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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON LITERACY PRACTICES AMONG TRIBAL CHILDREN

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Abstract

Background: In India for centuries Tribal people are marginalized, underprivileged and deprived in some way or the other. They are still not able to relish the fruits of modernization and technological development. With the help of education they can empower themselves and build confidence and courage to overcome the barriers of their day to day life. Teachers are the harbingers of educational development among the tribal children.

Objectives: The current research aimed to investigate the perceptions on literary practices among tribal children in the State of Telangana. Specifically, it probes into the usage of technology in the teaching-learning process with special reference to the selected villages, teacher's qualifications as well as experience.

Methodology: The study falls descriptive research. A sample of 12 teachers from six tribal villages of Achampet region in Nagarkurnool District of Telangana State was selected. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify the sample. A self-developed questionnaire was administered on the sample. Suitable statistics like chi-square was used to analyse the results.

Results: It was revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of teachers on the use of technology in teaching-learning process was found regard to selected villages, teacher's qualifications as well as experience.

Conclusion: It can be deduced from the discussion that overall results suggest that the use of technology in the teaching-learning process is not very common among the selected villages, teachers experience as well as their qualifications. There is a dire need to create awareness among the teachers in the use of technology among tribal children due to digitalization of academics. Educational implications along with suggestions for future research was also proposed.

Key words: Perceptions; tribal children; literary practices; use of technology; qualifications; experience.

1. INTRODUCTION

India is a home to a large variety of indigenous people. The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. India has the single largest tribal population in the world. According to Census of India, (2011) they constitute 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country (Sahu,2014).

G.S Ghurye (1963) writes in his book about scheduled tribes: "the scheduled tribes are neither called the 'Aborigines' nor the 'Adivasi' nor are they treated together with the scheduled caste and further envisaged as one group of backward class. In modern literature the scheduled tribes are sometimes referred to as untouchables.

The life of tribal communities is full of challenges. They face a lot of problems to survive. At some place the tribals have been made to serve as bounded labours. Even now a day's doms and colta's tribe communities serve the upper caste families in Uttar Pradesh. In Rajasthan the sagri system, in Andhra the vetti system, in Orissa the gothi system, in Karnataka the jetha system and in Chhattisgarh the naukrinaama system are the example of the boundedness. They have borrowed money from the money Landers, but have not been able to pay back so they bound to work till they bound to work till they return the loan.



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Due to shortage teachers, tribal schools are unable to attract students and create interest of tribal students in study. Without proper training, they will not get enough knowledge, which teaching method be opted to teach particular group of students. Acc to Desai & Patel (1981) in relation to effectiveness of various interventions for improving tribal education studied that only 18 out of 22 residential schools have 100% teacher's strengths. And in some cases, the educational qualification of the teacher was below 10th class, which also adversely affects the student's achievement(Vinu,2021)

Significance of the Study

The Central and State governments, since India's Independence, have initiated several schemes and programmes to educate the country's tribal population. These include the establishment of Ashram Schools, Ekalavya Model Residential Schools, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, pre-matric scholarships and vocational training centers.

A cordial relationship between tribal students and their teachers is one of the critical factors to promote meaningful learning in classrooms. It is important to understand that tribal children do not have the same backgrounds as their non-tribal schoolmates or teachers. There is a need to respect and value culture, traditions, mannerisms, languages and cultural heritage of the tribal students. Interestingly, many tribal cultures have positive elements. It should be the responsibility of the teachers and academic personnel to promulgate this incredible wealth of indigenous knowledge among tribal children.

Some reports indicate that tribal students are slow-learners. Overcoming the language barrier requires concerted efforts. The Government of Telangana and NGOs have made some promising efforts to educate tribal children in their mother-tongue. It was reported that tribal children are responding well to such innovative programmes. The literacy rate among the tribal children has steadily gone up over the years.

There is a pressing need for collaboration and strategic discourse between government, policy-makers, civil society organizations and international development institutions to collectively put efforts to address the chronic problems and allocate adequate funds from central and state budget for tribal education.

National Education Policy, 2020 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education and higher education including access to education. Since education is a concurrent subject, State/UT Governments play a vital role in the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020. Further, it aims to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. It proposes special emphasis to be given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). The NEP 2020 reaffirms that bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes in both school and higher education will continue to be one of the major goals of all education sector development programmes.

Need for the Study

Literacy is an important indicator of development among tribal groups. The percentage of literacy of tribes was only 8.54 per cent in 1961 which has increased to 63.1 per cent in 2011. But female literacy of tribes is only 54.4 per cent compared to male literacy of 71.7 per cent. During the post-Independence period, the Indian government implemented legislation and allocated funds to facilitate access to enrolment in primary education (Grades I-V) in India. As a result, both literacy rates and gross enrolment ratios of boys and girls across the general population have increased substantially during the past 50 years.

Kabita Kumari (2014) in an article 'Challenging Issues of Tribal Education in India' enumerated the following issues with regard to tribal education in India.



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- I. Medium of language – Language is one of the important constraints of tribal children which prevents them access to education.
- II. The Location of the Village - The physical barriers creates a hindrance for the children of a tribal village to attend the school in a neighbouring village.
- III. Economic Condition - The economic condition of tribal people is so poor that they do not desire to spare their children or their labour power and allow them to attend schools.
- IV. Attitude of the parents - As education does not yield any immediate economic return, the tribal parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment which supplements the family income.
- V. Teacher Related Problems -In the remote tribal areas the teacher absenteeism is a regular phenomenon and this affects largely the quality of education.
- VI. Lack of proper monitoring- Proper monitoring is hindered by poor coordination between the Tribal Welfare Department and School Education Department.

2.REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There exists a substantial amount of literature on the condition of tribal education in India. A brief review is worthwhile in order to highlight what has already been done in the field. In a study on tribes of Andhra Pradesh, K. Sujatha (1994) contends that the perspective adopted for educational development of tribal communities fails to adequately address the specific disadvantages characterizing the tribal population. It was found that one of the major constraints of tribal education at the planning level is the adoption of a dual system of administration. Jha & Jhingran, D. (2002) advocated the use of the mother tongue or home language as medium of instruction in early stages of education. Gautam, V. (2004) analysed wrong medium of instruction, the appointment of non-tribal teachers in tribal areas and communication gap between the teachers and tribal children are the causes of high dropout rates in tribal schools. Lal, M. (2005) found that among all school dropouts, Adivasis and Dalits form the biggest group. Nair, P. (2007) has given importance on non-formal education in tribal areas particularly to reach out to the hardest-to-reach group of children in remote areas. Sedwal, M. and Kamat, S. (2008) focused on issues related to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes – groups which are recognised for affirmative action within the Constitution of India. Abdurraheem, A. (2011) explained that education as an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy and the policies have to focus on inclusive rather than divisive growth strategies. Arulselvam and Maheswari (2011) pointed out another side of tribes and development; Muhammad Ayub Buzdar and Akhtar Ali's (2011) investigated the parents' attitudes toward their daughters' education in tribal areas of district Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakistan; Nagaraju Battini and Ivanov Alexey (2011) studied religion of Chenchus; Garnaik and Barik (2012) observed that education among tribals is given high priority for the simple reason that it is a key factor of socio-economic development of the tribal community; Abhimanyu Kumar, Kamala Fuloria and Krishna Agrawal (2012) conducted a comparative study of tribal and non-tribal women in the state of Uttarakhand; Kavitha.G et al (2013) studied the impact of technology; Alex Ivanov (2014) evaluated Chenchus tribe tradition and reality; Mohd Iqbal Khan, Amit Banerji (2014) investigated the 'Health Care Management in India; M. Venkata Ratnam, D. Venkata Rao, L. Giridhar, (2014) studied Effects of Deforestation on Chenchu Life; Senapati Tushar Kanti (2015) focused on holistic Tribal Education; Venkataswamy B, Kommalapati Srinivasa Rao (2016) conducted a study on Social and cultural life style of Chenchu tribes; Syed Abdul Shameer (2016) investigated the Cultural Heritage of Chenchu Tribe; D Ramesh Prof. Ch Babu Haranath (2016) studied Factors Inhibiting and Promoting Change in Development and Welfare Programmes Among the Tribal Communities; Bhavani Shankar (2016) took up a sociological study on Health Care Scenario in Rural India; Ramakrishnan Ramachandran (2017) studied on Public Private Partnership (PPP) in Indian Health Care; Dyavanapalli Satyanarayana(2019) studied festivals of Chenchu tribals of Nallamala forests; Kimnei salViana Leivon (2019) explored the idea of accessibility in education for tribal children; Anilkumar Pathavath (2019) evaluated thee use of media among Chenchu tribes; Sanatanaa Mohanthy (2020) conducted a study to measure the attitude of the teachers of the schools of the tribal areas towards the education of the tribal children.



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From the above, it is explicitly evident that research studies conducted in India in respect of perceptions of teachers on literary practices among tribal children are found to be in an embryonic stage. Therefore, there is a dire need to probe into the perception of teachers towards literary practices of tribal children in the state of Telangana. Hence, the present study is taken up for investigation.

Objectives of the Study

- To evaluate the perceptions of teachers of Scheduled Tribe Students on the literacy practices in the Achampet region of Telangana State.
- To study the perceptions of teachers of Scheduled Tribe Students on the literary practices prevalent in the Achampet region of Telangana State with special reference to usage of technology in their teaching-learning process.
- To delineate the perceptions of teachers of Scheduled Tribe Students on the literary practices prevalent in the Achampet region of Telangana State with special reference to usage of technology in their teaching-learning process with regard to the six villages selected, their qualifications and experience.

Delimitations of the Study

- This study is confined to Achampet region in Nagar Kurnool district in the State of Telangana.
- The investigation takes into its ambit the perceptions of teachers in Achampet region of Nagarkurnool district in Telangana State.
- The study is restricted to probe perceptions of teachers on literacy practices among tribal children with special reference to usage of technology in teaching learning process with regard to qualifications and experience.

3.METHODOLOGY

The fundamental purpose of this investigation, as already pointed out to investigate into the *perceptions of teachers on the literary practices for tribal children in the state of Telangana*. Hence, this study falls under non-experimental designs and a *normative survey* is employed to elicit appropriate information from the respondents.

The universe of the present study consists of State of Telangana. The sample constitutes twelve (12) teachers selected from six (6) tribal villages of Achampet Region. Purposive sampling technique was employed to identify the sample.

The investigator has employed the a self-designed questionnaire for the present investigation. The same was administered after testing its validity and reliability on the sample selected. Suitable statistical techniques like Chi-square, along with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 16.0 was used for analysis.

4.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

HO₁: There will be no difference in the perception of teachers on literacy with reference to selected villages.

Table showing perceptions of teachers on the use of technology in teaching learning process.

		Use of technology for teaching learning process		Total
		Yes	No	
Yerrapenta	Count	0	2	2
	% within Village	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%



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Mallapur	Count	0	2	2
	% within Village	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Farhabad	Count	0	2	2
	% within Village	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Appapur	Count	0	2	2
	% within Village	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Baurapur	Count	1	1	2
	% within Village	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Amarabad	Count	0	2	2
	% within Village	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	1	11	12
	% within Village	8.3%	91.7%	100.0%
Chi-Square= 5.455		Df=5	P = .363	Not Significant

It can be inferred from the chi-square test, the calculated p-value is insignificant at 5% level of significant and the calculated p-value is .526, which is greater than .05. Hence, the hypothesis formulated is accepted. Overall results suggest that the use of technology in the teaching-learning process is not very common among the selected villages.

HO₂: There will be no difference in the perception of teachers on literacy practices with special reference to experience.

Table showing perceptions of teachers on usage of technology in teaching-learning process

Usage of technology in teaching learning process		Total		Total	
		Yes	No		
Experience	5 - 10 Years	Count	1	7	8
		% within Experience	12.5%	87.5%	100.0%
	10 15 Years	Count	0	4	4
		% within Experience	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	1	11	12
		% within Experience	8.3%	91.7%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-Square = .545		Df=1	p-value .667		Not significant

From the above table it is observed that the Chi-square value is 545 and the probability value is .667, which is more than .05, therefore the hypothesis is accepted. That is there is no difference in the perception of teachers on literacy practices about technology using in teaching learning process with special reference to their experience.

HO₃: There will be no difference in the perception of teachers on literacy practices on use of technology

Table Showing perceptions of teachers on use of technology and qualifications.

		Use of technology in teaching learning process		Total	
		Yes	No		
Qualification	UG+DIET	Count	3	1	4
		% within Qualification	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
	UG+B.Ed	Count	1	0	1
		% within Qualification	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%



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	PG+B.Ed	Count	2	4	6
		% within Qualification	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	PG+M.Ed	Count	0	1	1
		% within Qualification	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	6	6	12
		% within Qualification	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-Square = 3.667		Df=3	P-value = .300	Not significant	

From the above table it is explicit that the Chi-square value is 3.667 and the probability value is .300, which is more than .05, therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. That is there is no difference in the perception of teachers on the usage of technology in teaching learning process with special reference to teacher's qualifications.

Major Findings

- 1.It was demonstrated from the findings that the use of technology in the teaching-learning process is not very common among the selected villages.
2. The results of the study indicated that no significant difference was found in the perception of teachers on literacy practices about technology using in teaching learning process with special reference to their experience.
3. The results of the study indicated that no significant difference was found in the perception of teachers on literacy practices about technology using in teaching learning process with special reference to their qualifications.

5. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The educational implications from the results of this study cannot be understated. The findings of the present study are of practical as well as theoretical importance to teachers, students as well as to the policy makers.

The findings of this research provide insight to teachers seeking educational development of their children to focus on the use of technology for academic success. Blended learning is one of such technique where traditional learning methods as well as on-line process can take place, which make the students to engage themselves to achieve their goal in education. Further, they can develop interactive learning through this mode of learning. Integrated learning experiences are achieved and learning becomes more accessible.

The investigation holds implications even for the parents to create an awareness among their wards to avail the facilities that are being extended by the Government from time to time to make them more productive citizens.

The results holds some implications even for students. Research documented amply the blended learning strategies have the proven potential to enhance both the effectiveness and the efficiency of meaningful learning experiences. So, the students are to be exposed from time to time, which lead to more flexibility in learning things effectively.

The policy makers should also take into consideration of teachers as well as students' needs and prepare curricular adaptations which are viable and achievable.

6.SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Since improvement and innovations are the hallmark of research, the present study explores many avenues for carrying further research. The suggestions can be summarized as:



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- A similar study can be conducted with a *larger group of respondents* to have in-depth knowledge on ‘the literacy practices among Tribal Children’ in the State of Telangana.
- Studies related to health awareness among tribal students may be taken up for furthering educational practices in the State of Telangana.
- An explorative study can be taken on the *digitalization* in teaching Scheduled Tribe students in the State of Telangana.

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