

Eklavya Model Residential Schools in Odisha: An Evaluation

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It has been universally accepted that education is the basic input for sustainable development of people and nation. Realising the importance of education the State and Central Government have given wide attention for promotion of education among all categories in general and, socially and culturally disadvantaged groups in particular. The schedule tribes' constitute the most backward among the weaker and disadvantaged sections in India. And only education can bring a visible change in their present life style. Many special schemes have been formulated in order to attract tribal children to school. However, review clearly underlines that they are far behind from the mainstream of life. For the upliftment of tribal people living in backward areas, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched a new concept of educational development—'Establishment of Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS)' in the country during 1997–1998. In Odisha, Eklavya Model Tribal residential school project was launched in the year 2000–2001. Over the periods of 12 years, 13 such EMRs have been established across the State covering total of 11 districts. The main aim of the study was to ascertain the effectiveness of the scheme; data were collected from the areas like — admission procedure for students, location and infrastructure, teaching and learning, assessment procedure etc.

Objective of the Study

- To assess the various segment of the schooling programs conducted in EMRS for the tribal students.
- To determine the achievement of tribal students for last three years.
- To study the present status and functions of EMRS.

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- To identify in-service and pre-service training needs of teachers working in EMRS.
- To determine the extent to which the EMRS scheme has been succeeded in the context of framed policies.

Research Methodology

Descriptive survey research was employed in order to assess the operational aspects of EMRS running in various tribal district of Odisha.

Sample Selected for the Study

The field study included all the 13 EMRs which have been sanctioned and operationalised in 11 tribal districts of Odisha. The study was conducted on a sample of 130 students, 63 teachers, 13 principals and 13 administrative officers.

Tools for Data Collection

Data for the study were collected both from primary and secondary sources. Reports, newspapers, journals, document, guidelines relating to the function of EMRS, office orders were used as secondary data. Primary data were collected through intensive field work which includes.

- Observation schedule.
- Interview schedule for administrative officers and principals.
- Questionnaires for teachers and students.

Findings of the Study

Examination of data obtained from students, teachers, principals and administrative officers revealed that education (including meals, school uniforms, books, pocket money etc.) is entirely free for all tribal students who have admitted in all 13 EMRSs of Odisha. In context of location and infrastructure, EMRSs were found appropriately located in tribal areas, essential infrastructures such as laboratories, computer lab, library, classrooms, toilets, teacher's room, office room, principal room, staff quarters were available. The recruitment of teaching staff is done through career assessment followed by an interview which plays an important role in getting quality teachers. All EMRSs have well qualified and sufficient number of teaching staff. It was also found that teachers felt the need to incorporate ICT in order to improve the quality of

education. Every EMR has a school level management committees headed by the Collector of the concerned district and 8 other members. In order to examine performance of students, the school engages in a range of comprehensive formative and summative assessment procedures. It was expected that the principals and teachers should undergo the induction level training which could focus how to understand and cater the needs of tribal children. The finding reveals that no such specific program has been organised till date.

Educational Implications of the Study

- The present study will be helpful to determine the strength and weakness of the ongoing programs, specially meant for tribal children.
- It will be helpful for reducing dropout rates and to increase enrolment of tribal students. It is also capable of providing authentic information to Ministry of Tribal Affairs on which further improvement strategies could be formulated.
- Policy makers can assess the feasibilities of different policies with respect to the education of tribal students.
- It will help to develop awareness amongst the parents who do not know much about the facilities available for their children
- This investigation would also be helpful to identify the real learning difficulties faced by students and problems faced by teachers in teaching learning process.
- It paves the way for future comparative studies in the area of tribal education.
- Teachers would be able to know their status in terms of salary, service conditions, future possibilities along with their role and responsibilities.
- Schools may draw inputs to strengthen the institutional and instructional capacities.

Conclusion

In terms of quality of education and infrastructural facilities, EMRSs outstands other government schools. This initiative has become successful in generating self-confidence among tribal children and assists them to enter the main stream of society. Extra curricular activities carried out by EMRS have added to the knowledge and

interest of tribal students and have given them an opportunity to develop their skills in the subjects of their interest. Availability and access to library and computers has also contributed towards skill up gradation of tribal students. By taking care of physical, psychological and emotional development of students, EMRS thus contributed to their overall development.