

Education and Development in Baiga Tribe of Madhya Pradesh

Heera Lal Jaiswal

Research Scholar, Department Of Sociology, Jiwaji University Gwalior (MP)

ABSTRACT:

The baiga tribe is extremely backward in terms of their social, financial and academic level. Their geographical isolation has made them a very vulnerable tribal group in India. Education plays an important role in the socio-economic development. To include the baiga tribe in the mainstream, development of education can be an important factor. After independence efforts are being made to improve their education in India. The government is trying to uplift their overall situation through development programs in their areas. Altogether, the baiga culture has gradually changed due to continuous migration and impact of neighboring communities in the past and still changing due to the impact of modernization and developmental program at present. The aim of this research is to know the educational levels of Baiga tribe and the various educational welfare schemes initiated by the govt for the tribe and their influences.

KEYWORDS: Baiga; Education; Development; Demography; Madhya Pradesh

INTRODUCTION

The baiga tribes are considered to be originated from Dravidian species. They live in the forest area of Central India in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The name "Baiga" means a sorcerer or medicine man. They have a vast knowledge of medicinal plant and folklore. To conserve this valuable tradition and cultural knowledge, they should be integrated with modern life parallelly. These tribal communities have stagnant increase low level of literacy and access to high yield agricultural technologies. This suggests they're quite impoverished. Seventy-five such groups across 30 states and union territory have been identified and categorized as particularly vulnerable tribal groups by the government of India in 2006. The official recommendation was made in 2015 for the growth and development of these tribes, focused on improvement to housing and habitat and conservation of culture. Each state and union territory are required to prepare a "conservation cum development plan" for each particularly vulnerable tribal groups of their states.

The dwellings of baiga are a part of their habitat which continues to evolve with the dynamic need of the family. Today baiga lifestyle has completely changed, as a result, their settlement has also continued to rework. They traditionally practiced the transient form of cultivation whereby in other words each individual is self-reliant and causes valuable vernacular knowledge worth recording.

The baiga tribe is known for its habitation, hairstyle, tattoo marks and ethnomedical knowledge. All over the world it has attracted anthropologist, sociologists and other writers for their simple traditional way of life, beware shifting cultivation and other cultural traits. The baiga chak is famous to know their way of life and culture. Verrier Elwin wrote in his book in 1939 that the baiga tribe is one of the few remaining

in the central provisions of India that has not yet greatly affected by civilization. This scenario is fast changing but still seems to be true to some extent.

A significant part of their culture is lost or changed due to the impact of migration, acculturation, development and change with time and space. Hence, it become significant to review the indigenous cultural traits of the baiga tribe before they get forgotten with time or face assimilation.

Cultural change or transformation of culture is the dynamic process whereby the living culture of the world is changing and adapting to external or internal forces. The various factors are responsible for cultural change such as innovation and Discovery acculturation assimilation education and developmental programs migration ecological change modernization, urbanization, industrialization etc. This paper deals with the demographic study of baiga culture and situational analysis of developmental and educational progress among the baiga people.

AREA OF STUDY

The State of Madhya Pradesh is one of the largest States of the Indian Union in Central India. It lies between 21°6' and 26°30' North latitude and 74°9' and 82°48' East Longitude. The total area of the State is at about 308,252 square km. As per census 2011, total population of the State is 72,597,565 with its density being 236 and sex ratio 931. Further break-up of population by sex shows that 37,612,920 are male and 35,184,645 are female.

According to the census 2011, tribal population of Madhya Pradesh is 21.1 per cent of the total population of Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh holds 1st rank among all the States/UTs in terms of ST Population. There are three primitive tribes living in Madhya Pradesh i.e. Baiga, Bhariya and Sahariya. According to census 2011, the total population of Baiga tribe in India is 5,52,495 out of which 4,14,526 are living in Madhya Pradesh. They are living mainly in the Mandla, Dindori, Anuppur, Shahdol and Umaria districts of Madhya Pradesh. A small number of Baigas are living in Jabalpur, katni, Seoni, Balaghat, Sidhi, Singrauli also. In this study, major polarized tribal districts are being focused and data is collected from these areas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is prepared on the basis of primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through schedule method of social survey. In this method, structured questions and open-end questions are designed. Besides some basic questions, a total no. of 53 questions were asked in which 52 questions are structured questions and one is open end question.

Besides this schedule, a google form is also prepared. This google form includes some basic question and three open end questions. The aim of this google form is to include educated Sahariya people so that quality wise suggestions can be received.

Secondary data was collected from various publications of the central and state government, journals, books, magazine, newspapers and reports prepared by the research scholars. The significant sources of secondary data are various published sources, which are as bellows;

1. Reports of Central and state government,
2. The publication released from of a statistical organization,
3. Documents and reports of different organizations,
4. Reports submitted by research scholar in universities and various educational and research institutions,

5. Descriptions of the various committees and commissions appointed by the government.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

It is generally perceived that Tribes were ignored during the process of development in the past. They have remained backward in all aspects of life. Therefore, effort needs to be made for educational and social development of tribes. This paper focuses on the educational attainment of Baiga tribe of Madhya Pradesh. This paper attempts to show the present status of education and development among Baiga tribes and factors affecting the education of them .

BAIGA CULTURE

The Baiga call themselves the 1st human on earth or the Prakriti-Putra. By nature, they are very shy and simple in living (Forsyth, 1871). The Baiga are a Mundari or Kolarian people located in the central highlands of India. The Baiga speak Baigani and Chhattisgarhi dialects of Hindi. It is a dialect of Indo-Aryan Stock belonging to the Indo-European Phylum (Grierson, 2005). Actually, they speak a broken form of language spoken by their Hindu neighbors. It has been also seen that the Baiga officiates as priests of the local deities. They do Jhar-Phunk and also work as medicine-men (Elwin, 1950, p. 22). The Kole and Gond consider the Baiga as priests knowing the secrets of the region's soil. The Baiga is a strong believer of magic and good medicine-men (Tiwari, 1997). They have sound knowledge of numerous forest herbs and medicinal plants that they use to cure diseases. The Baiga have very limited resources for livelihood and most of them if existing is often at the subsistence level. Basically, they are shifting cultivators. The staple food item of the Baiga is rice and pej. Pej is cooked from maize, wheat, Kodo (millet), and Kutaki. The Baiga are avid smokers. They are legendary drinkers of Mahua liquor. In the name of handicraft, they do little basketry, broom making, and wood carving. The Baiga love to decorate themselves with ornaments. The elaborate tattoo designs can be found on the Baigin's body for ornamental purposes. The Jat system found among the Baiga tribe is remarkable and it resembles the caste system in India (Sharma, 2012). Another characteristic of the Baiga community is polygamy . It was found during the study that some Baiga males had more than one wife.

DEMOGRAPHY

The Census of India, 2011 has notified 705 scheduled tribes in 30 States / Union Territories in India. The total population of the scheduled tribes in India is 104545716 (see Table-1) which forms 8.6 per cent of the total population of India. The population of ST in Madhya Pradesh is 15316784 which is 21.1% of total population of Madhya Pradesh and 14.7% of total population of ST in India. The population of ST in Anuppur district is 358543 which is 47.4% of total population. The population of ST in Shahdol, Umaria, Mandla and Dindori is 476008, 300687, 610528, 455789 respectively.

The population of Baiga tribe in India is 552495 and 414526 in Madhya Pradesh. The largest no. of baiga population in Madhya Pradesh is living in Shahdol which is 99,299. The population of Baiga tribe in Anuppur district is 302110 which is 5.4% of total Baiga population (See Table-2). Sex Ratio among the scheduled tribes of India is 990 while it is 984 in Madhya Pradesh and 1014 in Anuppur district. The sex ratio of baiga tribe in Madhya Pradesh is 997.

Table 1: Scheduled Tribe (ST) Population

Place	Total Population	Male	Female	Rural	Urban
India	104545716	52547215	51998501	93019162	10461872
Madhya Pradesh	15316784	7719404	7597380	14276874	1039910
Anuppur	358543	177977	180566	317627	40916
Shahdol	476008	236947	239061	447402	28606
Mandla	610528	299918	310610	590435	20093
Dindori	455789	225699	230090	448420	7369

Table 2: Baiga Population

Place	Total Population	Male	Female	Rural	Urban
India	552495	277245	275250	528802	23693
Madhya Pradesh	414526	207588	206938	394032	20494
Shahdol	99299	49251	50048	93943	5356
Anuppur	30211	15116	15095	24245	5966
Mandla	43331	21347	21948	42142	1189

Sources:

- Census of India 2011
- District Census Handbook: Anuppur, Shahdol, Mandla, Dindori

EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

Education is the key which contributes to earn livelihood, help to increase their resources as well as help to build the nation. Additionally, it helps to build their own thoughts.

The situation of baiga region is not good while comparing to other tribal's region because, even today the majority of baiga tribes resident is situated in the jungle and far away from other developed areas. These areas are lack in basic infrastructure like electricity, education, roads, hospitals etc. While comparing to other areas, people in this area are very poor because of un-employment, lack of education and lack of basic infrastructure. Due to the high poverty level and big family, they have to face the lack of facilities in which lack of transportation, unemployment, unawareness etc. are very common.

Many educational schemes have been introduced by the government to increase the level of education and for the development of baiga tribes & other tribe. To include them in mainstream and to avail them the advantages of education special schemes related to the education of schedule tribes are initiated which supplement the efforts of state government and central ministry are as under:-

(A) Scheme of strengthening education among schedules tribe girls in low literacy districts - The scheme is for promotion of education among tribal girls in the identified low literacy districts of the country. The scheme also aims to improve the socio-economic status of the poor and illiterate tribal population through the education of women. Kanya Shiksha Parishar is one of these initiative. There are 84 Kanya Shiksha Parishar in Madhya Pradesh out of which 22 Parishar are in Baiga polarized regions. There are 7 sport centers (Kreedha Parishar) approved by the tribal departments specially for the girls in

Madhya Pradesh. These centers have hostel facility also. Amarkantak kreeda parishar and Shahpura kreeda parishar are established in baiga tribal belt.

(B) Scheme of construction of hostels for ST Girls and Boy - The scheme is to provide Hostels for Scheduled Tribes including PTGs in an environment conducive to learning to increase the literacy rate among the tribal students and to bring them a par with other population of the country. Under this scheme, 8 Adarsh awashiy uchchar madhyamik vidhyalaya and 63 Eklavya Adarsha avashiya vidhyalay are established in Madhya Pradesh.

(C) Scheme of Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas - This scheme is to provide one time grant for residential school infrastructure for Scheduled Tribes including PTGs to increase the literacy rate among the tribal students and to bring them as per with other population of the country. There are 1078 Ashram schools established in Madhya Pradesh. Construction of Ashram School with the objective to provide living accommodation and conducive atmosphere for education in tribal sub-plan area. In the financial year 2020-21, a total amount of 2.8 lac crore rupees and in 2022-23 amount of 3.8 lac crore rupees was allotted for tribal sub- schemes.

(D) Vocational Training in Tribal Areas- The Schemes of Vocational Training in Tribal areas is a self-employment or increasing employability of ST boys and Girls equally. There are 38 vocational training centers established in tribal belt out of which 11 are working in baiga tribal belt. From the financial year 2017-18, Tribal Welfare department (Government of India) has approved 2984 lac rupees for five computer training skill development center out of which three are proposed in baiga polarized districts i.e. Shahdol, Mandala and Dindori.

(E) Post-Matric Scholarship for ST Students - The scheme covers professional, technical as well as non-professional and non-technical courses at various levels including correspondence courses covering distance and continuing education.

(F) Pre-Matric Scholarship for ST Students - The scheme is intended to support education of children studying in classes IX and X, so that the incidence of drop-out, especially in the transition from the elementary to the secondary stage is minimized.

(G) Upgradation of Merit of ST students - The scheme is to upgrade the merit of ST students by providing them remedial and special coaching in classes IX to XII.

(H) Fellowship for Doctoral degree – Government has initiated many schemes to provide fellowship to Scheduled Tribe students for pursuing higher studies such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. Veer Shankar Shah-Raghunath Shah fellowship, Veer Tantiya Bhil fellowship, Veer Badal Bhoyi fellowship, Veer Bhima Nayak fellowship and Veer Khazya Nayak fellowship are some of these doctoral fellowship.

(I) Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship for STs - To provide financial assistance to meritorious students for pursuing higher studies in foreign university in specified files of Master Level Courses, Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral research programs, in the field of Engineering, Technology and Science.

(J) Top class Education for ST students- The Scholarship Scheme for ST students was introduced from the academic year 2007-08 with the objective of encouraging meritorious ST students for pursuing studies at Degree and Post Graduate level in any of the Institutes identified by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for the purpose.

The main objective of these schemes is to educate the tribes and include them in the mainstream of development, but these schemes are not working at the required pace and efforts are not satisfactory. The cultural incoherence, irrelevant curriculum, language of instructions, nature of habitat, poverty, social discrimination are the factors which slowdown the pace of educational development in Baiga tribe.

Therefore, even today these primary and higher education are not doing very well. According to census 2011, level of the literacy is 47.2% which is too low and due to this, baiga tribes are not able to get the jobs as well as they are not able to integrate themselves into the mainstream.

ECONOMIC FACTORE

Due to poor literacy rate and poor level of awareness, baigas are unable to find employment and are exploited as laborer which fetches them meager income. This is also because of their low bargaining capacity as they are ignorant and poor. The findings of the study present a grim picture of the economic status of the tribe where most of the respondents did not have any stable sources of income. Because of low employment, almost all respondents were in the trap of Debt. Therefore it was highly unlikely that the households were buying and consuming food of the required quality or quantity. Poverty restricts the number and the quality of their meals as well as the cooking method. The decision on buying food items in a poor household is dictated more by affordability than by nutritional value which affects the nutritional status of the child. The baiga reveal their poor social-economic status and its influence on their food as below:

At home we cook for a jackfruit we catch fish from the pond that is the only place we can get them if money was there then we would buy fish but we don't have money so how can we buy and eat fish (by A baiga people).

SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSION

Education is a key indicator of socio-economic development. It also increases the knowledge and vision of a person. Equally, it is considered as an essential element in bringing change in social, political, economic fields in a society. Setting free and upliftment of people can be achieved only through education. Indeed, the country's progress and development largely depend upon the educational attainment of its people. Education is the single and most important means by which individuals and society can improve their personality, build capacity levels, overcome barriers, and expand opportunities for a sustained improvement in their well-being. Recognizing that the education system is currently designed for the dominant group, there needs to be dealt in creating support mechanisms that increase the integration of tribal children into the proper education system.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the position of education in the Baiga Tribes of Madhya Pradesh reflects weak scenes. Their level of education varied from 26.2% (According to Census 2001) to 47.2% (According to Census 2011) but still it is very low. Baiga Tribes of Madhya Pradesh is educationally backward when compared to another tribal group. It is a matter of serious concern and problem for the whole state as it affects the weaker section of society. The constitution of India promises every support and hold in mainstreaming the disadvantage sections of the society and to reduce histories of discrimination. However, in reality, the given opportunities were not exploited fully.

We have studied the education & development of baiga and the support level of schemes launched by the government. These schemes mark some importance in their education and development but there are a big gap and scope of improvement. It is very necessary to know the myth and thoughts of the baiga tribe because on the basis of their thoughts and myth we can plan schemes for their development. One of the myth mentioned by Verrier Elwin in his book "THE BAIGA 1939" is that the baiga tribe don't want to include themselves in the mainstream, that's why they do not like to leave their comfort zone.

Keeping this point in mind, an Ashram for the upliftment of the Baiga tribe is made by Dr. Praveen Sarkar, namely "Maa Sharda Awasiya Kanya Vidya Peeth". It was established in 1995 to educate the Baiga tribe. It is situated in a Baiga Village of Pushprajgarh Tehsil in Anuppur district. In 1995, there were only 15 students but this number increased to thousands in 2023. The main aim of this Institute is to provide education, health & basic facilities to the Baiga tribe. Besides basic schooling, technical education like skill development, stitching, music, etc. are also being provided by this Institute.

To conclude, education is an important avenue for improving the social and economic condition of the Baiga Tribes of Madhya Pradesh. Hence, there is a need of quick implementation of strong and effective education policies in the State. The education of these Tribes should be taken up on a high priority basis if the unnatural protective discrimination has to end within a short period. To improve Baiga education and their lifestyle, we need to amend the education pattern according to them as well as their culture needs to be included in their education system. The aim would not only be to increase the literacy level but also to skill them to develop themselves. The flagship programmes of the government like, Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission, Madhya Pradesh Jan Shiksha Adhinyam (2002), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Sakshar Bharat Abhiyan, Right to Education (RTE) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Rastriya Poshan Abhiyan must be implemented with strong commitment and conviction. Efforts in this direction need not only the Government but also non-government organizations (NGOs) and voluntary agencies should come forward to play a leading role in the State. Only then, we can establish an egalitarian society based on equality and justice.

REFERENCES

1. Administrative report 2022-23, Janjatiya Karya Vibhag, Bhopal
2. Census of India 2011. Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India: New Delhi.
3. Chakravarthy, M. and Singrole, C.S. "Problems of Tribal Education – A Key to Development" *Man in India*, Vol. 14, 1983, PP 91-96.
4. Chatterjee, Prana (2016): Status of education among tribal communities of Madhya Pradesh
5. Chaurasiya, V. (2009). *Prakriti Putra Baiga (Hindi)*. Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Hindi Granth Academy.
6. Dash B.N. (2004): Education and Society, Dominant Publishers and distributors, New Delhi.
7. Elwin, V. (1939). *The Baiga*. London: John Murray (Reprint: 2007, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House).
8. Ekta Mathniyan, Study of Education and Development of Baiga tribe in District Mandla, Vol.4, Issue 1, 2018, PP 14-16.
9. Goswami, Aradhana (2018): Development of education in Scheduled tribe of Madhya Pradesh
10. Government of India-Ministry of Tribal Affairs (2013). Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, New Delhi.
11. Heera Lal Jaiswal, Education and Development Of Baiga Tribe In Anuppur District, Vol. XI, Issue III, 2022, PP 91-99
12. Tiwari, S. K. (1997). *Baigas of central India*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd.