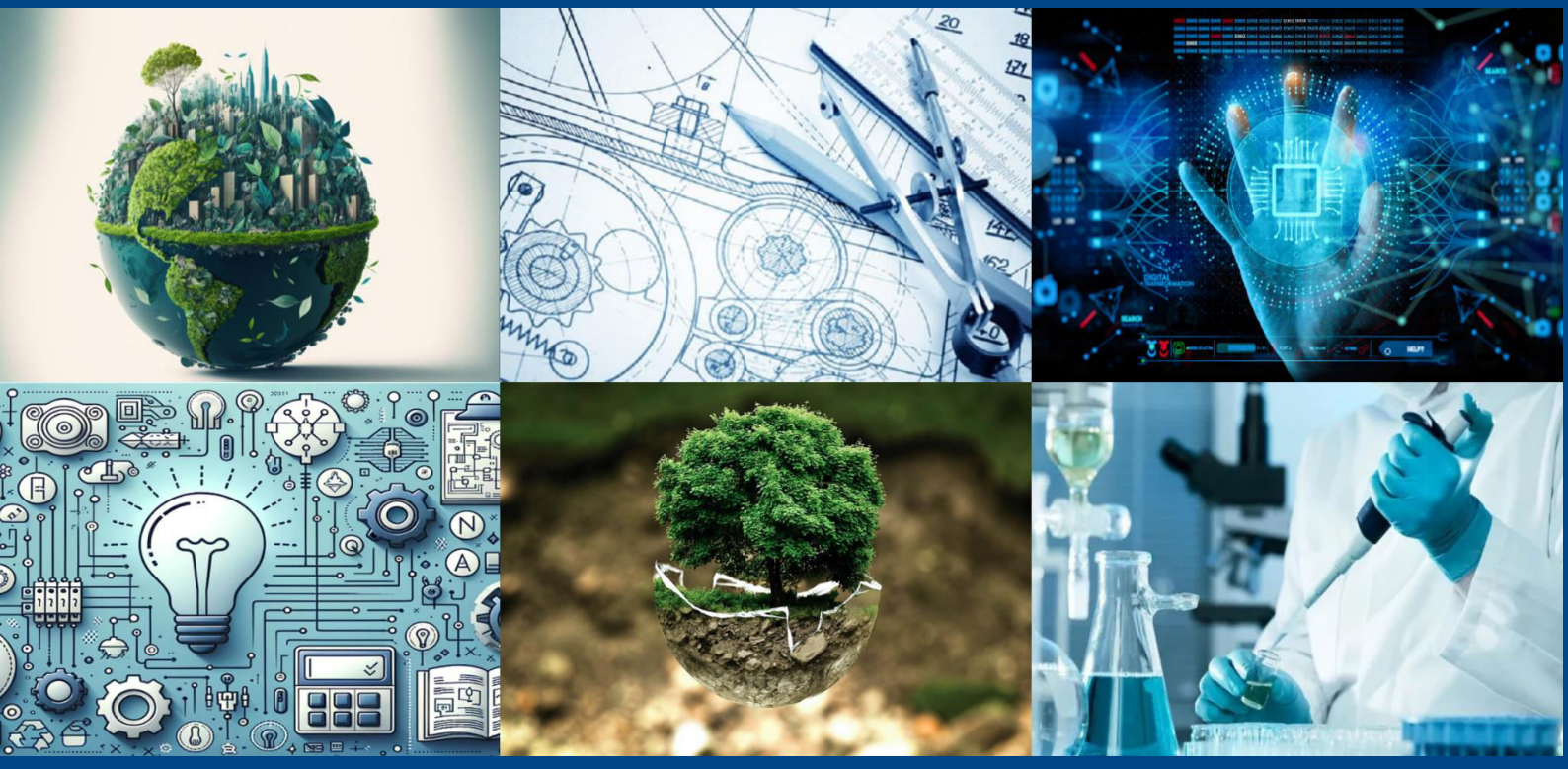
ISSN: 2582-7219

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)



Impact Factor: 9.864

Volume 9, Issue 10, October 2026

© 2026 IJMRSET | Volume 9, Issue 10, October 2026| DOI:10.15680/IJMRSET.2026.0910018

ISSN: 2582-7219 | www.ijmrset.com | Impact Factor: 9.864| ESTD Year: 2018|

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Educational Challenges of Tribal Students and Policy Interventions under NEP 2020

Paching Meena, Prof. Boa Reena Tok

Research Scholar, Department of Education, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh, India

Professor, Department of Education, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT: In order to empower and uplift the marginalized communities, education plays a very crucial role. Especially the Tribal communities in India still continue to be the most undereducated, facing hurdles such as poverty, isolation, and linguistic barrier, insufficient and substandard infrastructure. This paper explores the educational challenges faced by the tribal communities in reference to receiving education and analyse the opportunities and provision that NEP 2020 brings for tribal education A historic reform, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places a strong emphasis on quality, equity, and inclusivity in education.. It highlights important provisions that have the potential to improve tribal educational outcomes, including the, mother-tongue-based learning, Special Education Zones, and digital learning initiatives. NEP 2020 offers a robust framework for tackling historical marginalization. In line with the goals of NEP 2020, tribal education in India can advance towards inclusivity and empowerment by closing these gaps.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an important drive through which a society or nation shapes its future. Its importance is even more pronounced for communities that are socially and economically disadvantaged. Meaningful progress is difficult to achieve when a significant portion of the population remains marginalized and underdeveloped. (Ottaplackal, J. J. & Anbu k.,2022)Education is a key driver of personal and societal growth. Education plays a crucial role for development, as it enables the individual with adequate skill for participating in various economic and social activities.(Patra et al., 2025). Education helps human beings to understand the interrelationship among the tangible phenomena surrounding them and give skill to translate the knowledge into action (Hemasrikumar & Priyanka 2022) The national education policy (NEP) 2020 introduced by the Government of India has completely changed the educational scenario. (Tadingi.A.(2026). It is robust framework based on the principle of equity, equality and inclusivity with its comprehensive strategies and audacious objectives, it seeks to address the major challenges and problems faced by the tribal community in accessing education by creating framework which aligns and work to make a transformative change in educational landscape of tribal communities. (Shivam, P. K. (2024).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the various challenges faced by the tribal communities in accessing education
2. To evaluate the key provision of NEP 2020 for intervention in tribal education

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

For the present study the researcher employed thematic analyses by using secondary data, inferring from government report, documents and academic journals.

Major Problems in Tribal Education

Economic Problem: Tribal people's lack of access to education has inextricably connected it to their impoverished living conditions. Generally majority of the tribal communities in India still lives in a very distressful and dire living condition. Their economic circumstances deprived them from even accessing basic necessities such as food, clothes, shelter and providing a quality education for their children. (Ottaplackal & Anbu, 2022). Even though Government has provided various provision and facilities for providing free education for tribal communities but because of their economic condition, most of the tribal parents are compelled to engage their children in child labour for their livelihood and survival.

ISSN: 2582-7219 | www.ijmrset.com | Impact Factor: 9.864| ESTD Year: 2018|

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

The tribal children are also helping their parent's in house based work which directly prevent tribal children from receiving education. (Dash 2019).

Geographical isolation: Geographical factors play a crucial role in limiting educational opportunities for tribal communities. Tribal people usually reside and settles in inaccessible location and remote regions. Because of the torrential features, basic facilities such as road, electricity connectivity, establishing infrastructures, and maintain and providing education becomes very difficult and limited. The transportation facilities are inadequate so the children gets problems to reach school. As a result, they have to walk a longer distance which creates irregularity in school. As a result, geographical isolation perpetuates low enrolment, poor retention and weak learning outcomes among the tribal students. (Ottapackal & Anbu ,2022)

Language Barrier: Another major issue which breaks the flow of education among the tribal children is their difficulty to understand the language used in the classroom. It is commonly observed that the teachers in schools use the state's language for delivering instructions in the classroom which creates a problem for the tribal students.In most of the tribal regions, people use their own language and dialects as their means of communication which are mostly very different from the state's language. This language gap between the state's language and tribal language creates a barrier between the teachers and the tribal students (Yadav, 2024).

Lack of Trained and Insufficient Teacher: The sluggish progress of education in the tribal regions is often linked with the lack of trained teachers or insufficient teacher; it has been observed that most of the teachers are directly transferred to tribal regions without having any past experience to handle the tribal students. The teachers are mostly unaware of the tribal surroundings and their culture because of that they fail to establish any bond with the tribal children. Another issues is the shortage of teacher, which greatly contribute in educational disparities faced by the tribal people. (Mahata, 2024)

Inadequate educational infrastructure: Many tribal areas often have inadequate infrastructure including classroom, library, furniture's, electricity, waters or sanitation facilities, and oftens the conditions of the school buildings are in dilapidated conditions, which directly hampers to the educational demands of the tribal community. Kavitha, G., & Vanita, M. (2024). Inadequate infrastructure often leads to drop out of the students, irregularities and quality of the education (Bramhane 2024)

NEP 2020 Provisions for Tribal Education

Financial Aid: The policy expands scholarships through the National Scholarship Portal and other government schemes. Many tribal families cannot afford school fees, books, or uniforms. Financial aid reduces the economic burden, encourages families to send children to school, and prevents dropouts.

Distance Learning: It is often observed that the tribal regions face the problem of accessibility as the number of operational schools are quite low in such regions, to tackle this great challenge the National Institute of open schooling (NIOS) in collaboration with the state open schools have expanded their reach through their open and distance learning (ODL) program to facilitate learning requirement of the tribal communities which were previously neglected.

Mother Tongue as a medium of Instruction: This particular approach aims to help children belonging from multilingual heritage to improve the accessibility and inclusivity; under this approach children up to grade 5 will study in their own language or mother tongue to facilitate this high quality textbooks shall be made in local languages to make learning more relatable and enjoyable for the tribal students

Teacher recruitment and Training: NEP 2020 emphasizes recruiting teachers from local tribal backgrounds and providing special training in multilingual education. Recruiting tribal teacher will help in reducing the cultural gap, and help bridge mistrust between schools and communities. Training ensures teachers are sensitive to tribal socio-cultural.

Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones (SEZs): NEP 2020 provides a Gender Inclusion Fund and proposes Special Education Zones for regions with a high concentration of disadvantaged groups, including tribal. These funds and zones ensure targeted resources to improve female tribal education, reduce gender disparity, and encourage community participation.

ISSN: 2582-7219 | www.ijmrset.com | Impact Factor: 9.864| ESTD Year: 2018|

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Development of curriculum: NEP 2020 promotes inclusion Indian knowledge system especially related to tribal culture, tribal knowledge, arts, crafts, vocational skills, which will motivates and develop the feeling of connection within the tribal students and community with the main stream education. It will also help in opening ventures of job opportunities for tribal people

Digital Learning Opportunities: NEP 2020 looks at digital learning as a lifeline for tribal children who often live far from well-equipped schools. With platforms like DIKSHA and SWAYAM, it brings lessons in many languages, even tribal dialects, straight to their fingertips. This means a child in a remote village can listen to the same quality of teaching as one in a city classroom. It also gives them the freedom to study at their own pace, without worrying about missing school while helping their families with daily work. By opening the door to modern subjects and knowledge systems, digital learning narrows the gap between rural and urban students, giving tribal learners a fair chance to dream bigger and aim higher.

Development of curriculum: NEP 2020 promotes Indian knowledge system

IV. CONCLUSION

The expansion of education amid the schedule tribe has been indifferent during the last four decade. Tribal communities of India due to various factors such as culture, socio-economic and geographical isolation has been separated from the main stream education since a long time. On the other hand issues such as poverty, lack of infrastructure, language barrier and lack of teacher, continues to hinder their right to education. NEP 2020 with its robust and transformative framework and strong policies seeks to address those problems. However, the effectiveness largely depends on its successfully implementation. Often it happens that there is huge gap in translating the policies and recommendation into practices at glass root level. Government and stakeholder should work together to ensure that the program and policy is being properly implemented, regularly monitored for ensuring success, as education is an important means for their development. Though the growth of the tribal community is going on in India, but the progress of has been rather slow and as we know that education in modern day empowers people to adjust oneself to today's fast changing modern competitive world. Thus, while challenges remain, the provision of NEP 2020 provides a significant possibility of changing the educational landscape of the tribal communities in India

REFERENCES

1. Bramhane, A. (2024,). Implications of NEP-2020 on tribal education: Challenges and opportunities.B.Aadhar International Peer-Reviewed Indexed Research Journal, 10(C),215-218 Issue 488.
2. Dash, D. K. (2011). Problems of tribal education in India: An analysis. The Third Voice: Reality and Vision, 1(1), 14–22.
3. Hemasrikumar, & Rajan, P. V. (2022). A critical study on tribal education with special reference to primitive tribals in the Nilgiris District. International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR), 9(4), 1–6. http://www.ijrar.org
4. Kavitha, G., & Vanita, M. (2024). Education among tribes: Problem, issues and challenges. International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews in Innovative Education (IJARIIE), 10(5), 476–482. http://www.ijariie.com
5. Mahata, A. (2024). A Study on the Educational Challenges of the Tribal Community and NEP 2020. Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development, 2(3), 40–44. https://doi.org/10.70798/Bijmrd/02030006
6. NationalEducation Policy, (2020). https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/nep/ NEP_Final_English.pdf referred on 10/08/2020
7. Ottaplackal, J. J., & Anbu, K. (2022). Issues and challenges of school education faced by tribal students in India: A critical review. Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities, 9(4), 25–30. https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v9i4.4823
8. Patra, D., Dutta, M., & Bharti, N. (2025). Educational infrastructure challenges in tribal regions in India: An enquiry in the context of NEP 2020. Journal of Social and Economic Development. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40847-025-00446-9
9. Shivam, P. K. (2024). Transforming education for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in connection to NEP-2020. Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, 14(Special Issue), 27–33
10. Tadingi, A. (2026). NEP 2020 and tribal education: Challenges and opportunities in secondary schooling. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 10(7). https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100700903
11. Yadav, B. (2024, May). From policy to practice: Unraveling the realities of tribal education in Ranchi district post National Education Policy 2020. Idealistic Journal of Advanced Research in Progressive Spectrums (IJARPS), 3(5).

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD SERIAL NUMBER INDIA

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

| Mobile No: +91-6381907438 | Whatsapp: +91-6381907438 | ijmrset@gmail.com |

www.ijmrset.com