

Empowering the Traditional Indigenous Politics Through Education: An Agent of Political Socialization

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Abstract

Building the new political Institution comes up with lots of systematic planning but empowering aged long traditional indigenous institution needs extra precautions. These extra precautions are needed because of the fear of losing its original structure. Traditional indigenous structure has gradual build-up phenomena with lots of belief system. The present paper would attempt to showcase the empowerment of indigenous politics of Ho tribe in the district of West Singhbhum, Jharkhand, India. Change is the demand of time for the survival in the present times and upcoming years. Thus survival is followed by empowering its traditional politics with the positive collaboration of modern state policy through education. Education paves the way to think over the past practices of any traditional community and also gives the space to recreate or have the improvement in certain areas of politics and things concerned with life. Changes in individual's life bring about the changes in community to traditional politics. This paper would discuss the opportunity of education in tribal areas that are being initiated by the Jharkhand state government, in India. Gaps that affect indigenous politics will find out through educational policies. Findings and recommendations will be given after the analysis of the policies of the state government.

Keywords: Empowerment, Traditional Institution, Munda-Manki Institution, Education, and Opportunity.

Objectives:

1. Finding the status of indigenous politics in the state of Jharkhand
2. Role of education in the empowerment of the traditional politics of Hos as functions of Munda-Manki institution.
3. Finding loopholes in educational policies that limits Ho tribe

Research Methodology

This research paper is descriptive in nature. Data collection has been done from the villages of Tekrahatu, Simbiya and Lupungutu in West Singhbhum district of the state Jharkhand, India. Data collection has been done through Survey for this questionnaire has been prepared for interviewing responders. Random sample method was used for the collection of data. Total number of responders was one hundred twenty, forty responders from each village. Thereafter data has been analyzed scientifically. Oral history was also one of the important sources of primary data collection.

Introduction

Everywhere individuals, societies and nation-states are putting their efforts in different sectors only with the aim of empowering themselves. Empowerment comes with lots of collaborative work force of community, Government agencies along with the blueprint of strong policies and willingness of stakeholders. Empowerment is a word that has been overused and is in danger of losing its substantive meaning. It is the center of community work ideas, and many community workers will choose to define their role in terms of an empowerment process. However, a simple work definition will suffice, namely: Empowerment aims to increase the charge of disadvantaged (Ife and Tesoriero 2008).

Ho schedule tribe are among the forty-one tribal communities of Jharkhand state, India. Ho tribe have their age long traditional, societal and political way of living life based on customary laws. With the time implementation of Panchayati Raj system, Ho tribe are in the fear of losing the charm of traditional politics in their society which have being run by Munda-Manki traditional institution which is also an agent of political socialization. Several attempts have been made to maintain the status-quo of traditional politics among which education is an important means of political socialization. It is the most important tool of surviving in the present time as it provides the path way to have understanding, documenting and critical analyzing.

Indigenous Communities in the World

Ethnic communities are those who live in isolation with distinctive culture and customs. Ethnic groups are scattered all over the world. There are three hundred seventy million ethnic groups resides in the different part of the world stated by United Nation Development program (Stevens 2014). This number could increase because many are not counted as residing in far from mainstream land.

United Nation states that the right of ethnic minorities wherever they reside since long time. There is only one article number 27 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 'of 1966 that recognizes the question of the cultural rights of ethnic minorities on the context of Human Rights (Thornberry 1989). India also acknowledges the rights of ethnic or indigenous minorities.

Ethnic Communities in India

India has ethnic or indigenous (Adivasi) communities, in India ethnic or indigenous communities are known as primitive tribe and schedule tribe but one need to keep in mind that all ethnic communities are not schedule tribe (Khanna et al. 2010). The schedule tribe comprise about 8.6% of India's population (Census of India 2011). The Percentage of schedule tribal population has been increased in the present time due to health, food nutrition values has been increased by the initiative of empowerment schemes run by various organization and Indian government.

Table: 01. Population Growth of Schedule Tribes in India

	Sex ratio		Child sex ratio	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Sex ratio of ST's in India	978	990	973	956
Sex ratio of ST's in Jharkhand	987	1003	979	976

Source: Office of the Registrar General and Census commissioner, GOI 2011

India is a developing country and attempting to empower its citizens. In the process of development Indian states, districts, blocks, villages are too facilitating provisions to empower its citizens. Indian States holds ethnic or indigenous (Adivasi) population. Indian constitution provides Schedule five and six that explains about rights of indigenous (Adivasi) communities. Equal opportunity provides smooth pace of empowerment to get one self-empowered as an individual and as well as society through science, policies of government. Policies could achieve desired goals until the government gives authorization to indigenous (Adivasi) communities to manage their development polices in the context of execution (Tanggung et al. 2010) This gap could be bridge only when government attempts would be sincere enough. Therefore, government's attempt would be beneficial to societies when the society would be educated because education helps to promote government schemes by the stakeholders itself.

Ho Indigenous Community (Tribe) in Jharkhand

The present case study has been conducted in west Singhbhum District of Jharkhand state, India. Jharkhand state is twenty- two years old state came into existence with the demand of preserving its cultural, traditional heritage and on development issues.

Ho tribe's roots belong to Proto- Austroloid racial family. Its population found in the district of East and West Singhbhum of Jharkhand state, Keonjhar district of Orissa, Medinipur of West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Total population of Ho tribe as per the census of 2011 is 1,658,104. Ho tribe speaks Ho language that is Austro-Asiatic language of India which is similar to Munda language, Ho people uses Warangchiti script in writings. Ho tribe's supreme deity is "Singbonga". "Desauli" (supposed to have worship place) are situated in the village that is a place with 'saal' (Shorea robust) tree that is supposed to be a sacred grove among Hos.

Ho tribe does not follow any mainstream religion but are of nature worshiper which is generally termed as 'Sarnaism' (religion of the divine woods) and the percentage of practitioners are more than 91% that is completely different from any religion. It is important to note that there is no separate column for 'Sarna' or Adivasi in census of 2011 but unanimously accepted term by the Ho and other tribes in the state of Jharkhand and Orissa. Ho tribe's prime festivals are "Maage Porob" (festival of creation), 'Baa porob' (festival of flowers), and "Jom-nama Porob" (festival of having new harvest). Villages of Ho tribe do not follow any hierarchal system but practicing direct democracy. "Munda-Manki" is the traditional indigenous institution or structure of village administration. "Diuri" is the village priest who leads in the performance of rituals during festivals. 'Saal' (Shorea robust) tree is scared for them.

Ho villages are based on 'Killi' (surname). Every village consists of the family of same 'Killi' or more than two or three 'Killi'. Holding same killi maintains the belief of brother and sister from same family therefore they do not get marry to each other. Marriages take place in other 'Killi' (surname). Ho tribe generally dependent on forest and agriculture. With the time Ho tribe got engaged in settled agricultural activity, mining, industrial work and other laborious activity. With the time education helped the Ho community to get engage in different work. They practice patriarchy but at the same time daughters get share in the property until they are unmarried.

Survey Area

Tekrahatu, Simbiya and Lupungguttu these three villages of west Singhbhum district, Kolhan division of Jharkhand, India. Lupungguttu village has good literacy rate of education due to the existence of minority schools in the village. Students from Simbiya and Tekrahatu village also move to Lupungguttu

village for high and intermediate level education. Resident of Tekrahatu village Sadhu Purty said that he could not study further after 8th class due to lack of amenities but education has given him the sound knowledge of traditional politics and ways to empower the traditional politics.

Hos Traditional System of Politics through Munda-Manki Institution

Ho tribe has their own traditional political institution that is known as 'Munda-Manki' institution. Ho tribe fought for their ethnic autonomy from British that led to bloodshed. Ho tribe succeeded to save their traditional 'Munda-Manki' political institution. Gradually its glory is diminishing as Jharkhand state government imposed Panchayati Raj System in lieu of 'Munda-Manki' institution. It is necessary to mention that the state government has not demolished the 'Munda-Manki' institution but yes Ho community has been given opportunity to choose modern state government's new local policies as Panchayati Raj system. On the other hand, opportunity turned into forceful imposition of Panchayati Raj institution which is resulted in the declination of traditional politics. Today Ho community still holding their age-long traditional political institution. Indian President Mrs. Droupadi Murmu also stated that Munda-Manki institution has still its relevance in the present time (Pioneer 2018)

Empowerment through Education

Empowerment cannot be given but education and Politics is the state of power and its provides resources, opportunity, direct and indirect direction to achieve the stage of getting empowered (Page and Czuba 1999)

Education is the key which helps one person to understand things in better way. Educated person can understand and evaluates the policies of government by asking questions to government through different modes. Evaluating the policies by the stakeholders could make the government more accountable towards their responsibilities. Empowerment concerns with health, education, legal aid, autonomy, policy but all are directly or indirectly linked with education. Education provides insight to understand the phenomenon of empowerment.

The attainment of sustainable empowerment is always starts with grass root level. The empowerment is always driven by the concerning government policies. Government is responsible for the empowerment of ethnic community whether it is center, state, local self-government or village traditional governing administration. Empowerment deals with social, culture, customs, education, economic progress and political development. One ethnic community can be empowered only in the condition of equal opportunity in all the areas concerning to holistic development. In this research paper it would deal with the educational opportunity, hurdles and outcome that come on the way of education.

Systematic organization is the demand of time to empower oneself. Lack of education results in understanding the need of organization. Today Ho tribe is lacking the regularity of their ethnic politics of Munda-Manki institution. The analysis of the Ho's political structure shows that they do not organize themselves in a manner that is consistent with the aims of modern government (York 1976) instead Munda-Manki institution already practiced the essence of democracy in direct form.

The modern curriculum textbook language used in the primary schools does not have much appeal to Ho tribal children who come from very different socio-cultural backgrounds. They experience discontinuities between their traditional way of life and the ways of the dominant culture imparted through schools and text-books (Chattopadhyay 1953) due to that it is not easy to adopt new way of learning lessons.

Enrolment of Ho tribe students in Primary school, middle, high schools and colleges’ level are very low (Kumar 2008). Having lack of amenities to survive and unfamiliar language is the reason behind less enrolment in schools. In order to increase the enrolment ratio in the schools Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) in Jharkhand organized a meeting held in Ranchi decided to appoint Ho language teachers in schools in grade 1 to 5 (NDTV 2022). Appointment of teachers in Ho languages would surely appeal towards education and empower students which would help them to understand the value of education and the modern government system so as importance of their traditional system of politics.

Table: 02. Literacy Rates and Gross Enrolment Rates Scheduled Tribes

India	Literacy Rate	GER Grades I-VIII (%)
Jharkhand state	40.67	85.03

Source: Government of India, 2006

Literacy rate of West Singhbhum is 58.63 in 2011 and 58.63 in 2001 that is almost same. 71.13 % were the Male and 46.25 female literacy rates were recorded as per the census of 2011. These data shows that there is hardly any difference in increasing the numbers of literacy that is the failure of government. The total number of literate population is 570,404 out of which 351,945 were males and 218,459 were females according to census 2011. Ho tribe’s literacy rate is 44.7% for all and 33.1% for women as recorded by census of 2011 (Census of India 2011).

Table: 03. Jharkhand state, Indian policy to empower traditional communities:

State policy	Descriptions	Outcome of the policy
Language policy in Jharkhand	Warangchiti script has being taught in schools and colleges	No sufficient job opportunity provided that arose anger
Imposition of municipality	Imposition of municipality in fifth schedule area West-Singhbhum, Sadar Chaibasa , Jharkhand caused anger	Villagers made protest against municipality, Forcefully imposed
land taxes	Land taxes to pay in village blocks	Protested against it resulted to pay taxes to old traditional village head ‘Munda’

Source: Field survey 2022

Table: 04. Education Level in these three villages

S.No	VILLAGE	EDUCATION LEVEL			
		8 th Grade	10 th Grade	12 th Grade	B.A/B.COM/B.SC
1	Tekrahatu	42.5%	27.5%	12.5%	12.5%
2	Simbiya	5%	22.5%	52.5%	20%
3	Lupungutu	0%	30%	35%	22.5%

Source: Field Survey 2022

Students of Ho tribe uses Warangchiti script along with Devnagri (Hindi) script for their studies that are being taught till class eight. Thereafter Warangchiti curriculum is followed in the university level education. But there is no job opportunity after being a Ho learned degree. Imparting education in Warangchiti script and not providing job opportunity is the fault of the state policy. During colonial period British had to use Hindi and Cole as link languages when teaching English to the Ho people, their absence of a teacher who was equally skilled in the English, Hindi, and Cole languages was held accountable for the unworthiness of the Coles in learning English. (Nath 2016) this situation remained till the day. Persisting same situation indicates the love towards their mother tongue of Ho tribe but still government has failed to suggest any concrete steps to achieve the goal of increasing the level of education.

There are primary and middle school available nearby Ho tribal village. It is problematic as teachers come from outside of the village that resulted in communication gap as some teachers are unknown to Ho language. Whereas High schools and colleges are also far from Ho tribe inhabitant. Ho tribe students face issues to reach out to educational intuitions due to lack of transportation facility and struggle for daily bread. West Singhbhum is a drought hit area due to that small children also indulge in some kind of laborious activity. Those are the hindrance in Hos education.

These situation pushes them in isolation, builds lack of confidence and not able to establish connections with their own community leaders in the district level. These situations again make them to realize that traditional politics is more reliable. Through Munda-Manki institution there are one common practice has been found that “Denga-Depenga”(helping each other) whether it is the question of village harvest, construction or helping the needy family in their worst time.

Question arises a student will be defiantly struggling for job as present status of education that is not helping them to go for further studies. In these situation economically weaker families of Ho tribe is depending on (NGOs) non-governmental organization for their education. These situations resulted in self reliant solution that is seeking help from the traditional institution to look into the situation. Presently village Munda connects village people to the government officials as he has the authority to approach them. The traditional Munda-Manki institution cannot help much in monetary need.

Jharkhand state Government does not providing job opportunities on the regular time interval. Irregularity also making the situation worst due to that seasonal migration takes place. Ho people who remain in their villages does not have hope on the recruitment process of the government due to that Munda-Manki institution is the only hope to survive in the modern world where Ho people at least get justice without any cost. Example can be given from the Manjhgawon block that comes under West Singhbhum District of Jharkhand state Angarpada, Garasai, Supurguttu and Fulkam are the villages. The uniqueness of these villages is no police case had been filed in the police station since hundred years stated by the Police in charge Vikas Dubey. These evidence are the result of traditional practices of Munda-Manki (Deogam 2023). Tribes are unable to find job in the absence of mainstream political connection (Subrahmanian2005) as Hos representation are very nominal. Without job Hos could not empower themselves. In order to improve the educational condition Jharkhand Educational Department came up with the suggestion.

The district administration of West Singhbhum decided in 2016 in consultation with the Jharkhand and central government that it had developed textbooks to teach mathematics and Hindi in Warangchiti script an attempt to raise the Ho’s literacy rates. Those textbooks were made available on the e-library platform of the national government in 2017 (Dr. Ramdayal .Munda. T.W.R.I). Textbook had been

provided for the students with the hope of improving the level of understanding the concept among students.

One educationist Pradhan Birua who left his job and started a residential school in “Manjahari’ Block of west Singhbhum called “Aayub Academy” (Evening School) this school provides free education to students. This school is functioning with the contribution of the Ho society. Students are learning Chinese language also. Students got award in various international competitions. These are very helpful in order to boost student’s confidence and at the same time students are learning to empower their traditional governing institution of Munda-Manki.

Suggestion

The Jharkhand state government need to set goals for immediate result such as direct beneficiary goals, the overall empowerment goal. Direct beneficiary goal requires creating job opportunity in government offices, research institutions, schools and colleges. On the other hand, overall empowerment provisions are needs to be laid down foundational help to the empowerment of Ho tribes. School existed in Ho dominant areas need to recruit Ho language speaking teachers who can enable students in Ho as well as Hindi language to understand context of the syllabus. Since language is the primary challenge, that would ultimately result in to students lacking the ability to express themselves throughout their education.

Findings

Lupungguttu village has good minority schools till class 12th grade due to that students get direction to prepare themselves to get in good colleges and jobs. Simbiya and Tekrahatu villagers also come to attain education to Lupungguttu village by residing in school hostel. This school has helped nearby villagers to empower themselves by understanding education where teachers are bilingual in Ho and Hindi language. Whereas government school has been established in Lupungutu village but preferences goes to minority school for good education. Education has led the population of all these three villagers to think and ask questions to empower themselves in terms of livelihood and saving their culture. Education is helping the Ho tribe to learn the importance and stick to their roots in the modern time through Munda-Manki.

Conclusion

Ho tribes are attempting to focus on education so that various approach of empowerment could be understood and implemented. Government also focusing on traditional self-government with the collaboration of modern politics of state government. Whatever is the efforts has been made till now by anyone this is fact that survival is difficult for traditional politics as the world is changing. Needs are changing in the time of inflation, and Munda-Manki institution cannot help in this matter. But yes the element of direct democracy will be defiantly remaining in these Ho villages which is the first choice and practices of the villagers. One can be the witness the change of new political behavior patterns in the state and district are being adopted by the Ho tribal communities. Majorly for settling the disputes Ho tribe prefers the traditional Munda-Manki institution and for development looks forward to the district administration.

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