



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ACCESS, RETENTION AND LEARNING OF TRIBAL CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to know the administrative and cultural problems related to access, retention and learning of tribal children and from these problems drawing out the administrative and cultural adaptations. To study the problem four district of Gujarat Aravalli, Narmada, Dahod and Dang were selected randomly. From each district stakeholders like tribal children, their parents, teachers, Principals, SMC and community members, CRCC, BRCC, BRPs, TPEO and DPEO were interviewed and classroom activities and school activities were observed in 64 schools. Major findings of the study were lack of coordination between the administrative systems of the district was a major problem. Irregularity of teachers and students and migration of the parents were the problems affecting the teaching-learning process. Difference in home language and school language and menu not according to the culture of the tribal children were the major cultural problems related to tribal education. Based on these findings the suggestions were given for the administrative and cultural adaptation required for access, retention and learning of the tribal children.

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INTRODUCTION

The two main challenges in education of tribal children are physical access to schooling at upper primary level and diverse socio-cultural context. In 2001, there were 14 million tribal children enrolled in elementary schools as against 20.24 million in the 6-14 years age group. In 2005, there were 1.66 million ST children out of school. Thus, the continued focus of SSA will be to bring in these remaining children in school and retain them at elementary stage. The decreasing trends in children being out of school, indicates that it will not be difficult to narrow these gaps. Though the reduction trends in dropouts have been at par with overall, the gap between the two (13 percent) is a challenge. Reduction of this gap remains a key focus area in SSA. Another problem of SSA is Drop-out students. Drop-out rates for All India from class I to V fell steadily over the years from 42.6 in 1990-91 to 25.6 in the year 2007-08. Similar decline in the dropout rates of ST population was observed from 1990-91 (62.5) to 2007-08 (32.2). Among girls, the Drop-out Rates in 2007-08 was highest in the state of Manipur followed by the state of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Among boys, it was highest in the state of Manipur followed by Gujarat and Meghalaya (Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2010).

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This suggests that still there are problems regarding the access, retention and learning of the tribal children. The causes of the problems could be many, from which researcher tries to look into the administrative and cultural problems faced by these children. From that tries to work out the administrative and cultural adaptation required for access, retention and learning of the tribal children.

Statement of the Problem

Study of Administrative & Cultural Adaptation required for Access, Retention and Learning of Tribal Children

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the administrative problems in access, retention and learning of Tribal Children.
2. To study the cultural problems in access, retention and learning of Tribal Children.
3. To study the administrative adaptation required for access, retention and learning of Tribal Children.
4. To study the cultural adaptation required for access, retention and learning of Tribal Children.

Sample of the study

The sample of the study was selected randomly. The four district of the Gujarat state was given by the SSA, SPO which

were Aravalli, Dahod, Narmada and Dang. From each district 4 tribal blocks will be selected randomly. From each block two tribal clusters will be selected randomly. From each cluster two schools will be selected randomly. Thus from each block 16 schools will be selected. Thus total 64 schools will be selected from the four districts. From selected village 5 Out of School Children (OoSC) and 5 Parent of them were interviewed. 5 school going children and 5 parent of them was interviewed. 5 teachers of the school were given the open ended questionnaire and 2 teachers and Principal were interviewed. 3 SMC members were interviewed. Group discussion among the 20 students and group discussion among the 4-5 teachers of that school was conducted. From each block 2 CRCC, 2 BRP, 1 BRCC, 1 TPO and 1 DPO was interviewed. Apart from it classroom activities of the 2 class of one school was observed.

Community, Principals, CRCC, BRCC, BRP, TPO, DPO and observation of classroom and school activities. First of all the administrative and cultural problems related to access, retention and learning of the tribal children was derived by the content analysis of the data obtained from the stake holders. From these problems the solution of these problems were asked to the stake holders and from these response the administrative and cultural adaptation required for the access, retention and learning of the tribal children was derived.

Major Findings

- Lack of cohesiveness, transparency and co-ordination in administration between school, CRC, BRC, district and state level.

Table 1. Tools

No.	Tool	Target Group
1.	Interview Schedule for Students	Out of School Children & School going Children
2.	Interview Schedule for Teachers	Primary School Teachers
3.	Interview Schedule for Principals	Primary School Principals
4.	Interview Schedule for Parents	Parents of Out of School Children and school going children
5.	Interview Schedule for Community	SMC members and Community Leaders
6.	Interview Schedule for CRCC, BRCC, BRP, SRG	CRCC, BRCC, BRP, SRG
7.	Interview Schedule for TPEO, DPEO	TPEO, DPEO
8.	Observation Schedule for the Classroom & School	Classroom Teaching and School Activities

Data Collection

For the present study the data was collected through the field investigator. Among the four field investigator three were having M.Phil. degree in the field of Education. Thus most of the field investigator had research experience in terms of doing their dissertation and collecting the data. Then the training programme for the field investigator was conducted. In this workshop training was given to the field investigator in terms of how to collect the data from the primary schools. They were trained them in terms of how to interact with the teachers & students, how to behave in the school, how to get minute information, how to record all the data, what care needs to be taken while administering tools etc. Then each field investigator started their data collection work in their respective district. Arrangement was done that in each district each investigator has to take four BRC and from those four-four schools from each block. Likewise in another district same arrangement was done for the data collection. According to the above arrangement each investigator went to the school for the data collection. Investigator gave the SSA letter informing the principal about the purpose of the data collection. Investigator also gave Principal Investigators letter to the Principal of the school explaining the broader perspective and objectives of data collection. Thus from each school Principal permission were taken for data collection. Then investigator collected data from the stake holders personally by interviewing them. The investigator also observed the classroom and schools. The investigator recorded the interview, took field note and observed using the observation schedule.

Data Analysis

The data obtained was analyzed through the qualitative data analysis technique. The content analysis was done on the verbal data obtained from the Students, Teachers, Parents,

- Lack of ashram school, residential school, NGO and AIE centres in the tribal area as per the requirement. Awareness among tribal peoples was less regarding this. STP classes were running on the paper only.
- Trainings were not conducted on the basis of the need of the tribal students and teachers. The content of the training were decided from the top. Implementations of training were mechanical and no impact studies were conducted.
- Monitoring was not done scientifically. Monitoring data were obtained telephonically.
- Cultural and societal needs of the tribal people were not given holistic perspective while planning. Community participation was less, bottom-up approach of planning was not utilized properly. Lack of awareness and co-ordination between personnel in planning and implementation of planning.
- PTR and number of classrooms per students were as per the norms but practically, teaching all standards in one classroom by one or two teacher were difficult. Water, sanitation and transportation facilities were inadequate.
- Teachers were irregular in tribal area schools due to commutation. Lack of tribal teachers in the area. The quality of teachers was major concern.
- Stereotyping attitude of teachers towards tribal children. Communication and cultural difference affect the intensity of relation between the teacher and tribal children.
- Irregularity of students, no input from parents, language, no change attitude of teachers and lack of knowledge about new pedagogy were the major hindering factors in teaching-learning process.
- Diagnosis of student learning problems and remedial work related to it were on paper only. Teachers were not implementing CCE properly.
- Lack of capabilities, research attitude and awareness in teachers regarding the innovative practices. Innovation grants were not appropriately utilized. Teachers were less sensitive and trained for the inclusive education.

- Illiteracy, poor economic conditions, language barriers were the problems faced by community, Panchayat and SMC members. Lack of transparency and trust between teachers and SMC.
- Social customs, blind faith, belief system, habits, excessive use of alcohol by male as well as female, divorce and remarriages were the major social cultural problems faced by the tribal people.
- The curriculum was not according to the understanding level of the tribal children. The curriculum doesn't represent the culture of the tribes. Free textbooks and scholarship were not provided on time.
- Reading, writing and arithmetic of tribal children were very poor. Irregularity of students and teachers and language were the major reasons behind this.
- Difference between L1/LS that is home language and school language is the biggest stumbling blocks in the quality of learning of tribal children.
- Mid-Day meal was not according to the culture of the tribal children. The district-wise difference in menu was not there according to the local need.
- Migration of the parents and illiteracy among the parents were the major factors affecting retention and learning of the tribal children.

Suggestions

- The co-ordination between school, CRC, BRC, district and state level should be improved by advance planning and implementing it meticulously. Transparency in administration should be improved by sharing the information between stake-holders. The trained person should be recruited as administrators through transparent selection process.
- The number of ashram & residential school should be increased in the tribal areas as per the requirement. The community needs to be made aware about such institution around them and encourage them to take advantage of these institutions. The STP classes should be run sincerely and it should be monitored properly. The community participation should be increased.
- Training should be given according to the local need of the block and district keeping in mind the teachers and students problems in tribal area. The trainer should be highly qualified and have attitude of research and training. The impact study of training should be conducted on the teaching and learning, and based on that necessary changes need to be made in next training.
- CRCC, BRCC and other personnel should be trained properly about how to monitor. The science of monitoring should be taught to personnel. The highly motivated and qualified person should be recruited as a monitor and accountability of them should be fixed. They should be made responsible for the poor quality of teaching and learning in tribal area. Loopholes in the monitoring need to be removed.
- Participatory bottom-up approach should be used for planning. The social and cultural needs of the tribal people should be kept in mind. For each block and district planning should differ according to ground reality. The planning should be properly implemented taking all stake holders in it.
- The number of teachers and classroom should be minimum three irrespective of less number of students

in standard 1 to 5. The separate office should be there in the school. Water, sanitation and transportation facilities need to be improved in quantity and quality.

- The basic facilities should be available in nearby towns so that teachers do not need to commute from the far places. The tribal teachers need to be recruited in tribal areas. The teachers' capability need to increase by giving training about new pedagogy and curriculum transaction. Teachers have to pass the TET exam every five year so that he remains updated.
- Attitudinal change training should be given to teachers. Broadness among the teachers needs to be bringing by training them regarding it. The teacher working in tribal area should learn the local language and should use while communicating with tribal children. Teacher should be trained to develop healthy relation with tribal children.
- Reasons of irregularity of students should be found out using action research and the solution should be found from that. The adult education should be given to parents and importance of education should be established in their mind. Teachers should be flexible, knowledgeable and should use new pedagogy while teaching.
- Rigorous monitoring of the diagnostic and remedial work should be done by the personnel involved in it. The accountability of the teachers and monitors should be fixed and necessary actions should be taken against the violators. Teachers should be trained for the CCE in subject training.
- The teachers should be trained and motivated for the innovation in teaching and learning. The healthy competition should be developed at block, district and state level for the innovations. The special grants should be given to the school that does the innovations. The teachers should be sensitized for the inclusive education through the training and contact programme.
- Adult education should be given to community, Panchayat members and SMC members. The amount of trust should be established between the teachers and SMC members through transparent administration.
- Tribal people should be made aware about the social customs hindering their progress and convince them for changing their social customs according to the modern age. Awareness campaign should be run to abolish the blind faith and to leave the alcohol consumptions. The importance of family system should be established in them.
- The curriculum should represent the tribal culture and according to the understanding level of the tribal children. Special curriculum should be framed for the tribal children. Textbook and scholarship should be provided on time and through the transparent manner.
- Irregularity of the student and teacher should be looked after seriously and factors related to it need to be found out and accordingly steps should be taken to control. Poor ability of students in 3 R can be improved by addressing the language problems faced by the tribal children.
- Gap between home language and school language can be decreased by spreading awareness among parents to use Gujarati language at home and asking the teachers to use some local words and local language in the school.

- Menu of the mid-day meal should be according to the local culture of the tribal children. District wise it should be different and according to the need of the children.
- The job should be available in the tribal areas and the parents need to be made literate and aware about the importance of education. Parent should be made responsible for the regularity of their children in the school.

Conclusion

Based on the findings it is clear that sincere efforts are required for administrative and cultural adaptation to improve access, retention and learning of the tribal children. Major adaptations required are transparent and accountable administration, bridging the gap between the home language and school language by teaching tribal children in their home language in standard 1 to 3 and gradually taken them into Gujarati language. For this textbook need to be bilingual and curriculum should support the culture of the tribal children.

More residential schools and schools and colleges for higher studies need to be started in the tribal area.

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