

A Study on the Status of Elementary Education in Tribal Area of Odisha

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Abstract

Education for tribal children has been one of the key areas of focus in many of the policy provisioning and program implementation of Government involving the community in one or other way. But achieving the desired goal has remained a distant dream. In this context the study conducted in 20 elementary schools of Kaptipada block of Mayurbhanja district of Odisha attempted to identify the different problems faced by the children in tribal areas and explore possible strategies that could address those issues in reference to the policy provisions and status of elementary education.

The study found that despite huge investment in resources to those schools access to delivery of quality services in terms of infrastructure and basic facilities are still the grounding issues in the tribal area. It further found that only 30% schools have boundary wall, 50% have toilets, 35% have safe drinking water and 65% have electricity facility. On the other hand it was observed that hardly there was any linkage between the classroom pedagogy as expected (The National Curriculum Framework-2005) and the way it is executed. Teachers in the tribal area are mostly to comply the norms but somewhere the sense of ownership and responsibility was missing. Furthermore the linkage between the school management committees and school are not encouraging in tribal area. If at all there is some progress, it is the timely financial expenditure. The quality and equity aspect of education is still far away. Therefore a long term practical and contextual road map reflecting at policy, program and personal level may be a means to achieve the very constitutional commitment.

KEYWORDS: Equality, Tribal, Resources, Sustainability

Background of the study

“Equality” at the centre of Indian Constitutions’ Preamble exhibits Nation’s commitment and conviction towards the betterment of its people from every section of the Society. Many efforts and series of activities in the form of provisioning, policy and programs have been planned and executed in last seventy years post to the Independence period of 1947. In the process of time since after the 5th Five year Plan (1974-79) elementary education has been prioritized in the tribal sub-plan considering it as a crucial and important input for ensuring their total upliftment in the mainstream developmental process. Though concerted efforts were started by the Central and State Governments for the formulation of separate development strategies for the development of the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes during the Fifth Five Year Plan and subsequent plans. It is now explicitly recognized that these attempts have had

only marginal impacts on their socio-economic conditions in spite of various welfare measures and constitutional protection. However it must be noted that, the history of tribal's during the last 65 years is filled with stories of forced displacement, land alienation and increasing marginalisation, eruption of violence and counter-violence by the State. Going by any parameters of development, the tribal's are also always figure at the tail end. The situation of the communities that have been pastoral or nomadic is still worse. Tribal communities continue to face economic deprivation and lack of access to basic services, including education. Thus, for a country like India, where diversity is deeply rooted, approximately 10 crore Indians fall under the Scheduled Tribe population and each of the 705 scheduled tribes has their own language, and differs from the one mostly spoken in the State where they reside (Govinda, 2002). Education seems to be the most powerful tool to bring them into the mainstream developmental process and do justice to the imperative of Constitutional commitment.

Scheduled tribe: Article 342 of the Indian Constitution says that, "the Scheduled Tribes are the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within these tribes and tribal communities which have been declared as such by the communities who have been declared as such by the President through public notification." However, Article 366 (25) of the Constitution further refers to scheduled tribes as those communities who are scheduled in accordance with the Article 342 of the Constitution.

Tribal people constitute 22.13% of the State's population and 25% of the total school going age children (6-14 years) in the State are tribal children (census 2001). It was also found that 62 tribes in the state including 13 primitive tribes belonging to the Three language groups(Austro Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo Aryan) exists in the State of Odisha. Further the ST communities in Odisha speak 72 mother tongues broadly grouped into 38 languages. However, the current figure for the number of tribal languages in Odisha varies from 22 to 26. It seems that many tribal languages have become extinct and many more are endangered. (UNESCO, 2009: Atlas of World's languages in danger. (<http://unesco.org/culture/en/angeredlanguages>.)

Mayurbhanja district is the largest district in fact one of the tribal dominant district in the State of Odisha. The total population of the district as per 2011 Census is 25,19,738 (Rural- 23,26,842, Urban-1,92,896) But the Scheduled Tribe population of the district is 14,79,576 (Rural-1439002, and Urban -40574) . The district has 26 blocks. Out of those the most tribal concentrated blocks are Khunta, Shamakhunta, Udala, Bijatal, Jamda, Baripada, Bangriposi, Bisoi, Jashipur, Kuliana, Kaptipada, Kusmi, Thankurmunda and Karnjia. Here the tribal population is more than 60% of the total population of the block. Santals, Kolhas, Bhatudi, Bhumija, Khadia, Mankadia are the different tribes mostly present in the district.

Objectives and Methodology of the Study

The study was undertaken with following objectives.

- I. To identify the issues related to teaching learning process inside the school campus and classroom.

- II. To explore the possible strategies to enhance the quality of teaching learning process.

Keeping the objectives in view the explorative design was employed through survey method to study the problem. All the schools of the Kaptipada Block of Mayurbhanja District are the population. Whereas 20 randomly selected schools were chosen for the study. There were three types of tool used to study the problem. Those tools were Classroom observation, Interview Schedule and focused group discussion. Collection of data was done by personal visit and administration of Questionnaire, taking interview of the concerned stakeholders. However different kinds of techniques such as Percentage, Item Analysis and Summarization of key observations were used for data analysis.

Result and discussions

Objective 1: The issues related to teaching learning process:

In order to find out the issues related to teaching leaning process in the school and classroom the data was collected from two broad areas such as:

- A) Availability of resources and its condition at School Level.
B) Process adopted during the classroom teaching.

Table-1- Availability and condition of School facilities

INDICATORS	Availability in quantity and Working Conditions in percentage						
	YES	NO	Very Good	Good	Manageable	Poor	Very Poor
Boundary Wall	6	14	0	1	3	1	1
in %	30	70	0.0	16.7	50.0	16.7	16.7
Building	10	10	0	3	2	4	1
in %	50	50	0.0	30.0	20.0	40	10.0
Play Ground	3	17	0	0	1	2	0
in %	15	85	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Toilet	10	10	2	3	1	1	3
in %	50	50	20.0	30.0	10.0	10	30.0
Safe Drinking Water	7	13	0	2	1	3	1
in %	35	65	0.0	28.6	14.3	42.9	14.3
Notice Board	14	6	3	2	2	6	1

in %	70	30	21.4	14.3	14.3	42.9	7.1
Kitchen Garden	15	5	3	5	2	4	1
in %	75	25	20.0	33.3	13.3	26.7	6.7
Menu for Food being displayed	20	0	3	4	10	2	1
in %	100	0	15.0	20.0	50.0	10	5.0
Electricity and Fan	13	7	2	6	3	1	1
in %	65	35	15.4	46.2	23.1	7.69	7.7

As the above table shows out of 20 schools, boundary was present in only 30% of schools and out of it only 3 schools i.e. 50% were just in manageable conditions whereas rest of the schools were equally either good, poor or very poor contributing to 16.7%. In 50% schools building was observed out of which 40% were in poor condition and 10% school in absolute very poor condition. Thus, even if schools were having buildings but in 50% schools their condition were quite miserable and dilapidated which always raises a question for the safety and security of children in the school premises. In 85% schools it was observed that, they do not have their own playground and even if, the schools having playground, in 66.7% schools the condition was poor. In 50% schools toilets were not available, even if in rest 50% schools where toilet was available just 20% schools were in very good condition. In 65% school safe drinking water was not available. In 70% school notice board was available but sadly almost 50% of them were either in poor or very poor condition. In 75% schools kitchen garden was available and the good part was around 70% of them were in good condition, this shows how people in tribal areas people are attached to natural environment and careful about the nature around them, it may be in the form of small kitchen garden. Almost in all the schools i.e. 100% have displayed menu in the school wall out of which around 85% are in good and manageable condition, it may be due to the strict guidelines of the Govt. and also may be due to the vigilant of School Management Committee. 65% schools had accessed to electricity and fan out of which almost 85% school were in manageable or good condition.

Table-2: Availability and condition of classroom facilities

Indicators	Availability In numbers and Working Conditions						
	Yes	No	Very Good	Good	Manageable	Poor	Very Poor
Adequate Classrooms	10	10	0	5	2	3	0

in %	50	50	0.0	50.0	20.0	30	0.0
Text Book	18	2	1	2	4	6	5
in %	90	10	5.6	11.1	22.2	33.3	27.8
TLM Corner	10	10	0	0	2	3	5
in %	50	50	0.0	0.0	20.0	30	50.0
Reading Corner	11	9	0	1	2	3	4
in %	50	50	0.0	10.0	20.0	30	40.0
Library	10	10	2	3	1	1	3
in %	50	50	20.0	30.0	10.0	10	30.0

As far as the availability of resource is concerned in 50% schools adequate classrooms were available, out of which 30% were in poor condition and just only 20% schools they were in manageable condition. The good part was that in 90% classrooms text books were available but 60% of them were in poor condition, this could further lead to the discussion as the visit was made in the mid of the session and half of the session was yet to go what it may happen by the end of the academic year? Further in 50% schools reading corner was available but 70% of them were either badly used and in poor condition. Similarly, 50% classrooms had the library availability but 40% of them were in poor condition as either the maintenance was in bad shape.

B) Process adopted during the classroom teaching.

The classroom teaching process was divided into five broad sections namely: Preparation, organization, presentation, interaction and evaluation. In each of those aspects by means of different indicators and the steps the classroom activities were observed vigilantly. The detail analysis of the same is presented below separately.

Section 1: PREPARATION	AVAILABILITY / STATUS (In %)		Level of execution / engagement (In %)			
			4	3	2	1
Indicators	YES	NO	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Poor
The teacher had a clear distinct lesson plan.	80	20	18.75	31.25	37.5	12.5
The teacher showed proactive preparation for a variety of	45	55	22.22	55.55	22.22	0

student needs.						
The teacher presented overview of lesson.	40	60	12.5	37.5	50	0
The teacher began the class at the scheduled time.	85	15	88.23	5.88	5.88	0
The teacher checked Daily attendance.	100	0	50	25	20	5

The classroom teaching process was mainly categorised into 5 sections. As the above table shows in the preparation stage 80% teachers had clear distinct lesson plan and almost all the teachers check daily attendance at the beginning of the class and 85% teachers began the class at the scheduled time. However, only 45% showed proactive preparation satisfying variety of student needs. On the other hand 50% of the plans were fair enough. However, in case of daily attendance check 20% were just fair enough only as either they were in hurry or not calling up the names of the student or skipping sometimes few numbers. Similarly, the way 85% classes began was outstanding.

Table 3.2 Classroom organization by teachers

Section: 2: Organization	AVAILABILITY / STATUS (In %)		Level of execution / engagement			
	YES	NO	4	3	2	1
Dimensions/ Indicators	YES	NO	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Poor
The Teacher was neatly and Cleanly dressed	100	00	90	10	0	0
The Teacher maintained disciplined in the classroom	75	25	26.66	46.66	26.66	0
The Teacher followed Democratic principles in the classroom	65	35	38.46	46.15	7.69	7.69
The Teacher talked with students as he entered / exited class	55	45	36.36	27.27	18.18	18.18
The Teacher displayed effective classroom management/leadership	20	80	0	50	50	0

The Teacher demonstrated respectful behaviour toward students	85	15	17.64	41.17	29.41	11.76
The Teacher demonstrated sensitivity to different cultures	70	30	14.28	21.42	35.71	28.57
The Teacher the introduced contextual exercises and activities to the class	75	25	46.66	26.66	20	6.66
The Teacher facilitated the proper seating arrangement	60	40	83.33	16.66	0	0
The Teacher divided his or her attention among students appropriately.	30	70	0	50	33.33	16.66

In the second aspect of organising classroom activities, it was observed that cent percentages of the teacher were neatly and cleanly dressed. In-fact 90% the teachers' external appearance was outstanding. Likewise 75% teachers did maintained discipline in the classroom, which was good and outstanding in nature. And 85% of teachers demonstrated respectful behaviour towards students. Further most important aspect as observed that 70% teachers were quite sensitive in their demonstration towards the cultural and ethnicity of different children inside the classroom. On the other side the execution or real time behaviour of same indicators was quite striking as around 29% teachers approach was very poor, which could further be associated as almost 50% teacher attention towards students inside the classroom was just fair. Nearly 38% teachers remain silent or even their engagement by talking once after entering inside the class was either poor or just fair. On the whole though the teachers were aware of the facts and factors that contribute in the classroom teaching learning process but when it comes to its execution they could hardly make any differences or satisfy the need of the class as a whole.

Table 3.3 Classroom presentation by teachers

Section: 3: Presentation	Availability / status		Level of execution / engagement			
			4	3	2	1
Dimensions/Indicators	YES	NO	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Poor
The Teacher established Clear	55	45	18.18	63.63	18.18	0

learning goals						
The Teacher linked the new subject with prior knowledge / learning/ experience	30	70	33.33	0	50	16.66
The Teacher used the activities/exercises chosen to achieve the objectives were effective	55	45	36.36	27.27	18.18	18.18
The Teacher connected with individual students during class	35	65	28.57	28.57	14.28	28.57
The Teacher used multiple modes of instruction, with emphasis on active learning	30	70	16.66	50	33.33	0
The Teacher made flexible use of classroom space, time, materials	25	75	20	60	20	0
The Teacher communicated clear directions for multiple tasks	25	75	40	20	40	0
The lesson focused on important ideas, issues, or problems	20	80	25	50	25	0
The tasks emphasized thought/meaning vs drill and practice	25	75	0	40	20	40
The Teacher spoke clearly and distinctly with no distracting mannerisms	35	65	0	57.14	28.57	14.28
The Teacher placed the lesson effectively	30	70	16.66	50	33.33	0
The Teacher presented the topic in logical sequence	25	75	20	60	0	20
The Teacher explained major/minor points with clarity	30	70	16.66	33.33	50	0
The Teacher defined unfamiliar terms, concepts and terms	30	70	16.66	50	16.66	16.66
The Teacher used good example to clarify points	20	80	50	50	0	0
The Teacher gave varied	15	85	66.66	33.33	0	0

examples to explain difficult or complex material						
The Teacher emphasized important points	20	80	0	100	0	0
The Teacher integrated materials from real world	30	70	16.66	0	66.66	16.66
The Teacher provided effective rules/routines that supported individual needs	20	80	25	50	25	0
The use of Odia was appropriate to student needs	30	70	33.33	16.66	16.66	33.33
The Cultural instruction was integrated into class activities	60	40	33.33	16.66	50	0

As the above table says, in 55% classrooms the teachers were able to establish clear learning goals, among which 18% were just fair only but at the same time 70% were not able to link the new subject with prior knowledge / learning/ experience of children. Similarly 80% lesson did not focused on important ideas, issues, or problems This could further be analysed and observed as in the course of action 70% classes did not explained major/minor points with clarity, 70% did not defined unfamiliar terms, concepts and terms, 80% did not used good example to clarify points, 85% did not used varied examples to explain difficult or complex material, 80% did not emphasized important points, use of Odia was not appropriate to student needs in 70% classes. On the whole except that of the 55% activities/exercises chosen to achieve the objectives were effective in the classroom and 60% classes the cultural instruction was integrated into class activities were the few of areas where the classroom was in a way lively to satisfy the need and connect with the students learning process, although 50% of them falls behind the good level in terms of its execution respectively. The finding and observation once again highlights the poor pedagogic practices and technique employed in the classroom. This leads to the sheer disconnection and disappointment among students in tribal areas in terms of meeting their expectation and educational need.

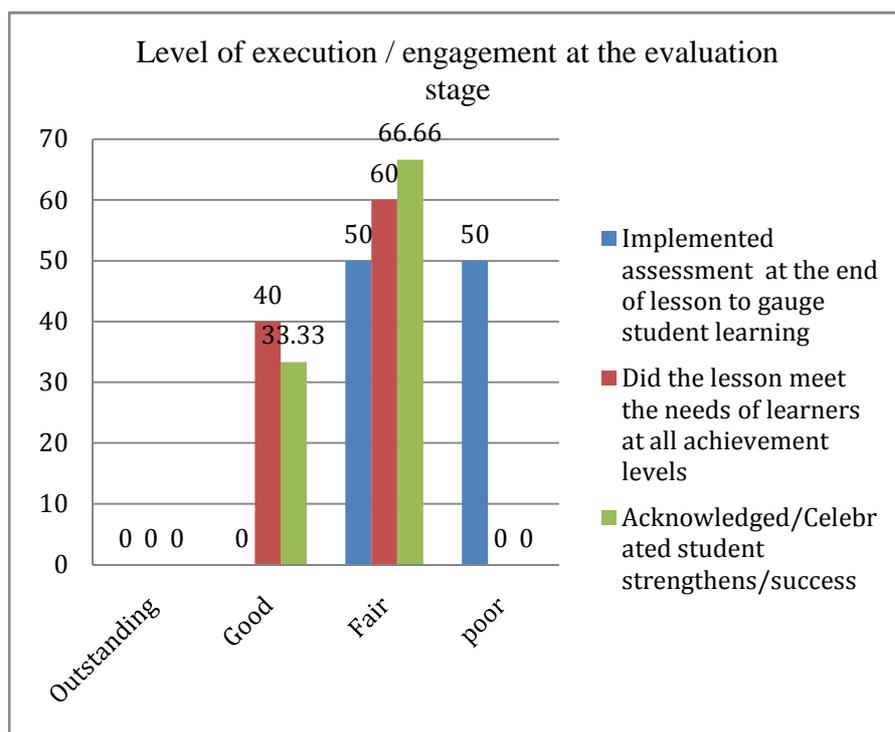
Table 3.4 Classroom interaction by teachers						
Section:4: interaction	Availability / status		Level of execution / engagement			
			4	3	2	1
Indicators	Yes	No	Outstanding	Good	Fair	Poor
The teacher treated students with respect	45	55	11.11	22.22	44.44	22.22

The teacher actively encouraged student to ask questions	25	75	0	40	20	40
The teacher listened carefully to understand students questions	30	70	0	33.33	50	16.66
The teacher responded appropriately to students questions	30	70	0	33.33	50	16.66
The teacher restated questions and answers when necessary	45	55	22.22	11.11	44.44	22.22
The teacher students comfortable asking questions/requesting assistance	60	40	0	25	50	25
The teacher involved whole class in sharing / planning / evaluating	25	75	0	40	60	0

In the classroom interaction aspect between teacher and students it was observed that, in 55% classroom observations teachers did not treated students with respect and 75% cases they did not actively encouraged students to ask questions. Further 70% classes’ teachers did not listened carefully to understand student questions and same percentage of teachers even did not responded appropriately to students’ questions. Even if in 30% cases where some sort of positive response was exhibited the level of engagement was miserable as in around 67% situation it was just fair or poor respectively. Further students involvement in the entire classroom sharing and planning process was very dismissal as in 75% classes students did not involved them even if they are involved it was more like ‘just to do’ sort of practice. However, only in cases of comfortably asking questions/requesting assistance 60% classroom observation responded positively, though it must be noted that they were mainly like making permission to go outside the class for call of nature or drinking water or making sitting adjustments with peers.

Table 3.5 Classroom evaluation process adopted by teachers

Section:5: evaluation	Availability / status		Level of execution / engagement			
			4	3	2	1
Indicators	YES	NO	Outstanding	Good	Fair	poor
Implemented assessment at the end of lesson to gauge student learning	20	80	0	0	50	50
Did the lesson meet the needs of learners at all achievement levels	25	75	0	40	60	0
Acknowledged/Celebrated student strengthens/success	15	85	0	33.33	66.66	0



In the last segment of the classroom teaching process it was observed that 80% classroom did not Implemented assessment at the end of lesson to gauge student learning as a result of which 75% classroom could not be able to meet the needs of the

learners at all in achieving the learning goals. Further in 85% classroom situation it was observed that teachers did not acknowledged/celebrated student strengthens/success. This leads to yet another way of disconnection between students and teachers.

Fig.1. Level of execution

Objective-2: To explore the possible strategies to enhance the quality of teaching learning process.

An interview scheduled was planned with the teachers, members of the school management committee and children to explore the strategies to enhance the quality of teaching learning process. It was divided into 5 domains. Namely: Student - Teacher Relationship, Classroom Management, Content Delivery and Classroom Teaching, School Environment and Assessment procedure. The detail findings are explained as follows.

☞ **Student - Teacher Relationship:** All the head teachers agreed that strong bonding or relationship between student and teacher is the pre-requisite for quality enhancement of teaching learning process. And specifically, in case of tribal area it is of utmost importance, since they have come from different cultural practices and background. But because of the appointment of teachers from other areas mostly urban and in few cases other districts they fail to establish that rapport with the tribal students. Further, there is a pre-decided or disposed mind-set of teachers as they sometime considers them as “backwards” and “non-performers”. Thus, they do not tend to show positive relationship or behaviour to them on the whole. Thus, they do not care or responds to those children. As a matter, instead of strong bonding the trust and believe weakness. This affects the classroom process as well and could not fulfil the aspirations of the children in those areas.

- ☞ **Classroom Management:** Head teachers believed that in most of the cases teachers' classroom rules and ways of doing things are not fair, since they mostly focus on comparatively good performers. And further teachers particularly in tribal areas are not tuned to this skill of management. Thus, they forgo the principle of equality and equity in most cases knowingly or unknowingly.
- ☞ **Content Delivery and Classroom Teaching:** All the head teachers were of the view that, since most the teachers are from non-tribal areas and not convergent with tribal language, it becomes the major barrier in classroom teaching and transaction process. Further, they were of the view that mostly following bookish knowledge and less activity based teaching approach contributes in losing interest of children in the classroom process for which teaching becomes dull and ineffective.
- ☞ **Assessment procedure:** In case of assessment it was of the view that, teachers finds it easy to construct knowledge type questions, which are mostly yes/no type and for which good students also feels bore and creates disturbances in some cases. Further the practice of CCE is yet to be grounded.
- ☞ **School Environment:** Since most of the schools are in remote areas and have limited access to road and major points like Bus-stop, Hospitals, Post-Office students have very limited exposure to the outer world. This narrow downs their purview to the different agencies. In the other side of the fact they are deprived of getting attention and consideration form authorities and also finds it difficult to relate when it is discussed in the different chapters of the text-books. A growing tendency is also found as there are many cases of miss-behaviour of teachers towards adolescent tribal girls; it is sending a wrong message of fear and disappointment. As an affect girls drop-out in higher grades becomes a regular phenomena in tribal area as well.

Focused group discussion with the School Management Committee:

The members of the School Management Committee shared that the quality of teaching learning process to a large level was hampered due to the disconnection between school and society. To simplify the same they said, earlier the school used to involve the community people in many aspects. But with the passage of time because of strict regulations, the community remained detached. In the last few years many efforts being made to bring back the same relation but unfortunately they are confined to pen and paper only. In most of the training sessions for capacity building of SMC members things are not properly taking place. Because either the trainings for them are planned without their consent and convenience. And for this they are not able to understand what is going on in the school and they could not contribute to the quality. They also of the opinion that, in most of the time the school teachers remain busy in different sorts of training and other programs other than teaching for which may be the quality is not taking place. Among other reasons they were of the view that, due to non appointment of teachers from the tribal community or even the teachers possessing a negative feeling about their culture is creating distance among children – teacher and classroom teaching. Above everything they shared that, “private schools are quite better off. At least in those schools their teacher is engaged in teaching only and they give priority to English and Mathematics which is not seen in Government Schools”. This to an extent reflects the notion among tribal people towards the system in general and Government run schools in particular. For improvisation they said, there should be the appointment of local teachers and adequate number

of teachers with all basic facilities should be the first and prime focus of the Government. After that, Govt. should regularly monitor the school and give more power to the School Management Committee as they can take decision for the welfare of the school without delay.

Focused group discussion with school children:

During the focused group discussion with school children they shared their expectation and perception towards the school and how quality improvement can be done. To summarise the points, they said that schools in their area should have sufficient teachers and all sorts of facilities should be given to them like any other schools mostly the private schools present nearby. Although they are getting free text book, Mid-Day Meal and incentives but they do not have access to other things like sufficient teaching learning materials (Globe, Maps, and Charts) and sports material as well. In few cases students reported that, since they have shortage of teachers, their course remains incomplete and at the end of the time during examination period, teacher speeds up the teaching process. Many times they fail to communicate effectively since; the teacher does not understand their language. In few schools adolescent girls shared that, due to the absence of lady teacher they feel fear and restricted in sharing their feelings and conditions. On the whole, they were of the suggestions that, there should be provision of sufficient teacher, teaching learning materials; interesting way of teaching and appointment of lady teacher could somehow help in ensuing quality in the school and classrooms.

Conclusion and implications

Scheduled tribes (ST) continued to be the major vulnerable group in the Indian society and many welfare policies and development programmes envisaged from time to time in order to uplift their socio-economic status and bring them into mainstream development process. Now when the whole world is moving towards a newer agenda of the Sustainable Development Goal and Global Peace it is high time to bridge the gap and take necessary steps to ensure their fundamental right of Free and Compulsory education is secured. And States should come up with exclusive programs and ensures its effective implementation as well to reap the benefits of constitutional benefits to the tribal people.

However, summarising the above all discussions it could be said that, there is a huge gap in the policy provisioning and its execution in the field. It was also observed that the institutional engagement within and outside with the community and authorities to a large extend was also missing. Given this following are the possible suggestions broadly classified into three categories to address the issue. They are at Policy Level, Program Level and at personal level as well.

- 1) At the policy level there should be decision to recruit teachers in regular interval and permanent in nature. Also provisioning of adequate and if possible extra amount of budgeting should be planned in tribal or sub-tribal plan meeting the educational needs of tribal area children.
- 2) As far as the program level suggestions are concerned there should be regular capacity building program of all stakeholders involved in the education process in tribal areas viz – teachers teaching in the tribal areas, SMC

members and administrators as well. Further there should be focus in the in-service and pre-service teacher training program to build perception and fair understanding on the process and practices to be adopted in those areas while teaching. Apart from it the text-book and learning resources should be developed keeping in view the need and diversity of tribal people. Innovative programs with incentivisation and appreciation could be introduced to motivate and attract teachers to work for / in those areas. Above all the community should be taken into confidence in each and every step for the development, implementation and monitoring of school development plan.

- 3) At personal level the teachers working in those areas with tribal people should be sensitive to their culture and feelings. Therefore they should demonstrate the character of tolerance and wide in thinking and feeling towards the tribal people. As far as possible they should spend time with those people other than teaching hours to increase their rapport and built trust. Teachers should rise above politics or small and pity issues as far as possible to behave all children neutrally.

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