



Educational Status And Opportunities Among Scheduled Tribe In Malwa Plateau Region Of Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

The Scheduled Tribe in India shares about 8.6% of total population (according to Census 2011) accounting a larger section of marginalised communities in India. The locational inaccessibility and remoteness along with the social marginalization creates impediments in their socio-economic development. As education is considered as the primary concern in any development process, here an attempt has been made to identify their backwardness in accessing education. Although several efforts have been made from government side, an acute deficit in their educational development is found here. Through understanding the innate failure of different education policies in improving their educational status, this study attempts to explore the issues and the interrelated factors in their livelihood that creates constraints in accessing education among them. The results have been drawn here through studying the level of education among the tribal households in some selected villages in malwa plateau region. Household survey has been conducted in six villages of malwa plateau and purposive sampling has been drawn in selecting the tribal household to understand the experience of educational backwardness among these people. Disparity measures have been attempted here to analyse the pattern of supply and demand side constraints in achieving education in spatial and temporal context. Asymmetric power relation in society proliferating educational backwardness among them has been observed here. The results show the intrinsic absence of proper education facilities as well as under-serving and un-serving of existing educational facilities in these tribal areas that intensify the disparity in educational development compared to other privileged sections.

Keywords: Educational opportunity, Scheduled tribe, Marginalisation, Malwa Plateau Region.

Introduction.

The Scheduled Tribes, who shares about 8.6 percent of the total population, constitutes a larger section of marginalized communities in India. The locational inaccessibility and remoteness along with the social marginalization create impediments in their socio-economic development. The tribal people in Malwa Plateau Region in western Madhya Pradesh are one of them that symbolizes this drawback not only in terms of locational inaccessibility but also concerning their social and economic exclusion.

In the neoliberal context, as the educational development falls under the basic instruments for economic gain of any individual, the need for educational achievements among the people becomes the primary requirement for any nation. Apart from this, educational development also contains several positive externalities which are imperative for sustainable development in any region. Scholars like Smith, Marshal, Schultz have identified the role of education as human capital investment that helps people in making industrially or economically efficient. The development of human capital thus translated into their capabilities in increasing their freedom in choosing to lead their lives through a range of options any person has (Sen and Dreze, 1997).

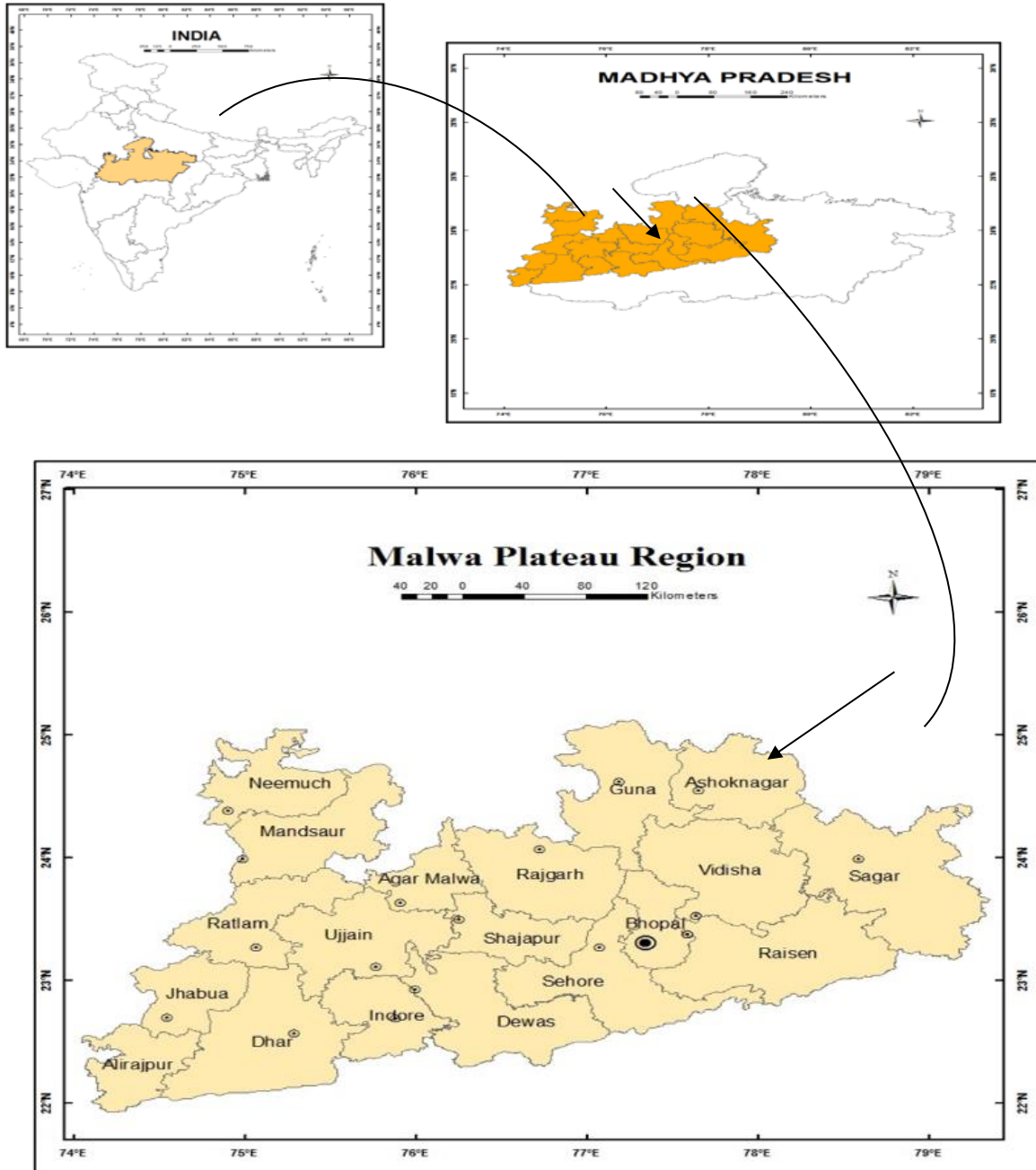
In this context, various constitutional provision, several commissions, and committees can be observed that provides recommendations for improvement of educational development among tribes. But in spite of several attempts made by our constitution, the statistics indicate the high wastage and dropouts among the Scheduled Tribes which results in failure of the policies and programmes for improvement of education among them. Scholars have also pointed out the lack of priority to this sector has given and the lack of necessary commitment in financial, human, administrative resources has been pointed out that deprive certain section from educational development (Bhatty, 1998). Apart from school education, the problems in accessing higher education have also been studied. Here, the policies regarding for higher education which has the pan-Indian identity has been criticized for not accounting the problems of Scheduled Tribes who remain isolated and suffers from impoverishment and economic backwardness (Chanana, 1993). Sujatha also mentioned several other problems like external, internal, socio-economic and psychological that effect in their educational development (Sujatha, 2002).

Therefore, all these reasons result low attainment among the tribal population. Different works and statistics like Public Report on Basic Education and Public Report on Basic Education Revisited widely discuss the educational achievement at the elementary level in the states of Central India (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh). These two reports also point out the level of social disparities in schooling opportunities and inequality in educational attainment among the disadvantaged groups of our society. According to PROBE Revisited report, although the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act in 2009 helps in increasing the

attainment level of these deprived sections, it does not ensure to bring quality and equity of school education in India. Thus, through giving insights into the major problems in the educational development in the backward states of India, these reports help to bring the problems in accessing education among the deprived sections of those states (PROBE Revisited, 2006).

In light of the current situation, it is imperative to look into their major limitations in accessing the education which is important for their sustained growth. This study, therefore, is an attempt to give an insight into the educational development among the Scheduled Tribe and the pattern of deprivation they face in accessing the education. This paper approaches these questions by analyzing the pattern of educational opportunities available in the tribal areas and studying the level of educational attainment among the tribal population and finally through finding the issues in accessing the educational opportunities some insights regarding their educational backwardness can be gained.

The present study focuses on the tribal communities of Malwa Plateau Region which represents a backward area of western Madhya Pradesh. The region constitutes about 18 districts in the western part of Madhya Pradesh surrounding Sagar, Ashoknagar Districts in the east to Neemuch, Mandasaur, Ratlam, Jhabua, Alirajpur districts in the west and the southern extent is up to the Narmada valley, the northern boundary extends to the northern boundary of Madhya Pradesh. The tribal people of Malwa region have low literacy (about 36 percent) in this area. The plateau region has low population density (200 persons per sq km.) except for the urban areas like Bhopal and Indore (about 850 persons per sq. km.). Variation in the spatial allocation of tribal population is found from one district to another. Districts like Alirajpur, Jhabua which are more backward and inaccessible have more than 85 percent of tribal population whereas, in Ujjain, Mandasaur, Shajapur, Bhopal, the share for the tribal population is lesser (less than 3 percent). From the patterning of spatial allocation an exclusionary nature of tribal habitations in some isolated patches is observed in this region that is quite dissimilar from the mainstream population distribution. The inter-tribal differences are also observed which reflects the notion of differential identities and heterogeneity among these people. About 70 percent of the Scheduled Tribe population in this region is basically engaged in agricultural activities as cultivators and as agricultural labourers. The high share of agricultural labourer among Scheduled Tribe indicates that high prevalence of landlessness among them. The status of landlessness among this group, who primarily depend on rural economy, indicates the high incidence of poverty among them. The Scheduled Tribe population also suffers from access to basic amenities like drinking water facilities, sanitation facilities, and electricity facilities.



Methodology:

Data collection:

The present study uses both Secondary as well as Primary data sources. The secondary data has been used to develop the base map from which villages for collecting the primary data has been chosen. The secondary data have been extracted from School Report Card, District Information System of Education, 2015-16. The base map shows different educational development zones in this region and from every educational development zone, tribal villages have been surveyed. The educational development zone is based on the composite index inclusive of several indicators of educational infrastructure and

educational achievements in this region. The analysis of the primary survey in this study has been conducted on tribal communities in this region.

Statistical tool:

Factor analysis and Principle component analysis (PCA) methods are used here to develop the educational development index. Indicators that are chosen here are related to school-related indicators, infrastructure indicators, teacher-related indicators, and student-related indicators. Each of the components of these factors is assigned a weight (factor score) generated through PCA. Then after combining all these variables with their respective weights, an index has been prepared which is named as Educational Development Index. Apart from secondary data, the descriptive statistical technique is used in analyzing the primary data and the analyses of this study are carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software.

Survey design:

Purposive random sampling has been used where firstly from three educational development zones three districts has been chosen. From high educational development zone, Bhopal has been selected; whereas for medium and for low educational development Zone Sagar and Ratlam have been chosen respectively. Secondly, since this study looks into the issues and challenges of accessing education and employment opportunities of the tribal population in this region, villages with more than 50 percent of Scheduled Tribe population are randomly selected from these three districts of three educational development zones.

A sample of 135 households has been surveyed in 6 villages of this region. Total six villages have been chosen randomly those who account a considerable amount of tribal population (at least 50%). To capture the education level of Scheduled Tribe from various economic background, household from different landholding categories have been chosen for surveying. An equal share of small (0-2 bigha), medium (0.2 – 4.9 bigha), and large (5 or more) landholding group have been picked up here of this study.

Results:

Educational Facilities

Educational facilities of the villages have been described here through showing the availability of educational institution in those villages and studying the existing infrastructural facilities in those educational institutes. A deficit in the educational facilities indicates supply-side constraint in education.

Availability of Educational Institution

All of the tribal villages surveyed in this region have access to primary schools within the village but none of them are availed with middle and higher schooling system. Majority

of the tribal children of the villages attend their primary schooling in those schools located in their villages. The presence of primary schools in the villages plays a great role in determining the level of educational attainment of the villagers. Most of the children in these villages are the first-generation learner and the reason behind the illiteracy rate among the elderly population is because of the absence of primary schools in the villages during their childhood days. After completing primary schooling, they travel to other areas for pursuing middle and further higher education. Distance to middle schools in the surveyed villages varies from 3 to 5 kilometers and for secondary and higher secondary education it varies from 6 to 15 kilometers. Availability of institutions for higher studies is basically found in nearest urban areas which are located about 22kilometers to 37 kilometers from their villages. Distant location from their habitation impacts on their attainment in the education as the level of discontinuation, especially for the female students, is greatly affected by the location of the educational institute.

Although contradictions in the quality of education between government and private schools persist among the villagers, in general, private schools are found to be more appreciable to them which entails a good amount of cost in getting 'quality' education. Government schools here to be unsuccessful in providing quality education considering both physical as well as human infrastructure. As villages in tribal areas are mainly equipped with government primary schools, the general tribal population choose to send their children in the village school except for few tribal households and the non-tribal household owning some who send their children to private schools in nearby urban areas. The few tribal households, who send their children to private schools with a fairly high amount of cost, have high expectation in getting a quality education from there that can help them in getting good job opportunities.

Infrastructure in the Schools

The schooling system in the villages suffers from inadequate infrastructural facilities in the villages. Six of the primary schools which have been surveyed, all of them although having the pucca building, although the condition of the building is very poor. The schools lack basic infrastructure which is very needful like classroom facilities, toilet facilities, boundary wall etc.

Availability of Classrooms

A deficiency in the number of the classroom can be noticed in the village schools. Three of the schools are functioning in a single classroom, so, the balconies of those schools are also used for teaching purpose. The condition of the classrooms in these schools is very poor which shows negligence in building construction in these tribal areas. Due to the absence of minimum classroom facilities, multi-grade teaching is performed. Lack of classroom facilities and teachers indicates dysfunction of the education system in these schools. There are also insufficient rooms are there in the surveyed schools for non-

teaching purposes and as a result, the only room for the teachers are used for storing foods or other non-teaching purposes.

Facilities in Schools

Only one of the primary schools surveyed here has a boundary wall around the school premise, and the rest five schools are only demarcated by the building itself. Playground or library is also not available in any of the six primary schools. Every school is facilitated by a tube well near the school premises and that tube well not only serves the school, but the villagers are also dependant on it for drinking water. Primary schools of those villages are mainly located near main roads of the villages which are connected with other localities. Primary schools have mid-day-meal provisions where children get their lunches in their schools. According to the teacher in Sagar, provision of mid-day-meal attracts children to come to school. Although children only get roti and sabji for their lunches, it is sometimes very crucial for these economically poor households of these regions.

Availability of Teachers

Teachers play an important role in determining the quality and functioning of education. In these tribal villages, where most of the students are first generation learner and parents and the guardian of the children are mostly engaged in earning and economic support for the families, the role played by the teachers becomes very vital for their educational development. Schools that have been surveyed show that there is a deficit in the number of total teachers in every school. It is found that there are only two teachers appointed in each of these surveyed schools. And on the date of the survey, there are three schools where only one teacher was present in each. So, teacher absenteeism in those schools may affect the quality of teaching and it creates lower learning achievements among students. In the absence of one teacher out of two, it becomes difficult for the teacher to present there for running all the five class at the same time. As a result, multi-grade teaching is very common in these schools.

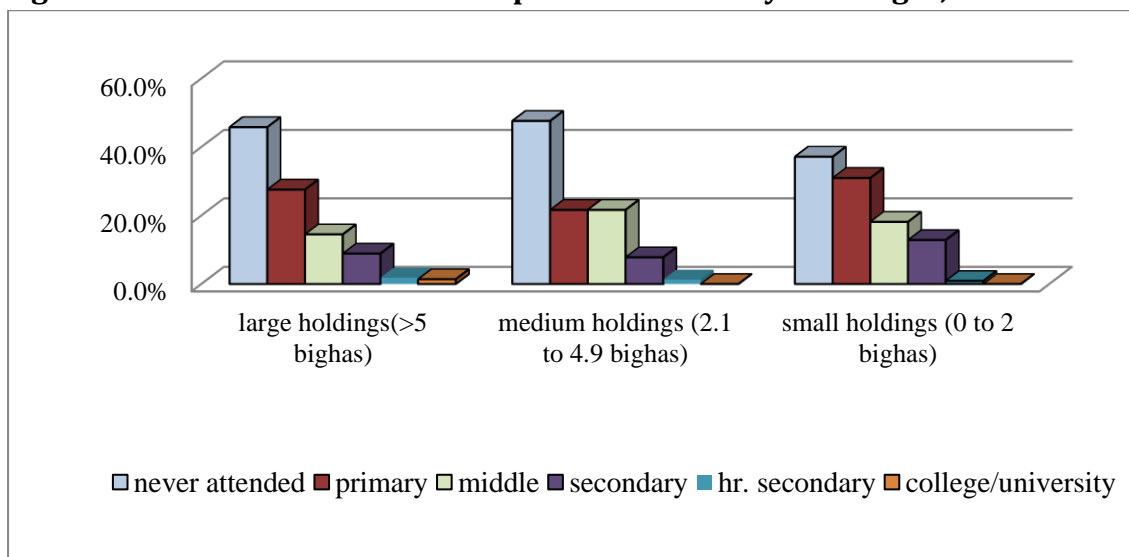
In the scarcity of teachers in the schools, the process of teaching hardly can be found in those schools. Teachers in these villages come from the nearest urban centre which is 30-40 kilometres away from these tribal villages. So, they use to travel by bus or motorcycle and it takes about one to two hours every day to reach school. As a result, sometimes they reach school one or half an hour late. And also, they use to leave school half or one hour early in case they need to travel by certain buses for their specific timings. Apart from teaching, the teacher is the only person who also used to supervise the mid-day-meal program due to lack of other workers in the schools. These all indicate that there is negligence of the teaching-learning process in the schools which results in little or no achievements of primary schooling among the children.

Schools in the surveyed villages are all run by the government and they have some provisions to give some incentives to the tribal children to attract the tribal students in the schools. Mid-day-meal is provided in the primary which is the major attraction for the students as they mostly come from the poor households and they hardly get cooked food in their household when their parents get engaged in earning for livelihood. Although the food that is cooked does not even have high nutritional value, the children still prefer to come to schools for lunch. Tribal students also get some annual scholarship, books, uniform etc. from the schools and no tuition fees they have to give to schools for education as the government schools have the provision of free and compulsory education up to the elementary level to household expenditure on education lowest at this level. These all provide the major attraction for these tribal children to attend the schools.

Educational Attainments.

A very poor educational attainment is observed among the Scheduled Tribe population in this region. The school going children are mostly first-generation learner in their household. From the primary data, analyses show that the share of people who never attended any education is higher than those who have attended any education level mostly belongs to primary and upper primary level.

Fig: Level of Education of Tribal Population in Surveyed Villages, 2017



A trend of decreasing the attainment level with increasing education level across different landholding group is found here. The share of population completing higher secondary and higher education level are hardly found here. The low attainment rate after primary and elementary level indicates the high prevalence of drop rate among these people.

The primary data shows that about 30 percent of the population between the age-group 7 to 25 years have discontinued going to school. The major reasons for dropping out is the financial constraints due to which they get engaged in earning wages. The incidence

of dropouts is common across different landholding groups which show that their economic advantages hardly help in their educational advancement. Although the provision of mid-day-meal and free cost of education up to elementary level increases the initial attainment level up to primary and elementary level, after that, high discontinuation is found. The financial constraints coupled with the distant location of the schools create major obstacles in continuing their education.

Issues in Accessing Education.

The education status of the Scheduled Tribes suffers from different problems encompassing a broad range of physical, socio-economic, cultural, psychological, administrative etc. the attainment is affected by a series of demand and supply side constraints which can be found from this study. The major issues in accessing education among the tribes are discussed here:

Economic Constraint

Economic hurdles are one of the major reasons in continuing education has been discussed in the above discussion. Table 1 shows that a significant amount of Scheduled Tribe has reported the financial constraints and engaged in economic activities being the major reasons of not continuing educational institute. Several other hurdle like household work, marriage etc. that also indirectly come up due to the economic constraints. In the case of the poor economic backgrounds, the family duties and economic responsibility arise as the major obstacles for education and most of them dropped out before completing basic education. In the case of large household size, the elders are engaged in taking care of the younger ones as their parents get engaged in earning wages.

Table1: Reasons for not Attending Educational Institute between 7 to 25 Age-Group

Size of Landholding	Reasons for Not Attending	Male	Female	Total
Small	To Support Household Income	90.9	5.6	52.5
	Marriage	0	50.0	22.5
	To Attend Domestic Activities	0	27.8	12.5
	Education Not Considered Necessary	9.1	16.7	12.5
	To Support Household Income	75.0	0	32.1
Medium	Marriage	0	37.5	21.4
	Sickness	0	6.3	3.6
	To Attend Domestic Activities	0	31.3	17.9
	School Too Far/absence of schools	0	12.5	7.1
	Education Not Considered Necessary	25.0	12.5	17.9

Large	To Support Household Income	87.5	0	35.0
	Marriage	0	16.7	10.0
	To Attend Domestic Activities	0	8.3	5.0
	School Too Far	0	25.0	15.0
	Education Not Considered Necessary	12.5	50.0	35.0

Source: Calculated from the Primary Survey, 2017.

Scheduled Tribe in this Malwa Plateau represents economically one of the most backward communities. From the discussion above, a subsistence nature agricultural economy can be observed among them with the prevailing poverty and economic stagnation. Due to economic constraints, Scheduled Tribe students devote more time in economic support for their family compared to other social groups that result in increasing the distance of educational environment among them and results in discontinuation from education system or dropouts. From the previous discussion on the attainment of education, a general decline in educational attainment is observed with the increase in education level. This indicates that in the agricultural household children after attaining the basic education get engaged in different household economic work like, rearing cattle, fuel collection etc that contributes directly or indirectly in family income.

Since the modern education system up to elementary or secondary level hardly gives any direct economic benefits in tribal livelihood, the opportunity cost among them increases among them after attaining basic education. Therefore, involving in earning wages for survival becomes more necessary among them rather than continuing education which incurs a serious burden on the family. The incentive of the provisions of providing books; uniform or learning materials mostly do not reach to the beneficiaries and do not have the full coverage at the community level. It does not fulfil their requirements and thus nullifies the entire purpose of attracting the students to the schools.

Locational challenges

Apart from economic constraints, the location of the educational institute also influences in the attainment of Scheduled Tribe population. Availability of schooling facilities is one of the main indicators concerning to access education as the schools are the main institution through which the process of teaching-learning can be operated. In the interior areas of this plateau region where there is little or no touch of educational achievements, availability of schools is very limited. According to the norm, any habitation, with 300 and more population, is entitled to have a primary school within a distance of one kilometer and every village should have an upper primary section within a radius of 3 kilometers. But in case of hilly and tribal dominated areas where settlement pattern is sparsely distributed primary school should be available within a distance of one-kilometre maximum up to which a child is expected to travel from residence to school. Although different attempts have been made to improve the level of accessibility,

tribal habitations in this region still suffer from inadequacy in the availability of schools. Table 1 indicates here a considerable share of tribal population, especially the girls discontinue their education because of the remote location of school from their habitation. So, there is a huge deficit in implementing the policies regarding the accessibilities in educational infrastructure in tribal-dominated areas which may create a discontinuity of education among this tribal population. Inaccessibility to schooling of this population results in a low level of educational achievement that creates disparities among the people of this region. In the case of higher education, institutes are mostly available in the urban areas, which becomes very far from the tribal habitation which is mainly located in interior rural areas. Therefore, this also becomes unfeasible for them to attend institutes for higher education.

Social and cultural challenges

The traditional factor among the Scheduled Tribe population also impacts on their educational attainment. The formal education system which is quite different from their traditional education system makes difficult for them to cope up with resulting high stagnation and dropouts. The problem of coping with the education system is also noticed in this study. The difficulty in coping with the education system indicates the lack of 'active participation' of the tribal students in the classroom teaching. Here the difficulties among Scheduled Tribe arises due to the way of teaching, medium of instruction. Tribal students are double burdened by English and other vernacular languages which they need to adapt to cope up with the education system. Here the method of teaching of the teachers, their sincerity, and dedication plays an important role in determining the notion of the students towards the subject.

The low achievement in education among the Scheduled Tribe in this region can be explained in the problem of accessing the education among them. The access to education system among the tribal population can be understood through 'active participation' of the tribal students to the education system (Freire, 2018). The 'active participation' indicates the regularity in teaching, classroom teaching methods, approachability of the teachers and understanding of subjects by the students and the active process of involvement and deliberation of both of teachers and the student in the teaching-learning process. The education system of any institute is fulfilled by the communication and interaction between both the students and the teachers. So, the whole system of education fails when any element of the system does not function properly. Paulo in 1995 in his work he introduced the concept of the banking system in our education which denotes the one-way process of storage and delivery of unrealistic narratives by the teachers and the thinking process of the student are fully controlled here. The role of the teacher here reduced as 'depositor' or 'prescriber' and performs the act of delivering the things and Students here play the role of 'receiver' and their performance in the classroom is extended only to patiently receive, memorize and repeat and storing the deposits. This approach results lack creativity, transformation, and knowledge in the

system and more of dialogues which never epitomize the reality. In the opposition of the banking system, the concept of 'active participation' of the students in the classroom has been developed. The accessibility of education here is defined by the participation and involvement of the students in the classroom teaching which diminish the oppressive nature of the education system.

Here the 'active participation' in the classroom teaching among the tribal population is hardly seen in the education system. The method of participation can only be possible when their cultural aspects, freedom, and sovereignty will be assimilated and introduced in the education system. A sharp division and gap emerge between school and home that creates a lack of interest in education among them. The inability to communicate with the teachers and the inherent fear of tribal people towards the teachers create difficulties in coping with the education system.

Administrative challenges

Apart from the above constraints, problems in educational accessibility are also found in the perspective adopted for educational development among the tribal communities. One of the major issues in educational development among the Scheduled Tribe is found in the planning and implementation of the provisions of providing educational facilities. Sujatha here explains that the tribal welfare department dealing with the tribal life, culture, administration, and education works at local level but does not have the expertise in educational planning and administration (Sujatha, 2002). According to Sujatha different policy that has been adopted fails to address the disadvantages of tribal population. The quality of schools' provisions in tribal areas including the pedagogic aspect fails to identify their problem in coping with their problem. Apart from this, the tribal culture and their complexity in their lives, has never been the part of the policy for their educational development. To integrate the tribal communities in the education system it is imperative to accommodate the tribal culture, their social reality into the education system. From the government side, although different approaches and incentives have been adopted for the inclusion of these tribal students in the education system, it does not motivate the Scheduled Tribe students enough in the education system. While implementation of the incentives, problems of abject poverty of the families has been focused and to overcome this, the provision of scholarships or mid-day-meal has been introduced, but here, the problems existing in the education system were overlooked (Ramachandran, et. al. 2007). Although the incentives are helpful to some situation in attracting the children to the schools, it is not sufficient among the tribal population in enhancing the access to quality education among them.

Discussion and Conclusion

The existing education system in India acts as a discriminatory mechanism favouring the privileged sections of society. Constitutionally although the 'principle of equality and social justice' has been enshrined as Fundamental Rights of any children, through

different education policies in India, the provision of varying quality of education to different sections of society has been observed (Sadgopal, 2010). A multilayered school system can be noticed where different categories like government or local, private aided, private unaided, central etc different management system exist with their differential resource endowment. This result a gap in educational development between the privileged and the weaker or disadvantaged section of society. The Scheduled Tribe population in Malwa Plateau as mostly backward in terms of economic development this multi-structured education system further pushes them to more deprivation. So, to introduce a sustained and balanced development in education of all the people it is imperative to restructure the education system all over the nation and build an equal educational opportunity for all through introducing equal education system.

Here, first of all, through uprooting the existing discriminatory education system, common education system needs to be established which will be discrimination-free and prevails equity. Emphasis should be laid in quality education with the increase in the quantitative terms that will be effective in their economic development. To eradicate financial constraints in achieving education, the allocation of budgets for education need to be modified in favour of this group. Here, all the tribal habitats will be facilitated with the educational institution as well all other relevant materials for education which can develop the affiliation of the children with school. Apart from this, to cope up the cultural obstacles the cultural norms and practices should be incorporated in their education system. Community awareness and community mobilization should also be the part of educational advancement and also, both community and local government participation need to be incorporated equally in determining the curricular and pedagogic aspect. Finally, education among the tribals should get more focused according to their local requirement where the tribal culture will get more emphasis and the education system will be directed according to their needs.

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