



Role of Vocational Education in Economic Empowerment of Adivasis of Jharkhand

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Abstract

The Adivasis are categorized as the Scheduled Tribes in the Constitution of India. Adivasis consist of 26% of the total population of State of Jharkhand. 78% of the total Adivasi population lives in the rural areas of the State. At least half of the rural population of the Adivasi lives below the poverty line. The Adivasis of Jharkhand are enslaved in the poverty trap. The per-capita income of the Adivasi community is very low. The majority of the Adivasi youth of the state are poorly equipped for employment in the labour market. Most of the Adivasi youth are neither adequately educated nor equipped with vocation skills. They are unable to succeed in finding productive employment which increases their per capita income and helps them to escape from the poverty trap. In this context the paper tries to study the roles of vocational education in the economic empowerment of the Adivasis of Jharkhand. Vocational education can equip the Adivasis with skills, especially the Adivasi youth, for self-employment and employment in labor market. It can trigger economic change and transformation in the Adivasi community in Jharkhand.

Keywords: Poverty Trap, Vocational Education, Per-Capita Income, Adivasis.

1. Introduction

The Adivasis are categorized as Scheduled Tribe in the Constitution of India. The Scheduled Tribe communities comprise a significant portion of the population of the state of Jharkhand. They comprise of 26.2% of the total population of the state. It is estimated that 78% of the total Adivasi population lives in the rural areas of the state. Their socio-economic condition is pathetic. In the rural areas, they are deprived of basic necessities of life. At least half of the rural population of the Adivasis lives below the poverty line. They are enslaved in the poverty trap. Their per-capita income is very low. There is a serious problem of low literacy and lack of education among the Adivasi youth of Jharkhand. According to 2001 census the literacy rate of the Adivasi population is 38.10 percent in Jharkhand. It is lower than the literacy rate of the general population of Jharkhand. Education and unemployment are interlinked. Education and socio-economic growth are interlinked [1]. Unemployment is a serious issue among the

Adivasis. The majority of the Adivasi youth of the state are poorly equipped for employment in the labour market. Most of the Adivasi youth are neither adequately educated nor equipped with vocation skills. They are unable to succeed in finding productive employment which increases their per capita income and helps them to escape from the poverty trap. They are enslaved in the vicious cycle of poverty. Vocational education can equip the Adivasis with skills, especially the Adivasi youth, for self-employment and employment in labor market. It can trigger economic change and transformation in the Adivasi community in Jharkhand [2].

2. Literacy and Education Level of Adivasis in Jharkhand

There are 32 types of Adivasi communities in Jharkhand. There are 8 Adivasi communities which are categorized as the Primitive Tribe groups. They are Asur, Birhor, Korwa, Birjia, Mal Paharia, Sauria Paharia, Paharia and Sawar. As per 2001



census the population of the Adivasis was 86,45,042 constituting 26.3 percent of the total population of the Jharkhand state. It is as per 2011 census 70,87,068 constituting 26.2 percent of the total population of the state. There is an uneven distribution of the population of the Adivasis in the state. Adivasis are one of the most deprived and marginalized groups with respect to education in Jharkhand. Adivasis have lagged behind in education due to internal and external constraints. The average literacy rate is 54.13 in Jharkhand. However, the literacy rate of the Adivasis is lower than the average literacy rate in Jharkhand. The literacy rate of the Adivasis as per 2001 census is 40.7 percent in Jharkhand. There is a big gap between the male and female literacy in the Adivasi communities of Jharkhand. The female literacy rate of the Adivasis is 10 percent in Jharkhand. It is noted that the literacy rate of the Adivasis has seen its growth since 1991 census in Jharkhand. It was 27.5 percent as 1991 census. The 2001 census shows that among the five numerically larger Adivasis Bhumij, Ho, Lohra, Santhal and Kharwar have over all literacy rates lower than that of the national average. The literacy rates of the Oraons and the Kharias have higher than the literacy rates of other Adivasi communities in Jharkhand. It is noted that more than half of the population of the Oraons and Kharias in the age of seven and above are literates. It is noted that Mundas have the literacy rate almost equal to that of all the Scheduled Tribes at national level. According to 2011 census the literacy rate of the Adivasis is 57.1 percent consisting of male literacy and women literacy rate 68.2 and 46.2, respectively in Jharkhand. The rural literacy rate of the Adivasis is much less than that of the urban in Jharkhand. It is 55.2 percent and 75.2 percent in rural and urban literacy rate, respectively in the state. According to 2011 census, there are five Adivasi communities which have very low literacy rate in the state. These Adivasi communities are Pahariya (25.6%), Birhor (26.4%), Sawar (26.9%), Baiga (29%) and Korwa (29.4%). It is obvious that the literacy rate of the Pahariya Adivasis is the lowest in the state [3, 4].

The state government is aware of the pathetic education condition and low literacy rate of the Adivasi communities of Jharkhand. The socio-economic development of the Adivasis is among the top priorities of the Jharkhand government. According to the Jharkhand Economic Survey 2022-23, the state government has made multiple efforts towards the educational enhancement of the Adivasis. These multiple efforts have been fruitful to an extent. This success is reflected through Gross Enrolment Rate of the of the Adivasi children in the school. The Jharkhand Economics Survey 2022-23 states that the Gross Enrolment among the Adivasis at Primary level was 106 percent in 2021-2022. It is observed that there has been no any improvement in the Gross Enrolment of the Adivasis at the Primary level as compared to 2020-2021. The figures have remained almost the same. However, the Gross Enrolment Rate has improved at the Upper Primary level for the Adivasis in the state. The Jharkhand Economic Survey 2022-2023 shows that the Gross Enrolment Rate among the Adivasis was 87 percent at the Upper Primary level during 2021-22 as compared to the Gross Enrolment Rate of 48 percent among the Adivasis during 2020-2021 [5]. The figures of the Gross Enrolment Rate are growing. The Gross Enrolment Rate at the Secondary level among the Adivasis was 61.4 percent as compared to the overall Gross Enrolment Rate of 68.4 percent among all social groups in the state during 2021-22. The Gross Enrolment Rate at the Secondary level among the Adivasis was 38 percent as compared to the overall Gross Enrolment Rate of 46.4 percent among all the social groups in the state during 2020-2021. The Gross Enrolment Rates of the Adivasis in the higher education has increased over the years. According to Jharkhand Economic Survey 2022-23, the overall Gross Enrolment Rate in Jharkhand has increased from about 16 percent in 2015-16 to around 21 percent during 2019-20. However, it is noted that the overall Gross Enrolment Rate of Jharkhand is much lower than the national average of 27 percent in higher education in 2019-20. The Gross Enrolment Rate in higher education among the Adivasis was



much lower than the overall Gross Enrolment Rate during 2019-20 in the state. The Gross Enrolment of the Adivasis in the higher education was 16 percent while the overall Gross Enrolment Rate of the state, as we have already noted, was 21 percent during 2019-20. The overall Gross Enrolment of the Adivasis in higher education at national level was better than that of Jharkhand. The overall Gross Enrolment Rate of the Adivasis in higher education at national level was 18 percent while the overall Gross Enrolment Rate of the Adivasis in the state is 15.6 percent [6-9].

The research paper “A Study of Career Awareness of Tribal and Non-Tribal Students of Gumla District” by Research Scholar Manisha Kindo and Dr. Prashant Kumar Astalin of University of Allahabad gives some glimpses of the presence of the Adivasi students in the vocational education and training. According to their findings the Adivasi students have less awareness of the career opportunities after the completion of vocational education and training as compared to the students of socially advantaged groups. The study reveals that majority of the Adivasi students have low and average level of career awareness in vocational education and training. They are not aware of importance of skill based education. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and Population Council 2009 in its study “Transition to work roles among youth in Jharkhand” reveals that the majority of the youth in the state are poorly equipped for employment for which there is a market demand. Most youth are neither adequately educated nor equipped with vocational skills. There are a number of vocational and skill development programmes available to youth through government, non-government and private institutions. However, according to the findings of International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and Population Council 2009, just 18 percent of young men and 14 percent of young women have been trained in vocational courses [10]. It follows that Adivasi youth have a negligible number who are being trained in vocational courses. They form unskilled labor force. They are not suitable for

labour market. It is difficult for them to succeed in finding productive employment and become into the labour market. It is true that the Adivasi youth needs vocational and skill based education in order to get employment. Skills development is central to improving productivity. In turn productivity is an important source of improved living standards and growth. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs of India and the Government of Jharkhand have launched encourage the Adivasis to enroll in the vocational courses. The aim of the vocational education and training in the state is to develop the skills of the Adivasis necessary to fit in the labour market and to enhance their income to improve their socio-economic condition.

3. Poverty and Unemployment of the Adivasis in Jharkhand

Adivasis have been known for their abnormal state of destitution and hardship in Jharkhand. The Adivasis are backward from the social and economic point of view. The Adivasis have two major problems: poverty and unemployment. The Adivasis have small or marginal land holdings. The Adivasi youth are largely engaged in agricultural and unskilled non-agricultural activities. It must be noted that agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the Adivasis in Jharkhand. They grow several kinds of crops. They do not grow crops in adequate quantity because they do not have proper agricultural land, irrigation facilities, agricultural tools and fertilizers. They use conventional method of agriculture. The labour income in the agricultural sector is low. A very small number of the Adivasis are engaged in government, private and commercial business in Jharkhand. It is this reason that most of the Adivasis are poor in Jharkhand. Some of the Adivasis of Jharkhand depend upon the forest produce like non-timber, firewood, leaves and herbs. They do not have skilled knowledge to match the demand of the labour market. They have a lack of job opportunities and bad economic conditions. They lack the options of sustainable employment in the state. From the discussion of the unemployment by Jharkhand Economic Survey 2022-23, we can argue that unemployment is high



among the educated Adivasis and low among the illiterates and those who are less educated. The unemployment rate is the lowest among the illiterates. However, the employment opportunities in which the illiterates are engaged generate low income. Such income does not fulfill the economic needs of the family. Such employment opportunities can be termed as unsustainable employment opportunities. The unemployment rate is the highest among those who have diplomas and certificates. It is followed by those who are graduates, post- graduates and highly educated. Diplomas, certificates and higher educational degrees do not ensure the employment among the Adivasi youth. It is true that some Adivasi youth have diplomas, certificates and higher educational degrees, but they lack the skills demanded in the labour market. They are forced to migrate to different metropolitan cities and other places in the search of different kinds of labour work. According to the recent census 2011 data, most of the people of the Adivasi communities migrated to Chennai, Kolkata, Delhi, Gujarat, Hyderabad, and Assam in search of employment in these cities. These cities provide them the opportunities of employment in industries, construction companies, private sectors and a number of other formal and informal organizations. These cities fulfill the economic needs of the family. In other words, they move out from their villages and migrate to these cities to fulfill the needs of their families. It helps them to improve their economic conditions [11-13].

4. Need for Vocational Education

We have already discussed that Diplomas, certificates and higher educational degrees do not ensure the employment among the Adivasi youth. Even after completion of secondary, higher secondary, diploma, certificates, graduation, post-graduation and higher education the Adivasi youth remain unskilled. Since they lack the skills demanded in the labour market, they can be employed in industries and other firms. The enhancement of employability of the Adivasi youth depends on skilled based and vocational education. The labour market employs those who have

acquired vocational skills needed for the production of goods in industries and firms. The Central government as well as Jharkhand government is aware of the importance of vocational and skilled based education for the employment the Adivasi youth in the labour market. There are 43 polytechnic institutions in the state to impart vocational and technical education to the Adivasi as well as non-Adivasi youth of Jharkhand. There are currently 17 engineering colleges in the state. These institutions are established to prepare engineers and technicians for the productions in industries and firms. The government Jharkhand has established the Jharkhand Skill Development Society (JSDMS) to catalyze skill development initiatives in Jharkhand. These initiatives are bearing fruits. They are empowering the Adivasis as well as non- Adivasi youth by equipping them with industry-demanded skills. Such industry-demanded skills lead the Adivasi as well as non- Adivasi youth to sustainable livelihood opportunities and economic growth of the households and the state. The vocational and technical education enables the Adivasi as well as non-Adivasi youth to enhance their employability. It bridges the skill deficit with a view to meeting burgeoning market demand for skilled manpower [14].

There are various Skill Development Training Programmes under Jharkhand Skill Development Society such as Saksham Jharkhand Kaushal Vikas Yojana (SJKVY), Employability Excellence with College Education & Learning (EXCEL), Deen Dayal Upadhyay Kaushal Kendra and Pradhan Mantri Kaushl Vikas YoJana (PMKVY). Saksham Jharkhand Kaushal Vikas Yojana (SJKVY) provides quality skills training to the Adivasi and non-Adivasi youth in the age group of 18-35 of the state and facilitates employment among them. The quality skills training is provided in the sectors of Tourism & Hospitality, Telecom, Security, Retail, Plumbing, Logistics, IT/ITES, Electronics, Domestic Worker, Construction, Capital Goods, BFSI, Beauty & and Wellness, Automotive, Apparel, Agriculture, Food Processing, Healthcare, Iron & Steel and Mining. Employability Excellence



with College Education & Learning (EXCEL) is designed for 10+2 passed out students from colleges across the state of Jharkhand. The programmes being implemented in the colleges run parallel to the ongoing traditional education programmes. These programmes impart life skills and soft skills; thereby increase the employability of the Adivasi as well as non-Adivasi youth in the industry. Deen Dayal Upadhy Kaushal Kendra conducts the training programmes for longer duration. It enables the Adivasi and non-Adivasi youth to help build skills with deeper technical acumen combined with mandatory on job training so as to make them industry ready. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) covers trainings on Beauty & Wellness, IT/ITES, Apparel, Healthcare, Logistics, Green Jobs and Electronics.

The vocational and skilled based education is enhancing the employability of the Adivasi youth. It is helping them to earn sustainable livelihood. It is helping them to become more self-employed individuals. However, a very small number of the Adivasi youth are provided with vocational and skilled based education. As result, the Adivasis are under the grips of poverty and unemployment. Their socio-economic conditions are very bad and pathetic [15]. Hence, vocational and skilled based education must be provided to the Adivasi youth to bring them out of the poverty trap. The state government must develop a mechanism which enables the Adivasi youth to access the vocational and skilled based training. Opportunities must be provided to the Adivasi youth to enable them to acquire skills which are demanded in the labour market. The Adivasi youth must be encouraged to acquire skills to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship among them. Most of the Adivasi youth fail to attend the vocational and skilled education due to economic constraints. Education loans must be provided to the Adivasi youth to complete their vocational and skilled based education. The skilled based programmes of the central government and the state government must be implemented in better way to help the Adivasi youth acquire skills demanded in the labour market.

Conclusion

The socio-economic and educational conditions of the Adivasis are very pathetic in Jharkhand. They are in poverty trap. There is low literacy rate among the Adivasis. Majority of the Adivasis are engaged in agricultural activities for livelihood. A very small number of Adivasis are engaged in private and public sector industries and firms. Most of the Adivasis attend the traditional courses in colleges, hence they lack skills demanded in the labour market. As they are unskilled, they cannot be employed in the labour market. Hence, the Adivasi youth must be provided vocational and skilled based education which will enhance their employability in labour market. It will help them to improve their economic conditions. Hence economic empowerment of the Adivasis will follow.

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