

Changing educational scenario of a scheduled tribe of Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

In this article, an attempted is made to highlight the reasons which are helpful to change the educational scenario of Korku tribe in a particular area of Madhya Pradesh. Previously, Korku tribal groups were situated in a very vulnerable condition and as a result, they were enlisted in the list of scheduled tribes. The purpose of such scheduling was astonished to give them special benefits under various Government schemes for their educational as well as socio-economic improvement. Establishments of enormous number of Government schools with infrastructural facilities such as availability of school building, proper sitting arrangement, teaching and non-teaching staff, free service of books, stationary and uniform, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, mid-day meal, hostel and stipend facility, etc. attract the children to participate in formal education system. Beside these, different tribal development schemes, control of population growth, increasing out-migration, decreasing livestock, effect of media and other factors play a great role to inspire tribal children for achieving education which change the overall educational scenario of Korku tribal groups.

Keywords: korku of kesla, school infrastructure, govt. schemes for socio-economic & educational improvements, role of media

1. Introduction

In Indian sub-continent, tribes are well known as the autochthon. They are intermittently scattered throughout the country except Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Chandigarh. Exact figure of total number of tribal groups is still remained contradictory. But total 623 tribes with groups are accepted by most of the researchers (Nanda & Prasad, 1996). These tribal groups are enumerated to constitute 8.6 per cent of total population of India (Census, 2011). They are considered as indigenous groups and traditionally, they use to build up cluster types of abode on hilly plateau in dense forests for their dwelling purpose. Most of the tribal groups are poverty stricken but they are not intended to go outside crossing their territory for the betterment of their life. There, they are depended on natural forest products for the subsistence of their daily life. As a reason of enormous struggle against poverty, their participation in formal education system is obstructed in a large extent which registers their deplorable low literacy rate (49.4 per cent, census, 2011). These indigenous groups are prostrated under socio-economic backward situation and they are bounded to follow their traditional orthodox. As the reasons of their low literacy rate, socio-economic backward situation and cultural orthodox, they are deliberately isolated themselves from the mainstream on national life (Thakur & Thakur, 1994) ^[13].

Madhya Pradesh is considered as the tribal heart of India. Total 46 tribal groups constituting 21.1 per cent of total population are inhabited there. 'Korku' is scheduled as one among total tribal groups the state. Distribution of Korku is mainly found in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In Madhya Pradesh, they sporadically inhabit mainly in four districts namely East Nimar or Khandwa, Harda, Betul and Hoshangabad. The name 'Korku' is originated from two terms 'Koro' and

'Ku' whereas 'Koro' means person and 'Ku' means alive. Combine, the two words 'Koro and Ku' are defined as the alive member. They speak Korku language which is linked with language of Dravidian (Gondi) population. The Korku language is written by following Balbodh style of the Devanagari script. In a particular area, they construct their houses making an arrangement in two rows which are found opposite to each other. Generally, they decorate their houses with ochre, chalk and yellow clay for giving a distinct identity. Tattooing marks are always visible on the forehead, hands and feet of Korku woman and the process of tattooing is locally called as Kapar Godai. They cover their bodies by tattooing which is considered as ornaments. Through such tattooing, they want to be strong and free from disease (Bijoy, 2003) ^[2].

In the Korku community, dead person is respected as a God and on behalf of dead, they dig a memorial pillar, locally known as Munda. Instead of Munda, sometime they place a small round stone at the place of Muthua Dev for the memory of dead person and respect this stone as Mahadev and Parvati whose inspirations are enacted in all aspects of their socio-cultural life. They also traditionally worship their many gods and goddess for various purposes. Korku tribal groups follow their unique and distinct culture which includes a rich heritage of traditional rules and norms. 'Korku Panchayat' is well known as their traditional representative body of the society. Patel is respected as head of Panchayat whereas Padihar and Kotwar are known as priest and Chaukidar respectively. Beside these, other ten to twelve old male members of the community are appointed as Panch. This Korku Panchayat is found to play a vital role at the time of their traditional festivals, marriages, resolutions intra- and inter-village conflict, etc. Most of them subsist their livelihoods seasonally employing as agricultural labourers. Some of them practise agriculture. They also

produce 'Kharif' crops, cereals, sugarcane, spices, groundnut, cotton and jaggery. They collect resin, gum, bamboo, teak and tendu leaves from their adjoining forest and sell these to their local market (Kumbhare, 2014) ^[8].

2. Methodology

At the outset, a research design was premeditated to conduct the study among Korku tribal groups at Kesla Block under Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh in Central India. Under this research design, collection of relevant research materials from various sources was given on priority. In second stage, the collected research materials were planned to consult for accumulating the general information about their overall socio-cultural aspects and the changing educational trends. Study was deliberated to use survey method throughout the area. Keeping in view on objectives of the study and socio-cultural aspects of the study population, observation schedule was developed as an important part of study design. Observation was presumed to observe the infrastructural facilities of schools, availability of teachers, participation of students in formal education system, quality of mid-day meal, etc. This design was also extended to include interview schedule to collect the qualitative data from students, teachers, parents and community people.

Conversely, Kesla Block in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh was at randomly selected to conduct the present study. In second stage, random selection was also applied to select four schools both primary and secondary in that Block. Infrastructural facilities of those schools were observed thoroughly. In those schools, teachers were interviewed to gather information regarding their teaching strategies throughout the year whereas students were interviewed to assemble information from their learning point of view. Information regarding co-curricular activities were also collected from teachers and students by using interview schedules. Many times, classroom transactions were also observed to assess the teaching-learning attitude of teachers and students. General observation on mid-day meal was also occurred to consider both quality and quantity. Adjoining Korku villages of those schools were investigated and information concerned to their changing socio-cultural aspects and economic status by the impact of divergent Government schemes were collected from the parents of school-students and other people of tribal community. Information related to different schemes for school students and community people were also collected from School Teachers, Village Panchyat Pradhan and Block Development Officer

3. Results and Discussion

This is generous that Koku tribal groups are still inhabited in backward areas. Adult counterparts of these groups are almost illiterate whereas more or less all young members of new generation are going to be educated by availing all resources of new education system. Keeping in view, study was conducted in Korku inhabited areas and information regarding different components of educational change were accumulated

from concerned persons. In results and discussion part, all those are stated in the following manner:

a) Essential Institutional Facilities

Educational schemes of India advocate that nearby, facilities of educational institutions attract children to come in the process of education. It is presumed that through this system, they get advantage to complete their studies comfortably and successfully. Accordingly, educational institutions at initial stage were established in every locality. Slowly and gradually, these institutions were given expert teaching staff, teaching-learning materials, libraries, materials for co-curricular activities, financial support, etc.

i) Availability of Government Schools

Kesla is identified as a rural and tribal dominated area under Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh. In spite of its rural setting, there many schools are found available. As a reason, nowadays, parents do not obstruct to send their offspring in those schools to avail the advantage of school facilities. Side by side, their offspring are also interested to attend the schools due to its close distance. Availability of total 176 primary schools indicates that every locality is possessed to have at least one primary school. Beside this, 70 middle schools, 9 high schools and 9 senior secondary schools are in function in the area. There is no existence of both ITI and Poly Technique institutes. Due to huge number of schools and its settlement in a close proximity to the locality, Korku as well as other community children of Kesla area are found to easily complete their school education. But very rarely cases, they reach in college to complete bachelor degree (Nanjunda, 2008) ^[9].

ii) School Infrastructural Facility

Primary concern of a school is accomplished by school infrastructural facility. However, school infrastructural facility consists of well-constructed building with having sufficient number of classrooms, desks, benches, at least one blackboard, one chair & one table, etc in every classroom, sanitation facility, availability of clean drinking water, facility of electricity, light, ventilation and fire exits. Library, laboratory, computer facilities, first aid kit, medical assistance, canteen, sufficient recreation ground, etc. are also come under the school infrastructural facility. In most of the primary schools of Korku inhabited areas are possessed to have school building with several rooms, chairs, tables, benches, blackboards, etc. Library, laboratory, computer facilities, first aid kit, medical assistance, canteen, etc are not available there. But secondary and senior secondary schools are running with all enlisted facilities. Under various Government policies, many schemes are going on to improve school infrastructure specially of rural schools. It is seemed that the value of education cannot be realized without better infrastructural facilities (Jahan & McCleery, 2005, Ghosh, 2005) ^[7, 5].

iii) Teaching Staff and Training

In Kesla area, it is recorded that total 415 teachers are

teaching in 176 Government primary schools and 242 teachers are teaching 70 middle schools. These figures indicate that as per number of schools, the numbers of teachers are insufficient. Many Government schools of Madhya Pradesh are permitted to appoint local teachers on contract basis. Even, the retired teaching staffs are hired by paying lump-sum amount according to their norms. In other side, the technologies are increasing over the past decade and both regular and contract teachers are taking part in those training programmes, organised mostly by DIETs in summer vacation. Beside this, some state and central organizations are also providing opportunities of short term training programmes throughout the year. By rotation, these teachers are to participate and orient themselves for the use of technologies in their teaching-learning processes.

iv) Non-teaching Staff

As per rule of Madhya Pradesh Government, every school where student strength is below 1500 is given one regular Lower Division Clerk. If student strength is above 1500, these schools are given two regular Lower Division Clerks. There, appointment of two regular Peons in each school is in general. Schools with having strength of 700 students are given two full time Sweepers and other staff. But whereas, strength of students is exceeding 1500, there schools are given three full time Sweepers and other staff like- Scavengers, Watchers, Gardeners and others. If school is having laboratory, there one computer assistant is sanctioned. But in the study area, all schools are having below the strength of 1500 students. Therefore, these schools are found to have one Lower Division Clerk, one Peon and one Sweeper or Gardener.

v) Co-curricular and Extra-curricular Activities

Study as per curricular is not considered as only the single platform for the overall development of children. Beyond curricular commotion, their all-round development is always amalgamated with co-curricular or extra-curricular activities. In those schools, engagement of teachers is done to perform co-curricular activities such as games, yoga, drawing, painting, song, drama, debate, extempore, etc which affect cognitive, emotional, social, moral, cultural and aesthetic development of the life of children. It develops ability of students in co-operation, co-ordination and organizational activities. They think that co-curricular activities may fetch pleasant to the students over the monotonous and routine activities of class. Through extra-curricular activities such as Poetry Club, Quiz Bowl, Blacksmithing, Community Festivals, Animal Rights, etc, teachers try to give them exposure to develop personality, help to transform psychological and sociological behaviours.

vi) Free Service of Book, Stationary & Uniform and Stipend

It is factual that various tribal groups are positioned in socio-economically backward condition. Therefore, several government schemes were framed to give them financial assistance. Government schemes were also introduced to give incentives to their school-going children. The purpose of these schemes is to motivate to

their children for increasing enrolment as well as regularity in student attendance. Under such incentive schemes, the Korku children who are studying in different schools are getting benefits. Children with other communities are studying with the Korku children in some schools, they are also getting equal share of incentives. Common incentives such as free textbooks, free uniforms, shoes, etc are giving to all children. There is also found that some upper primary girl students are given bicycles in some schools. Beside these, tribal children are also getting lump-sum monthly stipend which is also considered as important mechanism to attract the children for attending the school.

vii) Boys and Girls Hostels for Scheduled Tribes

Under Xth Five Year Plan, there was proposed to build up both boys and girls hostels for Scheduled Tribes in various state and Union Territories. In the proposal, it was also mentioned to provide central assistance to states or UTs for constructing new hostel buildings in tribal areas. Provision was also amended to extend the existing hostels, whether established earlier. Cost for the development of new hostel building or extension old buildings would be equally shared between the Centre and the State Governments. Under this scheme, both boys and girls hostels for Scheduled Tribes were developed in Kesla Block. In every hostel building, the numbers of seats were fixed not less than 100. Accommodation in hostels was conferred to the students of primary, middle, secondary and even senior secondary level. However, accommodation of tribal boys and girls was phenomenon as a very useful instrument for spreading education among them. As a result of this facility, specially the illiterate girls were given accommodation in the nearest hostel which helped to increase their literacy rate (Chavan, 2015) ^[3].

viii) Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Countless people of the nation are not able to arrange two square meals in a day. They are observing starvation day after day. Their specially offspring are prostrated by malnutrition. In such circumstance, their offspring are not having stability to receive education from any educational institution. In that situation, Midday Meal Scheme under the National Food Security Act, 2013 was implemented by Government of India to improve the nutritional status of school-going children of the whole nation. Under this scheme, there is provision to provide free lunch to every student in primary and upper primary classes of Government and Government aided all schools on all working days. This Mid-Day Meal Scheme is found available in every school of Kesla area and school-going children are receiving its advantage. This meal scheme bears the tremendous effect not only to improve the health status but also to increase the enrolment of the students. All Korku children continuously register their attainment in formal educational institution without nuisance of dropout.

ix) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was started from 2001 to continuously make several interventions in educational

sector for overall improvement. Under the programme, there is provision to establish enough infrastructure and delivery of necessary materials for educating all. This programme is also found to access and emphasise on retention, make bridge of gender and social category gaps in elementary education which is expected to improve the quality of learning. In Korku inhabited area, many people of all ages are taking advantages of SSA for improving their education. Mahila Samakhya Programme (MSP), launched by Government of India in 1988 is also found to play the active role to educate specially women. The main target of this programme was that 'Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman'. Under this programme, the girls and women of the area are given all educational benefits from stationary to teachers, sitting in their own hamlets. Beside text-book based education, they are also receiving the opportunity of vocational education to develop their knowledge and skill in different areas.

x) Tribal Development Programmes

Most of tribal people all over the country are positioned in backward situation. Therefore, many Government plans are implemented for the welfare and development of tribes. Tribal people are developed through different Tribal Sub-Plans and Five Year Plans of Central Government. State Governments is also funded by Central Government to implement specific schemes which are very helpful for tribal welfare and development. Tribal areas are mostly rugged and isolated from main stream of national life. People are always facing problems of food & drink, shelter, health, education, etc (Veerbhadranaika, *et al.* 2012) ^[14]. In that situation, Governments use to adopt holistic approach and promote synergy and optimization of recourses for their overall development. However, some of the development schemes, effected in Korku tribal areas are stated in the following manner:

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) 2005 later renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is providing at least 100 days of wage employment for livelihood security in rural areas in a financial year to those households whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Development of rural roads under various schemes connects the communities with each other and on the basis of this, better transport system towards markets is existed in the study area. Improvement of rural roads reduces transport cost which enriches status of life of the community people. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was independently started from 1996 to upgrade or construct the houses of the weakest sections of society. Many Korku families were benefited by this scheme. Under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), self-employment programme for poverty alleviation was launched in financial year 1978 for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes families and the physically handicapped.

As a separate national scheme, Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) was launched in 1979 to train rural youth for self-employment. Many Korku youths were also trained under this scheme. Later on,

National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) was started from 1980. There was launched in 2001 Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) to provide agricultural, breeding of animals and adopting the modern methods of animal husbandry, craft related training, 100 days employment guarantee, etc. Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was revamped in 1983 with the dual objectives, first one was expanding employment opportunities in the rural areas. The second one was providing sharper focus on the landless labours who were below the poverty line. Development of Women And Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was started from 1982 for improving the living conditions of women and children by accessing the opportunity of self-employment and basic social services. Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRF) was launched in 1989 by merging National Rural Employment Program (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). It helped to establish Panchayati Raj Institutions for rural employment guarantee.

b) Control of Population Growth

The sporadical dispersions of tribal people are mainly located in rural areas. Due to their rural inhabitation, they are not much more aware about the updated activities of modern India. Mostly, they are stagnated from better foods, dresses, road transports, education, medical facilities, etc. They do not have proper concept about birth control facility (Akin, 2005) ^[1]. Therefore, several Government and non-Government agencies carry on awareness campaigns among tribal people to inform them about different running development schemes. They are also informed to use modern medicines and family planning device to form the small size of family for wider benefits. Gradually, tribal people including Korku are receiving birth control devices and controlling over growth of population. Census study also shows that decadal growth of tribal people of Madhya Pradesh (from 2001 to 2011) is decreased from 24.3 per cent to 20.2 per cent by the intervention of various Government and non-Government agencies. Such trend may be noticed in next census study also.

c) Increasing out-migration

Tribal society is very egalitarian and both men and women are engaged in various occupations such as hunting, gathering of forest products, fishing, shifting cultivation, pastoralists, tribal crafts and artisans, bonded labour, etc. Due to very low return of such occupations, they are not able to subsist their daily life. Beside this, they are nowadays restricted to collect forest products. In addition, they are also suffering from construction of dam and collection of mineral products. Korku tribal groups are facing such poverty and insecure life. As like as other tribal groups, they are migrating on other areas to reduce their poverty and stress of insecure life. After internal migration from one to another area, they generally engage in agricultural labour. But after external migration from rural to urban area, they engage in small scale business, industrial labour, service, etc. It is always noticed that internal migration leads to acquire positive

change for in-migrants and out-migrants (Deshingkar, et.al 2006).

d) Decreasing Livestock

Domestication of livestock is phenomenon as an important element of tribal culture. Most of the tribes practise traditional cultivation and they depend on livestock from initial stage of ploughing to final stage of crop collection. Their cattle and buffaloes are also used to transport goods from village to market and sometimes patients from village to hospital in emergency situation. Manure is come from their livestock which is used to produce varieties of crop. They produce milk and sell to others because milk is not an item of their traditional foods. They use to fulfil their financial requirement by selling livestock (Islam, et.al, 2016). Generally, their offspring are mostly involved for the domestication of livestock. But nowadays, they are earning and availing tractor facility for ploughing, crop collection and transportation. Therefore, their offspring are extricated from the job of livestock herding which help them to participate in formal education system.

e) Role of Media

Engagement of technology expands the world of information which effectively play a great role for social change. Divergent mass media such as radio, television, mobile phone set with messaging, computer with internet, tweeter, face book, newspaper, magazine, etc. are usually used to convey various information (Paul, et.al, 2013). In spite of rural set up, Korku tribal people are also getting benefits by the information of divergent mass media such as radio, television, mobile phone set with messaging, sometime newspaper, etc. Computer with internet facility is rarely availed by them. Most of the time, they enjoy both Hindi and regional movies and follow both national and regional news. It is substantial that they do not have awareness of any educational channel. But, both Korku adults and children sit hours to hours in front of the television and more or less acquire knowledge about the nation as well world. They willingly or unwillingly realise about the different aspects of their socio-cultural milieu as an effect of television programmes. They also acquaint with various Government schemes which enrich their socio-economic and educational activities. Therefore, as a media, role of television is highly appreciable to inspire them for updating their socio-cultural aspects and for sending their children in school so that they can avail the educational benefit of different Government schemes and educate themselves.

4. Summary and Conclusions

The foregoing discussions summarise that Korku tribal groups were totally illiterate, positioned in socio-cultural backward situation and depended on forest products for the survival of their life. Therefore, divergent Governmental development schemes were implemented in the Korku inhabited areas. Under different schemes, many schools were set up in the area with sufficient infrastructural facilities. In well-constructed school building, adequate number of classrooms, desks, benches, at least one blackboard, one chair & one table in every

classroom, sanitation facility, availability of clean drinking water, facility of electricity, light, ventilation, fire exits, library, laboratory, computer facilities, first aid kit, medical assistance, canteen, sufficient recreation ground, etc. are also found available. Under different schemes, the enrolled children of Korku are getting benefits of free textbooks, free uniforms, shoes, etc. Both the boys and girls who come from somewhat distance are availing hostel accommodation with free of cost. In the study area, teachers training programmes are used to organize for professional development of teachers so that they can create better teaching-learning environment and use the available technology in classroom teaching. They also continue various co-curricular activities such as games, yoga, drawing, painting, song, drama, debate, extempore, etc and sometime extra-curricular activities like Poetry Club, Quiz Bowl, Blacksmithing, Community Festivals, Animal Rights, etc to develop cognitive, social-cultural, moral, behavioural and other aspects of students. Mid Day Meal Scheme, available in every school of the study area is not only serve one time food to the children but also attach them with formal educational system without nuisance of dropout.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) enormously provides several facilities to educate the people of all ages. In other side, Mahila Samakhya Programme (MSP) is found to play the active role to edify specially women of different age groups in the Korku inhabited area. Beside education, their socio-economic improvements are also accomplished by launching various tribal development projects such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRF), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), etc. Several Government and non-Government agencies carry on awareness campaigns among tribal areas to inform them about different running development schemes related to the use of modern medicines and family planning device for the formation of healthy and small family. Due extreme poverty, they use to migrate in other areas to reduce their poverty and stress of insecure life. Presently, Korku tribal people are reducing the functions of livestock and availing tractor facility for ploughing, crop collection and transportation which help their offspring to be free from the job of livestock herding. They use to enjoy different media programmes and avail the benefits of different Government schemes to improve their socio-cultural and educational status.

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