

Educational Problems Among Children Of The Nomadic Tribes In Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Education is widely recognized as a critical instrument in the global social inclusion process, particularly within India's context. However, educational development in India exhibits significant disparities, particularly among various tribal communities. Nomadic tribes, in particular, face notable challenges and are markedly behind in educational attainment. Presently, children belonging to nomadic tribes continue to experience educational exclusion, impeding their integration into mainstream society. This lack of educational access contributes to their socio-economic and political marginalization. Consequently, this study aims to address the educational deficiencies among nomadic tribal children and facilitate their integration into broader societal frameworks. This research aims to investigate the economic circumstances of nomadic tribes and the educational hurdles faced by their children. Data was sourced from both primary and secondary outlets. Primary data was collected through a sample of 60 respondents, comprising 15 individuals each from Iruliga, Hakki-Pikki, Malekudiya, and Medar tribes, selected via a simple random sampling approach. The study underlines that educational development among children from nomadic tribes remains significantly behind expectations.

Keywords: Nomadic tribes, Education, Backwardness.

Introduction

In the contemporary globalized society, education is considered essential and indispensable for all individuals. However, significant disparities in educational access and attainment across various communities reflect broader societal inequalities. While Western societies grapple with class-based educational disparities, India confronts educational inequities structured along caste lines. According to the 2015-16 annual report of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, India's Scheduled Tribes population stands at 10.45 crore, comprising 8.6 percent of the total population per the 2011 census (Seema & Nitin Sangwan, 2020). This demographic reveals that those disadvantaged in education also face challenges in employment, highlighting the intricate link between education and socio-economic mobility.

Education yields private benefits and generates spillover benefits for society, making it a critical investment in human capital (Duraismy, 2002). In India, groups experiencing educational inequalities include Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, nomadic tribes, women, and backward communities. The root causes of educational disparities in India are deeply embedded in social and economic inequalities among diverse communities. Literacy, considered a fundamental capability contributing to human well-being, signifies more than just a socio-economic indicator—it represents a means by which individuals can exercise agency over their lives (Amartya Sen, 1992).

Nomadic tribes are particularly vulnerable to educational marginalization within this context. Karl Marx's theory of economic inequality as a fundamental societal problem finds resonance here. Despite constitutional provisions for educational equality in India, nomadic tribes struggle to access such schemes. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate in Karnataka is 75.4 percent, whereas among Scheduled Tribes, it stands at 62.1 percent, indicating a 13.3 percent literacy gap that underlines their educational disadvantage.

Further, All India Survey of Higher Education 2018-19 data reveals that Karnataka's overall higher education enrollment ratio is 28.8 percent. In contrast, among Scheduled Tribes, it is merely 19 percent (Handbook on Social Welfare Statistics, 2021). This statistic highlights the stark disparity in higher education access, primarily attributed to financial constraints. Similarly, poverty among nomadic tribes has escalated, leading to increased school dropout rates as children are compelled to work at an early age. Consequently, children from nomadic tribes are deprived of higher education due to inadequate encouragement and support systems.

Objectives

- To study the economic background of the nomadic tribes and

- To analyze the educational problems among children of the nomadic tribes in Karnataka.

Review of Literature

Alka Saxena's (2002) study explores into the challenges faced in tribal education, mainly focusing on the issue of teacher absenteeism. The study highlights that although education department regulations grant teachers leave, their absences often coincide with school days rather than scheduled holidays. Consequently, when teachers are absent, schools are forced to close due to a lack of literate individuals to oversee the students in their homes. This absence of educational awareness among parents within tribal families contributes to educational disparities among their children.

Ananda (2000) advocates for a tailored approach to tribal education, emphasizing the necessity of aligning lessons with the economic activities prevalent among tribal communities, including food gathering, hunting, fishing, agriculture, and horticulture. The author emphasizes the importance of instilling values such as self-respect, self-reliance, and mental preparedness to equip tribal students for future educational and professional endeavors within diverse socio-cultural and economic contexts. This approach aims to nurture tribal students without instilling any sense of inferiority complex, enabling them to integrate effectively into broader societal frameworks. The literature reviews by Saxena (2002) and Ananda (2000) highlight key challenges and strategies in tribal education, with Saxena emphasizing issues of teacher absenteeism and parental education awareness impacting tribal children's schooling, while Ananda advocates for tailored educational approaches aligned with tribal economic activities and values to foster self-reliance and integration.

Statement of the Problem

Children from nomadic tribes in Karnataka encounter multifaceted educational hurdles stemming from their socio-economic context. These challenges include limited school access, inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, language barriers, and insufficient support systems. Economic factors such as poverty and nomadic lifestyles also contribute to irregular attendance, high dropout rates, and limited exposure to quality education. The educational problems faced by nomadic tribal children impact their academic performance and hinder their socioeconomic mobility and integration into mainstream society. Factors such as parental illiteracy, lack of awareness about the importance of education, and cultural barriers further exacerbate these challenges. Understanding the economic background of nomadic tribes is crucial to comprehend the root causes of educational disparities. Economic instability, limited livelihood opportunities, and inadequate resources within nomadic communities directly influence children's access to education and their ability to thrive academically. Analyzing educational problems among children of nomadic tribes involves examining barriers such as language differences, cultural disconnect, discrimination, and the absence of tailored educational programs that resonate with these communities' unique needs and aspirations. By investigating these issues, this study aims to inform targeted interventions and policies that promote inclusive and equitable education for nomadic tribal children in Karnataka. The ultimate goal is to empower these children with the knowledge and skills necessary to break the cycle of poverty, achieve socio-economic advancement, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Research Methodology and Techniques

For the present study, field survey has been carried out by using scientific techniques for the data collection. Qualitative and quantitative information was collected. Information was collected by the respondents with the help of mentors, experts and pre-tested and finally the perfect interview schedule was used to gather needed information for the present research.

Study Area and Sample

For the present study, a total of four districts from Karnataka state such as Shivamogga, Dakshina Kannada, Mysuru and Ramanagara districts have been selected to collect the necessary data. The data was collected from a total of 60 respondents among them 15 Iruliga tribes from Ramanagara district, 15 Hakki-Pikki tribes from Shivamogga district, 15 Malekudiya tribes from Dakshina Kannada district and 15 Medar tribes from Mysuru district were selected by using simple random sampling method.

Sources of Data Collection

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary data has been gathered through field survey by using well structured Interview Schedule from the respondents. The secondary sources of data have been gathered from published Books, Journal Articles, Periodicals, Reports, Theses, Volumes, Websites (E-source) and others.

Data Analysis

The research methods, techniques and research data from various sources are analyzed in a qualitative and quantitative manner using codification, revision, classification, indication and analyzing the information in a sociological framework using adequate statistical tools.

Table 1. Educational status of the respondents

Educational status	No. of respondents	Percentage
Illiterates	17	28.33
Primary	28	46.66
Secondary	10	16.67
Pre university	03	05.00
Graduation	01	01.67
Post-graduation	01	01.67
Total	60	100.00

Source- Field Study

The data presented in Table 1 reveals the educational status of respondents from nomadic tribes in Karnataka, with a sample size of 60 individuals. The majority of respondents (46.66%) have completed primary education, indicating foundational literacy and numeracy skills. However, a significant proportion (28.33%) of respondents are classified as illiterate, highlighting persistent educational challenges within this population. The low representation of individuals with secondary (16.67%), pre-university (5.00%), and higher education qualifications (graduation: 1.67%, post-graduation: 1.67%) underlines systemic barriers that limit access to advanced education among nomadic tribes. This distribution emphasizes the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve educational access, quality, and retention rates among nomadic communities in Karnataka, addressing socio-economic disparities and promoting inclusive educational development.

Table 2. Details of respondents children getting education at different levels

Educational level	No. of respondents	Percentage
Illiterates	09	15.00
1-10 th	22	36.66
Pre university	11	18.33
Graduation	08	13.34
Post-graduation	02	3.33
Bachelor of education	03	5.00
Others	05	8.33
Total	60	100.00

Source- Field Study

The details relating to respondents children getting education at different levels is given in table 2. Out of 60 respondents interviewed, 15 per cent of the respondents children are illiterates, 36.66 per cent of them are having 1-10th level of education, 18.33 per cent of their children have pre university education, 13.34 per cent graduation level of education, 3.33 per cent of them have post graduation level of education, 5 per cent of them are having bachelor of education (B.Ed.) education and the remaining 8.33 per cent of the respondents in the study area are having some other level of education like diploma, ITI and others. From the present study it is found that, 36.66 of the respondents children are getting 1-10th level of education. They said that, the reason for curtailing education to 10th class is that their families are suffering from poverty and their children have to work with them to earn some sort of income.

Table 3. Reasons for drop outs of respondents children from schools

Reasons for drop outs	Frequency N=60	Percentage
High costs	04	06.66
Work at home	13	21.66
Poverty	49	81.66
Work for livelihood of the family	09	15.00
Distant educational institutions	06	10.00
Fear to safety	11	18.00

Source- Field Study

The above table presents the reasons for drop outs of respondents' children from schools. Among a total of 60 respondents, 6.66 per cent of the respondents' children drop out from the schools due to higher costs for their enrollment to the schools, 21.66 per cent of them work at home along with their family, 81.66 per cent of the children drop put schools because of their poverty, 15 per cent of them respond that they have to work for livelihood of their families, 10 per cent of them said that the educational institutions are distant from their homes and the remaining 18 per cent of the respondents replied that due to fear of safety their children are dropped out from the schools. The present study reveals that, 81.66 per cent of the respondents children drop out from schools because of the poverty in their

families. It has also been found that, parents and children are not aware of the importance of their children education and thus depriving them from education.

Table 4. Details of challenges faced by the respondents for educational achievement of their children

Challenges faced	Frequency N=60	Percentage
Lack of information about education	29	48.33
Lack of information about career	25	41.66
Inadequate support from schools and colleges	06	10.00
Lack of parental support	28	46.66
Family poverty	49	81.66

Source- Field Study

Details regarding challenges faced by the respondents for educational achievement of their children has been shown in the above table. Out of 60 respondents interviewed, 48.33 per cent of the respondents' opined that, their children are facing lack of information about education, 41.66 per cent of the respondents' said that, their children are facing the problem of lack of information about their career, 10 per cent of them replied that their children are facing inadequate support from schools and colleges, 46.66 per cent of the respondents opined that, their children are facing lack of parental support and the remaining 81.66 per cent of the respondents said that their children are facing the problem of family poverty.

The present study showed that, 81.66 per cent of the respondents replied that their children are facing the problem of family poverty. It has been revealed that, they are facing such problems because they do not know about modern education.

Strategies for Enhancing Educational Access and Equity among Nomadic Tribal Communities in Karnataka

- Implement poverty alleviation programs targeting nomadic tribal families to lift them out of poverty, including income-generation initiatives and access to government welfare schemes.
- Conduct community-based education awareness campaigns involving local leaders, educators, and NGOs to emphasize the importance of education, highlight available resources, and showcase potential career paths.
- Develop and implement educational programs tailored to nomadic tribal communities, such as flexible schooling options, mobile education units, and distance learning programs.
- Empower parents within nomadic tribes through training and resources to actively support their children's education, fostering enhanced parental involvement and advocacy.
- Foster collaborations among government agencies, NGOs, educational institutions, and community leaders to provide comprehensive support, including scholarships, mentorship programs, and access to educational resources.
- Address safety concerns related to accessing educational institutions by establishing more accessible schooling options within nomadic communities, such as community schools or mobile education units.
- Advocate for policy reforms at local, state, and national levels to prioritize and address the educational needs of nomadic tribes, advocating for inclusive education policies and dedicated resources for these communities.

Conclusion and Discussion

The educational challenges faced by nomadic tribal communities in Karnataka are complex and multifaceted, rooted in socio-economic disparities, lack of awareness, and systemic barriers. This discussion highlights several key strategies and interventions to address these challenges and promote equitable educational opportunities for nomadic tribal children. Firstly, implementing poverty alleviation programs targeting nomadic tribal families is essential to uplift them from poverty and create a conducive environment for educational participation. Income-generation initiatives and improved access to government welfare schemes can mitigate economic barriers that hinder educational access and retention. Secondly, conducting community-based education awareness campaigns plays a critical role in promoting the importance of education and showcasing available resources and career paths. Engaging local leaders, educators, and NGOs is pivotal in fostering a supportive environment that values education within nomadic communities. Thirdly, developing and implementing educational programs tailored to nomadic tribal communities is crucial. This includes flexible schooling options, mobile education units, and distance learning programs that accommodate nomadic lifestyles and address their unique educational needs. Empowering parents within nomadic tribes through training and resources is another vital aspect. By enhancing parental involvement and advocacy, parents can actively support their children's education and break the cycle of intergenerational educational disadvantage. Furthermore, fostering collaborations among government agencies, NGOs, educational institutions, and community leaders is essential to providing comprehensive support. Initiatives such as scholarships, mentorship programs, and improved access to educational

resources can significantly enhance educational outcomes for nomadic tribal children. Addressing safety concerns related to accessing educational institutions is also imperative. Establishing more accessible schooling options within nomadic communities, such as community schools or mobile education units, can help overcome geographical and safety barriers. Lastly, advocating for policy reforms at local, state, and national levels is crucial to prioritize and address the educational needs of nomadic tribes. This involves advocating for inclusive education policies and securing dedicated resources to support educational initiatives within nomadic communities. In conclusion, by implementing these strategies and interventions collectively, stakeholders can work towards overcoming educational challenges and fostering inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for nomadic tribal children in Karnataka. Empowering these communities with education enhances individual socio-economic outcomes and contributes to society's overall development and inclusivity. Efforts must be sustained and collaborative to ensure that every child, regardless of their background, has access to quality education and the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

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