



A Study On The Attitudes Of Tribal Girl Students Towards Higher Education In Mayurbhanj District Of Odisha

¹Dr. Jashmi Hembram, ²Dr. Sujata Acharya

¹Lecturer & HoD, ²Associate Professor, Education & Dean

¹Department of Education, ²School of Tribal Heritage & Tribal Indology

¹Tarini Thakurani Mahavidyalaya, Ghatgaon, Keonjhar, Odisha, India, ²KISS Deemed to be
University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Abstract

As the neglected segment of society, tribal people in various states of India, especially in Odisha, face several challenges in their daily lives. The educational level of tribal children still lags behind that of the general population due to the obstacles they encounter. Higher education, particularly for tribal girls, is further worsened as a result of economic reasons, social stigma, unfavourable parental attitudes, and the physical remoteness of tribal habitats. The present study investigates the attitude of tribal girls in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha towards higher education. Attitude is a predisposition and prerequisite that prompts one to take action. To pursue higher education and overcome all challenges, one should have an inclination towards it. Thus, having a positive or favourable attitude towards higher education drives students to set life goals through higher education endeavours. Employing a self-constructed attitude scale, the investigator gathered data from 200 undergraduate tribal girls in arts, commerce, and science disciplines belonging to higher education institutions in the Mayurbhanj district. Analysis suggests a prevalent positive inclination among tribal girl students towards higher education, with those in the science category showing a more favourable attitude than their counterparts in arts and commerce disciplines.

KEYWORDS: Higher Education, Attitudes, Tribal Girl Students, Education, Tribal, Tribal Education

INTRODUCTION

A tribe is considered as “a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well-assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations” (Majumdar, 1961, p. 367). It is a collective of individuals comprising a community and claims origin from a common ancestor. However, in the context of India, the term “tribe” lacks a clear and universally accepted definition. While various criteria, such as social, cultural, economic, and geographical factors, are often used to identify tribal communities, there is no standardised definition that encompasses all tribal groups across the country. Historically, tribal communities in India were categorised as “backward class,” and until 1919, they were referred to as “depressed class.” The Indian census introduced various terms for tribal groups, with the 1931 census labelling them as “primitive tribes,” the 1941 census as simply “tribes,” and the 1951 census as “scheduled tribes” (Singh & Singh, 2018). The Constitution of India officially recognises these communities as “Scheduled Tribes.” Article 366 (25) defined Scheduled Tribes as “such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution” (Government of India, 2022). Tribal communities exhibit diversity in language, customs, traditions, and their degree of assimilation into mainstream society. While some tribes maintain traditional lifestyles, others have embraced modern practices to different extents. Indeed, the tribal population in India stands as one of the most vulnerable groups, facing consistent violations of their basic human rights. A significant tribal population resides in naturally isolated and remote villages and suffers from poverty and backwardness. Such individuals may lack knowledge about modern life and its advantages. Access to essential infrastructure such as roads, communication networks, healthcare, education, safe drinking water, and sanitation remains severely lacking in remote tribal areas. This hinders their ability to benefit from government assistance in technology and finance. Scheduled tribes are characterised by their traditional practices, distinct culture, geographical isolation, hesitancy to engage with the broader society, and overall socioeconomic disadvantage (Purshottam & Dhingra, 2017).

The essence of tribal communities is deeply intertwined with their cultural heritage, characterised by a strong connection to nature. This distinctiveness is defined by the enduring relationship between the community and their natural surroundings. However, as societies undergo modernisation, the intricate tapestry - the richness, diversity, and depth - of tribal cultures often diminishes (Patnaik, 2023). The uniqueness of tribal communities indeed plays a significant role in preventing acculturation with the mainstream population in various aspects of life. Their distinct languages, religions, social customs, and cultural practices create a strong sense of identity and belonging within their communities. Moreover, their close-knit social structures and reliance on traditional knowledge further reinforce their distinctiveness and separation from mainstream society. The remoteness of tribal habitats, cultural isolation, and discriminatory practices all become detrimental to the development of tribal communities. Alienation from motherlands due to various

projects, deforestation for agricultural expansion, and the construction of dams have all affected the smooth, nature-aligned life of tribal people. Today, they have become marginalised, neither assimilated into mainstream society nor able to continue their traditional tribal way of life. The central and state governments have introduced several steps to uplift tribal communities. The tribal communities have been given “Scheduled Tribe” status by the central government, and reservations for education and employment have been introduced. Besides such reservations, many schemes have been implemented for tribal welfare. However, for various reasons, such initiatives could not fully realise the stated objectives. Lack of awareness about governmental projects and programmes for tribal development frequently hinders their access to these benefits. The living standards of the majority of tribal people lag behind those of mainstream society.

CHALLENGES OF TRIBAL EDUCATION IN MAYURBHANJ DISTRICT

Mayurbhanj district, located in the northern part of Odisha state, is one of the 30 districts in the state. It holds the distinction of being the largest district in terms of geographical area within Odisha. The district's administrative hub is situated in Baripada, while other notable towns include Rairangpur, Karanjia, and Bahalda. As per the 2011 census, Mayurbhanj ranks as the third most populous district in Odisha, following Ganjam and Cuttack, with a population of 25.20 lakhs. Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute a significant portion, accounting for 58.7% of the total population in the Mayurbhanj district (Census India, n.d.). Mayurbhanj is the abode of diverse tribal communities, including the Santhals, Mahali, Saunti, Bhumji, Bathundi, Munda, Gond, Kol, Mankirdia, Lodha, Baiga, Hill Kharia, and others. Among these, the Kol and Bhumji tribes are notably prominent in the Mayurbhanj District. While these communities are dispersed throughout the district, Santhal and Bhumji populations are particularly concentrated in each block. Conversely, Lodha, Mankirdia, and Kharia communities are primarily found in the hilly regions of Similipal, Morada, and Suilapada blocks in Baripada. These tribes rely on forest resources such as nuts, flowers, and leaves of Sal trees for sustenance, with hunting a significant source of food and nutrition. Their diet consists of forest products, agricultural produce, and meat, while they construct their dwellings using wood and bamboo (Parida & Mishra, 2023).

The educational progress in Mayurbhanj district, predominantly inhabited by Scheduled Tribes facing various socio-economic challenges, lags notably behind other areas. As per the 2011 Census, the overall literacy rate of Odisha state stands at 72.9%, with rural areas recording 70.2% and urban areas 85.7%. In rural zones, women exhibit a literacy rate of 60.7%, contrasting with men's 79.6%, while in urban locales, men boast 90.7% literacy compared to women's 80.4%. The average literacy rate of Mayurbhanj is 63.17%, with men having 63.22% and women having 45.53%. A total of 1,220,428 individuals are literate, comprising 713,913 males and 506,515 females. These rates fall well below the national averages of 74.04%, 82.14%, and 65.46% for total, male, and female literacy, respectively. This highlights the educational disparity of Mayurbhanj compared to national and state standards. The district's multifaceted underdevelopment is mainly attributable to its predominantly rural population, with a significant portion belonging to Scheduled

Tribes, facing numerous educational obstacles due to economic, socio-cultural, and health-related factors.

The tribal communities in Mayurbhanj District face numerous challenges in accessing quality education, perpetuating a cycle of educational disadvantage and socio-economic marginalisation. Improving the quality of education presents a hurdle, given that several tribal communities, including the Hill Kharia, maintain their traditional lifestyle, depending on forest resources for their survival (Tudu & Mohapatra, 2021). Due to the mismatch between the current educational practices and tribal culture, many students cannot pursue their studies and discontinue them. Despite having a positive outlook towards educating tribal students, most teachers encounter significant challenges stemming from insufficient training, lack of resources in tribal languages, and shortage of textbooks. Many educators and some parents advocate for adjustments to the school calendar, environment, and curriculum to better cater to tribal-dominated regions. Some parents also voice concerns regarding their children's interactions with non-tribal peers at school. Both parents and students express a desire for increased government support, the establishment of residential schools, and the presence of tribal teachers in local educational institutions (Behera, 2015).

Tudu (2018) outlined several significant issues and challenges within the tribal education landscape of Mayurbhanj district, which can be summarised as follows:

1. **Language barriers:** Tribal children encounter obstacles in accessing education due to language differences, struggling to grasp concepts taught in languages other than their native dialects, particularly Odia (Behera, 2015).
2. **Geographic constraints:** The remote locations of tribal villages create logistical challenges, including physical barriers and long distances, making it difficult for children to attend school regularly.
3. **Financial constraints:** The impoverished economic circumstances of tribal communities often result in parents prioritising their children's labour over education to supplement family income.
4. **Unfavourable attitudes of parents:** Tribal parents may prioritise immediate economic gains over long-term educational benefits, leading to limited support for their children's studies, especially when parents are illiterate or not actively involved in their education.
5. **Teacher-related issues:** In remote tribal areas, teacher absenteeism is common, severely impacting the quality of education provided to tribal students.
6. **Inadequate monitoring:** Effective oversight of tribal education faces challenges due to poor coordination between the Tribal Welfare Department and the School Education Department, resulting in insufficient monitoring mechanisms.

Other obstacles that impede the educational advancement of tribal children in Mayurbhanj, according to Soren (2016), include:

1. **Tribal perspectives on leisure:** Tribals emphasise activities such as dancing, music, and other forms of entertainment as integral aspects of their enjoyment.

2. Presence of ethnic stereotypes: While stereotyping serves as a natural organisational tool in society, it can evolve into harmful prejudices and stereotypes when based on limited information, leading to notions of racial or cultural superiority.
 3. Tribal learning concepts: Learning in many tribal cultures is viewed as an active and enjoyable process primarily conducted among peers, contrasting with the formal education system's approach that often overlooks their preferred learning methods.
 4. Difficulties in learning English: Tribal individuals face greater challenges in acquiring English proficiency than non-tribal peers due to their primary use of regional languages, which can hinder their mastery of English as an additional language.
- Challenges in literacy: Tribal communities possess a rich oral tradition, with their history, myths, and traditions transmitted orally. The absence of a written script in many tribal languages perpetuates reliance on oral communication over literacy.
5. Academic and administrative hurdles: Despite efforts to improve tribal education, the impact on beneficiaries remains limited, with administrative authorities often displaying a neutral stance towards tribal educational needs.
 6. Psychological obstacles: Financial constraints among tribals often result in depression and psychological distress due to unmet needs and limited resources, exacerbating mental health issues.
 7. Health challenges and inadequate healthcare services: Limited health awareness and traditional healthcare practices contribute to recurring health problems among tribal children, compounded by insufficient access to healthcare facilities.

Another impediment to the progress of tribal communities stems from their displacement from ancestral lands due to various factors. For instance, mineral resources, crucial for the state's development, predominantly lie in areas inhabited by tribal groups. The establishment of mineral-based industries in these regions has resulted in the widespread eviction of tribal communities from their traditional lands, giving rise to challenges related to resettlement and rehabilitation (Behera, 2015).

HIGHER EDUCATION SCENARIO OF MAYURBHANJ DISTRICT

In recent years, the Mayurbhanj district has seen significant improvements in higher education. The establishment of additional higher education institutions, including universities and colleges, has expanded opportunities for students pursuing advanced studies. Presently, the district boasts over 70 colleges offering diverse courses. A crucial moment in the district's educational advancement occurred with the establishment of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University (MSCB University), formerly known as North Orissa University (NOU), by the Government of Odisha in 1989. Located in Takatpur, Baripada, MSCB University operates as an affiliating university, offering graduate and postgraduate courses alongside vocational education and skill development programmes that consider industry needs. In collaboration with educational bodies, district authorities have implemented initiatives to increase higher education enrolment and support deserving students through scholarships and other financial assistance schemes.

However, it is important to note that Mayurbhanj district still faces obstacles in ensuring equitable access to higher education. The district's literacy rate falls below the state average due to low-income levels, economic backwardness, absence of industries, and reliance on forest-based livelihoods for income (Tudu, 2018). Certain regions within the district exhibit alarmingly low literacy rates; for instance, the overall literacy rate in the Similipal area stands at 12.62%, with particularly dismal female literacy rates at 5.00% (Sahu, 2014). Many students, particularly those from tribal families residing in villages, encounter challenges such as financial constraints, lack of transportation from remote areas, language barriers, parental stereotypes, adherence to traditional occupations, and limited awareness of educational opportunities. The tribal population, which comprises the majority of the district, exhibits lower literacy rates than other demographic groups. Furthermore, due to the minimal number of tribal students completing secondary education, enrolment in higher education courses remains sparse. Despite government initiatives aimed at promoting girls' education, the status of female education in Mayurbhanj remains miserable, with a mere 37.84% literacy rate among girls. Numerous studies highlight the educational backwardness prevalent among the tribal population in Mayurbhanj, with significant gender disparities and recurring incidents of girls dropping out of school, particularly at the secondary level. According to Hansdah and Abhilash (2020), dropout rates are notably higher among 15-16-year-olds compared to those aged 6-14 years. Tribes such as the Hill Kharias are particularly affected, with many members lagging behind in modern society due to insufficient education, awareness, and nourishment (Tudu & Mohapatra, 2021).

HIGHER EDUCATION OF TRIBAL GIRLS

Empowering tribal girls with access to higher education is essential for promoting gender equality and challenging traditional norms that perpetuate discrimination and marginalisation. By equipping them with knowledge, skills, and confidence, higher education enables tribal girls to assert their rights, make informed decisions, and actively participate in social, economic, and political spheres. Moreover, higher education plays a crucial role in economic empowerment, offering tribal girls better job prospects, entrepreneurial opportunities, and avenues for contributing to the economic development of their families and communities. Additionally, higher education enhances health literacy and facilitates access to healthcare services, leading to improved health outcomes and overall well-being for tribal girls and their families. By investing in the higher education of tribal girls, communities can harness their potential as agents of change, driving social progress, innovation, and sustainable development. Higher education breaks intergenerational cycles of poverty by empowering educated women to make suitable choices about marriage, family planning, and investments in the education and health of their children, thereby uplifting future generations.

The educational backwardness of tribal girls in the Mayurbhanj district stems from a variety of factors, including socioeconomic circumstances, cultural norms, and inadequate access to educational resources. Socio-economic challenges such as poverty, economic disparities, and limited access to basic amenities pose barriers for many tribal families in providing education for their children, particularly girls. Cultural traditions and beliefs also play a role in hindering the

educational advancement of tribal girls, as some communities uphold practices that discriminate against females, thereby restricting their educational opportunities and discouraging parental investment in their schooling. Moreover, the scarcity of educational resources worsens the educational disparities faced by tribal girls. Many schools in tribal areas lack essential infrastructure, impeding regular attendance for girls. Additionally, the shortage of qualified teachers, especially female educators, presents challenges in delivering quality education to tribal girls.

In response to these challenges, both government and non-governmental organisations have initiated various programmes aimed at enhancing the educational prospects of tribal girls in the Mayurbhanj district. These efforts encompass initiatives such as free education, scholarships, and the establishment of hostels for economically disadvantaged girls. Furthermore, the government has undertaken measures to enhance school infrastructure and bolster teacher recruitment in tribal regions. However, despite these efforts, there remains a pressing need for further interventions to ensure that tribal girls in the Mayurbhanj district have equitable access to education, especially at higher levels, and are not left behind.

ROLE OF ATTITUDE IN ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Attitude, often regarded as a predisposition or mindset, is crucial in guiding individuals towards action. It refers to an individual's perspective and assessment of something, reflecting a predisposition or inclination to react favourably or unfavourably to a particular concept, entity, individual, or circumstance. A positive attitude plays a crucial role in academic success by fostering motivation, resilience, effort, confidence, and optimism. It encourages students to stay focused, persevere through challenges, and put in effort. With confidence in their abilities and an optimistic outlook, they actively engage in learning, seek assistance when needed, and remain hopeful amidst difficulties, ultimately leading to greater achievement. Numerous research studies emphasise the importance of attitude in determining individuals' academic success. Güngör (2021) identified a significant and positive correlation between university students' attitudes toward learning and their orientations toward success. Sarwar et al. (2010) found a correlation between secondary school students' study attitudes, measured with a 36-item self-developed scale, and their academic achievement, determined by marks in the 9th-grade examination. In İnce's (2023) study, it was observed that students' attitude significantly influences their academic performance, highlighting a strong and positive correlation between attitude and motivation. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2022) observed a positive correlation between the affective aspect of undergraduate students' attitudes and their academic achievement. Chen et al. (2018) found that having a positive attitude toward mathematics was a unique predictor of math achievement, even after accounting for several other cognitive and emotional factors. The researchers explored how this positive attitude is connected to academic success through neural processes and noticed a relationship between a positive attitude and increased activation of the hippocampal learning-memory system.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

For pursuing higher education, a favourable attitude is a prerequisite for tribal girls, and possession of this attitude equips them to face the challenges on their way to success. Inclination towards higher education serves as a catalyst, propelling individuals to embark on the journey of academic advancement despite potential challenges. A positive or favourable attitude towards higher education serves as a powerful motivator, shaping students' perceptions and behaviours. It not only influences their decision to pursue higher learning but also empowers them to navigate through the complexities of academic pursuits with resilience and determination. Ultimately, this proactive stance towards higher education is a guiding force, directing students towards setting and achieving meaningful life goals through their educational endeavours. The present study investigates the attitudes of tribal girl students in the Mayurbhanj district, Odisha, towards higher education. By exploring the attitudes of tribal girl students, the study contributes to the broader goal of promoting inclusivity within higher education, advocating for equal opportunities and accommodations for diverse backgrounds. Moreover, the findings can suggest the formulation of educational policies required to address the specific needs of tribal communities, potentially leading to improved educational outcomes and socio-economic empowerment.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess and describe the prevailing attitudes of tribal girl students in Mayurbhanj district, Odisha, towards higher education.
2. To examine the differences in attitudes towards higher education among tribal girl students in Mayurbhanj district across various streams of courses, namely arts, science, and commerce.

METHOD

Design of the Study

The current study was structured as an inquiry focused on the district level. Hence, a descriptive survey design was chosen to collect the primary data required for the study. This research design needs the systematic collection of primary data directly from a sample chosen from the population.

Population and Sample

In this study, the population under investigation consisted of tribal girl students enrolled in higher education institutions across the Mayurbhanj district. The researchers randomly selected 200 undergraduate tribal girl students from 10 higher education institutions to comprise the sample.

Research Tool

The study focuses on understanding the attitudes of tribal girl students in the Mayurbhanj district towards higher education. It acknowledges the challenges these students face due to cultural, economic, and familial barriers. An attitude scale was constructed by the researchers following Likert's summated rating method to measure the attitude of tribal girl students. Likert's summated rating method involves presenting respondents with a series of statements reflecting varying perspectives on the subject of interest, to which participants indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. In the context of Likert scaling, participants are presented with a set of response

choices, such as “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Uncertain,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.” Each response option is assigned a numerical value, allowing for quantification of the degree of agreement or disagreement expressed by the respondent.

The process of constructing the attitude scale involved an extensive preparatory phase, wherein the researchers engaged in literature review, consultations with experts, and interactions with tribal girl students, parents, and educators to gain insights into the issues of higher education perceptions within the community. Through these efforts, a pool of sixty statements was compiled, encompassing a diverse range of themes related to higher education opportunities, challenges, and perceptions. After careful examination and editing, 45 statements were chosen for the draft of the attitude scale. A try-out process involving 100 students provided data for item analysis. From this analysis, 40 statements with the highest discriminative power (t value) were selected for the final attitude scale, comprising both positive and negative items. Validity of the scale was established through rigorous content analysis, ensuring comprehensive coverage of relevant dimensions of attitudes towards higher education. Additionally, item validity was confirmed by assessing the scale’s ability to distinguish between contrasting groups based on their responses. Reliability was assessed using the split-half method, resulting in a high-reliability coefficient (.798), further confirmed by the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula (.887), indicating satisfactory reliability of the prepared instrument.

The scoring process for the attitude scale followed the Likert method, wherein responses to statements in the scale were categorised based on their level of agreement. For statements deemed favourable, a response of “Strongly Agree” corresponded to a score of 5. In contrast, “Agree” was scored at 4. “Uncertain” responses were assigned a score of 3 for both favourable and unfavourable statements. Conversely, responses indicating disagreement, such as “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree,” received lower scores, with 2 and 1, respectively, for favourable statements and 4 and 5 for unfavourable ones. Each respondent’s overall attitude score was derived by summing the scores assigned to each statement in the scale. As the attitude scale comprises 40 items, an individual’s score would fall within the range of 40 to 200, calculated by multiplying the lowest possible score (40 items scored as 1) and the highest possible score (40 items scored as 5). The midpoint score of the scale is 120 (40×3). Generally, a higher score indicates a more favourable inclination towards the advocated perspective, which is higher education for tribal girl students. Conversely, a lower score suggests a less favourable attitude.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection involved personally visiting the selected higher education institutions and administering the attitude scale to the sample.

Statistical Techniques

Descriptive statistics, along with the inferential statistical method ANOVA, were utilised to analyse the gathered data.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1. Prevailing attitudes of tribal girl students in Mayurbhanj district

The data collected by means of the attitude scale from 200 tribal girls studying in higher education institutions in the Mayurbhanj district were consolidated and analysed to reveal the stance of the study sample towards higher education. The findings of the descriptive statistical analysis are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Distribution of Attitude Scores of Tribal Girl Students (N= 200)

Sl. No.	Statistic	Value
1	Arithmetic Mean	139.67
2	Median	139.26
3	Mode	138.44
4	Standard Deviation	12.69
5	Skewness	+0.097
6	Kurtosis	0.277

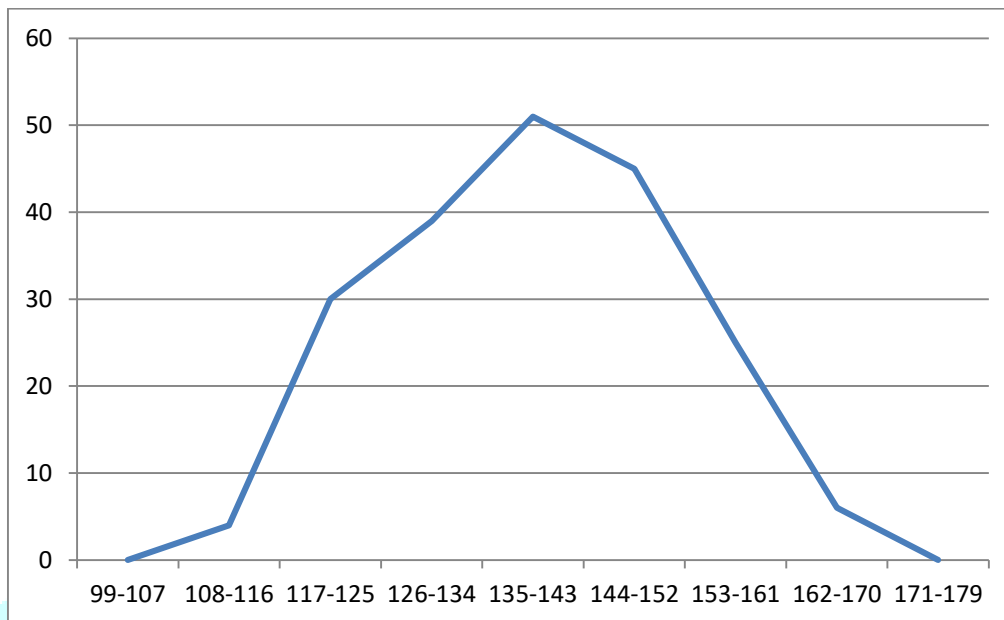
Source: Primary Data

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis presented in Table 1 provide a concise overview and interpretation of the distribution of attitude scores among the studied sample of tribal girl students. The calculated arithmetic mean, median, and mode stand at 139.67, 139.26, and 138.44, respectively. The value of standard deviation, a measure of the extent of dispersion of scores around the mean, is 12.69; the value is not high, indicating a reasonable degree of variability in attitudes. The skewness, at a low positive value of +0.097, suggests a slight rightward skew, but it's not considerable. Similarly, the kurtosis of 0.277 indicates a moderately peaked distribution, resembling closely to a normal distribution. This value isn't substantially different from the kurtosis of 0.263 of a normal distribution (Garrett, 1966, p. 102). From the descriptive statistical analysis, it is evident that the measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) are nearly identical, skewness is minimal, and kurtosis indicates a moderate level of peakedness, signifying an approximately normal distribution of attitude scores.

A graphical representation of the distribution of attitude scores of the sample of tribal girl students is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Graphical Representation of the Distribution of Attitude Scores of Tribal Girl Students



The descriptive analysis indicates that all three calculated averages—the mean, median, and mode (139.67, 139.26, and 138.44, respectively)—are considerably above the midpoint score of 120 on the scale. This observation suggests a prevalent positive trend in the attitudes of tribal girl students toward higher education. The fact that all three measures of central tendency are markedly greater than the midpoint suggests a consistent and favourable orientation in their attitudes. This finding carries implications for understanding the standpoint and predisposition of tribal girl students in Mayurbhanj District, demonstrating a positive outlook concerning higher education. The high scores surpassing the midpoint indicate a general eagerness and openness toward pursuing higher education among tribal girl students, highlighting the potential receptiveness of this demographic to further educational initiatives and opportunities.

The results indicate that, overall, tribal girl students in the higher education institutions of Mayurbhanj district exhibit a favourable attitude towards higher education. However, for the purpose of categorising the students into high, medium, and low groups based on their scores on the attitude scale, the researchers adopted the following procedure. Two score points were calculated: one standard deviation above the arithmetic mean ($M+\sigma$) and one standard deviation below the mean ($M-\sigma$). Students with notably favourable or positive attitudes scored above $M+\sigma$. Conversely, students with comparatively unfavourable attitudes scored below $M-\sigma$, while students with a moderate level of attitude scored between $M+\sigma$ and $M-\sigma$.

The mean and standard deviation of the scores of tribal girl students in the sample are 139.67 and 12.69, respectively. This highly favourable attitude group constitutes respondents having attitude scores higher than 152.36 ($139.67+12.69$), and the low group consists of students having attitude scores below 126.98 ($139.67-12.69$). The medium group with a moderate level of favourable attitude

constitutes students having attitude scores between 152.36 and 126.98. The details of the classification are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Numbers and Percentage of Tribal Girl Students Belonging to High, Medium, and Low Groups With Regard to Attitude towards Higher Education

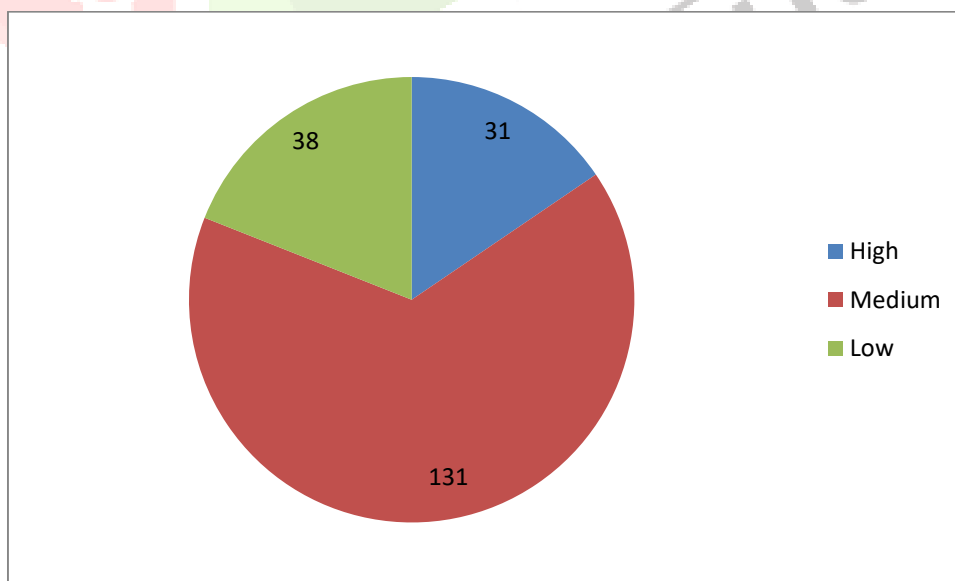
Category	Number	%
High	31	15.50%
Medium	131	65.50%
Low	38	19.00%

Table 2 presents the distribution of tribal girl students into high, medium, and low groups based on their attitudes toward higher education. Out of the total sample, 31 students, accounting for 15.50%, are classified as having a high level of attitude. The majority of students, 131 in total, representing 65.50%, fall into the medium category. Lastly, 38 students, making up 19.00% of the sample, are categorised as having a low level of attitude towards higher education. The distribution indicates that a significant portion of tribal girl students in the sample hold a moderate to high level of attitude towards higher education. However, a notable proportion also falls into the low attitude category, suggesting a need for the implementation of strategies to enhance their engagement and interest in pursuing higher education endeavours.

A graphical representation of the categorisation of tribal girl students based on their attitude towards higher education is given in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Graphical Representation of the Categorization of Tribal Girl Students With Regard to Attitude towards Higher Education



2. Comparison of the attitude of tribal girl students based on academic discipline

The study further investigates the differences in attitudes towards higher education among tribal girl students across various academic disciplines, namely arts, science, and commerce. The study sample consisted of 200 participants, with 70 students from arts, 70 from science, and 60 from

commerce disciplines. To determine if significant differences exist in attitudes towards higher education among these groups, the attitude scores were subjected to an inferential statistical procedure, analysis of variance (ANOVA). The outcomes of the ANOVA test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Results of ANOVA Test of Attitude Scores of Tribal Girls Students Based on Academic Discipline

Source	SS	df	MS	F Ratio
Between-Groups	3642.5914	2	1821.2957	F = 12.6311 (p = .0000)
Within-Groups	28405.6286	197	144.1910	
Total	32048.22	199		

The calculated F ratio of 12.6311 surpasses the critical value at the .01 significance level, which is 4.7145 (with degrees of freedom = 2/197), indicating a significant difference in the means among the compared groups. To identify specific pairwise differences, Tukey's HSD (Honestly Significant Difference) test was conducted. The specifics of the post hoc comparison utilising Tukey's HSD test are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of Pairwise Comparisons of Mean Attitude Sores Employing Tukey's HSD Test

Pairwise Comparisons	Difference between means	Q value
Arts: Science M ₁ = 136.57 M ₂ = 145.49	8.91	Q = 6.05 (p = .00009)
Arts: Commerce M ₁ = 136.57 M ₃ = 136.50	0.07	Q = 0.05 (p = .99935)
Science: Commerce M ₂ = 145.49 M ₃ = 136.50	8.99	Q = 6.09 (p = .00008)

Note: M₁ = Mean score of Arts discipline students; M₂ = Mean score of Science discipline students; M₃ = Mean score of Commerce discipline students

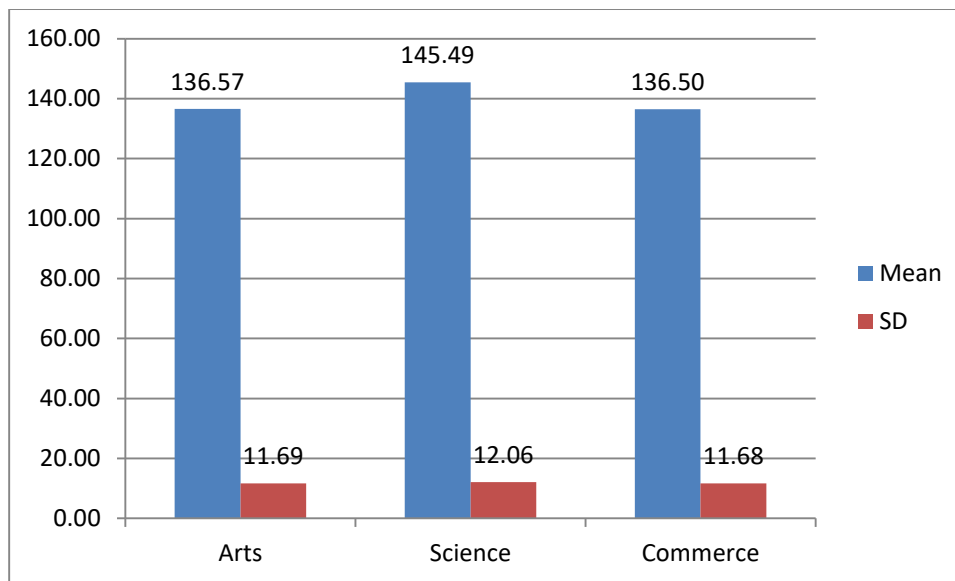
Table 4 provides the results of Tukey's HSD test. At the .01 significance level, the Q value is 4.1685, and the HSD value is 6.1467. Tukey's HSD test for pairwise comparisons indicates a significant difference (at the 0.01 level) in mean attitude scores between students of arts and science disciplines (Q = 6.05; p = 0.00009). Science students exhibit significantly higher attitudes towards higher education compared to arts students. Similarly, students of science and commerce disciplines (Q = 6.09; p = 0.00008) demonstrate a significant difference (at the .01 level) in their attitudes towards higher education; science students exhibit significantly higher attitudes towards higher education compared to commerce students. However, there is no significant difference between arts and commerce students (Q = 0.05; p = 0.99935) regarding their attitudes. Both categories of students exhibit comparable levels of attitude towards higher education.

The analysis reveals that students in the science category possess a more favourable attitude towards pursuing higher education than their peers in arts and commerce academic streams. These results shed light on the impact of academic discipline on the attitudes of tribal girl students,

highlighting the importance of implementing interventions and support systems to strengthen educational aspirations, particularly among those in non-science disciplines. Figure 3 is a graphical representation of the mean attitude scores of tribal girl students based on academic discipline.

Figure 3

Graphical Representation of Mean Attitude Scores of Tribal Girls Students of Different Academic Disciplines



CONCLUSION

The analysis of attitude scores indicates that tribal girl students in the Mayurbhanj district generally possess a moderately favourable outlook on higher education. This favourable stance offers various benefits, not only fostering individual advancement but also contributing to broader societal progress. Students with optimistic attitudes are likely to thrive academically, creating opportunities for diverse career paths and equipping them with critical thinking abilities. This empowerment, in turn, enables active engagement in community development efforts, challenging traditional gender roles and advocating for equality. Higher education serves as a catalyst for preserving culture, enhancing economic progress, and improving overall health outcomes. By cultivating a positive attitude towards education and providing adequate educational resources, tribal girl students can drive positive transformations within their communities, breaking down barriers and paving the way for a more inclusive and prosperous future. Based on the conclusion that tribal girl students in Mayurbhanj district generally possess a moderately favourable attitude towards higher education, several implications can be drawn:

1. **Individual Advancement:** Students with optimistic attitudes towards higher education are likely to excel academically and pursue diverse career paths. Providing support and resources to nurture their aspirations can facilitate their personal growth and development.
2. **Societal Progress:** A positive attitude towards higher education among tribal girl students can contribute to broader societal progress. As these students thrive academically, they can become agents of change within their communities, driving economic development and fostering social inclusion.

3. Empowerment and Community Engagement: Empowering tribal girl students with a positive attitude towards education enables them to actively engage in community development efforts.
4. Cultural Preservation: Higher education serves as a catalyst for preserving culture by equipping students with the knowledge and skills to appreciate and celebrate their cultural heritage while also embracing new ideas and perspectives.
5. Economic Progress: Education is a key driver of economic progress, and a positive attitude towards higher education among tribal girl students can contribute to the economic advancement of their communities. It opens doors to better employment opportunities and promotes entrepreneurship and innovation.
6. Health Outcomes: Education is linked to improved health outcomes, as it empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their health and access healthcare services. Tribal girl students with a positive attitude towards higher education are more likely to prioritise their health and well-being.
7. Community Transformation: By cultivating a positive attitude towards education and providing adequate educational resources, tribal girl students can lead positive transformations within their communities.

Fostering a positive attitude towards higher education among tribal girl students in Mayurbhanj district not only benefits the individuals themselves but also has far-reaching implications for societal progress, community development, cultural preservation, economic advancement, and improved health outcomes. To enhance the positive attitude towards higher education among tribal girl students, several strategies can be implemented:

1. Access to Quality Education: Ensure equitable access to quality education by providing adequate infrastructure, resources, and facilities in tribal areas. This includes well-equipped schools, qualified teachers, and educational materials.
2. Role Models and Mentorship Programmes: Introduce mentorship programmes where successful individuals, particularly women from tribal backgrounds, serve as role models and mentors.
3. Career Counseling and Guidance: Offer career counselling services to help students explore various educational and career pathways. Provide information about available opportunities, scholarships, and financial aid to support their educational aspirations.
4. Community Engagement: Engage parents, community leaders, and local stakeholders in promoting the value of education and supporting students in their educational journey. Organise community events, workshops, and awareness campaigns to highlight the benefits of higher education.
5. Curriculum Enrichment: Develop a curriculum that incorporates culturally relevant content and promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. This can help students see the relevance of education to their lives and communities.

6. Encouragement and Recognition: Celebrate academic achievements and positive attitudes towards education through awards, recognition ceremonies, and incentives. Encourage peer support and collaboration to create a supportive learning environment.
7. Life Skills Development: Offer life skills training programs that enhance students' confidence, communication skills, and leadership abilities. These skills are essential for navigating academic challenges and succeeding in higher education and beyond.
8. Community Outreach Programmes: Establish partnerships with local organisations, NGOs, and government agencies to implement community outreach programmes focused on education.
9. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Regularly assess the effectiveness of interventions and programmes aimed at enhancing positive attitudes towards higher education. Collect feedback from students, parents, and community members to inform future initiatives and improvements.

By implementing these strategies in a holistic and collaborative manner, stakeholders can work towards fostering a positive attitude towards higher education among tribal girl students, ultimately empowering them to realise their full potential and contribute to the development of their communities.

REFERENCES

1. Behera, A. K. (2015). Primary education among tribal people of Mayurbhanj District of Odisha: An evaluative study. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 4(2), 43-54. [https://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v4\(2\)/Version-3/G0423043054.pdf](https://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v4(2)/Version-3/G0423043054.pdf)
2. Chen, L., Bae, S. R., Battista, C., Qin, S., Chen, T., Evans, T. M., & Menon, V. (2018). Positive attitude toward math supports early academic success: Behavioral evidence and neurocognitive mechanisms. *Psychological Science*, pp. 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797617735528>
3. Garrett, H. E. (1966). *Statistics in psychology and education* (6th ed.). Bombay: Vakils, Feffer, and Simons Limited.
4. Government of India. (2022). *The Constitution of India*. <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s380537a945c7aaa788ccfcdf1b99b5d8f/uploads/2023/05/2023050195.pdf>
5. Güngör, C. (2021). The relationship between attitudes towards learning and success orientation in undergraduate students. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 8(3), 1774-1796. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1308321.pdf>
6. Hansdah, S., & Abhilash, T. (2020). *Scheduled tribes and school education: Analysis of a household survey in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha*. Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. <https://cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WP501.pdf>
7. İnce, M. (2023). Examining the role of motivation, attitude, and self-efficacy beliefs in shaping secondary school students' academic achievement in science course. *Sustainability*, 15(15), 11612. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151511612>

8. Johnson, J., Reddy, P., Sharma, S., Wakeling, L., Mani, J., Benveniste, T., Naiker, M., & Brown, S. (2022). Attitude and achievement of first-year chemistry undergraduate students at the University of the South Pacific. *Frontiers in Education*, 7, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.873571>
9. Majumdar, D. N. (1961). *Races and cultures of India*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
10. Parida, S., & Mishra, S. (2023). The tribal society of Mayurbhanj, Odisha. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Innovations*, 11(4), 35-42. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10078340>
11. Patnaik, A. (2023, August 1). Preserving tribal culture. *The Hindu*. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/preserving-tribal-culture/article67142138.ece>
12. Purshottam., & Dhingra, V. (2017). Understanding the Indian tribal life and their issues. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 5(7), 1588-1595. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/4873>
13. Sahu, K. K. (2014). Myths and realities of tribal education: A primary study in Similipal area of Odisha. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 3(4), 01-06. [http://ijhssi.org/papers/v3\(4\)/Version-1/A03410106.pdf](http://ijhssi.org/papers/v3(4)/Version-1/A03410106.pdf)
14. Sarwar, M., Bashir, M., & Alam, M. (2010). Study attitude and academic achievement at secondary level in Pakistan. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, 7(2), 55-60. <https://doi.org/10.19030/tlc.v7i2.89>
15. Singh, V., & Singh, M. (2018). Understanding the Indian tribal life and their issues. *International Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 12(1), 86-98. <https://ijeponline.org/index.php/journal/article>
16. Soren, D. (2016). Relevance of education and dropout among tribal students in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 3(23), 1693-1701. <https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/45614853/9>
17. Tudu, F., & Mohapatra, R. (2021). Educational status of the Hill Kharias of Mayurbhanj district of Odisha in East India: A psychological analysis. *Psychology and Education*, 58(1), 2915-2927. doi:10.17762/pae.v58i1.1189
18. Tudu, M. (2018). Issues and challenges of education of tribal children: A contemporary study in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 5(11), 681-686. <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR1811599.pdf>