

Dropout among Tribal Students from Formal Education *A Study in Northern Andhra Pradesh*

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Abstract

This paper studies the elements pertaining to formal education among the tribes of India and in particular to the students of Northern Andhra Pradesh. The study focuses on the reasons for drop out among tribal students due to various reasons and proposes initiatives to be taken to enhance the enrollment. The paper furnishes the drop out trends from 1995 to 2020 with regard to general population vis-à-vis tribal students.

Key words: Dropout, Tribal students, statistics, reasons for dropout, initiatives to reduce dropout.

INTRODUCTION

“Children from tribal communities often find their school education irrelevant and foreign to their lives, both culturally and academically,” says National Education Policy 2020. This is clear that the tribal students feel that they are not rewarded enough through the education they acquire. This could paveaway for dropout from studies.

As per the Ministry of Tribal Welfare Annual Report 2022-23:

- The Indian Constitution's Article 342 notifies more than 700 Scheduled Communities.
- There are 75 STs that have been designated as Primitively Vulnerable Tribal Peoples (PVTGs in short).
- 2011 Census show that, population of tribes in India is 10, 45, 45,716 and it mount only to 8.6% of the country's overall populace.

OBJECTIVES

The present study focuses on the following objectives:

1. Know the status of tribes in India.
2. Find the reasons for dropout among the tribes from literature.
3. Search for the initiatives suggested for reduction in dropout among tribes.
4. Glance through the statistics with regard to dropout among tribes in general and the locality chosen.
5. Educate about the constitutional safeguards for the education of scheduled tribes.
6. Know the Government Programmes initiated for the education of tribes.

Status of Tribes in India: The Austric, Dravidian, Tibeto-Chinese, and Indo-European families are the most prevalent ones among all major language families, with over 270 tribal languages being spoken in India (Sujatha, 2002). Only 8.6% of Indian population is tribal residing may states and union territories. In few states and union territories like Meghalaya (85.53%), Nagaland (87.70%), Lakshadweep (93.15%) and Mizoram (94.75), they are by far the majority.

In states i.e., W. Bengal, Orissa, together, Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh account for 83% of the entire tribal population.

According to the study of Mehendale (2010) indigenous communities of India are commonly referred to as tribal or “adivasi” communities and are recognized as Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution of India. Scheduled Tribes are not precisely stated in the Constitution of India, but it does refer to these groups as being “scheduled” in accordance the Constitution, particularly Article no. 342. The STs are defined as tribal groups and through public notification the president recognized those communities in accordance with the constitution specifically as per the Article 342. Criteria used to specify a group as a scheduledtribe include signs of a unique culture, backwardness, geographic segregation, unwillingness to interrelate with the other communities and aboriginal behaviours.” Of all tribes, 62 tribes reside in the State of Odisha.

Literacy of tribals in A P (United): Andhra Pradesh (united) consisted of 7% of the tribal population to its total population with 35 different tribal groups. Even after six decades of independence of India, the literacy rate is 71.70% (as per the 2011 Census) and women's literacy rate (54.40) is lower than men which is worse in tribal sections, especially tribal women (Veerabhadrudu, 2015).

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES

Status of education among tribes has improved from time to time after the independence. The government programmes and policies were instrumental in doing so. The evident progress can be seen from the following table.

Year	All			Scheduled Tribes		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	8.53	13.83	3.16
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	11.30	17.63	4.85
1981	43.75	56.38	29.76	16.35	24.52	8.04
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	29.60	40.65	18.19
2001	64.84	75.26	53.67	47.10	59.17	34.76
2011	73.00	80.90	64.60	59.00	68.10	49.40
2020-21	79.2	85.9	72.3	71.6	79.8	63.1

Source: Ministry of Tribal Welfare Annual Report 2022-23

The above table elucidates the trends in the literacy rates among the normal population and Scheduled Tribes. Females in the Scheduled Tribes are most affected in terms of literacy.

But at times this might be opposite too. The Kerala state stands out from the rest of India with a 94% literacy rate but when Joy & Srihari (2014) conducted a study on the hidden reasons for the increasing school dropouts among the ST students of Wayanad district, with special reference to the Paniya Tribe, they found that the tribal dropout was 61.11% in 2007-08 and 5 years later in 2011-12 it rose to 77.23%. This elucidates the rise of 16.12% dropout in the tribal population of the district.

DROP OUT IN THE TRIBAL CONTEXT

Dropout issue is perennial in all contexts. This is one hurdle that has been tilting the aims

of formal education from time to time and nation to nation. Psychologically it is noted that Scheduled Tribes experience a passive indifference that excludes them from opportunities for education, participation in social events, and accessing their own land. In the consideration of the mainstream Hindu population, the tribal population is said to be primitive, and technologically backwards apart from illiterate (Panda & Ojha, 2021).

Though various initiatives and programmes have been taken up since independence, such as setting up schools in and around Tribal Sub Plan areas, the universal problem of dropout is impeding tribal education mostly.

REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT OF CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL

The key causes for school dropout and absenteeism could be an economic problem, working at household, lacking interest in studying, long distances and problems in reaching school, meagre earnings in family, lack of parents’ interest in their children’s education, and universal fact of language problem in teaching (Bindhani, 2021). The study with regard to dropout of tribals of Jhargram district in west Bengal revealed that there are 11 reasons for dropout. Of the eleven reasons identified, the most projected reason among tribal students’ dropout is a lack of interest in studying and the least is a lack of proper guidance (Chowdhury & Mete 2017).

The dropouts in primary education in Odisha are attributed to the work at household, lacking parental guidance in formal education, and punishments are given by the teachers etc., (Soren, 2010). The causes for the American-Indian student’s dropout from school were found to be large schools, uncaring/untrained teachers, passive teaching methods, inappropriate curriculum, inappropriate testing/student retention, tracked classes, and lack of parent involvement (Reyhner, 1992).

In the context of given studies, prerogative reasons for dropout were found to be:

- Academics and pedagogical issues
- Convenience for education
- Cultural aspects
- Socio-economic as well as family conditions
- Peer pressure
- Language problems

Dropout rate is on rise from Primary education to Secondary education. The table below evidently shows the same

TABLE: The table shows the national dropout rate for ST students in India from 1990-91 to 2021-22.

Drop-Out Rates in School Education for Scheduled Tribes Students in India									
Year	Classes(I-IV) (By the end of IV Class)			Classes (I-VIII) (By the end of Class)			Classes(I-X) (By the end of X Class)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1990-91	60.3	66.1	62.5	75.7	82.2	78.6	87.7	83.3	85.0
1994-95	56.9	61.3	58.6	74.5	80.0	76.7	NA	NA	NA

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1995-96	55	58.9	56.6	62.3	71.2	66.0	NA	NA	NA
1996-97	54.4	60.0	56.5	73.0	78.3	75.2	86.8	82.5	84.2
1997-98	52.9	58.1	55.1	71.3	75.5	73.0	80.4	72.5	75.8
1998-99	54.8	56.8	55.7	70.1	75.7	72.4	85.1	79.8	82.2
2000-01	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2001-02	51.0	54.1	52.3	67.3	72.7	68.7	82.9	79.9	81.2
2002-03	50.8	52.1	51.4	66.9	71.2	68.7	83.0	78.4	80.3
2003-04	49.1	48.7	48.9	69.0	71.4	70.1	81.2	77.9	79.3
2004-05	42.6	42	42.3	65	67.1	65.9	80.7	77.8	79.0
2005-06	40.2	39.3	39.8	62.9	62.9	62.9	79.2	78.0	78.5
2006-07	30.6	35.8	33.1	62.8	62.2	62.5	79.1	77.3	78.1
2007-08	31.0	31.7	31.3	62.6	62.3	62.5	78.0	76.0	76.9
2008-09	36.0	35.1	35.6	58.5	60.0	59.2	76.8	75.4	76.0
2009-10	38.1	35.4	36.8	54.6	59.1	56.8	75.3	74.5	74.9
2010-11	37.2	33.9	35.6	54.7	55.4	55.0	71.3	70.6	70.9
2011-12	36.1	34.4	35.3	57.3	57.1	57.2	67.6	64.4	65.9
2012-13(P)	33.3	31.2	32.3	50.6	47.5	49.2	62.2	63.2	63.2
2013-14(P)	31.9	30.7	31.3	49.8	46.4	48.2	61.4	63.2	63.2
2014-15	7.97	7.98	7.97	8.03	8.85	8.40	27.42	26.96	27.23
2015-16	4.18	4.29	4.24	9.64	9.70	9.67	26.28	26.27	26.27
2016-17	3.91	3.96	3.94	8.60	8.69	8.64	27.15	27.85	27.51
2017-18	3.48	3.82	3.66	6.14	5.95	6.04	21.36	22.90	22.14
2018-19	5.23	5.72	5.48	6.46	6.89	6.69	23.38	26.40	24.93
2019-20	3.61	4.06	3.69	5.65	6.15	5.90	22.49	25.51	24.03
2020-21	2.31	2.72	2.52	4.69	5.36	5.02	19.65	22.14	20.91
2021-22	2.60	3.04	2.83	5.70	6.35	6.03	15.33	17.87	16.62

Data Source: U-DISE-NUEPA Enrolment Data and UDISE plus Reports

P-Provisional, NA-Not Available

TABLE: Time series data of Andhra Pradesh from 1994-95 to 2016-17 for all categories

Andhra Pradesh Drop-Out Rates From 1994-1995 To 2016-2017 -For All Categories									
YEAR	Classes (I-V) (By the end of IV Class)			Classes (I-VII/III) (By the end of VIII Class)			Classes (1-X) (By the end of X Class)		
	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
1994-95	52.86	52.14	52.55	64.48	68.33	66.14	77.56	82.26	79.61
1995-96	51.28	49.35	50.44	65.17	68.47	66.61	77.79	81.32	79.31
1996-97	51.01	50.93	50.97	64.18	66.25	65.08	76.77	80.46	78.38
1997-98	44.36	46.77	45.48	63.03	64.01	63.46	76.43	79.04	77.56

1998-99	42.69	44.7	43.63	61.58	63.91	62.63	76.94	79.6	78.1
1999-00	39.42	41.23	40.28	56.21	60.68	58.29	75.44	76.57	75.93
2000-01	37.15	37.12	37.14	54.34	58.79	56.43	73.82	75.13	74.39
2001-02	35.36	33.64	34.54	51.98	55.77	53.78	71.62	73.28	72.37
2002-03	33.74	30.91	32.39	49.93	53.22	51.52	67.46	71.02	69.12
2003-04	42.42	42.8	42.61	52.71	55.92	54.27	65.08	68.53	66.7
2004-05	31.77	32.14	31.95	51.96	54.46	53.17	62.3	65.24	63.69
2005-06	24.61	24.85	24.73	50.26	52.37	51.3	62.24	65.2	63.67
2006-07	26.76	27.32	27.04	42.14	44.32	43.22	62.99	65.33	64.13
2007-08	11.85	11.64	11.75	29.66	32.85	31.25	59.21	62.72	60.95
2008-09	8.1	7.26	7.69	29.24	30.43	29.83	54.97	57.75	56.35
2009-10	9.27	8.58	8.93	20.69	21.38	21.03	49.31	51.08	50.18
2010-11	10.56	9.33	9.95	15.35	15.99	15.66	42.95	45.44	44.19
2011-12	7.51	7.4	7.45	14.94	14.96	14.95	41.23	42.75	41.98
2012-13	5.83	6.34	6.08	20.33	20.42	20.38	32.84	34	33.41
2013-14	3.16	3.25	3.2	19.37	18.95	19.16	26.2	27.48	26.83
2014-15	4.88	4.30	4.60	14.91	16.59	15.74	24.54	25.92	25.28
2015-16	8.93	9.24	9.09	13.97	15.97	14.95	23.68	25.08	24.37
2016-17	2.19	2.13	2.153	1.47	1.65	1.55	0.78	1.84	1.29

Data Source: Andhra Pradesh Educational Statistic Reports, Government of AP.

DEMOGRAPHY OF RESEARCH AREA

Andhra Pradesh has 9 ITDAs namely Chintur, Kotaramachandrapuram, Nellore, Paderu, Parvathipuram, Rampachodavaram, Seethampeta, Srisailam and Plain Areas. Out of these 9, only 8 are active ITDAs and Plain Areas are not included in them.

The research area consists of 3 ITDAs and they are ITDA Seethampeta, ITDA Parvathipuram and ITDA Paderu.

Table : The demographic details of the study locale

Sl. No	ITDA	Established	Blocks/Mandals	ST population	Sq. Area	Tribes residing
01	Paderu	04.12.1975	11	6,18,500	6,293Sq. kms.	Bhagatha, Gadaba, Khonds, Poorja, Yerukalas, Benthoria, Kondakapus, "Valmiki, Kotia, Kammara , Yendia, Mookadoras
02	Seethampeta	01.08.1985	20	1,66,118	218.89 Sq. Kms.	Jathapu, Konda Savara, KapuSavara, MaliyaSavara, Yerukala, and Gadaba
03	Parvathi	NA	08	2,60,419	2,383	Jatapu, Kondadora, Savara,

	puram				Sq.Ks.	Gadaba, Mannedora, Mukhadora
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Source: Ministry of Tribal Welfare Andhra Pradesh

TABLE: Time series of dropouts in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam for ST students from 1995-96 to 2019-20

Drop-Outrates in School Education for Scheduled Tribes Students in the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam									
Year	Srikakulam			Vizianagaram			Visakhapatnam		
	By the end of highest grade given the column								
	I-V	I-VII	I-X	I-V	I-VII	I-X	I-V	I-VII	I-X
1995-96	80.88	90.58	NA	65.62	88.03	NA	72.96	85.2	NA
1996-97	41.83	65.91	NA	44.3	68.31	NA	43.65	60.73	NA
1997-98	69.58	88.14	NA	62.97	86.67	NA	63.85	80.43	NA
1998-99	63.25	84.17	NA	61	86.06	NA	57.14	74.65	NA
1999-00	31.88	62	NA	34.57	66.82	NA	32.01	56.66	NA
2000-01	50.7	76.49	NA	49.12	85.97	NA	52.95	67.16	NA
2001-02(III)	25.96	55.16	73.68	16.88	57.46	80.96	33.49	48.09	69.77
2002-03	35.96	61.37	86.8	36.26	67.4	84.33	46.83	62.16	77.72
2003-04	53.97	53.97	78.37	35.52	35.52	85.92	51.35	51.35	74.5
2004-05 (III)	20.79	43.62	65.96	18.6	51.29	66.08	26.51	47.44	57.32
2005-06	30.34	66.2	69.03	19.52	63.46	77.19	49.82	64.98	71.78
2006-07	32.74	63.11	60.27	27.83	50.17	76.06	58.13	65.12	77.18
2007-08	25.61	45.69	60.76	22.27	56.6	81.05	53.49	64.03	79.31
2008-09	9.49	45.76	75.03	10.9	56.85	74.58	33.55	71.07	74.04
2009-10	2.74	46.45	73.05	5.99	51.47	65.03	25.41	66.56	74.68
2010-11	2.23	17.36	57.77	2.36	49.39	68.99	30.77	51.26	74.31
2011-12	6.33	27.77	61.39	11.23	43.24	70.7	0.86	48.37	80.19
2012-13	3.92	26.56	58.38	0.98	44.26	64.94	19.03	53.84	77.2
2013-14	-2.4	21.99	31.22	4.71	40.97	61.59	19.91	56.13	63.77
2014-15	5.01	20.92	34.46	11.43	37.98	52.32	21.51	56.09	60.3
2015-16	3.86	24.23	28.77	9.72	38.48	51.3	28.85	53.71	65.36
2016-17	4.33	7.75	11.12	4.77	7.66	10.6	7.1	8.93	7.92

2017-18	0	3.77	7.46	0.3	4.18	10.99	1.6	7.82	4.83
2018-19	0	2.98	4.6	0	0.04	10.75	0.97	2.76	7.94
2019-20	0	2.13	3.67	0.23	6.62	16.2	0	4.21	12.28

Data Source: Andhra Pradesh Educational Statistic Reports, Government of AP.

INITIATIVES TO BE TAKEN TO MINIMIZE THE DROPOUT

Reyhner (1991) made a study on “Plans for Dropout Prevention and Special School Care Facilities for Alaska Native and American Indian Students,” and suggested initiating certain aspects like teacher training in suitable instruction methods; “integrated culture-based curriculum; limiting school size; elimination of tracking; increasing science and mathematics classes; exploring alternatives to retention, suspension, and expulsion; promoting Native education departments; developing tribal curriculum and textbooks; and a national initiative to deglamorize alcohol and tobacco use etc.”. Juneau (2001) made a study on “ Foundation of American Indian Education Policy and History”, and proposed 3 models such as (i) teachers need to be trained to comprehend culture, history and the Montana’s Indian’s contribution and to teach the students from India. (ii) Making use of the plans to escalate the ratio of teachers from Indian, (iii) To educate the students about history, culture, current issues and program of Montana India and also to introduce language of India into schools.

CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR THE EDUCATION OF STs

Constitution has sanctioned the state to constitute or provide the SCs and backward classes through following:

Article 15(4): The State is empowered to institute provisions for the development of backward classes who are socially and educationally underdeveloped, especially the SCs and STs.

Article 21(A): "The state by law shall determine to give compulsory education to all the tribal children from 6 to 14 years of age." This article along with others has given the STs to be part of the larger group through RTE Act 2009. This has become an additional and significant perspective in the educational development of STs.

Article 29(2): Lays down that under any circumstance none of the citizen shall be deprived of admission to any state-maintained educational school or any institution that receives funds from State on the basis of their religion, race, caste, language, or any combination of these bases.. This has given the students of the ST a chance to be part of the larger group.

Article 35(A): The article says, the state is responsible for ensuring that every local governance in state facilitates instruction in primary school mother tongue of linguistic minority group children. President may issue any State any instructions he deems appropriate or necessary to ensure the provision of such facilities. The needs of tribal communities with their own languages and dialects-typically belonging to a distinct family of languages and not the state's official language-are described in this article.

Article 46: The article lays a comprehensive foundation for the developmental and regulatory aspects of educational foundation. The article says, all authorities in state is required to provide sufficient instruction facilities in student's mother language, which is the state's

responsibility. The state is required to safeguard the weaker groups of the population from social injustice and all forms of exploitation while also promoting their economic and educational interests, particularly those of the SCs and STs.

SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES FOR EDUCATING OF SCHEDULED TRIBES

After independence, the State has been taking affirmative steps to educate and socially develop the STs through various programmes. The following initiatives have been listed:

Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme

With the objective of providing monetary help to ST students, whose parental annual income is below Rs. 1.8 lakh, to continue senior secondary and secondary education, this particular scheme is in vogue since 1944-45. These scholarships are distributed by the governments of particular State and Union Territories where students reside.

National Overseas scholarship scheme for Higher Studies Abroad

Commenced in 1954-55 as a non-plan scheme but the scheme became a planning scheme from 2007-08, with the objective of providing monetary assistance to those selected ST Students, who pursue higher studies such as Post-Graduate, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral education in subjects Science, Engineering and Technology.

Schemes for the establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub-Plan Areas:

Ashram schools said to be established before Education Commission (1964-66). And it affirms necessity of establishing such schools. The Commission says, the availability of educational facilities, which are commonly very limited, must be improved. Ashram Schools need to be set up in substantial numbers in areas that are very sparsely populated. The operation and programmes of the schools should be made to blend with the surroundings in order to draw children to them and keep them there.

As it was mentioned in "In a review of the National Policy on Education 1968" and "the Report on Educational Developments 1976-1978", "Tribal areas are being given priority and wherever necessary ashram schools are being established for them" (p.9).

According to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs' and Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2013-2014), Forty-fourth Report, role of Ashram Schools in tribal areas was to provide ST boys and girls with elementary, middle, and secondary education. Local governments oversee these. National Policy of Education (NPE) 1986 and Programme for Action Plan, 1992 also have shown willingness in establishing new Ashram schools.

The Committee further says, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been executing a programme for the "establishment of ashram schools in tribal sub-plan areas," and grant-in-aid is provided to States under this programme for the construction of school buildings. The Scheme has been in existence since 1990-1991 and was updated beginning of 2008-2009 fiscal year.

The plan includes upgrading the current Ashram Schools for the boys and girls of the ST, particularly PTGs, in addition to the framework of Ashram Schools for the primary, middle, secondary, and senior secondary levels of education.

Schemes for construction of hostels for ST Girls and Boys

The Programme was launched in 1989-90, during the Third Five Year Plan, for

facilitating accommodation to economically poor ST Students. This facility is serving people belonging to remote areas.

Vocational Training Centers in Tribal Areas

This scheme's plan of action was to improve the talents of the youth of the ST to take up a variety of livelihoods and to prepare them for self-sufficiency and employment. This Scheme commenced in 1992-93.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)

In 1997-1998 "Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)" were introduced in to aid Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in remote areas with high-quality upper primary, secondary, and senior secondary education as well as to give them access to the best educational opportunities and bring them on par with the general population. This project is directly under the supervision of Tribal affairs Ministry.

The Programme was initially funded through a Special Area Plan called Grants under Article 275(1) of the Indian Constitution, which is a legal requirement. At present according to the ministry website, 401 EMRS are functional.

Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship

In 2005-2006 this Programme commenced with the purpose of granting fellowships to the UGC recognized institutions/universities to award JRF and SRF to Scheduled Caste Students.

Coaching for Scheduled Tribe Students

To fill the void between the students of economically and socially advantageous and ST students who are socially and economically poor, and come from remote areas, the Tribal Affairs' Ministry has started this project to train the Scheduled Tribe students in competitive exams such as "Civil Services, State Civil Services and CDS, NDA and professional courses like commission for staff selection commission, engineering, medical, business management, banking, recruitment board for railways and insurance firms etc."

Project for pursuing higher education for Scheduled Tribe children

From the academic year 2007-2008, a new Programme was announced by the Tribal affairs' Ministry with the objective of providing deserving ST students to pursue Top-Class graduation or post-graduation in 125 selected government and private institutions. A total of 625 students were awarded scholarships in the area of medicine, management, engineering, commercial and law courses.

Up-gradation of merit

With the objective of facilitating the students, in residential schools, this scheme prepares the ST students to develop the skills and to compete in a competitive examination, to participate with few other students to get admitted in higher level education courses besides technical positions. It also provides incidental charges and honorariums to the principals of the institute or experts who give training.

Book Bank

To prevent dropout of ST students from institutes of professional courses or the

universities this scheme was introduced to purchase books. This project is sponsored by the center but the states too have to support it with 50% of funds towards the purchase of the books.

Intensifying Education among ST Girls to increase the Literacy

Present project intends on minimizing dropouts among tribal girls and 100% enrolment in education institutions.

Tribal Research Institutes

The constitution of Tribal Research Institutes is meant to help the government in providing plans and inputs to collect data on all the aspects of tribal life activities. 14 such Research Institutes exist today.

CONCLUSION

Basing on the references above, it is evident that the dropout rate among tribal community is a threat to formal education. The time series data show that there exists considerable variation in the context of dropout in formal education when compared to the general population and Scheduled Tribe. The studies have amply shown that the obvious reason for dropout among tribal students are; academic, convenience and cultural, family- related issues, socio-economic aspects and language-related issues (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009; Bagai and Nundy, 2009 and Rami 2012).

The present study not only enquired into the reasons for the dropout but also initiatives to be taken to minimize the dropout in formal education among the tribal children. This research concentrates on the perception or opinion of the majority of the stakeholders in tribal education i.e., the opinion of the dropouts themselves, teachers, present students, parents of dropouts and the village elders.

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