

# Transforming Tribal Lives with the Power of Education

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## **ABSTRACT:**

India's diverse population and socio-economic conditions pose challenges in ensuring every child receives quality education. Tribal children, in particular, face significant barriers to education, despite constitutional provisions guaranteeing equal access. This paper explores the complexities of tribal education, highlighting the need for tailored policies and approaches that respect cultural diversity while promoting comprehensive development.

**Keywords:** Children, Tribal community, Education, Human rights, Indian Constitution, Government.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Tribes in India are distinct communities with their own languages, cultures, and traditions, often living outside mainstream societal structures. They have preserved their unique identities despite efforts to assimilate them into the broader culture. Tribal groups in India typically, a chief leads the tribe. The Bhils, Gonds, Santals, Oraons, Mundas, Khonds, Mizos, Nagas, and Khasis others, are united under their leaders and have preserved their languages and cultural identities. However, their seclusion has raised concerns about national integration, leading to government efforts to integrate them into the mainstream.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION:**

The Indian Constitution has several provisions to protect and promote the rights of tribal communities, including ;

**Scheduled Tribe Recognition:** The President can notify tribes as Scheduled Tribes under Article 342, after consulting with the Governor of the state.

**National Commission for Scheduled Tribes:** Article 338A establishes a national commission to safeguard the interests of Scheduled Tribes.

**Anti-Discrimination:** Article 14 ensures no person is discriminated against on any ground.

**Reservation in Public Employment:** Article 15 provides for reservation in public employment, although it's more accurately Article 16 that deals with this matter.

**Special Protections:** The Sixth Schedule includes special provisions for tribal communities in Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, and Meghalaya, while states like Odisha have their own protection acts.

These provisions aim to promote the welfare and development of tribal communities, addressing their unique needs and challenges.

## **ACADEMIC NEEDS OF TRIBAL CHILDREN:**

Tribal children deserve education that reflects their culture, language, and traditions, promoting academic

success and preserving their identities. This requires schools to incorporate tribal perspectives into their curriculum and provide quality resources. Tribal schools often face significant resource challenges, including outdated materials, limited technology access, and inadequate infrastructure, which hinder educational opportunities and perpetuate inequities. Providing sufficient resources to these schools is crucial for supporting tribal children's academic success.

Tribal children deserve a safe and inclusive learning environment, free from discrimination and bias, where they feel valued and supported. Schools should provide cultural competency training for educators to better understand and meet the unique needs of tribal students.

Tribal children with disabilities deserve equal access to education through individualized support and services. Schools should provide necessary resources and accommodations to help these students succeed. Tribal children should have access to extracurricular activities like sports, music, and arts to support their overall development. Schools and communities must address barriers like funding and transportation to ensure equal opportunities.

Tribal children need access to proper nutrition and healthcare to support their well-being and academic success. Schools should address these basic needs to create a supportive learning environment. Protecting tribal children's education rights is crucial for their success, cultural preservation, and well-being. This requires policymakers and educators to provide inclusive education, resources, and support.

Limited access to quality education perpetuates poverty and restricts opportunities for tribal children, impacting their well-being and community development. Education protects tribal children from exploitation and abuse, while lack of it exposes them to risks like child labor and trafficking. A holistic approach addressing socioeconomic and cultural barriers is necessary to ensure access to quality education.

Tribal children's education should incorporate their cultural heritage and languages to boost engagement and pride. Collaboration between governments, NGOs, and local communities is crucial for providing equitable education.

## **BARRIERS TO EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES :**

Tribal children face numerous challenges in accessing education, hindering their progress and opportunities. Education is a key tool for their advancement, but various obstacles stand in the way.

- 1. Economic Constraints:** Poverty limits tribal families' ability to afford education expenses.
- 2. Illiteracy:** Lack of basic education perpetuates disadvantage and limits opportunities.
- 3. Unemployment:** Inadequate education and skills hinder tribal youth's employment prospects.
- 4. Poor Living Conditions:** Inadequate housing and nutrition affect tribal children's well-being and focus on education.
- 5. Language Barriers:** Tribal children struggle to learn in non-native languages.
- 6. Distance to Schools:** Remote location and lack of transportation make regular attendance challenging.
- 7. Teacher Shortage:** Tribal schools lack trained and motivated teachers, affecting education quality.
- 8. Cultural Irrelevance:** Mainstream curriculum often disregards tribal culture and traditions.
- 9. Private Tutoring:** Tribal families may rely on private tutoring, which can be burdensome and ineffective.
- 10. Government Initiatives:** Laws and policies exist, but effective implementation is still a work in progress.

### ENHANCING EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES :

Boosting tribal education demands a comprehensive approach that tackles the distinct obstacles tribal communities face.

1. **Community Engagement:** Involve tribal communities in education decision-making to create effective programs.
2. **Cultural Curriculum:** Incorporate tribal culture, history, and traditions into the curriculum to promote identity and pride.
3. **Teacher Support:** Train teachers in cultural sensitivity and encourage tribal youth to become teachers.
4. **Infrastructure:** Build accessible schools with basic amenities and improve transportation.
5. **Bilingual Education:** Teach in both tribal languages and regional/national languages to enhance learning.
6. **Nutrition and Health:** Provide nutrition programs, health check-ups, and medical support.
7. **Financial Aid:** Offer scholarships and financial assistance for higher education.
8. **Tech Integration:** Use e-learning resources, virtual classrooms, and internet access.
9. **Life Skills:** Provide vocational training and life skills for employment and self-sufficiency.
10. **Programme Evaluation:** Regularly assess programme effectiveness and track student outcomes.

### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR TRIBAL EMPOWERMENT:

The Indian government has launched various initiatives to uplift tribal education and welfare, including :-

- **Education Initiatives:**
  - Ashram Schools: Residential schools providing education to tribal children in a boarding setup.
  - Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya: Residential schools focused on girls' education, although specific details about its implementation for tribal girls weren't mentioned in the search results. However, schemes like Strengthening Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts aim to bridge the literacy gap between general female population and tribal women.
  - Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS): Providing quality education to tribal students in remote areas, with 728 schools sanctioned and 477 functional.
  - Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships: Financial support for ST students, benefiting around 33-35 lakh students annually.
  - National Fellowship for ST Students: Supporting tribal students pursuing higher education.
- **Vocational Training and Development:**
  - Skill India Mission: Training tribal communities through skill development centers and institutes.
  - Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram: Training and development of value chain components for minor forest produce.
- **Tribal Welfare Programs:**
  - Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs): Comprehensive development plans for the most vulnerable tribal communities.
  - Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN): Addressing gaps in social infrastructure, health, education, and livelihood development.
- **Cultural Preservation and Promotion:**
  - Adivasi Mahotsav and Cultural Festivals: Showcasing tribal heritage and promoting economic empowerment.

- Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs): Preserving tribal culture, languages, and traditions.
- Additionally, initiatives like Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan aim to address critical gaps in tribal villages, while Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas honors tribal heroes and promotes awareness about their contributions.

### **SCHOLARSHIP FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS:**

#### **Pre-Matric Scholarship:**

- Financial aid for ST students in classes IX and X
- Covers tuition fees, books, stationery, and other essentials

#### **Post-Matric Scholarship:**

- Supports ST students pursuing higher education beyond class X
- Covers tuition fees, maintenance allowance, and other educational expenses

#### **National Overseas Scholarships for ST Candidates:**

- Supports ST students pursuing postgraduate courses abroad
- Covers tuition fees, annual maintenance allowance, and other expenses

#### **Umbrella Scheme for Education of ST Students:**

- Offers financial support through various components, including:
- Pre-Matric Scholarships: For ST students in classes 9 and 10, covering expenses like tuition fees, books, and stationery.
- Post-Matric Scholarships: For ST students pursuing higher education beyond class 10, covering expenses like tuition fees, maintenance allowance, and study materials.
- Vocational Training Centres: Providing practical skills training for ST youth.
- Hostel Establishments: For ST boys and girls.
- Ashram Schools: Residential schools for ST children.
- National Scholarship Scheme (Top Class) for Higher Education of ST Students:
- Provides scholarships to ST students pursuing professional courses like engineering, medicine, law, and more.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Ensuring tribal children's education rights is crucial for their empowerment and a more equitable society. By addressing challenges and investing in their education, we can help them break the cycle of poverty and reach their full potential.

NGOs and grassroots organizations are vital in supporting tribal children's education through advocacy, scholarships, and mentorship, helping them succeed and children through education support .

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