INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The tribal population is found in almost all parts of the world. India has a very large concentration of tribal population. These tribes are believed to be the earliest settlers in Indian Peninsula. They are the earliest inhabitants of the country, who were unable to defend themselves and were gradually forced to recede before the invading hoards of such people as the Dravidians, Indo-Aryans and Mangolians coming from the west, north-west and north east respectively who were not only superior in numerical strength but also in mechanical equipment.

Though the tribes were the original inhabitants; for centuries they were treated as second class citizens, kept in ignorance and thus relegated from the main stream of national life. Their living conditions fall far below the accepted standards and there remains a wide gap between them and rest of the society. Social inequality has remained the chief characteristic of Indian society. Scheduled Tribes form the lowest rung of the social and economic ladder and are educationally the most backward section of our country. The exploitation process can be checked only with the help of a good dose of educational awareness, which alone can build an inner strength in them.
Education is a powerful instrument for individuals to achieve upward social and economic mobility and achieve power and status in the society. It is a source of equality, mobility and empowerment both at the individual and at the societal. The socio-economic growth of a country depends, to a large extent, on the rate of literacy and the availability of skilled and educated man power. Education can be conceived as the panacea of all social ills and evils. No programmes for social improvement can be planned and implemented successfully unless the people are educated.

The uplift of depressed classes is a must for the establishment of a welfare state. Among the depressed classes tribal population is the most backward. There are about 35 tribal communities in Kerala. The Scheduled tribes population of the state is 3.64 lakhs according to 2001 census and this constitutes 1.14 per cent of the total population of the state.

With the attainment of independence both the Government and leaders were conscious of the need for the welfare of tribes. Tracing the historical back ground of the term scheduled tribe as used in the constitution, it may be stated that during the debates in the Constitution Assembly, Shri Jaipal singh had favoured the use of the term Adivasi, instead of 'Scheduled Tribe'. It was not accepted. The reason for this is explained by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman, drafting committee of the constitution as "the word 'Adivasi' is really a general
term which has no specific legal de jure connotation” whereas, the word ‘Scheduled Tribe’ has a fixed meaning, because it enumerates the Tribes. In the event of the matter being taken to a court of law, there should be a precise definition as to who these adivasis are. It was therefore, decided to enumerate the adivasis under the term to be called ‘Scheduled Tribes’.

The importance of education has been duly recognized by Indian Constitution. And many provisions have been included in the constitution. Under article 246 in Schedule VII entries 63, 64, 65 and 66 of list I (the Union list) and entry 25 of list III (the Concurrent list) shows the importance given for education under the constitution. Article 45 makes provision for free and compulsory education for children until they complete the age of fourteen years. Right to education has been granted by the 86th Constitutional Amendment carried out in 2002. The Amendment stipulates that the “government shall provide free and compulsory education to all children from the age of 6 to 14 in such a manner as the State may by law determine”. The act also enjoins upon the parents to send their children to school by including it as a fundamental duty under Article 51A. Further, it enjoins on the State to endeavor to provide early childhood care and education to all children until they complete six years of age. It may be noted that if a child is denied this right he can take the state to court.
Article 46 of the constitution states – “The state shall promote with special care for the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations”. In addition to the safeguards provided by Article 46, Article 15(4) and 16(4) also contribute to the realization of equality by removing inequality, social and educational, suffered by the Scheduled Tribes for centuries. Article 339 also empowers union government to give directions to state government for drawing up or executing schemes considered essential for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes. The article reads as “Control of the Union over the administration of Scheduled areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes”. In addition to this constitutional safeguards and provisions to ameliorate the social, educational and economical conditions of scheduled tribes various educational schemes and programmes have been launched by the government of India since independence.

Nothing but education can bring an over all change in tribes in order to give them scope to cope up with the civilized citizens of the country. Kothari Commission (1964-66) has remarked that “One of the important social objectives of education is to equalize opportunity, enabling the backward and under privileged class and individuals to use education as a lever for improvement of their conditions. Every society that values justice and is anxious to
improve the lot of common man and cultivate all available talents; must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the population. Thus, it is the only guarantee for the building up of an egalitarian and humane society in which the exploitation of the weak will be minimized”.

The educational development of the scheduled Tribes is one of the priorities of the government. But they have remained socially, economically and educationally backward due to prolonged suppression and deprivation. Even now the tribes continue to remain in the lowest strata of the society. Tribal development is essentially a national problem and it demands many positive measures for the uplift of the tribal masses.

**Need and importance of the study**

Both the central government and the state government and also a few voluntary agencies have dedicated themselves for the cause of the education of the tribes. All the possible measures are taken and all kinds of incentives are offered for the popularization of education among the tribes but they still remain educationally backward. Though it cannot be denied that the tribes are gradually picking up in the area of education, whether the speed of their progress in this regard is to the desired extent is a moot point.

As a teacher the present investigator had the occasion to teach in the tribal belts of Kerala. It was observed during her experience
that the tribal pupils do have many inhibitive constraints with regard to their education. That in spite of the strenuous efforts from the part of the government and other agencies, education of the tribal population is far below the accepted norms bears ample evidence for this. And also various Committees and Commissions appointed by the governments have reported that Scheduled Tribes are educationally the most backward section of the society.

In this connection many relevant questions spontaneously emerge. What is the enrolment status of the tribal pupils in schools? What constraints do they face in their education? What are the educational incentives offered to them? What is the attitude of parents towards the education of tribal pupils? Do they get additional help from the teaching community? Is the academic achievement of the tribal pupils at par with others? How do the socio-economic factors of the tribes interfere with their education? How can the existing constraints be overcome? These and many such questions will find reliable answer only through systematic research.

Systematic and scientific studies are essential to find out the constraints in tribal education to suggest measures that can accelerate the induction of tribes into the formal education system. Though the education system among the tribes has not attained a status at par with the rest of the population the constraints have been rarely studied empirically. A good amount of work has been done on
different aspects of the education of Scheduled Tribes. It has got much relevance in identifying the educational constraints of the tribes. Only through systematic, scientific and sincere investigation alone can the constraints and the impediments in the popularization of education among them be identified. The present study is a humble attempt in this direction.

**Statement of the Problem**

The present study is entitled "CONSTRAINTS IN THE EDUCATION OF THE TRIBAL PUPILS OF KERALA".

**Definition of Terms**

(i) **Constraints**

In the present study by constraint is meant the impediments and limitations faced by the tribal pupils.

(ii) **Education**

In this present study by education is meant the formal system of education.

(iii) **Tribe**

The term tribe is used to mean all the Scheduled Tribes notified by the Government of Kerala.

(iv) **Pupils**

The children studying in schools from standard to I to X are termed as pupils.

(v) **Kerala**

Kerala is the state situated in the south west corner of Indian Republic. The boundaries of the state are Arabian sea in the west,
Karnataka state in the North, Tamil Nadu state in the East and South. The area of the state is 38,863 Sq-Kms

Objectives of the Study.

General Objective:

The general objective of the study is to identify the constraints in the education of the scheduled tribe pupils of Kerala.

Specific objectives:

The specific objectives of the study are the following

1. To find out the enrolment of tribal pupils from primary school level to secondary school level (Std I to X).
2. To identify the socio-economic factors act as constraints in the education of the tribal pupils.
3. To find out whether the inadequacies of incentives act as constraints in the education of the tribal pupils.
4. To identify whether the parental attitude act as constraints in the education of tribal pupils.
5. To identify the additional help, if any, received by the tribal pupils from teachers.
6. To identify the academic constraints in the education of the tribal pupils.
7. To identify the inadequate school facilities act as constraints in the education of tribal pupils.
8. To offer suggestions to minimize the educational constraints of tribal pupils.
Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study is mainly intended to identify the educational constraints of the tribal pupils. The inferences arrived from the present study along with the recommendations are expected to go a long way in the restructuring of the education of the tribal pupils in the state. The findings of the study will also help the practicing teachers in handling tribal pupils more effectively.

Any how, the study is not free from limitations. The ideal method to study any problems concerned with the tribes is participant observation. Because of the time limit participant observation was limited only as a supplementary method in this study and it was confined to identify the socio-economic problems, attitude of tribal parents towards education and study habits of tribal pupils. The study, leans heavily on questionnaires and interview schedules for the collection of data. Though these limitations of the tools are likely to affect the findings of the study, all precautionary measures were taken by the investigator to make the collection of data, interpretations and conclusions as objective as possible. The pupil's response was collected from secondary schools only, since pupils below secondary school level were considered as incapable of giving well organized written response related to educational constraints.

The 35 tribal communities scheduled by the Government of Kerala have almost separate customs, conventions and problems.
Their social, educational and financial statuses also vary strikingly. Hence to arrive at universal conclusions equally applicable to all the tribes may be difficult. The study is confined to four major revenue districts with tribal concentrations viz. Wayanad, Palakkad, Idukki, and Thiruvananthapuram. Covering all the districts and total population would have made the study more reliable.

A few tribes are reported to be living in the dense interior forests of Kerala. They are reported to be quite inhibitive in coming to the limelight. They are beyond the scope of the study.

Any how, the present investigator was well cognizant of these limitations and hence took all precautionary measures to minimize the impact of these limitations and has made the study as objective as possible.

**Methodology in brief**

The present study is mainly intended to identify the educational constraints of the tribal pupils. Hence survey method was mainly selected for the study. The scheduled tribe pupils from four revenue districts of Kerala viz. Wayanad, Palakkad, Idukki, and Thiruvananthapuram was used in the study. This ensures representation to North Kerala, Central Kerala and South Kerala. 1500 tribal pupils, 500 teachers, 150 tribal parents, 25 social workers and 25 educational experts formed the sample of the study. In order
to collect relevant data about constraints in the education of tribal pupils, the investigator developed the following tools.

1. Questionnaire to scheduled tribe pupils of secondary schools
2. Questionnaire to Teachers in schools
3. Questionnaire to scheduled tribe parents.
4. Interview schedule for social workers.
5. Interview scheduled for educational experts.

Participant observation was also used as a supplementary technique in this study to verify and reinforce the data supplied by the respondents.

The data obtained through various tools were analysed using the statistical technique of percentage analysis.

The study has also made use of the records available with the Scheduled Tribes Development Department, Directorate of Public Instruction, State Planning Commission, Bureau of Economic and Statistics, Reports of Committees and Commissions and Educational Survey Reports.

**Organization of Research Report.**

The thesis is presented in six chapters. The first chapter gives a short introduction, need and importance of the study, statement of the problems, definition of terms, objectives of the study, scope and limitations, methodology in brief and organization of Research Report.
In the second chapter a short general description of the tribes in Kerala is given.

The third chapter provides a Review of the related literature.

The fourth chapter provides a detailed account of the Methodology.

The fifth chapter is dedicated for the analysis of the data collected.

In the sixth chapter the inferences of the study along with corresponding recommendations are provided.