



ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research
Vol. 14, Issue, 12, pp. 67158-67160, December, 2024
<https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.28961.12.2024>



CASE STUDY

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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN THE EDUCATION OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN JHARBANDH BLOCK OF BARGARH DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 17th September, 2024
Received in revised form
03rd October, 2024
Accepted 11th November, 2024
Published online 28th December, 2024

Key Words:

Jharbandh, Education, Tribal, Digital, Empowerment.

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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that education is a potent instrument for social and economic change, many Indian tribal people struggle to get access to high-quality education. In order to investigate current difficulties in tribal education, specifically with relation to digital education, cultural relevance, and assessment, this case study focuses on Jharbandh Block in the Bargarh area. The study uses a qualitative methodology, drawing on secondary sources like government papers in addition to primary data gathered via surveys and interviews with local officials, educators, and students. The results show that despite government policy efforts, a number of obstacles, such as a lack of digital resources, poor infrastructure, economic hardships, and cultural differences, limit the community's ability to participate in digital education initiatives and impede effective learning. The study emphasizes the need for a holistic approach that incorporates infrastructure improvement, digital inclusion, and culturally relevant teaching practices to support tribal learners. By addressing these issues, this research aims to inform policymakers and stakeholders on actionable steps to enhance education for tribal communities, contribution to long-term development and empowerment.

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Citation: Dr. Chandrika Bhoi, 2024. "Contemporary issues in the Education of Tribal Communities in Jharbandh block of Bargarh District: A Case Study". International Journal of Development Research, 14, (12), 67158-67160.

INTRODUCTION

Background of Tribal Education in India: Indian tribal communities, with their varied cultures, dialects, and customs, make up a sizable portion of the country's social fabric. However, social and economic marginalization is common among tribal groups, with one of the most impacted sectors being education. Tribal and non-tribal people continue to face differences in educational access and quality, particularly in isolated and underdeveloped areas. According to studies, tribal students frequently lag behind their peers for a variety of reasons, such as poverty, a lack of proper educational facilities, and a curriculum that is not culturally relevant. These problems contribute to tribal students' low educational attainment and high dropout rates.

Education in Odisha and Jharbandh Block: There is a sizable tribal population in Odisha, with communities living in many districts, including Bargarh. The majority of people living in Jharbandh Block in the Bargarh District of Odisha are tribal, with Scheduled Tribes (ST) making up a sizable portion of the population. There is a significant need for primary and secondary educational infrastructure because the population is primarily rural and has a younger age distribution. There is a gender disparity in education as seen by literacy rates that are below district and state averages, particularly for women.

The main sources of income are wage labor and agriculture, which results in financial limitations that impact educational prospects because many households cannot afford to invest in digital resources or education. Regular school attendance and retention are hampered by inadequate access to schools, healthcare, and other necessities. These factors create a complex environment where digital education and e-learning could play a vital role in bridging educational gaps and expanding access to quality learning resources in this tribal region.

Importance of digital Education: Digital education has gained attention recently as a possible way to get over educational obstacles in rural locations. But in tribal areas like Jharbandh, the digital divide continues to be a serious problem. The inability of many tribal households to access digital equipment, energy, and internet connectivity restricts their capacity to engage in e-learning. For tribal students to have fair access to education, these digital inequities must be addressed.

Conceptual background Demographics of Jharbandh Block: Jharbandh Block is part of Bargarh District, Odisha, with a predominantly tribal population. The community primarily relies on agriculture and traditional livelihoods, with limited access to modern amenities. High poverty rates, coupled with geographical isolation, have resulted in limited access to educational and healthcare facilities.

These socio-economic conditions play a significant role in shaping the educational challenges faced by tribal students.

Educational Infrastructure: Educational infrastructure in Jharbandh is underdeveloped, with many schools lacking adequate facilities, such as classrooms, sanitation, and libraries. Teacher shortages further compound the issue, as schools often rely on temporary or untrained teachers, which affects the quality of education. Additionally, digital infrastructure is minimal, with very few schools having access to computers or internet connectivity, limiting students' exposure to digital learning tools.

Government Policies and Initiatives: The Indian government has implemented various programs to support tribal education, such as the Right to Education Act, the creation of Eklavya Model Residential Schools, and scholarship programs. Initiatives like Mo School and Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya in Odisha are focused on enhancing both the quality of education and access to it. Nevertheless, these policies frequently encounter difficulties in being put into action in far-off areas such as Jharbandh, where logistical and infrastructural obstacles impede their efficiency.

Cultural factors in Education: Tribal communities' cultural identity is strongly tied to their language, traditions, and beliefs. Unfortunately, the formal education system does not always incorporate these cultural elements, leading to curriculums that tribal students find unfamiliar. Language barriers are a major issue, with many tribal students speaking a different dialect or language at home, making it hard for them to connect with curriculum delivered in a standard language.

Statement of the problem: Contemporary Issues in the Education of Tribal Communities in Jharbandh Block of Bargarh District: A Case study.

- 1- What are the primary educational challenges faced by tribal communities in Jharbandh Block?
- 2- How do socio-economic, cultural, and policy factors affect educational attainment in this region?
- 3- What strategies can be implemented to improve digital education access and culturally integrated learning?

Objectives of the study

- To analyze the contemporary educational challenges faced by tribal communities.
- To identify the factors that affect educational attainment in this region.
- To provide recommendation for improving access quality and culturally integrated learning.

Delimitations of the Study

The present study was confined to:

- The students of Jharbandh Block of Bargarh District.
- The students belong to Tribal Community Only.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The investigator used qualitative case study method for the present study to explore educational issues on Jharbandh Block.

Sample: The present study used purposive sampling. The study sample included representative from various tribal groups with Jharbandh, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the regions educational landscape.

Tools: Primary data was collected through semi structure interview with teachers, students and local administrators and a focus groups discussion with community member, secondary data including government reports academic study and policy documents provided additional content.

Analysis of Data: Analysis of data was conducted through thematic coding to identify recurring patterns and insights.

DISCUSSION

Challenges in Tribal Education in Jharbandh

Accessibility: Access to education is limited in Jharbandh due to its remote location and lack of transportation options, making it challenging for students to consistently attend school. A lot of schools are situated a great distance from tribal communities, making students walk lengthy distances.

Digital Divide: Despite attempts to encourage digital learning, Jharbandh's schools struggle with poor connectivity, limited internet access, and insufficient digital infrastructure. Many households do not have computers or smart phones, which hinders students from engaging in online education.

Cultural Barriers: Tribal students' cultural backgrounds are frequently ignored in the usual curriculum. Disengagement and high dropout rates are caused by the absence of culturally relevant content and language support.

Economic Constraints: Poverty serves as a major obstacle to learning in Jharbandh. A lot of families depend on the work their children do to earn money for the household, which results in poor attendance and a high number of students leaving school.

Evaluation of policies and programs: The government's efforts to reduce educational disparities have only a small effect in Jharbandh. The Eklavya Model Residential Schools provide assistance, but face challenges in terms of accessibility and cultural significance. Changes in policy are needed to enhance the effectiveness of these programs for tribal students in Jharbandh.

Role of Community Engagement: The participation of the community is essential in establishing long-lasting educational solutions. Getting local leaders and parents involved in educational planning can assist in overcoming cultural and logistical obstacles. Teacher training programs that include cultural awareness can also enhance teacher-student relationships and academic achievements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following strategies could help address educational challenges in Jharbandh:

Mobile Learning centers: These could reach student in remote areas providing digital access and learning support.

Culturally Relevant Curriculum: Incorporating tribal languages, history, and cultural elements into the Curriculum would increase student engagement.

Infrastructure Development: Investments in School facilities, digital access, and teacher recurrent are essential for creating an inclusive learning environment.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the need for a holistic approach to improving education for tribal communities in Jharbandh Block. Addressing infrastructure gaps, expanding digital access, and integrating cultural elements into the curriculum are essential steps toward equitable education. Policymakers and educational stakeholders should prioritize localized solutions that respect the unique cultural and socioeconomic conditions of tribal communities. By fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment, this research suggests that long-term educational outcomes can be improved, enabling tribal students to participate fully in the broader socio-economic framework. The insights gained from this study provide a foundation for further research and policy interventions to support the education of tribal communities in Odisha and beyond.

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