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Editorial

The Adivasis in India have been striving to manage and maintain their traditional identity. The basic similarity across the country is their simplicity, innocence and helpful nature. Due to various levels of interaction and degree of influence, different layers among them have been developed. Some have become educated and are maintaining a good life whereas others are still in the outer periphery of the developed world and associated environment and as such are not being able to bring improvement in their lives. The existence has been precarious in the absence of financial security. The only character they inherit and endowed with is the social security. Through the social bond of belongingness, attitude of caring and sharing, these groups of people continue their life and are happy with whatever they have with them. The care and comfort they receive from the society act like an elixir which provides them the desired or required resolve to move forward and maintain the continuum.

A large number of Adivasi people are labourers and form workforce in India. All the houses, offices, bridges, malls, roads and infrastructure projects etc. are being built by them. They are the true heroes and heroines of India from the pre-historic to modern era. Still they have not been accorded due recognition and given just remuneration. The moment they complete all these facilities and facilities become operational, these facilities become out of bound for them. The other people throng to these places to enjoy whereas the original people who through their sweat and hard toil created the facilities are not in a position to dare to enter such facilities. The only barrier is the economic condition of the people which make them separate. The irony is that in India the remuneration is inversely proportional to the hardship one has to face to do the work. The less the person works physically is rewarded by the better and bigger salary/remuneration package. That trend is continuing and only for that reason the persons who are working throughout the day and throughout their lives are not being able to earn much and save adequately for their sustenance and better life. When survival becomes a question, what to talk about the other requirements of life like housing, health and recreation.

The large scale illiteracy has been the cause for remaining in the primary sector and basically in the unorganized sector. The bargaining power diminishes with the low level of education and in the absence of a viable organization to protect their interests. As self defence is the best defence, these sections need to start developing a sound self defence system in order to safeguard their interests by resisting the exploitation tendency of others. When education is the primary requirement to emerge as a formidable group to face the challenges, it has been kept outside the reach of these communities and in the age of globalization when education has become too expensive to pursue, these section would remain in the dark for not having the access to modern, scientific and higher education.

The education through mother tongues has been discussed in various forums and though it has been enshrined in our Constitution, little effort has been made to implement this pristine provision. With the policy to patronize the regional language or the languages of the dominant class, the mother tongue education policy has not been pursued with the desired conviction and compassion. It is better to educate people with the language they are familiar with as learning a language to become educated takes a long path. In the interest of education and to create an enabling environment for a vast majority of population in India, it is high time to introduce education through mother tongue in the elementary level so that people can express themselves in a way that is expected of them and free them from the bondage inflicted on them for centuries.

Position, possession and perception shape the framework to indulge in some activities may it pertains to self or for the benefit of a larger cross-section of people. It is commonly seen that the urge from within, discipline and dedication of the individual make him/her unique and develop a character which can be different from others. The situation, circumstance, inner feeling and understanding prompt a person to think differently and listen to the call from the inner sense. The direction follows and person becomes obsessed with his/her new understanding and inherent compulsion to take up a new assignment which is not generally taken up by majority of the people. Let's hope volunteers from the respective community to take up issues inherent in their society.

Unraveling Indian Census Data on Santals (Education)

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Below table depicts the education status of Santals in West Bengal as per 2001 Census in detailed age-wise and education level wise break up. Out of total 22,80,540 Santals in West Bengals, 14,80,760 (64.93%) are illiterate and 7,99,780 (33.07%) are educated up to various levels as shown in the table.

EDUCATION STATUS OF SANTALS IN WEST BENGAL as per 2001 Census															
Sl. No.	Age Group (Years)	Total population			Illiterate			Literate & their EDUCATION LEVEL							
		Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Sl. No.	Educational Level	%age of Literate Total	Total	%age of Male Total	Males	%age of Female Total	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
0	All ages	2,280,540	1,147,655	1,132,885	1,480,760	601,771	878,989	0	Total	100.00%	799,780	100.00%	545,884	100.00%	253,896
1	0 - 6	387,164	195,357	191,807	387,164	195,357	191,807	1	Without Level	3.85%	30,765	3.52%	19,237	4.54%	11,528
	Age 0 to 6				26%	32%	22%								
2	7	61,506	31,139	30,367	29,927	13,860	16,067	2	Below Primary Level	49.61%	396,741	46.22%	252,305	56.89%	144,436
3	8	75,497	39,241	36,256	31,662	14,407	17,255	3	Primary	24.33%	194,611	24.47%	133,599	24.03%	61,012
4	9	51,223	25,955	25,268	16,702	6,901	9,801	4	Middle	14.65%	117,197	16.63%	90,767	10.41%	26,430
5	10	78,641	41,591	37,050	27,831	11,727	16,104	5	Education / Secondary	5.06%	40,496	6.07%	33,114	2.91%	7,382
6	11	34,617	18,477	16,140	9,253	3,519	5,734	6	Higher Secondary	1.44%	11,480	1.75%	9,538	0.76%	1,942
7	12	75,590	40,637	34,953	26,159	10,539	15,620	7	Non-technical diploma or	0.00%	22	0.00%	20	0.00%	2
8	13	40,606	21,129	19,477	12,381	4,318	8,063								
9	14	51,828	28,029	23,799	17,838	6,701	11,137	8	Technical diploma or certificate not	0.05%	406	0.06%	339	0.03%	67
	Age 7 to 14	469,508	246,198	223,310	171,753	71,972	99,781								
					12%	12%	11%								
	15 & above	1,421,359	704,684	716,675	920,358	333,741	586,617								
					62%	55%	67%								
10	15-19	207,322	110,534	96,788	88,190	31,855	56,335								
11	20-24	186,892	86,605	100,287	102,223	30,607	71,616	9	Graduate degree other than technical	1.00%	7,989	1.27%	6,906	0.43%	1,083
12	25-29	199,211	95,848	103,363	119,772	38,804	80,968								
13	30-34	172,335	85,507	86,828	114,168	40,815	73,353								
14	35-39	164,275	83,714	80,561	115,242	44,571	70,671								
15	40-44	123,016	64,367	58,649	89,452	36,369	53,083								
16	45-49	108,455	56,438	52,017	80,096	32,068	48,028								
17	50-54	78,001	39,226	38,775	60,681	23,890	36,791								
18	55-59	59,404	28,620	30,784	46,810	17,345	29,465								
19	60-64	49,769	22,254	27,515	41,982	15,287	26,695								
20	65-69	31,822	13,408	18,414	27,226	9,302	17,924								
21	70-74	20,624	8,997	11,627	17,915	6,636	11,279								
22	75-79	8,697	3,807	4,890	7,355	2,654	4,701								
23	80+	11,536	5,359	6,177	9,246	3,538	5,708								
24	Age not stated	2,509	1,416	1,093	1,485	701	784								

The detailed break up of illiterate Santals in West Bengal are: 3,87,164 (16.98%) children between the age of 0-6 years, who are likely to go to schools; 362,166 (15.88%) children and adults aged between 7 to 25 years and are either school dropout or have never gone to school and 7,31,431 (32.07%) adults above 25 years of age who probably have never gone to any school or non- formal education institutions and thereby not educated. For educated Santals in West Bengal, 7,989 (0.35%) are graduate, 52,404 (2.30%) are above matriculation but below graduation and 7,39,314 (32.42%) are having below matriculation education level.

Learning Teaching Problem of Tribal Children

(Source: Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority)

{Continued from July 2012 issue...}

CHAPTER – VII IMPLICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGIES

Before formulating suggestions and recommendations towards development of more meaningful strategies for articulation of better teaching and learning process, it is required to comprehend the basic parameters of the process itself.

Learning – Teaching Process

All pedagogical innovations and inputs should result in quality improvement, that should be clearly discernable in classroom settings over various designated time frames. What takes place within the classroom environment in terms of the teaching-learning process and classroom transaction of the curricular framework, designed in advance, is a matter of serious concern, since it reflects the ultimate objective and culmination of all the strategic planning for the respective localities in the district/sub-district levels. It is the classroom environment that provides the setting for the teaching-learning process. Therefore more effective classroom processes determine the improved learning outcomes.

It is imperative, therefore, to know and understand the actual nature of classroom transactions and how they are conducted and managed, the kind of classroom environment and the nature of various teaching learning strategies adopted by the teachers in their classroom transactions. The

levels of children's participation and involvement amongst other related aspects have to be improved upon.

Therefore, it is imperative to improve and develop classroom environment and transaction processes for child-friendly pedagogic communication between pupils and their teachers, enhancing and encouraging child's participation and providing adequate physical facilities/TLM in the classroom settings.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Inadequacy in access to schools

Geographical location continues to be a significant predictor for providing access to children in primary schools. Schooling provision within easy access has been relatively poor for the tribal children as compared to general category children. Tribal communities in inaccessible terrain encounter administrative apathy and get a very raw deal, as interior habitations are small in size, scattered and sparsely populated, without basic facilities of transport and communications. This situation has marginally improved after operationalisation of tribal area subplans and implementation of NPE, 1986.

Poor implementations of school level policies

Qualitative expansion usually occurs as a result of competitive political pressures and enhanced awareness in certain areas, communities etc.

Creating an asymmetry in schooling provisions. Mid-Day Meal Scheme has been potential significant for improved enrolment of largely impoverished tribal children. This scheme is poorly implemented in tribal area schools.

Poor physical infrastructure in tribal area schools

Physical infrastructural facilities are generally inadequate and particularly deplorable in schools accessed by tribal children. Majority of tribal children goes to regular Govt. schools. The school buildings are in bad shape. Basic furniture and teaching equipment either do not exist or of pathetic quality. There is high incidence of very poorly and irregularly functioning schools in tribal areas. There is shortage of classrooms, drinking water facilities and teachers. There is neglect indifference and greater teacher absenteeism.

Inadequacy of teachers and classroom transactions

A highly inadequate teaching force has been a most critical element unequal provisioning. Teacher-pupil ratios in schools frequented by tribal children have been much higher than those in other schools meant for higher caste villagers. Multi-grade teaching often amounts to very limited teaching. The problem of insufficient number of teachers has been compounded by the problem of unmotivated teachers, which is reflected in the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism. Teachers for tribal children primarily belong to non-tribal backgrounds. They are highly irregular in attending schools since they live outside the villages. This is a common feature in schools located in remote areas.

Most of the primary school teachers are loaded with non-teaching works like; Census enumeration, Electoral duty, Health Programmes etc. which also cause teacher absenteeism. Dysfunctional and poorly organized school environments, inadequate number of teachers, inadequate teaching work ranging from absence of teachers to the adoption of most conventional and uninteresting teaching methods together makes for a situation where the teaching transaction poor and inadequate. Poor teacher competence is also a critical negative factor. Even trained teachers are not necessarily good teachers. both their knowledge and skill levels are unsatisfactory. At the same time however, poor teaching conditions, which can de-motivates and de-moralises the primary school teachers. Teachers are expected to work in isolation under harsh conditions.

Worse still their teaching function is dislodged by compulsions to perform all kinds of government work. Bureaucrat-teacher relationships undermine the dignity and status of the primary school teachers, which in turn interferes with their teaching role.

Provision of Teaching Learning Materials and the Quality Classroom Process

Teaching-learning material – blackboards, chalk, texts and other reading material, laboratory equipment, instructional aids are always in short supply, of poor quality or simply non-existent. The teachers do not properly utilize the TLM grants and no higher authority has seriously taken this problem, which adversely affects on understanding of the teaching learning process and achievement of the students. The textbooks supplied by the government agencies are also reported to be of poor quality.

(To be continued...)

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