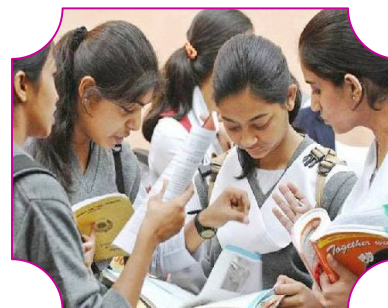




## EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES AMONG SCHEDULED TRIBES IN MAHARASHTRA

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### ABSTRACT

Literacy and level of education are two vital indicators of the level of development achieved by a group/society and overall nation. India's education system has made significant progress in last few decades but the education system has not assured equity in education opportunity or quality of education. This is true for children's from the scheduled tribes and other marginalized groups. The present paper focuses that despite of efforts to promote education among the scheduled tribes, their literacy rates compared to the state average is much low. In 2011 census literacy among scheduled tribes population of Maharashtra is 65.7 percent as compared to 82.3 percent for the state population as a whole. This difference is more prominent among female literacy, among scheduled tribes it is 57 percent as compared to 74 percent among the total female population of Maharashtra. The study is based on secondary data taken from 1991, 2001 and 2011 census reports of Maharashtra.

**KEYWORDS:** Scheduled tribes, Literacy rate, Society

### INTRODUCTION

Education can act as a powerful tool for reducing poverty and unemployment, improving health and nutritional standards and achieving a sustained human development growth (World Bank 2004). The main cause of poverty and backwardness in any society is lack of education. It brings enlightenment and awareness which helps in advancement of the country. UNESCO says 'literacy is human right, a tool of personal empowerment and means for social and human development. According to Indian census definition of literacy means "a person who can read and write a simple message in any language with understanding is considered literate" (census of India 2011).

India has a rich glorious heritage, but a sizeable part of Indian population is yet to get benefits out of it. They are still tribal communities which are primitive and live in tribal areas (Verma 1996). India is home to large variety of tribal population, which are geographically, socially isolated and economically marginalized communities. The tribal in India usually reside in hill areas, forests, near the sea and in islands. Their life style is quite different from non-tribal (Preet 1994). Realizing the economical and educational condition of tribal, a host of programs and measures are initiated by the central and state government. The present paper reveals that despite government efforts to promote education among scheduled tribes their literacy rates compared to states average is very low.

**In the light of observations paper sets the following objectives.**

1. To study the education gaps among the general and tribal population.
2. To study different educational programmes initiated by government on tribal areas.

## DATA AND METHODS

Secondary data was used for this paper. The relevant data is collected from the 1991, 2001, and 2011 census reports of India, published by government of India. Statistical Handbook of Maharashtra, Tribal Sub-plan in Maharashtra a report by Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai were also referred. In addition various books and journals are used. Literacy rate, gender wise literacy, dropout rate such variables were used. Different data is presented in tabular form shown in percentage.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Tribal population scenario in Maharashtra

Table 1 shows the percentage of the scheduled tribe to total population of Maharashtra. In 1991 the total population of state was 78.94 million, of these 7.32 million (9.27%) was tribal population. According to 2001 census total population increased to 96.88 million and that of tribal to 8.58 million, there by accounting for 8.73 percent of the total population. In 2011 Maharashtra's population further increased to 112.87 million and tribal to 10.51 million (9.35). The share of scheduled tribe population declined slightly in 2001. This may be due to the fact that the infant mortality rate among tribal in Maharashtra during that Period was higher.

During 1991 and 2001 decadal change for total population is 22.73 percent and for tribal population it is 17.20 percent which is much less than total population. But in next decade (2001-2011). The decadal growth rate for total population was 15.99 percent and for tribal it was 22.54, overall the decadal percentage increase in the total population has been slowing down where as there is increase in the tribal population.

**Table 1 Change of Scheduled Tribe population in Maharashtra.**

Census year	S.T. population (In million)	Total population (In million)	Percentage of S.T to total population	Decadal variation	
				Total	S.T
1991	7.32	78.93	9.27	25.73	26.79
2001	8.58	85.77	8.85	22.73	17.20
2011	10.51	111.23	9.35	15.99	22.54

**Source:** Hand book of Maharashtra 2013-14

### Literacy differential among Scheduled Tribe Population

According to 2011 census over all literacy rate of Maharashtra is 82.3 percent and that of tribal is 65.7 percent which is much less as compared to total population. The literacy rate of scheduled tribes in Maharashtra is a cause of concern as it is constantly lower than that of the total population. The literacy rate of scheduled tribes in 2001 was 55.2 compared to 76.9 of total population. The gap between the literacy rate of the total population and the scheduled tribe population is 21.7 which is very high. In 2011 the gap between total population and S.T. population is reduced to 16.9 showing an overall improvement which is good indication of education programs conducted for scheduled tribe in the state.

**Table 2 Literacy Rate of Total and Scheduled Tribe Population Maharashtra (2001& 2011)**

Literacy	2001		2011	
	Total population	S.T. population	Total population	S.T. population
Male	86.0	67.0	88.4	74.3
Female	67.0	43.1	75.9	57
Total	76.9	55.2	82.3	65.7

**Source:** Source: Hand book of Maharashtra 2013-14

The literacy of S.T. in 2011 has increased to 74.3 percent as compared to 67 percent in 2001. The gap between the literacy rate of the total population and scheduled tribe male population is 19 percent. This gap

seems to be reduced to 14.1 percent in 2011. Female literacy continues to be an area of concern despite notable achievement during last decade. The female literacy among S.T. population increased from 43.1 percent to 57 percent in 2011. The gap between female literacy among total population and S.T. population is 24 percent in 2001. The gap has been reduced to 19 percent in 2011. Though literacy levels among S.T. was lower than that of the total population, there has been increased in the literacy rate in S.T. population especially among females. But still there exists a huge gap between the total population and S.T. population and S.T. population literacy rate.

### Enrolment in Different Levels of Education

The enrolment status among the scheduled tribes over the years is an important indicator of development of this venerable community. Table 3 shows the percentage of children enrolment for primary school, secondary school and college by sex for total and scheduled tribe population. The figures were obtained from the National Survey (NSS) Round 66 (July 2009-June 2010). The children in age group 6-9 years indicates primary school enrolment. Age group 10-14 indicates children attending college are in the age group 15 to 19. Similarly the percentage of students in the age group 15-24 shows who completed 11<sup>th</sup> standard and proceeded for higher education.

**Table 3 Enrolment Rate of total and S.T. Population Students attending School and College by sex and Age**

Population	Enrolment in school and college							
	Male				Female			
	6-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	6-9	10-14	15-19	20-24
Total	93.1	95.4	71.8	25.0	94.1	95.9	62.8	18.0
S.T.	76.9	87.1	58.8	18.5	72.6	93.5	40.4	9.7
Difference	-16.2	-8.2	-12.9	-6.5	-21.5	-2.3	-22.4	-8.3

**Source:** National Sample Survey (NSS) Round 66 (July 2009- June 2010)

The data presented in table shows that in Maharashtra in the age group of 6-9, 10-14, 15-19, and 20-24 years 93.1%, 95.4%, 71.8%, and 25% of total male children in the total population were attending school. For scheduled tribe children, the corresponding figures were 76.9%, 87.1%, 58.8% and 18.5%. This shows that the enrolment difference between total male population children and scheduled tribe male population children is very high (-16.2%, -8.2%, -12.9% and -6.5% respectively). In the same age groups mentioned above the enrolment rate for female children in total population was 94.1%, 95.9%, 62.8% and 18% and for female scheduled tribe population the corresponding enrolment rates were 72.6%, 93.5%, 40.4% and 9.7%. The figures from the above table indicates that there is a large gap between the student enrolment of total population children and scheduled tribe population children. The percentage of children attending the school in total population and scheduled tribe population in age group 6-9 years is high but the percentage of school attending children goes on decreasing rapidly in the higher classes which indicates higher dropout rate especially in scheduled tribe children.

### CONCLUSION

Education is the most powerful tool for the socio economic development of society as a whole. Education brings a reduction in inequalities among various communities. The literacy picture of scheduled tribe population in Maharashtra is not satisfactory. Based on the discussion made in the paper still lot of improvement in the field of education for scheduled tribe, by the government has to be made. Even after the implementation of various education schemes for scheduled tribe population there is large gap between the literacy rate of total and scheduled tribe population. The scheduled tribe in Maharashtra suffer from poor educational attainments with a wider gender disparity. While the literacy rates for males is 74.3 percent and for the females is 57 percent, however there is improvement in the female literacy rate from 43.1 percent in 2001 to 57 percent in 2011. Educating the tribal children empowering them is a challenge, the government

is making steps towards it. Necessary infrastructure and the appointment of teachers belonging to scheduled tribe community should be encouraged.

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