



---

## **A Study On The Perceptions Of Teachers Towards Improving Quality In Education For Tribal Girls In The North Coastal Districts Of Andhra Pradesh**

**Dr. D. Nagaraja Kumari** Associate Professor, Iase & Chairperson, Bos In Education (Pg) Department Of Education, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam-530003, A.P., India.

**Ampili Satyam** Research Scholar, Department Of Education Andhra University, Visakhapatnam-530003, A.P., India.

---

### **ABSTRACT**

Education is the process of transmitting culture, knowledge and skills from one generation to another. It encompasses various forms and occurs within structured institutional frameworks, such as public schools, where a curriculum guides learning. However, it is essential to recognize that education is not synonymous with schooling. It extends beyond formal settings and aims to cultivate learning and positive change, allowing people to lead better lives. It is one of the most powerful instruments of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of national goals. It has relevance to the needs and aspirations of the people living in a fast-changing society. Education of tribal students is an important task before the Government of India. The Article 46 of the Indian Constitution talks about promotion of educational and economic interests of people belonging to Schedule Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections. The education of tribal girls is of paramount importance for several reasons. It serves as a cornerstone for social justice, economic development and political empowerment. It is the need of the hour to provide quality education for tribal girls in the country. This research paper seeks to throw light on the critical issue of providing quality education to tribal girls, recognizing its pivotal role in achieving inclusive development. The present study is an attempt to explore the perceptions of teachers towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls in Ashram schools. The study was conducted using survey method. The sample of the study consists of 350 teachers (250 male and 10 female) selected randomly from 40 Ashram schools in the three north coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh, viz., Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. The data were collected from the teachers using a questionnaire. The variables considered for the study include gender, age, designation and experience of teachers working in Ashram schools. The data were analyzed using Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations and Critical Ratios. The findings of the study revealed that the gender and designation of teachers have no influence on their perceptions towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls in Ashram schools. However, age and experience of teachers have a significant positive influence on their

perceptions towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls. The study suggested that teachers working in Ashram Schools should have a positive attitude and right perceptions towards providing congenial learning environment for quality education of tribal girls in schools with a view to empower tribal women in the society.

**Key Words:** Tribal Girls, Improving Quality, Education, Empowerment Of Women, Perceptions Of Teachers, Ashram Schools.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a fundamental human right, serving as a cornerstone for individual empowerment and societal progress. It is a powerful tool that has the potential to break the cycle of poverty and inequality, fostering a brighter future for all. However, access to quality education has not been uniform across different segments of society in general and those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups in particular. Education of tribal students is an important task before the Government of India. The Article 46 of the Indian Constitution talks about promotion of educational and economic interests of people belonging to Schedule Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections. The article says: "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of the people and in particular of SCs and STs and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations". For several historical, economic and social reasons, the scheduled groups have remained socially backward and economically deprived even today. This is true with respect to their educational levels also. The biggest issue with teaching tribal children is the lack of adaptability of tribal children to non-tribal conditions. There is a gap between school culture and family culture of children, creating a situation of cultural mismatch, resulting into several problems that impede quality improvement in tribal education.

## **THE CONCEPT OF A 'TRIBE'**

The word "tribe" is generally used for a "socially cohesive unit, associated with a territory, the members of which regard themselves as politically autonomous" (**Mitchell, 1972**). With the upsurge of nationalism in Europe, the term 'tribe' was used to denote a particular stage in the socio-political growth of a community of people speaking a certain language within a specified territory. Clan, tribe and nation came to denote in European phraseology successive stages in the liberal march towards nationhood (**Ray, Nihar Ranjan, 1972**).

The Imperial Gazetteer of India (1911) defines a tribe as a "collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so" (**Purshottam and Vanita Dhingra, 2017**). For Romans, the tribe was a political division. The Dictionary of Anthropology mentions 'tribe' as a social group, usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organization. The tribes in India

differ from one another depending upon the region, language, customs, culture, religion, racial traits and so on. Often a tribe possesses a distinct dialect and distinct cultural traits. In the West, as also in India, the word, 'tribe' initially had a totally different connotation than what is prevalent now (**Verma, R.C., 1990**).

**Lewis H. Morgan (1877)**, in his book "Ancient Society", defines tribe as a completely organized society where all forms of social relation are dominated by kinship. For Morgan, tribal society is organized in such a way that their form of social organization is capable of reproducing itself. A tribe, according to him, is a collection of a number of clans who have distinct nomenclature, separate language, distinct political organization and a territory under their own possession.

According to **Majumdar, D.N. (1937)**, "a tribe is a collection of families or group families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speaking the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well-assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations".

In the words of R.N. Mukherjee, 'A tribe is that human group, whose members have common interest, territory, language, social law and economic occupation' (**Prasad Reddy, B.R., 2021**). From the study of the anthropological literature, it appears that the term, 'tribe' has been used for those groups of human beings, whose place of residence is situated in remote areas like hills, forest, sea coasts and islands; and whose style of life is quite different from the present day civilized men.

## **EDUCATION OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN INDIA**

The concentration of tribal population is high in states like Andhra Pradesh (now divided into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttarakhand and the Northeastern states of India. Children constitute a larger proportion of the tribal population when compared to non-tribal population (**Rustogi et al., 2012**). However, ST children are found to lag further behind in education when compared with other deprived groups such as the SCs, despite the number of special educational provisions and incentives designed for them (**Jha and Jhingran 2005; NCERT-2006b**). Even though in recent years there has been a large growth in enrolment of tribal children, their enrolment ratios continue to be below the national averages (**NCERT-2006**). Access and enrolment of tribal students also vary both geographically as well as in terms of gender, with girls in particular seriously lagging behind boys (**Nanjunda, 2000; Sujatha, 2004**). Studies have shown that deprivations faced by tribal children consist of a larger set than what is accounted by conventional measures of poverty (**Rustogi et al., 2012**). Several studies revealed that the Socio-economic status of tribal students influences their academic achievement in schools.

The educational outcomes of tribal children are affected by socio-cultural factors, in addition to school-related variables (**Sujatha, 2004**). Access to basic education still remains a challenge for a large segment of tribal population across the country, especially in economically or/and educationally backward areas (**NCERT, 2006**). The dropout rates

for tribal children between classes I-V have been particularly high in India (65 per cent, with the dropout rate for tribal girls being as high as 82 per cent). Further, a number of studies have shown that tribal children have lower achievement levels as compared to non-tribal children (**Sujatha, 2004**).

The constitutional machinery had designed various programs and policies that aim at the welfare and social security of these indigenous tribal people in the country. Yet the process of total empowerment of tribal people did not reach the zenith and there have been mixed experiences of effectiveness in the form of quality and standard of these tribal people. Since India's Independence, the Central and the State governments have been launching several schemes and programmes to educate the country's tribal population. These include the establishment of Ashram Schools, Ekalavya Model Residential Schools, Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalayas and vocational training centers.

### **IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL WOMEN**

The education of tribal girls is not just about personal advancement; it is about uplifting entire communities and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. It is essential to continue supporting and investing in educational initiatives that target tribal girls to ensure they have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and contribute to the development of their communities and the nation as a whole.

Education is considered essential for tribal girls in view of the following:

1. **Social Empowerment:** Education helps tribal girls break free from the cycle of poverty and social constraints. It provides them with the knowledge and skills necessary to challenge and change the status quo, leading to greater participation in societal decision-making processes.
2. **Economic Empowerment:** Educated women have better access to economic resources, which can lead to improved livelihoods for themselves and their communities. Education opens up opportunities for skill development, financial services, and market information, which are crucial for economic independence.
3. **Cultural Transformation:** Education can transform cultural attitudes that often limit the roles of women in society. By educating girls, communities can move towards more equitable gender norms, reducing discrimination and increasing respect for women's rights.
4. **Health and Well-being:** Educated women are more likely to make informed decisions about their health and the health of their families. This leads to better health outcomes, reduced child mortality rates, and improved family planning.
5. **Political Empowerment:** Education enables tribal women to engage more effectively in political processes, advocate for their rights, and take on leadership roles within their communities.
6. **Encouraging children for education:** Education enables tribal women to motivate their children for education; and thereby improve their socio-economic status.

## **ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL GIRLS**

Spread of quality education among marginalized sections like tribes of the society has become a formidable task in India today. Quality education for tribal children needs to be considered on priority basis not only because of the constitutional obligation, but also for the comprehensive development of the tribal communities in the country. However, under the influence of globalization, tribal education and culture have been tremendously influenced. The uniqueness of the tribal culture, which enriches the country's culture, is fast disappearing and even getting indistinct under very powerful influences of the dominant urban culture. According to **Rita Rani Talukdar (2013)**, "Different types of programmes like compensatory, remedial, enrichment, guidance, teacher-orientation, parental education, curriculum renewal etc., are to be conducted regularly in the schools in tribal areas with a view to provide quality education for tribal children. These programmes will help in increasing the educational attainment and personality development of the tribal students".

Access to quality education for tribal girls is a topic of paramount importance, as it intersects with various facets of development, such as gender equality, poverty alleviation, and social justice (**Power & Power, 2015**). Indigenous and tribal communities have long experienced systemic discrimination, socio-economic exclusion, and geographical isolation, which has severely limited their access to education (**Chakraborty, 2013**). Among these marginalized groups, tribal girls often face the double burden of gender and ethnic-based discrimination, making their educational journey even more challenging. Historically, the educational experiences of tribal girls have been marred by a lack of infrastructure, inadequate resources, and culturally insensitive curricula (**Power & Power, 2015**). These factors have contributed to high dropout rates and limited educational attainment among tribal girls. In the absence of quality education, tribal girls are denied the opportunity to develop essential skills, knowledge, and self-confidence, hindering their personal growth and prospects for a better future (**Arya & Chauhan, 2012**). The consequences of limited access to quality education for tribal girls extend far beyond the classroom. It perpetuates a cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and social exclusion. Furthermore, it reinforces traditional gender roles and norms within tribal communities, restricting the potential for gender equality and women's empowerment (**Unnithan-Kumar, 1991**). Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive and inclusive approach to education for tribal girls. This approach must consider the unique cultural and socioeconomic contexts of tribal communities, recognizing their traditional knowledge systems and values. This research paper aims to explore the multifaceted issues surrounding the education of tribal girls, from barriers to access to the design of culturally sensitive curriculum. By examining existing policies, initiatives, and best practices from around the world. The present study aims to explore the perceptions of teachers working in Ashram schools towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls as envisaged by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 5

(Gender Equality).

### **NEED FOR THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION**

There are Several barriers that impede the access to and quality of education for tribal girls. Gender discrimination is a pervasive issue in many tribal societies **(Koburtay, Syed & Haloub, 2020)**. Tribal girls often face discrimination within their own communities, which can affect their access to education. Traditional gender roles may prioritize boys' education over that of girls. Economic factors such as poverty and the need for girls to contribute to household income, often lead to early dropout rates **(Nayak & Kumar, 2022)**. Poverty is prevalent among tribal communities, and this economic hardship often forces families to prioritize immediate economic needs over education. The cost of education, including uniforms and textbooks, can be a significant burden on tribal families. One of the primary challenges in providing quality education to tribal girls is the lack of proper infrastructure and resources in tribal areas **(Ghosh, 2007)**. Many tribal communities live in remote and underserved regions where schools are often poorly equipped and lack essential facilities such as classrooms, toilets, and libraries. Geographical isolation also plays a role, as many tribal communities are located in remote areas with limited access to schools and educational infrastructure. Additionally, social and cultural factors, such as early marriage and traditional gender roles, restrict girls' participation in formal education **(Bokil, 2002)**

The present investigation is an attempt to study the perceptions of teachers working in the Ashram Schools towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls. Further, the study also takes into its purview the influence of certain demographic variables, viz., gender, age, designation and experience on the perceptions of teachers working in Ashram Schools towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the present investigation is to know the perceptions of teachers working in Ashram schools towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls. The study also aims at studying the influence of gender, age, designation and experience on the perceptions of teachers towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls.

### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present investigation:

- (i) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female teachers working in Ashram schools towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls.
- (ii) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of Ashram school teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls.
- (iii) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of Secondary Grade Teachers and School Assistants working in Ashram schools towards improving quality in the

education of tribal girls.

- (iv) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of Ashram school teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study is limited to find out the perceptions of 350 teachers (250 male and 100 female) selected randomly from 40 Ashram schools in the three north coastal districts, viz., Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. Further, the study is confined to know the influence of four demographic variables, viz., Gender, age, designation and experience on the perceptions of teachers working in Ashram schools towards improving quality in the education of tribal girls.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS TOWARDS IMPROVING QUALITY IN EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL GIRLS IN THE NORTH COASTAL DISTRICTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH

### **METHODOLOGY**

(a) **Sample:** The sample consisting of 350 teachers (250 male and 100 female) has been selected from 40 Ashram schools located in the three north coastal districts, viz., Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random sampling method.

(b) **Research Tool:** The researchers used a well-developed questionnaire consisting of 34 items as the tool of research for the present investigation. After selecting the items for the tool, the researchers verified whether the tool prepared for the present investigation is in conformity with the conditions required by a standard measuring instrument duly finding out the reliability, validity and objectivity of the tool. The tool was administered initially to 35 teachers (25 male and 10 female) working in Ashram schools under pilot study. On conducting item analysis, the discriminating power of 30 items has been found positive and that of the other 4 items negative. The negative items have been removed from the pool; and the final form of questionnaire consists of 30 items which are foolproof in all respects.

(c) **Administration of the Tool**

The final form of the standardized questionnaire consisting of 30 items on various factors relating to the perceptions of teachers towards quality improvement in the education of tribal girls has been administered to the selected 350 teachers (250 male and 100 female) working in 40 Ashram schools located in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh. These teachers include both male and female aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above working as Secondary Grade Teachers and School Assistants in the Ashram schools.

The same taken here is exclusive for final administration; and the sample taken under pilot study has not been included in this sample.

### STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data collected has been analyzed using different statistical techniques such as Mean score values, Standard Deviations and t-ratios; and is presented in the following table:

**Table showing t-values of different variables relating to the perceptions of teachers towards improving quality in education of tribal girls**

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Result
1	Gender	Male	250	89.62	28.39	0.35*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Female	100	88.50	26.98		
2	Age	Below 40 years	200	90.50	28.43	5.83*	*Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		40 years & above	150	105.83	20.87		
3	Designation	Sec. Grade Teacher	225	89.39	27.44	0.33*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		School Assistant	125	88.34	28.61		
4	Teaching Experience	Less than 10 years	250	76.34	26.75	6.42*	*Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		10 years & above	100	94.90	23.51		

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data, the researchers have arrived at the following findings and drawn the conclusions.

1. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female teachers working in Ashram Schools towards improvement of quality in the education of tribal girls.
2. There is significant difference in the perceptions of Ashram School teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards improvement of quality in the education of tribal girls.  
Teachers aged 40 years and above perceived higher towards improvement of quality in the education of tribal girls as compared to their counterparts aged below 40 years.
3. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of Secondary Grade Teachers and School Assistants working in Ashram Schools towards improvement of quality in the education of tribal girls.
4. There is significant difference in the perceptions of Ashram School teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards



improvement of quality in the education of tribal girls.

Teachers with an experience of 10 years and above perceived higher towards improvement of quality in the education of tribal girls as compared to their counterparts with an experience of less than 10 years.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

It is concluded that gender and designation have no influence on the perceptions of teachers working in Ashram Schools towards improvement of quality in the education of tribal girls. Further, the results revealed that age and experience of teachers have a positive significant influence on the perceptions of teachers working in Ashram schools towards improvement of quality in the education of tribal girls.

## **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

The following are the educational implications of the present study.

- (i) The present study throws light on the importance of education for tribal girls.
- (ii) The study helps tribal girls realize the need for quality education to improve their status in the society.
- (iii) The study is an eye-opener to the policy makers to evolve policies with a view to improve quality in the education of tribal girls.
- (iv) The study helps to improve the working conditions in Ashram schools in order to provide quality education to tribal girls.
- (v) The study helps the parents to realize the need for education of their daughters to attain empowerment in their socio-economic status.

## **REFERENCES**

- Arya, S. & Chauhan, T. (2012): A critical study of tribal education with special reference to women. In International Seminar on Tribal Development, in the Pacific University, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.
- Best, John W. and James V. Kahn (2003): Research in Education. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited. (2003).
- Chakraborty, S. (2013): Empowering the Tribal Women through Education: Issue of Social Justice with Reference of West Bengal. Afro Asian Journal of Anthropology and Social Policy, Volume 4, Issue 1, January, 2013, p.24.
- Dar and Najar (2017): Problems of teaching tribal children: A study on tribal schools of Khanshaib. Academic Social research, Volume 3, Issue 4, pp.34-37.
- Haseena, V.A. and Ajims P. Mohammed (2014): Scope of education and dropout among tribal students in Kerala – A study of Schedule Tribes in Attappady. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Vol. 4, Issue 1, January, 2014. ISSN: 2250-3153.
- Henry E. Garrett (1981): Statistics in Psychology and Education. Bombay: Vakils, Feffer and Simons Limited.
- Jha, J. and Jhingran, D. (2005): Elementary Education for the Poorest and Other Deprived

Groups. Manohar Publishers, New Delhi.

Kabita Kumari Sahu (2014): Challenging Issues of Tribal Education in India. IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance (IOSR-JEF) Volume 3, Issue 2, Ver. II (March-April, 2014), pp.48-52. e-ISSN: 2321-5933, p-ISSN: 2321-5925.

Lewis H. Morgan. (1877). Ancient Society. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, pp.1-368.

Majumdar, D.N. (1937). A Tribe in Transition: A Study in Cultural Pattern. London: Longmans Green and Co.

Mitchell, Duncan G.A. (1972) New Dictionary of Sociology. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Nanjunda, D.C. (2008). Introduction. In Nanjunda, D.C., Anjali Kurane, Steven Wind, Annapurna M., and Jyothi Lakshmi S. (Eds), Ignored Claims: A Focus on Tribal Education in India. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications.

NCERT. (2006). Position Paper of the National Focus Group on Problems of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children. New Delhi: NCERT. Retrieved from:

Power, C., & Power, C. (2015): The power of education, pp. 1-14. Springer, Singapore

Prasad Reddy, B.R. (2021): A Brief Review on Tribal Education in India. Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, Volume 9, Issue 6, pp. 45-49.

Priti Chaudhari and Hemant Rathod (2021): A study of Problems faced by Tribal students of Ashram schools. Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Volume 4, Issue 4, April, 2021. ISSN: 2581-6241.

Purshottam and Vanita Dhingra (2017): Understanding the Indian Tribal life and their issues. International Journal of Advanced Research, Volume 5, Issue 7, July, 2017, pp. 1588-1595.

Rita Rani Talukdar (2013): "Quality of Elementary Education among the tribal children of Meghalaya: An analytical study". Project Report Submitted to the National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi.

Rustogi, P., Mishra, S.K., and Mehta, B.S. (2012): Scheduled Tribe Children in India: Multiple Deprivations and Locational Disadvantage. New Delhi: UNICEF.

Unnithan-Kumar, M. (1991). Gender and Tribal Identity in Western India. Economic and Political Weekly, WS36-WS39.