

Poverty and Education Among the Siddis: A Sociological Analysis

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Abstract

Education is essential for the development of a nation and society and is a key to economic Reliance. In the post-independent scenario, schemes have been implemented to improve the education status of Scheduled Tribes (STs). Nonetheless, the Siddi Tribe in Karnataka has particular difficulties because of their traditional farming methods, low literacy rates and pervasive poverty. Due to their remote location, lack of access to communication resources, unfavorable surroundings, ill health, depressed and superstitious beliefs, they are perceived as having a low educational status. This paper investigates the educational status of Siddis in the Uttara Kannada district of Yellapur, India, and the reasons behind their low literacy rates. It uses primary and secondary data, collected through interviews and group discussions in two selected villages. The study identifies factors such as distance from educational institutions, poor living conditions, and parents' inattention to their children's education.

Keywords: Siddi tribe, Poverty, Education.

Introduction

Education's main purpose lies in the development and improvement of individuals' abilities. By acquiring knowledge and providing the means for a satisfactory quality of life, education aims to promote longevity as the ultimate goal of personal growth. Central to this process is the significant role that education plays. Within the realm of human resources policy, one crucial aspect of education is its focus on individuals themselves. The core objective of education revolves around the enrichment of people's material, cultural, and spiritual well-being. This human factor or the human context is of extreme importance and should always be held as the focal point of educational efforts (Haksar, 1977).

The education of the Siddis, an ethnic group in the Indian sub-continent, has been a significant issue due to past discrimination and the need for their development. The Siddis, who descended from the Bantu people of Africa, live in remote forest areas in Karnataka and face poverty, illiteracy, and lack of awareness. Despite government initiatives for tribal welfare and education, only a few have reached the Siddis, and their education levels are significantly lower than the rest of the community. The lack of awareness and political will among government programmers and political leaders contribute to the lack of benefits. The Siddis are the most backward tribe in Karnataka, lacking agricultural land and formal income, leading to children working as daily wage laborers. Therefore, the education of the Siddis is crucial for their overall development and the nation.

Who are the Siddis?

Siddis have a total species element of Negros. They are athletic build, distinctly short, curly hair, bright eyes, snub nose, and thick lips under the dark complex. Their look is distinct from others. The Kali River, flowing down the western ghat, holds a rich cultural heritage and reflects the community's history. The river is a strong link to the past, dating back to the community's birth. The Western Ghats hill is part of a slave tribe, which was bought by the Portuguese in Goa. These Siddis, originally from Kenya, Ethiopia, and African countries, escaped from the forest of labor in Karnataka and lived off the land. However, some tribal communities are more isolated, archaic, vulnerable, deprived, and backward, living in small, scattered habitats in remote and inaccessible areas. These tribes are the most neglected among the hundreds of tribal communities living in the Western Ghats.

Profile of Siddi Education

Siddi tribal people in Karnataka, India, are adjusting to their remote forest environment and are unable to attend school due to their unique culture, social system, structure, and values. The Indian Constitution assigns special status to tribals, known as Adivasis, Vanvasis, or tribes. According to the 2011 census, the Siddi tribal population in Karnataka is 10,477. Most Siddis are illiterate due to their backwardness and lack of agricultural land or property. Some students drop out of secondary school due to distance and lack of vehicle privileges. Some students are unaware of the education system and some scholarships are not available due to family background. Some students are interested in attending school but are not provided with guidance or financial support. The Siddis are the most backward tribe in Karnataka and face challenges in accessing education and financial support.

Importance of the Study

The Siddis tribe in Karnataka has experienced significant socio-cultural, economic, political, and educational changes due to poverty and lack of awareness. The Siddis have been isolated from other communities due to their primitive culture and lack of education, leading to a lack of modernization. The study aims to explore the relationship between education and poverty among the Siddis, focusing on the problems faced by students in gaining an education and the importance of education in enhancing the quality of life for the tribe. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Siddis' socio-economic conditions and the need for improved education.

Objectives of the study

- Evaluate poverty levels in Siddi tribes.
- To understand the reasons behind the poor educational status among the Siddi children.

Research Methodology

The study explores poverty and educational inadequacy among the Siddi tribe in Karnataka state. The research involved household data from two Siddi-concentrated villages, collected through personal visits, structured interviews, and group discussions with 12-25-year-olds. The explorative nature of the study ensures a comprehensive understanding of the Siddi tribe's experiences with education.

The Area and People under Study

Fieldwork was conducted on two hamlets in Magod and Harigadde villages, which were in poor communi-

cation and densely populated. There were no regular public transport systems, causing people to walk long distances to access public facilities. The Siddi tribe relied on daily labor and forest produce collection, and most had no agricultural land. Although electric and drinking water facilities were provided, poor maintenance caused problems and health centers were not accessible within a 5-10 km radius.

Methods of Data Collection

This article presents data from fieldwork conducted among Siddis in Yellapur, Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka. The data was collected through, interview and group discussions. The primary data was randomly collected two village, there is a 56 Siddi family’s, the Siddi population is more than 45 (age group of 12 to 25) people. In this part of the study, we selected 40 (Yamane formula = $N/1+n(e)^2$) respondents for the study.

Result and Discussion

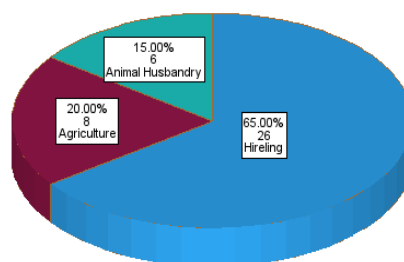
Poverty is the main problem of Siddi's education, and his way of life is also responsible for this. Although the children of Siddis have the desire to study, they are unable to do so due to poverty. It has been seen that many Siddi children stop studying halfway and start working. Lack of education is also fatal to the progress of Siddis. The present paper analysis the various aspects of poverty and education among the Siddis.

Table No.1 Occupation of the Parents

Occupation	Number of Respondents	Percent
Hireling	26	65
Agriculture	8	20
Animal Husbandry	6	15
Total	40	100

Source: Fieldwork

Occupation of the parents



Occupation is an important indicator of the economic status of an individual. The occupation structure's nature determines the individual's personality and Stan Table No.1 shows that 65 percent of parents belong to agriculture, 20 percent are in agriculture, and 15 percent are in animal husbandry. The study shows Siddis are agriculture hirelings. The important thing about the study is that no one is a government

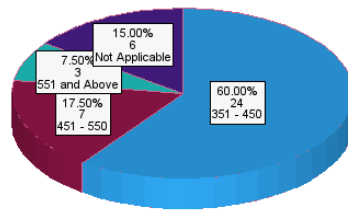
employee or a private company employee. It shows that the Siddis are the backward of the occupational structure and hard of living.

Table No.2 Daily Wages of the Parents

Amount in Rs.	Number of the Respondent	Percent
351 - 450	24	60.0
451 - 550	7	17.5
551 and Above	3	7.5
Not Applicable	6	15.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Fieldwork

Daily wages of the Parents



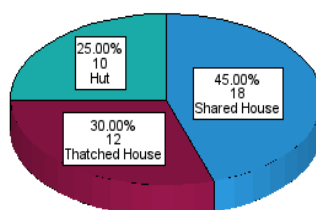
In this Siddi tribe, most of the Siddis are in agriculture. Table No. 2 shows that 60 percent of parents are getting 351-450 rs. The important fact is that the Siddis are living in the middle of the forest, and for work on the dominant other community agricultural land, they give some money from this work. To their children to some extent and then take them to the same profession as is ever inevitable. This will help those who are interested in further studies continue their education by doing agricultural.

Table No.3 State of Dwelling

Types of House	Number of the Respondent	Percent
Shared House	18	45.0
Thatched House	12	30.0
Hut	10	25.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Filed work

State of Dwelling



Siddi's poverty has been exacerbated by poor household infrastructure, including a lack of separate spaces for their study and services. According to Table 3, 45% of the shared houses, 30% of the hutments and 25% of the grass houses are the abodes of Siddis. It clearly shows that Siddis have very low-level infrastructure of the there dwellings.

Table No.4 Nature of Agriculture land

Agriculture land in Acre	Number of the Respondent	Percent
No Agriculture land	29	72.5
0.5 - 2 acre	11	27.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Fieldwork

Nature of Agriculture Land

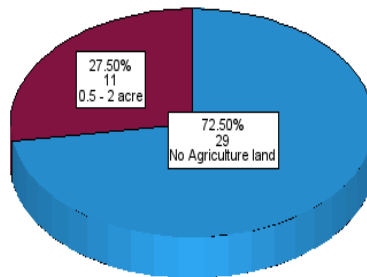


Table 4 shows the nature of agricultural land. In this study, 72.5 percent of Siddis do not own agricultural land and 27.5 percent own one acre of agricultural land. They are unable to own their land due to forest dwellings.

Table No.5 Distance between Residence And School

Distance in K.M	Number of the Respondent	Percent
less-than 2kms	4	10.0
3 - 5 km	12	30.0
6 - 10 km	13	32.5
10 and above	11	27.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: field work

Distance between Residence And School

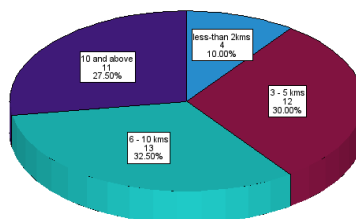


Table No.6 shows the distance between residence and school, or college. The Siddis are living in an area with no human contact that is far from the city; they live in the middle of a forest area. The present study

found that 32 percent of the respondents' distance between school and residence is 6 to 10 km, 30 percent of the respondents are 3 to 5 km, 25 percent of the respondents are 10 and above, and only 10 percent of the respondents are less than 2 km from the primary school. When they while going to school, they walk for 3–5 km, and then catch the bus.

Table No. 6 Respondents Involved in Helping out the Family

Involved in Helping out the Family	Number of the Respondent	Percent
Yes	35	87.5
No	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Work

Respondents Involved in Helping out the Family

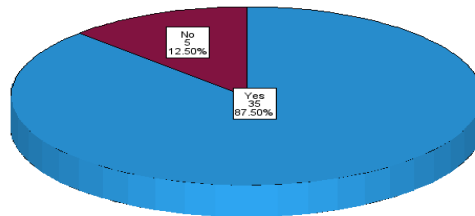
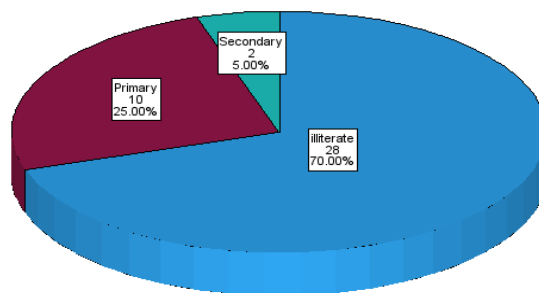


Table No. 7 Shows that respondents involved in helping the family in this study 84.5 percent of respondents were involved with their parents or family when they dropped out or did not go to school. Children stand as assistants of the family to support the economy and maintain the family in daily life.

Table No. Education Level of Parents

Education Level of Parents	Number of the Respondent	Percent
Illiterate	28	70.0
Primary	10	25.0
Secondary	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Education Level of Parents



Parents' education status is found to be an important determinant of the educational attainment of their children. Table 8 shows the educational level of the parents. In this study, 70 percent of the Siddis parents in the village are illiterate, 25 percent are primary, and only 5 percent are from secondary schools. It is clear that the educational level of the Siddis parents is very low, and they are not aware of their education.

Reasons for Low Educational Attainments of Siddi Tribe

Infrastructure facilities: The majority of the Siddi tribe live in poor infrastructure, with limited access to reading rooms and long distances between homes and schools. They go to school around 10 kilometers away from walking from the forest, and they catch the buses.

Poor Economic Conditions: The Siddi tribe has inextricably tied it to their precarious economic situation. Agriculture wages are the primary source of income for the Siddis, yet productivity remains poor. As a result, children play an essential role in generating family money by participating in family occupations and home chores. They believe that removing the children from their regular economic work to go to school deprives the family of even the small income that they would have received.

Indifferent attitude of the Parents: It is quite difficult to persuade the Siddi tribal parents to send their children to school. A huge number of Siddi tribal parents do not send their children to school to take advantage of the free educational possibilities available to them.

Tribal Education is an important issue considering, not only the fact that they were denied equal opportunity in the past by government and policymakers but also as it is crucial for the development of tribal communities and the nation. In the case of Siddis, they are the most backward tribe in Karnataka and are trapped in an intergenerational vicious cycle of poverty, and illiteracy. This is evident considering the extremely poor adult literacy rates which are reproduced in the next generation as low education levels among the Siddis. Although the government has launched various policies and programs for tribal welfare and education, in reality very few of them have percolated down to the Siddis and benefited them. Many of the programs did not benefit the Siddi tribe.

Suggestions for Solving Their problems

- To create awareness of the use of education in the Competitive Era
- Involve them in socioeconomic, cultural in nature and political activities to raise their social and cultural standing.
- Proper advice on course and career opportunities should be conveyed to students at the school level.
- Make sure the Siddi students are not made to feel alone or excluded at school.

CONCLUSION

Lack of access to proper guidance and poverty make them unable to get an education because of the illiteracy of their parents, a lack of awareness of education, and their living style. Because of this, there is poverty, and that poverty again makes them poor. Siddis are poor first; they become poor because their lack of education means they are not interested in getting an education. Because of a lack of awareness, they don't want to send children to schools and colleges. They are happy with what they have today; they do not think about tomorrow. They have some of the rarest people who come outside. Look at this scenario of the Siddi tribe in the villages. People don't want to go outside; they won't work in the limited area.

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