

## **Educational Status of Tribal Children in Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in English Language: Strengths, Concerns and Challenges of Implementation**

**Neena Dash**

Assistant Professor, Department Of Education, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Odisha State, India

### **Abstract**

The introduction of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) in India since 1997-1998 is a novel experimental scheme in India to provide quality middle and high level education to meritorious tribal students in the remote tribal areas of the country. The study also presents educational achievement level of tribal students in English language in EMRS. Two districts have been selected: one with the highest literacy rate and the other with the lowest literacy rate as per 2011 census India (where EMRSs were functional). One EMRS from each of these two districts have been finally selected as the sampled school. For purposes of comparison, two SC & ST schools and one JNV have been selected from the district with lowest literacy rate. Forty teachers and 52 students constitute the sample of the study. Descriptive survey method was used by the investigator. The tools used for the study is achievement test in English language (Class VIII) and interview schedule for teachers. In English language subject, Class VIII students in JNV performed better than their grade-mates in EMRS and ST & SC schools while the EMRS students scored better than those in ST & SC schools.

**KEYWORDS:** Tribal education, Ekalavya Model Residential Schools, Educational Status in English language

### **Introduction**

India has a rich glorious heritage, but a sizeable part of Indian population is yet to get benefits out of it. They are still tribal communities which are primitive and live in secluded areas (Verma 1996). The Tribe is defined 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 (Nithya 2014). According to D.N. Majumdar "A tribe is a social group with territorial afflation, endogamous with no specialization of functions, rule by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise united in language and dialect, recognizing social distance with other tribes or caste without any social obloquy attaching to them, as it does in the caste structure, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas, from alien sources, above all conscious of homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration" (quoted in Varma 1996). The tribes in India usually reside in hill areas, forests, near the seas, and in islands. Their life style is quite different from non-tribals (Preet 1994). It is not that their societies are static, but the pace of social change in tribal society is very slow. Since they are materially and economically backward, attempts have been made by the Government to develop them. Today, the governments in all countries are paying special attention to development of the tribes (Nithya 2014). Though national leaders and constitutional makers are committed to uplift the tribal people, a desired level of development has not been achieved yet (Chandra Guru et. al: 2015). There are 705 number of

individual ethnic groups etc., notified as Scheduled Tribes in India. (ST in India as Revealed in Census 2011). In Odisha State of India, there are 62 number of ethnic groups as tribes (ST in India as Revealed in Census 2011). Education and human development are keys to any quantitative social change and those two factors influence demographic behaviour.

A new concept for educational development “Establishment of Model Residential Schools was launched in India during 1997-98 to provide quality education to the tribal students in India. A total 197 EMRSs have been sanctioned by the MHRD, Govt. of India in various parts of the country with an intake capacity of 480 students per school, of which 129 are fully functional and the remaining 68 are under construction. These schools are set up under the Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India on the pattern of Rajkiya PratibhaVikasVidyalaya (RPVV) in Delhi, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), India, and the KendriyaVidyalaya (KV), India. 13 EMRS have been established across Odisha State of India covering total of 11 Districts. Among them three EMRSs are in Sundargarh District and one each in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Nawarangpur, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Jajpur, Malkangiri and Nuapada Districts. The objectives of setting of EMRS in India are to provide quality education up to Higher Secondary stage to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in remote areas. These schools provide access to the better opportunities in education at par with the non-ST population. And this is achieved by comprehensive physical, mental and social development of students enrolled in each EMRS. Consequently they have been empowered to be changing agent, in their school, in their homes, in their villages and finally in a larger context in shaping the nation. These schools focus differentially on the educational support to be made available to that in Standards VI to XII, so that their distinctive needs can be met, support the annual running expenses in a manner that offers reasonable remuneration to the staff and upkeep the standard, support the construction of infrastructure that provides education and improves physical, environmental and cultural needs of student life. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India have suggested for management of these schools through a registered society. In Odisha Model Tribal Education Society(OMTES) in Odisha State of India is in charge of management of these schools. The Board of Directors of the said Society has representatives of the ST& SC Development Department, representatives of other concerned Government Departments, Eminent Educationists, Selected Representatives and Community Leaders from among the Tribal Communities in the State. These schools have sufficient number of Post Graduate, Graduate and other trained teachers to maintain the optimum teacher pupil ratio of 1:30. The time table of these schools is devised in a manner to provide sufficient time for activities, such as teaching, vocational training, sports, cultural activities and other extra- curricular activities so as to ensure all round development of the children. The number of seats for boys and girls is equal. Education is entirely free. Every class is having 60 students and the total sanctioned strength of the school to be 420 students with only one stream at +2 levels. However it should be 480 if Arts/ Humanities is also added at +2 level. Admission to these schools is to be through selection process with suitable provision or preference to children belonging to particularly vulnerable Tribal groups, first generation students, etc. These schools is primarily located in scheduled or tribal areas, keeping in view the availability of drinking water, power, health facilities, communication and other minimum information facilities. However, in exceptional cases such schools may also be located outside the tribal areas in India with the prior approval of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. These schools to also have the facility for

vocational training and for practical training in agriculture, Animal husbandry and related areas. Scholarships is to be given to all the Schedule Tribe Students pursuing their studies in EMRS. The schools is fully residential with residential quarters even for the teaching staff and also for some of the non-teaching staff, as considered necessary. OMTES is responsible for efficient management of finances, location of schools, selection of students and to formulate policies and programmes for management improvement, diversification and any other related matter with regard to the functioning of these schools.

#### **Review of Related Literature:-**

A recent survey conducted by Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) as presented in Times of India (2014) has revealed that 75 per cent tribal children in 22 districts of Rajasthan are lagging behind in education and tribal girls are no more enrolling in schools. The samples of the survey which started in September last year, pictured a grim educational level of the tribal children with 75 per cent drop out of boys in 4th and 5th standards while girls were found not even enrolling in schools. Laya (2003) found that there is a need to strengthen tribal literacy levels by promoting opportunities for reading at the grassroots level. Tribal institutions of secondary education are irrelevant and do not 'educate'. The main reason for this is that the content of education does not take into account their traditional knowledge systems, an understanding of their own environment which is rich in natural resources, relevant skills to provide access and control of their environment and a recognition of their own identity as tribal communities. Mainstream educational institutions tend to create an alienated group of youngsters with few opportunities to use their capacities. There is a need to review the relevance of curriculum and methodologies of education currently in the tribal context. More specifically we need to campaign for a policy, which takes into consideration the learning needs of tribal youth dropouts at the school and pre university levels. Sujata(1999) found that in language, a little more than one fourth of community schools had achievement mean scores ranging between 20 to 30 percent , while less than 4 percent of them had an achievement mean score of 70 to 76 percent. A lot of research study has been conducted in the field of tribal education. But very few studies conducted on educational status of children particularly in English language in EMRS. Thus, the investigator decided to conduct this study to examine and analyse the educational status of tribal children studying in EMRSs in English language and to find out strengths, concerns and challenges of implementation of EMRS program and draw implications for policy making on education of tribal children.

#### **Objectives of the Present Study:-**

- To assess the educational status of tribal students in English language in class VIII at EMRSs, JNV and ST& SC schools.
- To find out the difference in English language achievement of tribal students in EMRSs, JNV and ST& SC schools.
- To study the strengths, concerns and challenges of implementation of EMRS programme

#### **Hypotheses of the Study:-**

- Ho1:- There exists no significant difference in English language achievement of tribal students in EMRS and ST& SC schools

- Ho2:- There exists no significant difference in English language achievement of tribal students in EMRS and JNV schools
- Ho3:- There exists no significant difference in English language achievement of tribal students in JNV and ST & SC schools

#### Research Questions:-

- What is the educational performance of tribal students in EMRS, ST & SC schools and JNV schools?
- Which school tribal students do perform better in English Language?
- What are the strengths of EMRS programme for tribal students?
- What are the concerns of EMRS programme for tribal students?
- What are the challenges of implementation of EMRS programme for tribal students?

**Methodology:-** Two EMRSs have been used as sample for the present study for comparing the educational status with JNV and SSD schools. Two districts have been selected: one with the highest literacy rate and the other with the lowest literacy rate as per 2011 census (where EMRSs were functional). One EMRS from each of these two districts have been finally selected as the sampled school. For purposes of comparison, two SC & ST schools and one JNV have been selected from the district with lowest literacy rate. Forty teachers and 52 students constitute the sample of the study. Descriptive survey method was used by the investigator.

#### Tools Used:-

The tools used for the study is achievement test in English language (Class VIII) and one language expert and interview schedule for teachers to find out the strengths, concerns and challenges of implementation of EMRS programme. The test is validated by one subject expert

#### Results and Discussion:-

The results indicate as follows:

**Table 1: Percentage Achievement Level of Class VIII ST Students in English in relation to School Type**

School Type	English	
	N	%
EMRS	54	38.92
SC & ST	44	25.96
JNV	33	54.56

In English language subject, Class VIII students in JNV performed better than their grade-mates in EMRS and ST & SC schools while the EMRS students scored better than those in ST & SC schools (Table 1). It may, however, be mentioned that the performance of students from all the three types of schools was not in the satisfactory range as students in ST & SC schools scored in the range of only 25% across English language area, while those in EMRS scored in the range of 38%. Even

if the performance of JNV students was better than those in the other two types of schools, their performance was not also satisfactory, as they scored in the range of 54 % across English language subject.

**Table 2 :Mean Achievement Level of Class VIII ST Students in English in relation to School Type**

School Type	English		
	N	Mean (SD)	%
EMRS	54	9.73 (2.95)	38.92
SC & ST	44	6.49 (3.38)	25.96
JNV	33	13.64 (4.56)	54.56

In English language subject, the mean achievement score indicate that Class VIII students in JNV performed better(13.64 mean score) than their grade-mates in EMRS(9.73 mean score)and ST & SC schools(6.49) while the EMRS students scored better than those in ST & SC schools (Table 2).

**Table 3 :‘t’ Values Showing Group Comparisons among EMRS vs. ST& SC schools in respect of Achievement Level of Class VIII ST Students in English Language**

School Type	English		
	Mean	df	T
EMRS vs. ST & SC	9.73 6.57	81	4.04**

\*Significant at .05 level\*\* Significant at .01 level

Category-wise analysis of educational status of English language in Class VIII students (Table 3) revealed the same trend as was observed for the aggregate data. The t-tests (Table 3) revealed that the ST students in the EMRS performed better than their grade-mates in ST & SC schools with a maximum gap being noticed in English language attainment. There exists significance difference between EMRS and ST & SC schools in English language achievement. Thus the null hypothesis (Ho1) is rejected.

**Table 4 :‘t’ Values Showing Group Comparisons among EMRS vs. JNV schools in respect of Achievement Level of Class VIII ST Students in English Language**

School Type	English		
	Mean	df	T
EMRS vs. JNV	9.73 14.79	66	4.32**

\*Significant at .05 level\*\* Significant at .01 level

Category-wise analysis of educational status of English language in Class VIII students (Table 4) revealed the same trend as was observed for the aggregate data. The t-tests (Table 4) revealed that the ST students in the JNV performed better than their grade-mates in EMRS schools with a maximum gap being noticed in English language attainment. There exists significance difference between EMRS and JNV schools in English language achievement. Thus the null hypothesis (Ho2) is rejected.

**Table 5 : 't' Values Showing Group Comparisons among ST & SC vs. JNV schools in respect of Achievement Level of Class VIII ST Students in English Language**

School Type	English		
	Mean	df	T
ST & SC vs. JNV	6.57 14.79	41	6.38**

\*Significant at .05 level\*\* Significant at .01 level

Category-wise analysis of educational status of English language in Class VIII students (Table 5) revealed the same trend as was observed for the aggregate data. The t-tests (Table 5) revealed that the ST students in the JNV performed better than their grade-mates in ST & SC schools with a maximum gap being noticed in English language attainment. There exists significance difference between JNV and ST & SC schools in English language achievement. Thus the null hypothesis (Ho3) is rejected.

**Strengths of EMRS Programme:**-It is reported by teachers that EMRS offers the opportunity to tribal students to get education in English medium. EMRS provide education with all facilities at par with Navodaya Vidyalaya. Student's evaluation is continuous and comprehensive and co-curricular activities are also a part of the study /evaluation. Every year special coaching classes are conducted to prepare students for competitive examinations. Educational tour is the part of the study. Education in CBSE pattern with both Hindi and English medium. Opportunity to improve the moral, physical and mental level of the tribal students. Different activities like debate competition, writing competition etc. are conducted. So competition spirit among the students is developed. EMRS helps to discover and developing the inner qualities of the students. In the school activities like sports and game different cultural activities are organised.

**Concerns:**-It is indicated by teachers that no provision of staff nurse and doctor. Stipend provided to the students is not enough to compensate the monthly cost of the food. Insufficiency of regular teaching and supporting staffs. No facilities for professional coaching. No training programme for teaching staffs is conducted. Students are very weak in English subject and are not confident. Getting very poor salary. No service condition for teachers. No summer vacation given to teachers.

**Conclusion:-Challenges for Implementation for EMRS Programme:-** It can be concluded that for improving educational status of tribal children in EMRS, Regular teaching and supporting staffs should be appointed immediately. Activities should be arranged to develop the students' English knowledge. Regular pay scale with service condition should be provided to teachers. After every five year promotion policy

should be given to the teachers. Adequate TLM should be supplied in each classroom of EMRS.

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