

**DROPOUT AMONG TRIBES: A MATTER OF CONCERN FOR ALL OF US****Steen Pagan****Ph.D. Research Scholar****School of Social Science,****Jawaharlal Nehru University****New Delhi-110067****ABSTRACT**

*After more than six decades of independence, India has been struggling with numerous challenges, including tribal (8.6 percent of the total population) education which needs an urgent attention. Despite huge investment in education and numerous flagship programmes, high dropout rate still exists among tribal due to various reasons. This study conducted by adopting sample survey method and qualitative research with 69 sample of Kharia tribal dropout children, their parents, teachers and civil society members to explore the unnoticed socioeconomic and cultural background, institutional constraints on the educational achievements of tribal children in the state of Odisha. This study also looks into the role of civil society to bridge the educational gap among tribes in Odisha. This study found various causes and consequences of dropout among these tribes in elementary education such as school factors, home factors, social and cultural factors, economic factors, communication factors, language factors, illiteracy etc. Hence, the government has to do a lot more for the education of these tribes by adopting different measures such as appointment of qualified teachers, upgrading school facilities, more investment, proper monitoring of implemented flagship programmes, financial supports, proper communication facilities etc.*

**Keywords:** *tribal education, dropout rate, elementary education, universalization of education, right to education and Kharia tribes.*

**Introduction**

The indigenous communities in India have been habituated with distinct tradition, culture and speak different dialects. These communities have been encountering many challenges in India in general and in Odisha particular because of the systematic marginalization as a historical fact on the one hand and asymmetrical development by the nation-state on the other. For instance, there is a huge gap and a high dropout rate found in education of these communities vis-à-vis general category. District Information System for Education of India (DISE) report (2013-14) shows the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 101.36 in primary education, 89.33 in upper primary, 97.00 in elementary, 76.64 in secondary and 52.21 in higher secondary respectively in 2013-14 in India. It also indicates the enrollment of Scheduled Tribes (STs) is 11.09% in primary education and 9.37% in upper primary education of the total enrollment rate in 2013-14. The perceptible gap between STs and general is a challenge for policy makers, educationist and social scientists to understand the root causes of the high dropout rate. The tribal in Odisha constitutes 9.2 percent of the total tribal population in India. Among them, more than 70 tribal groups are living mainly in rural and hilly areas of Odisha. This study seeks to undertake educational problems of Kharia tribes in Odisha. Social, economic, education and health status of them are reported to be inadequate as the Human Development Index (HDI), Odisha has been shown at the bottom since 1999 in comparison to other states in India (Indian Human Development Index Report, 2011). It is in this context; the present study becomes

significant to find out the persistence of the high dropout rate in elementary education among the tribal groups.

In India, tribes are treated as out-castes for long, as they have been isolated from mainstream and living a miserable life (Thorat, 2004). Similarly, there has been a huge gap among the tribes in the domains of education, income, social status, human dignity, health, sanitation etc. in comparison to others. Studies have also revealed a high dropout rate in elementary education among these Kharia tribal schools going children in rural Odisha. Despite a bunch of welfare measures taken by the state, no significant changes are visible in education and mainly in the living standard of these tribal people in Odisha due to various reasons. In Odisha disparities between social groups are continuing to remain for long. Tribal groups suffer from the accumulative disadvantages because of their spatial and social location. It adds to the entitlement failures, lack of accountability and high rate of corruption. Therefore, the problem of the tribal development is a complex one that needs careful attention ((De Hann and Dubey, 2005, Kulkarni, 1980).

There has been a global debate on universalization of primary education since the 1960s and the American Coleman Report in 1966 made a commitment to equal educational opportunity for all children across regions, race, class and gender. Education for all was to acknowledge and recognize the strong inter linkage between educational achievement and subsequent economic wellbeing as it has been proved among higher income families and their economic prosperity based on educational achievements. Since, access to education has been poor among lower income families around the world, global debate on universal primary education for all becomes significant to the developing societies like India. Though access to free education has been declared as fundamental rights in India between the age group of 6-14 years children, the dropout rate continues to exist and persist particularly among the lower income groups.

The public expenditure on education, including all levels, is very low in India as compared to the other countries of the world. The Human Development Report of India (2011:237) shows that in 2000-01 India had made an expenditure of 3.9% of GDP and over the years it has been reduced. As far as India is concerned, it is a land of large population, diverse cultures and full of numerous potentials. She is growing and the investment in human resource development is also growing slowly, though, since 2000-01 it has been decreased till 2012 due to global recession and other domestic causes. Since improving the quality of human resource is necessary for the development of the nation, it needs more investment. But huge investment is made to exploit natural resources for industrial progress. As a result, it created a huge investment gap and imbalance in investment for people. This dilemma of development is visible in the form of less investment in education and thereby huge opportunity gap in education between diverse sections of society in general and most deprived groups like tribal children in particular. In fact, opportunity gap was found in all sectors of education of tribe in Odisha. The present study, indeed, examines the causes and consequences of dropout rate among the Kharia tribe.

### **Tribal History in Indian Society**

Hindu religion described what depicted in the Vedas, Hindu society is classified into four firstly, varnas or castes: Brahmin (priest and teacher), secondly, Kshatriya (ruler and warrior), thirdly, Vaishya (trader), and finally, Shudra (servant). Subdivided into many smaller castes or jatis are found later. Additionally, Dalits and Adivasis are lower in the social hierarchy and have been left outside the caste system. The Dalits, were called “untouchables” and later Mahatma Gandhi renamed them as Harijan

(“children of God”). They are now constitutionally denoted as the Scheduled Caste (SCs), and the adivasis or the tribe, as the Scheduled Tribe (STs). In the Indian framework, “scheduled” has a specific meaning that is different from the common practice. The SCs and STs are mentioned in a list of the castes and groups which were pinched and counted in two separate schedules of the Constitution of India (Desai and Kulkarni, 2008). Though India is the largest nation in the world with tribal concentration and almost half of the tribal researchers are here, the exact meaning referred to tribes in India, is not clear till today.

During colonial periods, British used to call these tribal people as criminal tribes in some places, because they revolt by not listening the colonial government and were busy in their own practices. After colonial rule, the tribes have been increasingly brought in contact with the larger society and with the world through means of transport, trade and commerce (Xaxa, 2001:2769). But during post-independence, in 1952, they were de-notified by the government of India as the aboriginal people of the land and different kind of initiations were taken like reservation in, union/state legislature, educational institutions and employment, provision of scholarship for primary to higher education, reservation in job promotion, special provisions for them within Plan Expenditure in the Annual Budget which is known as sub-plans and so on for their development. Article- 342 and Article-366 (25) of Indian Constitution distinguishes and defines the Scheduled Tribes.

After independence, the impact of economic development became deeper and more extensive among the tribal with a rapid development of communications and contact with non- tribal society and its exploitative elements. But still the pressure of non-tribal settlement is forcing them to go into forest and hill which is causing cultural and economic impoverishment. The tribal situation is simmering with acute discontent of a basically different character over the last many years is clear from the emergence of Naxalite movement which arose mainly in the tribal tracts. 1990s, after the Government of India focused on the competitive global market by exploiting her natural resources and in the name development, numerous tribes have been displaced. Land is taken away from them, a major source of livelihood of these people (Pathy, 1981 & 1999, kunhaman, 1985 and Xaxa, 2001). So despite constitutional and legal safeguards, the lives of the tribes have been worsened and socio-cultural lives have been destroyed (Pathy, 1999:106). The educational benefits, reservations, special development programs for the tribal people are still in contradictions (Kamat, 1981). So, for their development, we have to understand their environment or their local based needs, interests and cultures (Watson, 1970). In Nehru’s words, it is known as ‘tribal pachsheel’. It means, each and everything is to be considered while tribal development agenda formulation and execution (Jharkhand Forum).

The Mission Mode Project (2013) for school education reveals that there are 1, 24, 500 secondary schools, over 11 lakh elementary schools and more than 71 lakh teachers engaged in teaching in India. Similarly, to assess the progress of education sector, Government of India prepared a ‘Report to The People for Education, 2011-12’ reveals that the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) has increased in comparison to other categories of student that is Scheduled Tribes’ enrollment in elementary school is 119.7 percent (120.50 boys and 118.7 girls), secondary school is 53.3 percent (57.00 boys & 49.1 girls), in higher secondary is 41.5 percent (45.4 boys & 37.3 girls) and elementary to higher secondary is 94.8 percent (96.8 boys & 92.8 girls). On the other hand, the dropout rates have also increased to 35.6% in primary, 55% in elementary and 70.9 in secondary education of the tribal students at national level.

Table- 1  
GER in India, 2011-12

Class	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
	ST	ALL	ST	All	ST	ALL
I-V (6-10 yrs.)	137.2	115.40	136.7	116.7	<b>137.00</b>	116.00
VI-VIII (11-13 Yrs.)	90.7	87.70	87.00	83.1	<b>88.9</b>	85.5
<b>I-VIII (1-13 Yrs.)</b>	<b>120.5</b>	<b>104.90</b>	<b>118.7</b>	<b>103.7</b>	<b>119.7</b>	<b>104.3</b>
IX-X 914-15 Yrs.)	57.1	69.00	49.1	60.8	<b>53.3</b>	65.00
I-X (6-15)	108.2	97.60	105.3	94.8	<b>106.8</b>	96.2
XI-XII (16-17 Yrs.)	32.7	42.20	24.8	36.1	<b>28.8</b>	39.3
IX-XII (14-17 yrs.)	45.4	55.50	37.3	48.4	<b>41.5</b>	52.1
I-X (6-17yrs)	96.8	88.00	92.8	84.4	<b>94.8</b>	86.5

Source: "Statistics of School Education, 2010-11"

The table given below shows a clear picture of grade wise dropout rate of tribal student in India. The highlighted row is the dropout rate in elementary education and a comparison can be made here of tribal student with all categories of students. It is also clear from the table that the dropout rate among tribal students is high.

Table-2  
ST Dropout Rate in 2010-11

Class	Boys		Girls		Total	
	ST	All	ST	All	ST	All
I-V	37.2	28.7	33.9	25.1	<b>35.6</b>	27.0
<b>I-VII</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>40.6</b>
I-X	70.6	50.4	71.3	47.9	<b>70.9</b>	49.3

Source: "Statistics of School Education, 2010-11"

Boom of the District Information System for Education (DISE) (2013-14) expressions that the enrollment of STs was 11.09% in the primary and 9.37% in the upper primary education of the total enrollment in the year 2013-14 and the average annual dropout rate was 4.67% in primary education, 3.13% in upper primary education and 4.17% in elementary education at the national level.

Despite all initiatives or programs, the developmental status of tribes are not yet satisfactory. The paradox is noticed here is that, in primary school education, the enrollment ratio is good and the dropout rate is high, despite universalization of primary education began one and half decade ago. It is in this context, this study becomes significant to investigate the dropout rate in the primary education and its causes and consequences among the tribal groups in the state of Odisha. Since, primary education is the critical minimum for overall development and intellectual growth of any society and foundation for building a sustainable use of human resource, its direct or indirect impact on children of backward communities are paramount.

### **The Tribe in Odisha**

Odisha became an independent state got separated from British ruled Bihar-Orissa-Madras provinces on the first of April 1936. Administrative unites of the state constitutes 30 districts, 314 blocks and 317 Tehsils. The total population is estimated to be 4, 19, 74,218 (34970562 rural & 7003656 urban) and the sex ratio is 1000:1029. Out of total population 9590756 (22.8%) are tribes (Census report, 2011). In the state, more than 62 notified tribal groups have been residing and Kharia is one of them. Kharia tribes distributed around neighbouring state of Odisha like Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and West Bengal (Govt. of Odisha, 2013). As far as educational status of the state is concerned, the literacy rate was 72.9 percent, however, the dropout rate of the tribal students was reported to be 22.1% in primary education, 74.6% in elementary and 85.6 secondary education (Govt. of India, 2013). No doubt, role of the state is critical for the development of deprived sections of society. In this context, strategies on public policy and public investments get immediate attention in these gray areas of development. For example, policies such as Midday Meal (MDM) and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) are flagship programs for improving the quality of elementary education in India began in 1995 and in 2000 respectively. In spite of these initiatives, the tribal education in India in general and Odisha in particular is not satisfactory. Despite reasonable public investment in education, the tribal education in Odisha is under trial. Due to high corruption, less accountability among bureaucrats, politicians and disinterestedness of teachers, development of tribes remained stagnant. As a result, most of the tribal people in Odisha are continued to be illiterate and living without foods, sanitation, proper health facilities, communication and quality education in the forest and hilly areas.

Among 30 Districts in Odisha, district Jharsuguda is found to be rich in mines, industries and business outlets. In fact, it was new a district being carved out of Sambalpur District on the first of April 1994. The total population of the district was 579,505 (296,690 males and 282,815 females) which has grown 13.69% from 2001 and the density was reported to be 274/sq.km. Development indicators such as literacy (78.86%), sex ratio (953) and the child sex ratio (943) have also shown moderate. About 60 percent live in the villages (census report, 2011).

It has been observed that the environment is not conducive for education in the district. Now the district is changing fast because of the introduction of industrial units, power and steel plants. Serious environment degradation is vividly visible on the one hand and employment and financial condition of the district are rising up on the other. The KBK region of Odisha constitutes ten districts, located in western part. This region is the most backward in the state and it has been considered as one of the most vulnerable area in the world. No adequate health facilities, education and communication facilities are found here. Poverty hits the lives of the people very hard. Jharsuguda District is one among the ten districts of this region where educational environment is bound to be poor here. The dropout rate in elementary schools is reported to be high. Dropout rate in the district is a matter of concern. So the study area is reported to be incidence of high dropout among tribal children. (All India School Education Survey, 2013)

Kharia tribe has been habituated almost all parts of the district, but they were distributed unevenly. The socioeconomic, educational, health conditions are miserable. Rarely, children from this tribal community are completing matriculation and I am the only post graduate belong to the Kharia tribe in the district even today. It has been observed in the district that the exploitation of dominant upper castes has resulted in the marginalization of tribal. Almost all benefits of the tribes have been cornered by the caste

Hindus in the district as they were in the bureaucracy and politics. No doubt, educational status of the district is high, but it very less among the tribal community and many of them remained illiterate. Now the situation is changing due to rapid industrialization in the district.

### **Rationale and Field Area Covered**

After more than six decades of independence, India has been struggling with numerous challenges, including education despite enormous investment has been through in this sector. India pledge with the league of 135 nations to make education a fundamental right committed for access, attend and complete elementary education for all constitutionally. Despite this, a large section of society is still remained backward, particularly the tribal communities. Living conditions of tribes are extremely poor in terms of basic amenities like access to food, education, health, sanitation and communication. Recently, India Government's Human Resource Ministry, alarmed the high dropout rate among the children (July 2014). Apart from this, many studies show an educational gap among tribes, particularly in Odisha. The Indian Human Development Index Report, 2011 for instance, reveals the position of the state of Odisha being very poor. There are numerous factors and forces hinder the educational achievement of the tribes. In this context, this study is undertaken to explore the unnoticed socioeconomic and cultural background, institutional constraints on the educational achievements of tribal children in the state of Odisha. This study also looks into the role of civil society to bridge the educational gap among tribes in Odisha.

The existing studies suggest that the backwardness of tribal in India is fundamentally due to lack of education. But, there is no study so far on the Kharia tribes of Odisha. Dropout rate is reported very high among them, despite of different flagship programs, such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme and Right To Education (RTE) implemented to ensure completion of 14 years of schooling to realize universalization of elementary education. Because of various constraints, the rights and provisions are not reaching to the tribes. There is a huge gap between the government policies on the one hand and ground realities in the field, on the other. By keeping in mind the equal educational opportunity for all on the one hand and growing educational inequalities among the tribes on the other, this study intends to explore the educational status of tribes in the Jharsuguda District of Odisha. It specifically investigates, whether social, school, home environment, economic and other social factors influence the high dropout rate in elementary education among the Kharia tribal children? In corollary to this, this study also examines the consequences of high dropout among the tribal children?

Though, Jharsuguda District has shown high literacy rate and rich in minerals, industries, business as shown in government reports, the reality is something different from the official records. The present study is carried out among the Kharia tribes as the researcher has been a member of the same tribe and has been observing the community since childhood. It is noticed that only few Kharia young tribes are completing matriculation due to miserable living conditions. Most of the tribe's men do wage laborer to earn livelihood. The state of Odisha for the last several years has been at the bottom of the low development index in India (Indian Human Development Report, 2011). There is no such visible educational environment in the district and the tribes are neglected in every sphere of life. For instance, because of the less irrigation facilities, tribes lost their agricultural activities and as a result, they are in search of job in other state for livelihood. Because of these structural problems and uneven development, conditions for improving education status of them are very poor. Hence, the dropout rate of early education

is found is to very rampant. Therefore, the present study focuses on the elementary education to find out the real causes that led to the high dropout rate among Kharia tribes. This study explores the challenges, opportunities and gap in education among them. It also finds out hidden unnoticed causes and consequences behind the high dropout rate in the elementary education.

### **Methodology**

Mediation research has been considered with theoretical and empirical practices in different paradigms of human life, including education, international dispute resolution, labor management, judges, mental institutions, community, environmental, managerial, public sectors, marital, parent- child, child custody and police interactions (Wall and Lynn, 1993:161). Academic Mediation Theory has been deployed for long to study different kinds of mediating factors which influence academic performance in school and lead to drop out of school. It is not only limited to this problem, but also to study other numerous factors in the entire education arena such as problems in student-teacher relationship, parent-teacher association, curriculum framework, policy formulation, investment in education, child centered education, school environment, home environment, teacher training, children's socioeconomic and cultural background and so on.

### **Sample, Tools and Method**

This study rely on both primary as well as secondary information. Primary sources include governmental documents, records, laws, policy statements, newspaper reports, important persons' opinions, conference documents and programs. Secondary sources include books, periodicals, journals, newspapers, official reports, and internet. The nature of data are both qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative data largely gathered from secondary sources such as census and research reports and existing literature related to the problem of study. Quantitative data are used to analyse the comparative trends of dropout rates in general and different regional and socio-cultural groups in particular. In addition to that, during fieldwork, an attempt is made to assess the dropout rate in quantitative terms as well.

Since Kharia tribe children are out of school or leaving schooling incomplete, there is a need for understanding the structural and cultural factors responsible for such problems. In this context, descriptive analysis based on qualitative information is used to understand the grass root problems and their possible alternatives to find a solution.

The Kharia tribes of Odisha constitute as the field area of the present study to identify the educational gap between them and to explore the causes and consequences of dropout. For the convenience, field is divided into four strata of groups such as dropout children, their parents, teachers and civil society members. School dropout children belong to the Kharia tribe are selected from two rural elementary schools from two Blocks out of the five Blocks of Jharsuguda District due to time constraints. Dropout children of class I to VIII from 2007-08 2012-13 academic year are selected by identifying them in school records as dropouts by teachers. Sample units of the elementary schools for field work is selected as per the latest census 2011 subjected to distribution of Kharia tribes in the district. A sample survey is executed to collect primary information from the strata identified. Semi-structured interview scheduled is prepared and used for each strata to collect both qualitative and quantitative information from elementary school dropout Kharia tribal children, their parents, teachers and for civil society members. An electronic device is also

used to record the interview process to save time. The researcher has collected data from 69 subjects including 17 Kharia tribal dropout children (male-07 and female-10), 20 parents (male-16 and female-04), 12 teachers (male-08 and female-04) and 20 civil society members (male-13 and female-07) engaged in different positions in the society.

The current study is narrow to the Kharia tribe of the Jharsuguda District in Odisha and focused on the influential factors of dropout among Kharia tribal students in elementary schools, due to time constraint. This research study is based on a sample study of tribal children, parents of these children, teachers and civil society members of the Jharsuguda District in Odisha. Jharsuguda district has five blocks and the researcher has selected this area by keeping in mind the high dropout rate among the tribal children, especially among the Kharia tribe in the district. But due to time constraint, the researcher has covered only two Blocks namely Kolabira and Kirmira for the present study. In 2010, the constitution of India through education as a fundamental right for children between the age group of 6-14 years. It means every child has right to access educational institutions in India freely and compulsorily without any discrepancy. Despite this, there is a high dropout rate among tribal in elementary education. There are numerous bottlenecks in all sectors of education in India. But this research study is limited to only elementary (class I to class VIII) education due to time bound space, financial constraint and inappropriate communication facilities in the study area.

### **Major Objectives**

The following objectives are set to focus the study in context:-

The first objective was to find major causes and consequences of dropout among children belongs to the Kharia tribe in Odisha. Secondly, to examine the socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of these dropout children. Thirdly, to explore the institutional constraints that led to school dropout rate high among the tribal children. And finally to study the role of civil society organizations on the development of tribal education. Based on the objectives, certain leading questions were framed for empirical enquiry.

### **Major Findings**

The following are the major research findings of the study:-

The government of India has been implementing many flagship programs to increase the enrollment ratio of the tribal children in the school. SSA, MDM and RTE are the major programs among them. Despite these policy prescriptions, there are some pertinent issues being noticed in the study. For instance, basic facilities like adequate class room, separate toilet for teachers, computers for teachers were found to be inadequate. There was no adequate teaching and non-teaching staffs, about 66 percent of school, there was no proper sitting arrangement for teachers, no computer was available for students, no playground, no reinforcement provision for children, no electricity and no television. Similarly, it has been found that in the study area there was no library, no sport kits, no drinking water facility, no eco-clubs, no special counselling for children, no regular salary for teachers and no in time book distribution among children in 33 percent school in Odisha. The study reveals that about 47.05 percent (Male-29.41% and Female-17.64%) Kharia tribal children have been dropping out from the school due to poor academic performance in the school. About 40 percent parents have also accepted that children have not gone to school because of below average performance in their studies. Similarly, responses were also gathered from

teachers (50%) and civil society members (50%). The low performance syndrome let the tribal children create less interest in attending schools.

About (82.35%) of the Kharia tribal dropout children (male-35.29% and female-47.05%) expressed that they left school because of they had no interest in studying by observing the school environment and they were thinking of not being forced to remain within the four wall. Lack of interested is reported to be adversely affected the children to visit school according to parents, teachers and civil society of the sample responses constituting 90 percent.

Despite of government provision of free book distribution for children in elementary schools in the country, about 64.70 percent Kharia tribal children (male-11.76% and female-52,94%) left school at the middle due to shortage of study materials like pencil, copies, bags etc. Parents were also of the view that they could not afford to buy study materials for their children because they were poor daily wage laborers. Teachers were expressed deep sorrow about this problem of these tribal children and carelessness from the side of parents was major issue. They revealed that thye can afford to help one or two child in this regard by providing pencils, bags and copies from their own salary, but not possible to provide every child of the school. Civil society members have also scored this problem very high.

All the Kharia tribe children covered under this study, have left the school at the middle due to worst financial condition at home. Parents could not support their children for education. Because most of the parents were daily wage earner and struggling for survival. Parents and teachers were agreed that the financial condition of their family forced them to leave school. Some parents were very much interested to send their children for studies, but because of economic condition, they could not. It is revealed from the field report that all parents covered in this study aere daily wage laborer.

Teachers were of the view that engagement of children at household activities and help extending to their parents in agriculture and some other activities, is one of the major causes of dropout. Some teachers expressed their deep sorrows by listening the word 'will you feed us' with anger while teachers try to convince parents to send their children to school regularly. Most of the parents (80%) were agreed that without the constant help for their children, they cannot sustain livelihood. Civil society members informed that this community earns its livelihood by daily wage labor work. So they are bound to do this in spite of their willingness to send children to school.

The study found that about 76.47 percent tribal children have left school due to the pressure came from their peers groups. They have followed that their peers group asked to do. Most of the parents (90%) were also reported that the children had peers groups pressure ot leave the school at the middle. Some parents revealed that though children were left home for school, they do not attend classes. Instead they used to hide away from the vicinity of school so as from the teachers. Sometimes they used habituate drinking illicit alcohol and rice beer in their early age. As a result of it, they never turned to the school and eventually ignored parents or teachers. Members of the civil society were of the view that it is the cultural and social barriers block the children to visit school regularly.

Majority of children (64.70%) have left school because of the ill treatment and insult by teachers on the group of children not having adequate study materials, proper dresses, bad habits etc. a sizable number of teachers, parents and civil society groups too agreed on it.

About 90 percent parents informed that they could not afford for the study of their children because more than five children were there in the family and they had no any other source to support

children. So large family with many children has also causing dropout among these children due to financial constraints. Most of the civil society members were also informed about this concern. Some of the teachers too agreed with the parents views. But they opined that since government is providing facilities, parents are left with minimum liabilities for their children's education.

It is found in the study that proper care and in time motivation and reinforcement are needed for everybody to do better in life and it is also found essential for tribal children at school. At home and in the society. Most of the dropout children informed that lack of reinforcement and motivation by parents and teachers led them to leave school. But most of the parents disagreed to this. Instead parents and civil society members blamed the children for not being self-motivated for studies. In order to overcome lack of motivation among students and parents. It has been suggested that frequent Parents-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting to be conducted regularly. But teachers, in fact accused that most of the parents do not attend such meetings.

The civil society members informed about the poor connectivity and communication in the schools. The tribal settlements are spread around interior places are being vulnerable to roads connectivity and hence less access to the government offices located in distant places. All the schools covered in the sample study are within 35 kilometers from the District Head Quarter. Similarly, there was no proper communication facility. The Xaxa Committee Report, 2014 has outlined five criteria to identify the backwardness of tribal communities and geographical isolation has been one of them which is very critical in our study as. Because of lack of access, 41.17 percent children could not go to school regularly and eventually they left school. Parents and teachers were also agreed to this kind of problem faced by these people even today.

The study found that almost all the dropout children of this community did not approach teachers to discuss their problem with them. Had they discussed their problem with their teachers, things would have been different then. All the teachers covered in the sample study were also expressed the same that children of these community often hide their personal problems in front of teachers because of fear. Some teachers of course scolded to some children. But they tried to explain and convince these children and eventually they failed.

From the study it is clear that the data gathered from all strata of the sample were agreed upon the lack of proper and regular communication between children/parents and the school. Teachers accused parents of not being visited to school to attend meeting in spite of repeated request to discuss about the academic performance and future of these children. Parents were also informed and confessed that they never visit school as they were kept busy with work throughout the day. Most of the civil society members were also expressed their anger on parents and teachers about this problem.

The teachers and civil society members are of the view that the parents and children of this tribal the community neither well informed nor aware about the government facilities extended to them. Most of the parents expressed their inability to understand the welfare provisions because of illiteracy and ignorance. In some cases, parents informed that they were busy for their livelihood and expected more from the government to eliminate their poverty. Some teachers informed that parents were addicted to alcohol consumption out of their meager wages and as a result, unable to support their family. This became a major factor influencing tribal children to leave school.

The study revealed that almost all the dropout children covered under this study, were interested in further study while the researcher explained them about National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). In the same way their parents and civil society members were also viewed of numerous educational opportunities available for all children under 17 of age. Most of the children and their parents were repented about leaving school right now. They expressed that thing could be something different, if they could complete their education.

It is a matter of fact that the parents of the dropout children had no high thinking or dream for the future of their children after education, because of their illiteracy. Parents were themselves unable to understand the real value and importance of education and in this situation how could they inspire their children. They were thinking of survival only and did not pay attention to their children. Neither did they encourage their children for schooling nor did they meet teachers in the school to discuss about the future of their children.

Parents of these children have confessed that they have been daily wage laborers to earn their livelihood and they expressed their inability to support their children for education. Sometimes they forced their children to leave school at the middle. Another major problem of them was more children in the family due to which they cannot afford to send all of them to school. Although government has been providing facilities to the tribal children for their studies, parents were unable to bear minimum responsibilities held. As a result, children left school without completion. The dropout tribal children were also informed the inability of their family to inspire them at the time of crisis.

There was nobody found educated in the tribal settlement to support and motivate the Youngers and guide them for higher studies. Everybody in the sample study expressed this problem. Without proper guidance either from parents or educated people. Children were often misguided by their peer groups.

Since most of the parents of these children were either illiterate or dropout themselves. They don't feel worthy and usefulness of educating of their children, instead, dropout children have been in a position to earn money adequate by doing manual labor work and other kind of jobs like driving, store keeper etc. Parents were found to be happy about their children as the children earning and supporting to the family.

The study also found out that children leaving school due to severe illness. Some parents were also expressed the same and they did not send their children to the school. But teachers had disagreed with this that disease is the reason for dropout. Civil society members informed this problem which forces children to leave school at the middle. During the field work, it has been observed from the field that some dropout children were died due to severe diseases and the parents of them were interviewed by the researcher to explore the reality.

The RTE has implemented in the country and made education as a fundamental right of every children between the age group of 6-14 years. Section 17(1) of the RTE act strictly prohibited about the physical punishment of children in the school. Despite this, the study reveals instances of punishment. As the researcher has covered all the subjects from the academic year 2007-08 to 2012-13 in the study area. Some dropout children have reported to leave school with fear of corporal punishment by the teacher. But on the other hand, teachers disagreed about this kind of cases in the school. Some parents and civil society members were also viewed the same as children did. Hence before implementation of RTE, corporal punishment was also a major obstacle for children to make entry in the school.

Nearly 50 percent children in the sample have left the school, because of the insensitivity of of teachers towards the tribal culture, habits, ways of talking, manner, dressing pattern etc. Similarly, more than 50 percent parents were also of the same view and reason of leaving school. Some civil society members expressed their concern about this matter in the school and they suggested to notice and monitor this kind of cases inside the school.

Nearly 20 percent of both male and female parents reported that they are forced their children to leave school to help them in the household activities. Dropout children accused their parents of being forced them to leave school despite they had shown interest in studies and were doing well at the school. As the parents were daily wage laborers, they had no options left other than forcing their children to support them in their woks so obviously children have to leave school at the middle to support the poor family. It is in this context, some teachers suggest that families of tribal settlements are to be settle financially well by the government to begin with.

It is no doubt that the internal problems of families influence the education of the children. For instance, some dropout tribal children were reported have left the school after separation of their families. In such cases, mother took the children to the interior villages without having found proper communication facilities and schooling. As a result, they were bound to leave studies in the middle. Some parents were expressed their inability to rehabilitate such children in the new social settings. For short term benefits, children were not motivated by parents for education that would have been long term effect for these children.

More than 50 percent dropout children have reported that they have language problem in the classroom. Since Kharia tribes use distinct dialect for everyday communication, language in the school and communication was found to be alien to them. But gradually they have picked up the school and book languages. However, some could not cope up with new language and hence left school at the middle. Therefore, it is necessary to keep in mind while framing curriculum for these children. Some teachers have also expressed their concern and suggested to avail different kinds of story book in their own dialect for effective teaching.

There is need for special training for the teachers to make sense of the social, cultural and economic background of the tribal children. Special efforts in teaching and counselling would inspire children for studies and thereby better performance. The study shows that most of the teachers remain engaged in non-teaching activities as a result children get less attention whenever they were in needed of. Reward and felicitation of hard working teachers and students are being suggested for motivating them to pursue further studies. The teachers who are engaged and committed for the tribal education should get reward for their performance as well as regards from society. On the other side of the spectrum, parents have kept their high expectation on the performance of school and the governmental support for its maintenance. The members of civil society have highlighted that the government should create teaching-learning environment in the state, especially among tribes so that their development in every sphere of life would be visible and definitely help in the nation building. In doing so, the goals of universalization of elementary education is achievable eventually by the state. The government has to change first the present scenario of tribal society to bring them to main stream of the development and subsequently, society has to change its perception towards the tribal communities to keep them as integral of the developmental process

of the nation. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for more research and innovations oriented towards the progress of tribal communities in the country.

### **Conclusion**

Tribal education in India, especially in the state of Odisha is an urgent issue that needs to be considered. Because tribes are treated as out-caste for long and hence they have been isolated from main stream and living miserable life (Thorat, 2004). Similarly, there has been a gap among the tribes in the domain of education, income, social status, human dignity, health, sanitation etc. in comparison to others. Studies have also revealed a high dropout rate in elementary education among these Kharia tribal school going children in rural Odisha. No doubt, the level of literacy among the Scheduled Tribes (ST) has always been a matter of concern. In the case of education of the tribes of Odisha, it is much lower than that of the rest of the population. In order to achieve the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), specific and need based policies are needed. Because of the failure of the policies, even today more than 24 percent of the population in the country remains illiterate and the conditions of tribes are worsened.

The study found that the social inequality and discrimination persists as long as tribal groups are remained uneducated well. This would adversely affect the overall growth and development of the community as a whole. In this regard, the state of India has also implemented RTE to ensure access, attend and completion of elementary education in the nation. But educational status of the tribal children has been reported unsatisfactory, especially in the state like Odisha.

There are numerous factors responsible for the less performance in education and high dropout rate. The social, cultural and economic background of these people needs to be understood first, so that appropriate policies can be framed with the active participation of tribal communities. There is an urgent need for recognizing and rewarding those teachers and activists committed for the tribal education. Respective ministry's direct involvement of tribal education may make the system more effective and accountable to the system and people. It has been alleged that the general government schools are neglected by the state in spite of the fact that the larger concentration of tribal children are found in these school. In other words, negligence of government institutes will adversely affect the education of tribal children who are left with no other options like private educational facilities available for the rich.

It is a matter of fact that the tribes in India are closely associated and solely dependent upon nature for their livelihood. As a result, they have learned simplicity from nature. But today, tribal groups are rising their voices against the state what we call them as maoist or internal threat to the nation like the abnormal situations of nature. So let's understand their interest and convince them for education through non-violence. In other words, education of tribes of India is the viable solution for the overall development.

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