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A STUDY ON THE ATTITUDE OF ASHRAM SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN TRIBAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Education is the process of facilitating learning; or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, beliefs, habits and values. It is an effective means of social reconstruction. It has relevance to the needs and aspirations of the people living in a fast changing society. Education of tribal children is an important task before the Government of India. The Article 46 of the Indian Constitution talks about promotion of educational and economic interests of people belonging to Schedule Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections. The article says: "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of the people and in particular of SCs and STs and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations". About 8.08 % of this vast country is the tribal (scheduled) population. 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 several problems that impede quality improvement in tribal education. 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 Ashram schools in Visakhapatnam District. The data were collected from the teachers using an attitude questionnaire. The variables considered for the study include Gender, Marital status, Age and Teaching experience of the teachers working in Ashram schools. The data were analyzed using Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations and Critical Ratios. The findings of the study

revealed that the gender, age, marital status and teaching experience of teachers working in Ashram schools did not influence their attitude towards quality improvement in tribal education. The study suggested that the tribal parents should be motivated towards the need for exposing their children for quality education in the context of globalization.

Key words: *Tribal education, Ashram schools, Tribal children, Quality improvement.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is an effective means of social reconstruction. It has relevance to the needs and aspirations of the people living in a fast changing society. Education of tribal children is an important task before the Government of India. The Article 46 of the Indian Constitution talks about promotion of educational and economic interests of people belonging to Schedule Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections. The article says: “The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of the people and in particular of SCs and STs and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations”. For several historical, economic and social reasons the scheduled groups have remained economically backward and socially retarded even to this day. This is true with respect to their educational levels also. 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 several problems that impede quality improvement in tribal education. To bridge the gap, it is suggested that the school managements and the administration should evolve curriculum which is relevant, decentralized and flexible; and to adopt appropriate pedagogy in teaching tribal children. The life-experiences of the tribal children should be related to the class room teaching; and accordingly the academic activities are to be planned 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 quality improvement in tribal education. Hence, the investigators 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 present study also aims at studying the influence of gender, age, marital status and teaching experience on the attitude of teachers working in Ashram Schools towards quality improvement in tribal education.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present investigation:

- (i) There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education.
- (ii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards quality improvement in tribal education.
- (iii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of married and unmarried teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education.
- (iv) There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards quality improvement in tribal education.

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. The study is confined to know the influence of four demographic variables, viz., Gender, Age, Marital Status and Teaching experience on the attitude of teachers working in Ashram Schools towards quality improvement in tribal education.

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 male and female of different age groups; married and unmarried with differences in their teaching experience.

STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data collected has been analyzed using different statistical techniques such as Mean score values, Standard Deviations and t-ratios; and is presented in the following table:

Table showing t-values of different variables relating to the attitude of teachers towards Project-based learning in secondary schools

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Result
1	Gender	Male	25	153.70	31.84	0.180*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Female	15	151.83	32.22		
2	Age	Below 40 years	28	151.21	31.39	0.185*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		40 years & above	12	153.83	33.49		
3	Marital Status	Married	26	152.81	31.54	0.190*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Unmarried	14	154.79	31.33		
4	Teaching Experience	Less than 10 yrs	30	154.50	32.82	0.096*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		10 yrs. & above	10	152.50	34.00		

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data, the researchers have arrived at the following findings and drawn the conclusions.

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards quality improvement in tribal education.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of married and unmarried teachers working in Ashram schools towards quality improvement in tribal education.
4. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers with a teaching experience of less than 10 years and those with an experience of 10 years and above towards quality improvement in tribal education.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that gender, age, marital status and length of service of the teachers working in Ashram schools have no influence on their attitude towards quality improvement in tribal education.

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 quality education to tribal people.

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