Tribal Educational Schemes and its Awareness among Tribal Youths

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Abstract

West Bengal, India is home to diverse tribal communities with unique customs, languages, and traditions. These communities often reside in rural areas, maintaining a close-knit social structure and preserving age-old practices. Education among these tribal communities has been a focal point for social upliftment, with efforts by the government and NGOs aiming to bridge educational disparities by establishing schools in remote areas, promoting indigenous languages, and incorporating tribal culture into the curriculum. They aim to bridge the educational gap by providing specialized programs tailored to the unique cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic needs of tribal youths. Raising awareness among tribal youths about these schemes is crucial, and efforts should be made through community outreach programs, workshops, and digital platforms.A study collected data from 100 tribal youths of Jhargram district through survey methods, finding that social media campaigns are the most impactful channel to engage tribal youths regarding educational schemes. To improve awareness, two predominant strategies should be prioritized: increasing social media presence and conducting more community-based programs. The primary goal of the West Bengal Tribal Development Department is to provide educational opportunities for tribal youths, emphasizing the importance of education as a fundamental avenue for socio-economic progress and individual empowerment, especially in marginalized communities.

Keywords: Tribal youth, West Bengal govt. initiatives, Tribe education, Scheme awareness

1. **Introduction**:

The vibrant state of West Bengal in India is a tapestry of diverse cultures, and its tribal communities contribute significantly to this rich heritage. The tribal population in West Bengal comprises various groups like Santhal, Munda, Oraon, and many others, each with distinctive customs, languages, and traditions. They often reside in rural areas, maintaining a close-knit social structure and preserving age-old practices passed down through generations. Education among the tribal communities of West Bengal has been a focal point for social up-liftment. Efforts by the government and NGOs have aimed to bridge educational disparities by establishing schools in remote areas, promoting indigenous languages, and incorporating tribal culture into the curriculum. Initiatives also focus on providing vocational training to empower youth and preserve traditional skills. Despite challenges like access and infrastructure, these endeavors strive to create inclusive educational opportunities, aiming to empower and enrich the lives of West Bengal's tribal populace.

Tribal educational schemes represent a pivotal avenue for uplifting and empowering indigenous communities globally. These initiatives aim to bridge the educational gap by providing specialized programs tailored to the unique cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic needs of tribal youths. With a focus on preserving traditional knowledge alongside modern learning, these schemes foster holistic development and sustainable growth within indigenous populations. Efforts to raise awareness among tribal youths about these schemes are crucial. By disseminating information through community outreach programs, workshops, and digital platforms, awareness can be heightened. Education fairs, interactive sessions with local leaders, and collaborations with tribal organizations play a vital role in informing youths about the opportunities available to them.

Moreover, integrating culturally sensitive curricula into these educational schemes ensures that tribal youths can connect with their heritage while acquiring contemporary skills. This approach not only enhances educational outcomes but also strengthens cultural pride and identity among indigenous youths. As awareness grows, it's essential to address barriers to access

such as geographical remoteness, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic challenges. By prioritizing inclusivity and tailored support mechanisms, tribal educational schemes can truly empower and equip indigenous youths to navigate a rapidly changing world while preserving their rich cultural heritage.

1.1 Tribe:

Displaying loyalty to a tribe, group, or tribal values" is the meaning of the term tribal. A tribe is a social group that is distinct from different social, cultural, and political entities owing to its unique set of attributes. People that belong to this group usually have common roots, backgrounds, convictions, traditions, and customs. Moreover, a tribe's solidarity is one of its main traits. Tribes are united with their past, with the location where they dwell on, and with each other. The overwhelming majority of tribes are totally autonomous and do not rely on the government for financial or political support. They sell the items they generate to earn money while surviving off the land. Tribes also prefer to be very acquainted with the area they inhabit and try to live there as much as possible. Tribes have the common decency to respect one another's boundaries, even when they are adjacent to each other (until they are at war).Tribes have a common progenitor, hence the people who founded their initial tribe are represented by their totems. They might revere this totem as well. More significantly, tribal members are not accepted into mainstream culture.

1.2 Objectives

- To find out the tribal youths aware about the schemes.
- To study the schemes being benefitted to them in education and career building.

2. Literature Review

Anan Dita, Marvina, et al. explores the definition of quality in early childhood education (ECD) for children from marginalized communities in India. It provides a qualitative analysis from various stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, parents, and community members, presenting an evidence-based approach to develop and improve good quality preschool programs. The book consists of two parts, with the content of the chapters in Part I based on case

studies presented in Part II. The eight model early childhood programs presented in the second part cover the diversity of quality in ECD in rural, urban, and tribal areas in India.

Devajana, D. C. proposes a capabilities approach to contextualize education for aboriginal children, emphasizing sustainability through vocational training and skill building programs. It emphasizes environmental awareness and cultural values, and suggests a framework for economic growth activities in tribal settlements. The paper also emphasizes the importance of skills for bridging intergenerational income shifts and calls for policy-making to adapt educational services to the dynamic needs of tribal societies. According to Pati, Diptansu Bhusan, and Minati Mohanty, India has the second-largest tribal population globally, comprising 7% of the total population and 212 tribal communities. The majority reside in states like Chhatisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan, Maharastra, Madhya Pradesh, and Union Territories. However, their economic condition is alarming due to poor educational attainments. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of ST students is deplorable, with about 160 million children not enrolled in school and half dropping out before completing primary education. The government has launched several schemes to ensure primary education for all children.

As per the study of Nanjunda, D. C, India is a multi-racial country with diverse cultural traits and development levels. Tribes, such as Aboriginals, are groups of families living under a chief, united by language and customs. This volume aims to contribute to tribal education knowledge by focusing on concepts, principles, and applied aspects. It will be useful to faculty members, researchers, policy makers, local self-governments, NGOs, and the general public. Brayboy, Bryan McKinley Jones proposed in their paper that, Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit), a theoretical framework rooted in Critical Race Theory, Anthropology, Political/Legal Theory, Political Science, American Indian Literatures, Education, and American Indian Studies, to address the complex relationship between American Indians and the US government.

3. Methodology

Data collected from 100 tribal youths of Jhargram district through survey method. This study is basically quantitative research and done through convenient sampling. The survey likely included structured questions with predefined response options, allowing for quantifiable data collection. These questions might have focused on various aspects of the youths' lives, such as educational attainment, access to resources, awareness of educational schemes, socio-economic status, or cultural practices. This method allows for a systematic and structured examination of the specific variables under study. By analyzing the numerical data gathered from the survey, researchers can draw conclusions and make informed recommendations or policy suggestions to address the needs or challenges faced by tribal youths in the context of education, thereby contributing to evidence-based decision-making and interventions.

3.1 West Bengal Govt. and Tribal Education Development:

The West Bengal Tribal Development Department implements several educational schemes to promote education among the Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities in the state. These schemes aim to address the educational needs of ST students and help them achieve their full potential. Here are some of the key educational schemes for ST students in West Bengal.

3.2 Sikshashree

Sikshashree is a pre-matric scholarship scheme for ST students from families with an annual income of less than Rs. 2,50,000. The scheme provides financial assistance to students from Class VI to Class X to cover their educational expenses, such as tuition fees, textbooks, and uniforms.

3.3 Post-Matric Scholarship to ST

The Post-Matric Scholarship to ST scheme provides financial assistance to ST students pursuing post-matriculation studies (Class XI onwards) in recognized institutions. The scholarship covers tuition fees, maintenance allowance, and other incidental expenses.

3.4 Centrally Sponsored Pre-Matric Scholarship to ST Students Reading in Classes IX & X

This scheme provides financial assistance to meritorious ST students from families with an annual income of less than Rs. 4,50,000. The scholarship is awarded to students from Class IX and Class X who secure high marks in their previous examinations.

3.5 Adivasi Siksha Rinn Yojana (ASRY)

ASRY is a loan scheme for ST students pursuing higher education. The scheme provides loans for tuition fees, books, and other educational expenses. The loans are repayable after the student completes their studies and secures employment.

3.6 Hostel Facilities

The Tribal Development Department provides hostel facilities for ST students at various levels of education. These hostels provide accommodation, food, and other essential amenities to students from remote areas and those from economically disadvantaged families.

3.7 Joint Entrance Examination Coaching & NEET

The department offers coaching for Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) to ST students aspiring to pursue higher education in engineering and medical fields.

3.8 Merit cum Means Scholarship Schemes

The department implements various merit cum means scholarship schemes for ST students. These schemes provide financial assistance to meritorious students from economically disadvantaged families.

3.9 Ekalabya Model Residential School

Ekalabya Model Residential Schools are residential schools established for ST students in remote and tribal-dominated areas. These schools provide quality education from Class VI to Class XII.

3.10 Pandit Raghunath Murmu Abasik School

Pandit Raghunath Murmu Abasik School is a residential school for ST girls from Classes VI to XII. The school provides quality education and a nurturing environment for girls from marginalized communities.

3.11 Belpahari Residential Government Girls High School

Belpahari Residential Government Girls High School is a residential school for ST girls from Classes VI to X. The school provides quality education and a supportive environment for girls from rural areas.

4. Data Analysis

When respondents were asked *about the west Bengal govt. educational schemes for tribal, then the following data collected:* Social media campaigns overwhelmingly stand out as the most impactful channel to engage tribal youths regarding educational schemes, with a staggering 71% of respondents citing this medium as their source of information. This high percentage emphasizes the dominance of social media in reaching this demographic efficiently. While "All of the above options" and television advertisements also contribute to informing youths about these schemes, their influence is notably lower, at 16% and 11% respectively. Furthermore, community meetings and workshops emerge as the least effective channels, with a mere 2% indicating their effectiveness. This data underscores the need for prioritizing social media campaigns when targeting tribal youths for educational scheme awareness due to their undeniable efficacy compared to other outreach methods.

Inadequate government funding, accounting for 10% of respondents, stands out as the only element that is not cited as a significant contributor to the lack of awareness about these schemes. Language barriers dominate the responses at 63%, indicating a substantial hurdle in communication and comprehension. Limited access to information channels, at 5%, highlights another obstacle, limiting the avenues through which information

reaches this demographic. Geographical remoteness, identified by 22% of respondents, also plays a notable role, indicating the challenge posed by physical distance in disseminating information. However, the relatively lower percentage of respondents attributing the lack of awareness to inadequate government funding suggests that while funding might be a concern, it's not as prominent a factor in the lack of awareness about these schemes among tribal youths compared to the other listed obstacles. These were some of the points that were indicated by the respondents.

When the respondents were posed a question on *improving awareness among tribal youths, these schemes can be significantly bolstered by focusing on two predominant strategies:* increasing social media presence and conducting more community-based programs. The data indicates that 53% of respondents believe enhancing the social media presence would be instrumental in reaching out effectively to this demographic. Social media's pervasive reach and influence among youths make it an ideal platform for disseminating information. Additionally, 42% of respondents advocate for conducting more community-based programs, underscoring the value of direct engagement within the tribal communities. Collaborating with local tribal leaders, while essential, appears to be less emphasized, as only 5% of respondents highlight its significance. Hence, while engaging with tribal leaders remains important for cultural insights and community trust, the data highlights the need to prioritize increasing social media presence and expanding community-based programs to improve awareness of these schemes among tribal youths.

When respondents were solicited about *the primary goals of the West Bengal Tribal Development Department, they replied:* The primary goal of the West Bengal Tribal Development Department, as indicated by a significant 68% of respondents, is to provide educational opportunities for tribal youths. This overwhelming majority emphasizes the department's focus on empowering the tribal youth through education. Education is a fundamental avenue for socio-economic progress and individual empowerment, especially in marginalized communities. While economic growth in tribal communities, selected by 31% of respondents, is undoubtedly important for holistic development, the data underscores the higher

emphasis placed on educational opportunities by the department. Preserving and revitalizing tribal culture, indicated by only 1% of respondents, while a crucial aspect, seems to be a less highlighted priority within the stated goals of the West Bengal Tribal Development Department compared to providing educational opportunities for tribal youths.

When respondents were asked about *some of the measures that can be taken to increase awareness of tribal educational schemes, they choose among the factors listed:* Increasing awareness of tribal educational schemes can be effectively achieved through a multi-pronged approach, as indicated by the responses gathered. Organizing awareness camps and workshops, cited by 41% of respondents, stands as a valuable method for direct engagement and information dissemination within tribal communities. Simultaneously, broadcasting information on radio and television, highlighted by 43% of respondents, harnesses the power of mass media to reach a wider audience, including those in remote areas. Additionally, distributing pamphlets and brochures, though chosen by 24% of respondents, offers a tangible and localized way to deliver detailed information about these schemes. The collective data underscores the importance of employing various strategies, including direct community engagement, mass media broadcasting, and tangible informational materials, to comprehensively increase awareness of tribal educational schemes among the target population.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the data analysis emphasizes the pivotal role of social media campaigns in effectively engaging tribal youths regarding educational schemes, with a significant 71% citing this medium as their primary source of information. This highlights the dominance of social media in reaching this demographic efficiently, overshadowing other methods like television advertisements, community meetings, and workshops, which were found to be less effective. Among the hurdles contributing to the lack of awareness, language barriers emerge as the most prominent issue, followed by geographical remoteness and limited access to information channels. Notably, inadequate government funding appears to be less prominent in hindering awareness compared to other listed obstacles. The primary goal of the West Bengal

Tribal Development Department, as reflected by 68% of respondents, centers on providing educational opportunities for tribal youths, underlining the department's focus on empowering through education. To improve awareness, the data advocates for prioritizing strategies like enhancing social media presence, conducting more community-based programs, and employing diverse approaches such as organizing workshops, utilizing mass media, and distributing informational materials. This multifaceted approach highlights the necessity of employing various strategies to comprehensively increase awareness of tribal educational schemes among the target population.

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