A STUDY ON DROPOUTS OF TRIBAL SCHOOL CHILDREN IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

Dr. D. Vijayaraghavan  
Associate Professor, Department of English

Abstract

Indian sub-continent is inhabited by multilingual and multicultural and multi-ethnic communities. About 1652 languages and Dialects are spoken in this country. All these languages and dialects can be broadly grouped under four major language families. They were Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian. Traditionally referred to as adivasis, tribes, or tribals, scheduled tribes (STs) constitute about 9% of India’s population. Scheduled Tribes, the most disadvantaged groups in India, were enlisted in Article 341 and 342 of the constitution. Each of the 573 scheduled tribes has their own language, and differs from the one mostly spoken in the State where they reside (Govinda 2002). This paper deals with the dropouts of tribal school children in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu.

Key words: Tribes, GTR Schools, Dropouts, Reasons, Children.

Introduction

The English word tribe has come from the Latin word ‘tribus’ which signifies a particular type of common and political organisation which is alive in all these societies. The name ‘tribe’ refers to a category of people and designates a step of development in human society. As a type of society the term signifies a set of typical features and as a point of advancement it cannots a definite form of social organization, (Behura, 1990). Tribals are one of the most exploited and deprived sections of the population in the Indian societies. In all indicators of development, they remain the most excluded despite the fact that various kinds of policies and programs have been pursued for their upliftment in the post-Independence India. Fundamental changes in how society thinks are essential to enable the marginalized to engage with the mainstream, and thereby improve their survival (and revival) chances after a disaster. In societies where prejudice and bias run deep and there is little public debate on key issues, the need for a profound shift in attitude is critical. (Suchitra Sheth, Setu). Tribal communities situation in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu are scattered throughout the district. Their economy is primitive. Missionaries and anthropologist are being brought into light the tribal communities. In Coimbatore district
tribes are scattered from uliyoor of Mettupalayam to Thirumoorthyhills of Udumalpet taluk, Valparai at Coimbatore district. They were more than six tribal communities in Coimbatore schools have been set up for their further uplift.

**Samacheer Kalvi**

In Tamil Nadu samacheer kalvi are quite clear. The main objective of this system is to maintain uniformity in education offered in the entire state. Without any discrimination, students from any caste and social background can get equal education. Additionally, Samacheer Kalvi is started to provide quality education in an affordable way. Hence, students from any economic background including below poverty level, can continue their studies by spending minimal amount. Making education compulsory is always a prime objective of this new system. Thus, Samacheer Kalvi has been enlightening thousands of students since its inception. It gives each student a better place in our society by providing requisite expertise.

**Review of literature**

A review of previous researches related to the present study is attempted since a survey of related literature is necessary for the proper planning, execution and of any study and to detect the problems and solutions. “It provides a comparative data for interpretative purpose” (Good 1959). As this research deals with the tribal students, many works written on this line and significant research works have been done by the Indian researches. For example, few chief works have been reviewed are Dr. K. Viswanathan (1995), his study describes about tribal literacy problem for the modernization and imparting education to the tribal students of Western Ghats. S. kothainayaki (1994) discussed the classroom interaction and language use a case study of English teaching in Coimbatore district. Ganapathy (1980), in his study elaborately discusses the problems connected with the pronunciation of English by the Tamils. Kundu, M (1985), has surveyed the Teaching English to Tribal Learners in Orissa: The Use of Ethnically – Oriented instructional strategies to improve language skills and to influence attitudes.

**Aim and Objectives**

1. To identify the problems of dropouts from the tribal schools.
2. Identify and describe the educational problems are being faced by the tribal children who study in government tribal residential school.
3. Awareness about the importance of education should be created among the elders in the tribal communities.
4. Huge money is invested and spent every year for this purpose. When compared to non-tribal children, the education of tribal children is very poor.

5. Alternative approaches to be provided for the education of children when geographical conditions pose obstacles or the community's lifestyle involves mobility.

6. Addressing the health and nutritional needs of tribal children.

**Methodology of the Study**

The present studies follows a descriptive and micro level examination of the developmental sequences and the dropouts among the tribal students of GTR schools of Western Ghats, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu in order to give a full-fledged primary analysis. For this study 200 students have been selected for sample from a GTR schools located at Mavuthampathi and Valparai in Coimbatore district. The test materials have been constructed and the data have been collected mainly in written mode and recordings. The methods are i) students profile sheet ii) questionnaire method iii) interview method.

**Details from Dropout School Students**

The reasons are collected from the tribal school students in the form of an interview for dropping out from the school.

The following are the causes for drop out from the school. They are

1. Negative attitude towards education.
2. Linguistic problems.
3. Fear about the teachers and their teaching methods.
4. Problem of learning English.
5. Indifferent attitude of tribal parents.
6. Punishment given in schools.
7. Migration of parents.
8. Ill health of children.
9. Poor economic condition.
10. Due to puberty of girl students.
11. Lack of transport.
12. Wildlife threat and others.

**Data from the Parents of Drop out Children**

Information collected from the parents of the drop out tribal school children in the form of an interview and following factors, reasons are observed from the collected data.
1. The students are retained for the household chores as the parents have to leave the house for work.
2. Health condition of the children.
3. The low socio-economic status.
4. The inability of the children to cope with education.
5. Migration of the family.

The causes for Drop-outs

The reasons for the drop outs in the Government Tribal Residential middle schools as revealed by different studies. They can be classified into three categories, namely (i) Educational reasons, (ii) Socio-Economic reasons and (iii) Miscellaneous reasons.

(i). Educational reasons

Absence of schooling facilities is one of the main causes of wastage in most of the schools of the Western Ghats tribal settlements. Sometimes, the school established in the tribal village is a middle school which does not provide facilities to continue their higher education.

When there is no school for their higher studies in a nearby place they are left with no other option except to discontinue their studies. Poor school environment is yet another cause and perhaps the most important one, which contributes significantly to the problem of drop-outs. It is true that a majority of our elementary schools are run in buildings which are in dilapidated condition where there is no proper power supply, play ground, water supply etc.

(ii). Socio-Economic Reasons

Poverty is the main cause that contributes to the phenomenon of drop-outs. The tribal parents have to bear the direct cost for educating their children in the form of
tuition fees to be paid to the school, clothes for children, stationery items to be used for study, purchasing blanket and mat for bedding in school. Next to bear the indirect cost by way of losing the income that their children would have otherwise earned if they had not been sent to school.

(iii). Miscellaneous Reasons

Irregular attendance has been found to be one of the most important contributing factors responsible for the phenomenon of poor learning which ultimately leads to drop-outs. And continuous illness of pupils has been found to adversely affect their achievement in studies which ultimately leads to an increase in the percentage of drop-outs. Some other reasons like emotional difficulties of pupils, lack of interest in education, ill-health, dissatisfaction with the school, home environment, poor encouragement from the parents etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berg, B.C.</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Teaching efficient reading</td>
<td>Central institute of Indian languages: Mysore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betts, E.A.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>A new area: reading and linguistics</td>
<td>Reading Teacher, (Vol. 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. J. Preethi</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shweta Bagai &amp; Neera Nundy</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Errors committed by rural students at UG level in learning English as a second language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tribal education a fine balance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>