



ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS TRIBAL EDUCATION IN ASHRAM SCHOOLS: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Education is the backbone of every society. It is a powerful tool for social change. Opening of tribal schools in the tribal areas in the wake of the modern developmental process have brought in juxtaposition two distinct value systems—one based on inherent traditions and the other one relating to technology and innovations. Harmonious synchronization of the two systems is highly essential for the rapid educational development among the tribal children. The biggest issue with teaching tribal children is the lack of adaptability of tribal children to non-tribal conditions. There is a gap between school culture and family culture of children, creating a situation of cultural mismatch, resulting into creating discipline problems, management problems and poor responsiveness of tribal children towards academic activities. It is the need of the hour to overcome these problems and provide quality education to tribal children. The present study is an attempt to explore the attitude of Ashram school teachers towards quality improvement in tribal education. The study was conducted using survey method. The sample of the study consists of 40 teachers (25 male and 15 female) selected randomly from 10 schools in Visakhapatnam District. The data were collected from the teachers using an attitude questionnaire. The data were analyzed using Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, Critical Ratios and Percentage analysis. The findings of the study revealed that majority of teachers working in Ashram schools are very much committed to their profession. The physical facilities available in the schools are adequate. The teachers reported that there is good working environment in the schools. The study recommended long term planning for providing quality education to tribal children. It is also suggested that the parents should be motivated towards the need for education of their children.

Key words: Tribal education, Ashram schools, Professional commitment, Quality education

INTRODUCTION

There are two main areas in which Ashram Schools need to improve upon with regard to tribal education. One is evolving curriculum which is relevant, decentralized and flexible; and the other one is to adopt appropriate pedagogy. In the context of Ashram Schools, the important aspect is how to bridge the gap between the tribes and the schools, how to relate life-experiences with the class room teaching and how to re-orient the planning of academic activities at institutional level. It is neither possible nor desirable to have separate curriculum for Ashram Schools due to the problems that arise with regard to certification, equivalence, mobility, credibility etc. Therefore, the only option where the Ashram schools and the teachers rely upon is the adoption of appropriate curriculum and pedagogy suitable to the needs of the tribal children.

CONCEPT OF 'ASHRAM SCHOOLS'

The concept of 'ashram school' emerges from the objective of making provision of an atmosphere, in which students are provided with opportunities for their complete personality development. Ashram schools are residential schools in which free boarding and lodging along with other facilities and incentives are provided to the students. In ashram schools, apart from formal education, there is emphasis put upon physical activities, meditation, sight-seeing, play, sports, games; and other extra-curricular activities such as drawing, painting, handicrafts, music and dance. Ashram schools have been regarded as operative institutions to meet the educational needs of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes and individuals belonging to poverty stricken families. In these schools, a close connection is established between teachers and students. These individuals mostly live in the interior, backward and dispersed habitations, where it is not practicable to establish normal schools.

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL CHILDREN

Spread of quality education among marginalized sections like tribes of the society has become a formidable task in India today. Quality education for ST children needs to be considered on priority basis not only because of the constitutional obligation, but also for the comprehensive development of the ST communities in the country. However, with the advent of modernization, the education of tribal children has undergone a different phase. Under the influence of globalization, tribal education and culture have been tremendously

influenced. The uniqueness of the tribal culture, which enriches the country's culture, is fast disappearing and even getting indistinct under very powerful influences of the dominant urban culture. According to **Rita Rani Talukdar (2013)**, "Different types of programmes like compensatory, remedial, enrichment, guidance, teacher-orientation, parental education, curriculum renewal etc., are to be conducted regularly in the schools in tribal areas with a view to provide quality education for tribal children. These programmes will help in increasing the educational attainment and personality development of the tribal students". Under these circumstances, there is a dire need to take necessary steps to improve 'quality' in tribal education and bring the tribal population into the mainstream of the society.

NEED FOR THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

When the investigators, as a part of his research activity, approached some of the Ashram Schools, it has been noticed that most of the teachers do not possess the specialized skills with regard to teaching tribal children. Some of the teachers have expressed the problems they confront with while educating tribal children in Ashram schools. Further, from the review of related literature, it is observed that there are very few studies conducted earlier by the other researchers on the attitude of teachers towards tribal education in Ashram schools. Hence, the investigator thought it desirable to conduct research in this area. The present investigation is an attempt to study the attitude of teachers working in Ashram Schools towards quality improvement in tribal education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present investigation is to know the attitude of teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education. The study aims at studying the teachers' attitude with regard to different dimensions, viz., Professional commitment of teachers, Physical facilities available in Ashram schools, Academic activities conducted by the school, working environment and Service conditions of teachers working in Ashram schools.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present investigation:

- (i) There is no differential influence in the attitude of teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education with regard to the dimension, 'Professional commitment'
- (ii) There is no differential influence in the attitude of teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education with regard to the dimension, 'Physical facilities'.
- (iii) There is no differential influence in the attitude of teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education with regard to the dimension, 'Academic activities'.
- (iv) There is no differential influence in the attitude of teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education with regard to the dimension, 'Working environment'.
- (v) There is no differential influence in the attitude of teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education with regard to the dimension, 'Service conditions'.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to find out the attitude of teachers working in Ashram Schools in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh towards quality improvement in tribal education. These teachers include both male and female working as Headmasters, School Assistants and Secondary Grade Teachers in the Ashram Schools.

METHODOLOGY

- (a) **Sample:** The sample of the study consists of 40 teachers (25 male and 15 female) working in 10 Ashram schools located in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh selected by using Random Sampling technique.
- (b) **Research Tool:** The researchers used a well prepared questionnaire consisting of 45 items as the tool of research for the present investigation. After selecting the items for the tool, the researchers verified whether the tool prepared for the present investigation is in conformity with the conditions

required by a standard measuring instrument. The tool was administered to 40 teachers (25 male and 15 female) working in Ashram schools.

(c) Administration of the Tool

The questionnaire consisting of 45 items on various issues relating to quality improvement in tribal education has been administered to 40 teachers (25 male and 15 female) working in 10 Ashram schools in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. These teachers include Headmasters, School Assistants and Secondary Grade with differences in their age, qualifications and teaching experience.

STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data collected has been analyzed using different statistical techniques such as Mean score values, Standard Deviations, t-ratios and percentage analysis.

The following table provides the high acceptances of respondents (80% and above) in respect of different items of the research tool with regard to different dimensions that contribute for the quality improvement in tribal education.

Table showing high acceptances (total score of 80% and above) in respect of all the subjects for different items included in the scale, dimension wise

S. No.	Dimension of Quality improvement in tribal education	S. Nos. of items showing high acceptance	Total number of items showing high acceptances	Percentage of high acceptances in the dimension
1	Professional commitment	1, 2, 3, 9	4	44.44
2	Physical facilities	12, 16, 19	3	27.27
3	Academic activities	22, 26	2	25.00
4	Working environment	29, 33	2	28.57
5	Service conditions	36, 38, 42, 44	4	40.00
	Total		15	

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

From the high acceptances given by the respondents in respect of the items in the scale provided under different dimensions shown in Table-4.28 above, it is concluded that teachers working in Ashram schools have exhibited the highest positive attitude towards quality improvement in tribal education with regard to the dimension, 'Professional commitment' of teachers (44.44%) followed by the other dimensions,

‘Service conditions’ of teachers (40.0%), ‘Working environment’ (28.57), ‘Physical facilities’ (27.27%) and ‘Academic activities’ (25.0%).

From the results shown above, it is concluded that the teachers working in secondary schools have exhibited better attitude towards ‘Professional commitment’. The priority given to this aspect of teachers is due to the reason that the commitment of teachers in the profession plays a significant role in the teaching-learning process. The teachers working in Ashram schools should work with commitment and dedication towards the profession for the noble cause of tribal education. The teachers should have a thirst for providing quality education for tribal children. Hence, the teachers working in Ashram schools have expressed the highest positive attitude towards quality improvement in tribal education with regard to the dimension, ‘Professional commitment’.

Similarly, teachers have also exhibited favorable attitude towards ‘Service conditions’. Teachers prefer to work in schools where the service conditions are satisfactory. They have also expressed that they will be able to work in schools whole-heartedly provided the service conditions are better. Next in the order of priority, teachers have expressed a positive attitude towards ‘Working environment’, which helps them serve better in the institution for the well-being of the tribal children. The teachers have expressed that they find good working environment in the school to render their services for the noble cause of teaching in Ashram schools. Similarly, they have shown positive attitude towards provision for ‘physical facilities’ in the school. Teachers can work with commitment in the schools only when the schools are able to provide minimum physical facilities in the institution. Finally, the teachers have exhibited favorable attitude towards the ‘academic activities’ conducted by the school. The academic activities are conducted in the Ashram schools as per the academic calendar provided by the authorities of Education Department of the State Government. Hence, the teachers are expected to follow the academic calendar scrupulously; and there should not be any deviation in the schedule of academic activities. The curriculum prescribed for these schools should be transacted as per the schedule given in the academic calendar.

CONCLUSIONS

The teachers working in Ashram Schools have shown a high favorable attitude towards quality improvement in tribal education with regard to the following dimensions.

(i) Professional commitment of teachers

From the high score of acceptances (80% and above) given by the teachers on the dimension, 'Professional commitment' in respect of items 1, 2, 3 and 9 of the scale, it is concluded that the teachers feel proud of themselves for serving in Ashram schools with all commitment and dedication.

(ii) Physical facilities

From the high score of acceptances (80% and above) given by the teachers on the dimension, 'Physical facilities' in respect of items 12, 16 and 19 of the scale, it is concluded that there is a good library available in the school. There is also an attached hostel to the school and the students are provided free boarding facility in the attached hostel.

(iii) Academic activities

From the high score of acceptances (80% and above) given by the teachers on the dimension, 'Academic activities' in respect of items 22 and 26 of the scale, it is concluded that the students are provided counseling and guidance services in the school. Further, they are given training in life-skills education.

(iv) Working environment

From the high score of acceptances (80% and above) given by the teachers on the dimension, 'Working environment' in respect of items 29 and 33 of the scale, it is concluded that the teachers maintain cordial relations with their colleagues; and parents visit the school frequently to know the progress of their children.

(v) Service conditions

From the high score of acceptances (80% and above) given by the teachers on the dimension, 'Service conditions' in respect of items 36, 38, 42 and 44 of the scale, it is concluded that the teachers are happy with the service conditions relating to their job. They have expressed that they get their salaries in the regular pay scales attached to the posts held by them. They also get pension benefits on their retirement.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The following are the educational implications of the present study.

- (i) The present study helps teachers to formulate appropriate teaching strategies suitable to tribal children studying in Ashram schools.
- (ii) The results help to develop the curriculum content suitable to the learning needs of tribal children in Ashram schools.
- (iii) The study is an eye-opener to the policy makers with regard to formulation of policies suitable to tribal children in Ashram schools.
- (iv) The study helps to improve the working conditions in Ashram schools in order to provide quality education to tribal children.
- (v) The study helps the teachers working in Ashram schools to motivate the students and their parents towards the need for education for tribal people.

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