14.6 Tribal Education

14.7 Education and Social Change

Biradar, R.R. and Jayasheela: Effects of Educational Inequalities among Social Groups in Rural India. *Journal of Rural Development* 26, 3 (2007): 379-401.

This paper examines the social and gender inequalities which exist in respect to educational attainment in India, especially in rural areas. It shows that the educational status of persons of Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste backgrounds is significantly lower than that of other communities. With reference to gender, female literacy rates are considerably lower than male literacy rates in almost all social groups, more so in respect of STs / SCs. This paper argues that though overall literacy has increased significantly, STs / SCs continue to lag in this respect. Ultimately, the unequal distribution of education among social groups and between males and females has had an adverse impact on their access to qualitative employment, both in agricultural and non-agricultural occupations, resulting in a greater incidence of poverty among the STs / SCs, and consequent impacts on their health status.

Since the level of educational attainment plays a 'linchpin' role in reducing the incidence of poverty as well as improving the health status of the socially marginalized and economically disadvantaged sections of the society, the author emphasizes the need to provide adequate and qualitative education in rural areas, and especially to the weaker sections of the society. Adequate credit and non-credit support should also be provided to them. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) should be comprehensively implemented across different parts of the country, focusing especially on disadvantaged sections of the society.