

Bridging the Divide: Analysing the Correlation between Literacy and Crime against Scheduled Tribes in India

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Abstract

The article discusses the link between literacy rates and crime against Scheduled Tribes in India, which is complex and defies the simplistic assumption that education reduces victimization. The attempt here will be to understand how literacy impinges on the actual empowerment and safety of these historically oppressed communities. The study uses a mixed-methods approach. It combines a quantitative correlation of state-wise ST literacy data (Census) and crime statistics (NCRB) with a qualitative interpretation of the socio-political contexts to explain the statistical findings. The correlation is not a simple inverse one. The results support an “empowerment-reporting effect,” in which higher literacy may lead to higher reported crime because aware individuals would be more likely to access the justice system. In other contexts, the protective effects of literacy are negated by deep-rooted structural violence and land conflicts. Effective policy needs to go further than basic literacy and ensure functional, legal, and political literacy. This educational empowerment needs to be linked with strong implementation of protective legislation and socio-economic support in order for ST communities to actually be safe and experience justice that bridges the gap between constitutional promise and lived reality.

Keywords: *Scheduled Tribes, Literacy, Atrocities, Empowerment, Social Justice*

1. Introduction

India is a country of immense diversity and rapid growth. However, the country continues to grapple with entrenched social inequalities. Among the most marginalized groups in the country are STs over 104 million people (8.6% of the population according to the 2011 Census) -(Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021), comprising more than 700 distinct communities with unique cultural and ecological ties. In spite of constitutional safeguards under Article 15(4), 16(4), 46, 244, 330, and the Fifth and Sixth Schedules, and legal protection under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (PoA Act), the reality remains grim. The National Crime Records Bureau recorded 8,802 crimes against STs in 2021, which saw a jump of 6.4% from 2020; even these figures tend to underestimate the actual incidence due to underreporting, police apathy, and victim intimidation during criminal investigation procedures (NCRB, 2022).

Alongside this, education has been promoted as a primary tool of empowerment through various initiatives like scholarships, hostels, and Eklavya Model Residential Schools. The underlying assumption is that literacy leads to reduced vulnerability because of growing awareness, contribution to economic functions, and access to justice. On the other hand, this paper challenges the linearity of that assumption, pointing out that the relationship between literacy and crime against STs is actually complex and context-dependent. The rise in literacy, especially legal and political consciousness, can lead to a greater reporting of crimes rather than their occurrence, an “empowerment-reporting effect.” In areas with low levels of literacy, pervasive fear and systemic exclusion foster a “culture of silence.”

The study attempts to examine the state-wise correlation between literacy and crimes against STs, based on quantitative data from the Census and NCRB, combined with a qualitative socio-political analysis. It tries to show how literacy acts not only as education but also as a possible instrument for justice, dignity, and structural empowerment of India’s indigenous communities.

2. Literature Review

The connection between literacy and crime towards vulnerable populations, represents an example of an interdisciplinary area involving sociology, law, economics, and education. There are three main types of literature concerning Scheduled Tribes: (i) studies on their educational and socio-economic status, (ii) research on crimes against them and the effectiveness of protective laws, and (iii) analyses connecting education, empowerment, and social justice.

2.1 The Socio-Economic and Educational Landscape of Scheduled Tribes

Ranging from sociology and economics to law and education, the connection between literacy and crime against weaker sections is thus an interdisciplinary area of study. A significant body of research explains the continuous marginalization of the STs. Works like that of Virginius (Xaxa, 2008), among others, have engaged in-depth with the question of “tribes into castes” and highlight how the processes of state formation and market integration have led to their dislocation and subordination. The alienation of the Scheduled Tribes from their traditional lands (Rajasenana et. al., 2019) and forests has been identified as the leading factor for their economic vulnerability and a major trigger of conflict (Shah, 2017).

This is always backed up by government reports. The Report of the High-Level Committee on Socio-Economic, Health and Educational Status of Tribal Communities of India (Xaxa Committee Report, 2014) give a full and honest picture. Even after decades of affirmative action, STs are still behind practically all other socioeconomic groups on important development indices including health, education, and poverty.

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2.2 Crime, Atrocities, and the Law

The literature on crime against STs is dominated by analyses of “the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989”. This Act has been greatly praised as a strong piece of legislation, but has been marred by difficulties in its implementation. Research has persistently indicated poor conviction rates, excessively lengthy delays in trials, and the routine abuse of the Act by the ruling communities to press counter-cases (Prakash, 2015).

Narayan and Vaddiraju (2019) contend that the PoA Act’s success is significantly eroded by the police and judicial institutions’ inclination. The police are not willing to file cases under the Act, try to water down the charges, or conduct half-hearted investigations. Victims are intimidated by offenders and not safeguarded by the state machinery, resulting in a majority of withdrawn or acquitted cases. The conviction rate under the PoA Act for ST crime was a paltry 25.5% in 2021, and more than 90% of cases remained pending trial at the year-end, summarizing the words of wisdom, “justice delayed is justice denied” (NCRB, 2022).

Researchers have also observed the changing nature of atrocities. In addition to open physical violence, they include more hidden forms of structural violence, such as taking tribal land for development projects (Borah, 2016), breaking the Forest Rights Act (2006), and going after Adivasis who oppose dispossession (Asher & Ramdas, 2018). These systemic issues are infrequently classified as “atrocities” under the PoA Act; consequently, they are absent from official crime statistics.

2.3 The Nexus: Literacy, Empowerment, and Social Justice

People in India generally think that being able to read and write is linked to lower crime rates, but this hasn't been proven. Amartya Sen (2000) and other economists have said that the basic idea is that education gives people more “capabilities” or freedoms. Literacy facilitates access to information, develops critical thinking, and makes political and legal participation much easier. An educated person is better acquainted with his or her rights, with red tape, and can defend against injustice.

Some micro-level studies confirm this hypothesis. For example, studies of the impact of female literacy find a clear correlation between increased literacy rates and lower incidence of domestic violence and increased ability to make decisions independently of male relatives (Jejeebhoy, 1998). It is therefore reasonable to assume that STs with higher literacy rates in their communities would be less vulnerable to being hoodwinked in business matters, more knowledgeable about legislation that protects them, such as the PoA Act and the Forest Rights Act, and better able to mobilize politically.

Nevertheless, several researchers have clarified some important nuances. In his seminal article, “Why the ‘Haves’ Come Out Ahead,” Galanter (1974) argues that the courts inherently favor the rich and powerful. Basic literacy may not be adequate. People need to know the law and have the tools to utilize it well. Also, as people become educated and forceful, it can make dominating societies angry because they feel that their old hierarchies are being challenged (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). This might cause a short-term rise in violence and reports of atrocities as newly emboldened groups fight for their rights and resist being stopped.

3. Research Gap

The literature review reveals that while substantial research exists independently on ST education and crimes against STs, there is a significant gap in scholarship that systematically and empirically analyzes the correlation between them. Most studies either:

Theoretically assumes a positive link between education and empowerment without testing it against crime data.

Focus on legal analyses of the PoA Act's implementation failures, without correlating these failures with the educational status of the victim communities.

Conduct socio-economic analyses of ST communities where education is treated as one of many development indicators, but its specific role as a protective factor against crime is not isolated or deeply analyzed.

No major study has undertaken a state-wise statistical correlation of ST literacy rates with the corresponding rates of reported crime against STs (adjusted for population) and then interpreted these statistical findings through a qualitative lens that accounts for contextual factors such as reporting behavior, the political economy of a state, and the presence of social movements. This paper aims to fill this gap by providing a data-driven analysis that neither takes the protective power of literacy for granted nor dismisses it, but rather seeks to understand its complex, mediated, and often paradoxical role in the Adivasi struggle for justice and security in the following ways.

4. Research Objectives

To fill the research gap that has been found, this study has the following goals:

To chart and examine the disparities in literacy rates among Scheduled Tribes in India, encompassing the gender divide.

To look at the trends and how crimes against Scheduled Tribes are spread out across states under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Atrocities Act (PoA).

To conduct a correlational analysis to investigate the statistical relationship between state-wise ST literacy rates and the rate of reported crime against STs (per lakh of ST population).

To qualitatively analyze the statistical results, the study examined the “empowerment-reporting hypothesis” and the impact of regional socio-political situations.

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5. Methodology

This study utilizes a mixed-methods research methodology, principally focusing on the analysis of secondary data, complemented with qualitative interpretation informed by the current literature. This was a descriptive and correlational investigation at the macro (state) level.

5.1 Data Sources

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Literacy Data: The Census of India 2011 is the main source of state-wise Scheduled Tribe literacy rates, including rates for men and women. Even though these statistics are more than ten years old, they are still the most complete and detailed set of data for this particular group of people. The analysis recognized this restriction. More current, although not as direct, data from sources like the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5, 2019–21) will be utilized to help us understand how well people do in school.

Crime Data: The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) publishes annual reports called «Crime in India» that show how many crimes and atrocities have happened against Scheduled Tribes in each state. Recent years data (such 2019, 2020, and 2021) will be utilized to look at present trends. The study would utilize the crime rate (the number of crimes per 100,000 or lakhs of the ST population) instead of the total number of instances for making the dataset normal and comparable.

Population Data: The Census of 2011 gives us the ST population numbers for each state, which we use to compute the crime rate.

5.1.1. Scope and Limitations

Scope: The study covers all major states and union territories of India for which comparable data on both ST literacy and crime against STs are available.

Limitations:

The research depends on official statistics, which have their own problems. The NCRB's crime data comes from First Information Reports (FIRs) that the police file, and it is known to be incomplete.

The literacy data from the 2011 Census is old. It's likely that literacy rates have gone up since then, but the order of states in terms of literacy is thought to have stayed mostly the same.

Correlation is not causation. A statistical correlation can never prove that it is the levels of literacy causing changes in crime rates. There are just too many other things that could impact on this relationship, including levels of poverty, patterns of land distribution, effectiveness of the police, political will, and the presence

or absence of civil society organizations. The qualitative interpretation looks to address this through an analysis of these mediating factors.

5.1.2. Method of Analysis

Descriptive Analysis: This involves the description of data on ST literacy and crime rates through the use of tables and charts to indicate trends and differences across states.

Correlation Analysis: The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) will be used to find the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the two main variables: state-wise ST literacy rate (%) and the number of crimes against STs, cases per lakh of ST population.

Qualitative Interpretation: The statistical results will be interpreted by categorizing states into different typologies, for example, High Literacy/High Reported Crime; Low Literacy/High Reported Crime; High Literacy/Low Reported Crime. This interpretation will use the literature review to explain the patterns observed, with particular emphasis on the empowerment-reporting hypothesis and the unique socio-political contexts of different states and regions, for instance, mainland states versus tribal-majority states in the Northeast.

5.1.3. Analysis and Interpretation

Using the methodology that was discussed before, this section demonstrates how the data was studied further. First, the study presents the trends in crime and literacy in a different manner. Next, the correlation analysis and its interpretation are presented. Finally, the analysis concludes with a conclusion.

5.2 State-wise Trends in Scheduled Tribe Literacy

The results of the Census taken in 2011 paint a clear picture of the educational disparities that STs are subjected to. There were significant disparities amongst the states, despite the fact that the national ST literacy rate was 59%.

Table 1: ST Literacy Rates in Major States (Census 2011)

State	Literacy Rate for all (%)	ST Literacy Rate (%)	ST Female Literacy (%)
High Literacy States			
Mizoram	91.3	91.5	89.4
Kerala	94.0	75.8	70.8
Sikkim	81.4	79.5	73.6

Moderate Literacy States			
Maharashtra	82.3	65.7	56.4
Gujarat	78.0	62.5	52.0
Jharkhand	66.4	57.1	46.2
Odisha	72.9	52.2	41.2
Low Literacy States			
Rajasthan	66.1	52.8	37.3
Madhya Pradesh	69.3	50.6	41.2
Telangana	66.5	49.5	39.4
National Average	73.0	59.0	49.4

Source: Census of India, 2011

Interpretation

Regional Disparities: Literacy rate data display extreme regional differences. The Northeast Indian States, mainly Mizoram, possess much higher literacy rates, some states exceed the national average. One contributing factor is the historic involvement of Christian missionaries in the spread of education in the tribal majority states where social structure is primarily homogeneous and empowers their communities.

High-Performing Mainland States: The state of Kerala possesses a much higher ST literacy rate than most states located on the mainland, due to a combination of the level of education in the state along with successful social development policies embraced by the state.

The “Heartland” Lag: Central India is represented by the “Heartland” Lag. States in Central India that have a high concentration of Scheduled Tribes (STs) including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, and the state of previously undivided Andhra Pradesh have shown significantly lower literacy rates. These Central Indian states also have the highest levels of caste integration among ST’s and also continue to have an increasing amount of conflict over land and resources.

Gender Gap: The “Gender Gap” between the literacy of ST men and women in all states shows a disturbing trend with little evidence of abatement. In Rajasthan, for example, the female literacy rate is precariously low at 37.3%, with Adivasi women being doubly vulnerable due to their gender and tribal identity.

5.3 State-wise Trends in Crime Against Scheduled Tribes

The data from the NCRB illustrates the locations where atrocities are recorded the most frequently. We compare the crime rate (number of cases per lakh of ST population) for the year 2021 in order to ensure that the comparison is accurate.

Table 2: Crime Rate against Scheduled Tribes in Major States (2021)

State	Total Cases Reported	ST Population (in Lakhs, 2011)	Crime Rate (per Lakh)
High Crime Rate States			
Kerala	518	4.85	106.8
Rajasthan	2121	92.39	23.0
Madhya Pradesh	2627	153.17	17.1
Telangana	536	31.78	16.9
Moderate Crime Rate States			
Maharashtra	1342	105.10	12.8
Odisha	676	95.91	7.0
Gujarat	363	89.17	4.1
Low Crime Rate States			
Jharkhand	436	86.45	5.0
Mizoram	4	10.91	0.4
All-India Average Rate	8802	1042.8	8.4

Source: Calculated from NCRB "Crime in India 2021" and Census 2011 population data

Interpretation:

The Kerala Paradox: Despite gaining international recognition for its social progress and high ST literacy, Kerala tops the list with a very high crime rate against STs in the country by a huge margin of 106.8. This number is more than 12 times the average for the whole country.

The Central Indian Hub of Atrocities: Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of cases, though it reports a lower crime rate than Kerala or Rajasthan. It is part of the epicenter of documented atrocities against STs along with Rajasthan.

Low Reporting or Low Incidence: States like Jharkhand and Odisha, which have large ST populations and known problems with conflict and exploitation, have crime rates that are moderate to low. This brings up an important question: does this mean things are getting better, or is it just that people aren't reporting crimes because they can't get justice and are scared?

The Northeast Anomaly: Mizoram has the highest ST literacy rate and a very low crime rate. This makes sense because the PoA Act's power dynamics (minority vulnerability vs. dominant majority) don't work the same way in a state with a lot of tribes.

5.4 Correlation Analysis and Interpretation

Correlation analysis aims to ascertain the magnitude and characteristics of the relationship between two variables in the study. In a bivariate distribution, a significant correlation between two variables typically signifies the existence of a causal relationship. The "coefficient of correlation" is being denoted by "r".

Pearson's correlation analysis is used to see the association between two variables in a bivariate distribution for the following major states

Table 3: Crime Rates and Literacy Rates for Major States

State	Crime Rate against ST People (Per Lakh People)	Literacy Rate for all (%)	Literacy Rate for ST (%)	Literacy Rate Gap
Kerala	106.8	94.0	75.8	18.2
Rajasthan	23.0	66.1	52.8	13.3
Madhya Pradesh	17.1	69.3	50.6	18.7
Telangana	16.9	66.5	49.5	17.0
Maharashtra	12.8	82.3	65.7	16.6
Odisha	7.0	72.9	52.2	20.7
Gujarat	4.1	78.0	62.5	15.5
Jharkhand	5.0	66.4	57.1	9.3

Source: Calculated from NCRB "Crime in India 2021" and Census 2011 population data

A simple linear correlation analysis yielded a positive correlation coefficient ($r > 0$) [Crime against ST and Literacy Rate for all ($r = 0.74$); Crime against ST and Literacy Rate for ST ($r = 0.70$)]. This statistically suggests that as the literacy rate increases, the *reported crime rate* against ST Population also tends to increase. This finding directly contradicts the common-sense hypothesis that education is a purely protective factor that should lead to a *decrease* in crime. There is a moderate positive correlation between Crime against ST and Literacy Rate Gap ($r = 0.25$), meaning areas with higher gaps in literacy between Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the general population tend to report more crimes against STs. Visual representation (Table 4) illustrating the relationship between the literacy rate (from the 2011 Census) and the crime rate against STs (from NCRB 2021) for major Indian states.

Figure 1: Crime Rate vs. ST Literacy Rate

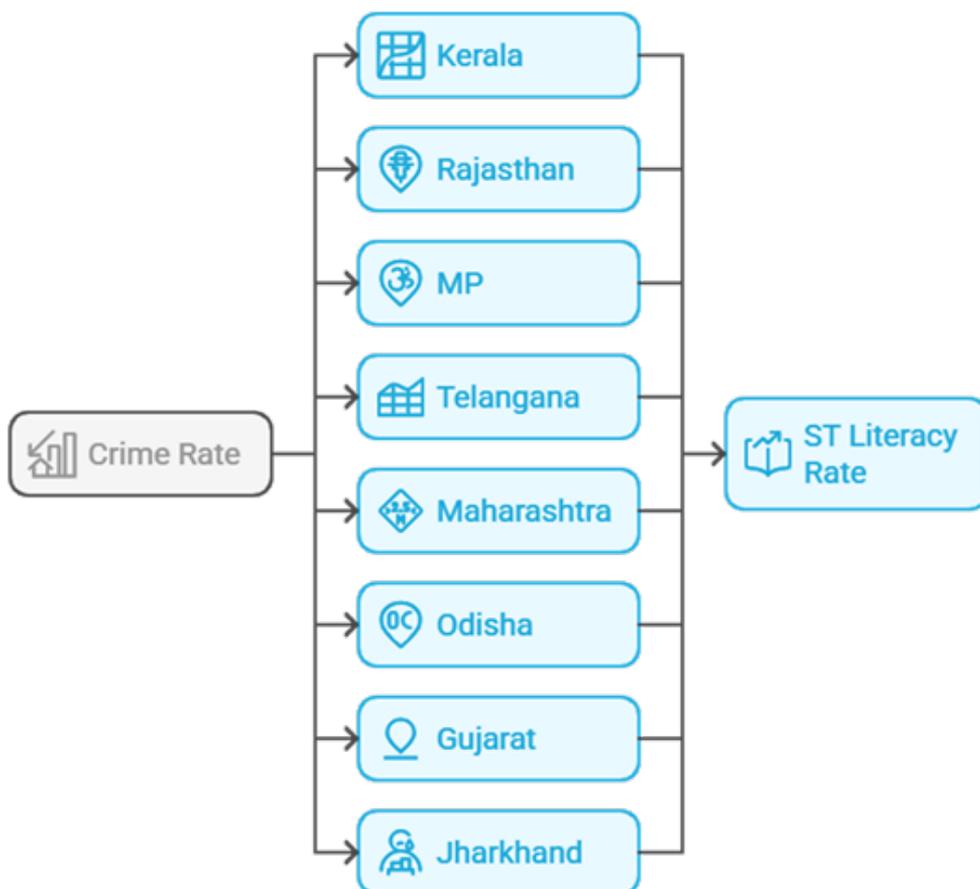


Table 4: Pearson’s correlation analysis between two variables in a bivariate distribution

	Crime against ST	Literacy Rate for all	Literacy rate for ST	Literacy rate gap
Crime against ST	1.00			
Literacy Rate for all	0.74	1.00		
Literacy rate for ST	0.70	0.93	1.00	
Literacy rate gap	0.25	0.38	0.02	1.00

The correlation analysis across all states would be misleading due to the contextual differences. Instead, a qualitative grouping of states provides a more insightful interpretation.

Group 1: High Literacy and High Reported Crime Rate (e.g., Kerala)

The case of Kerala is the most compelling evidence for the empowerment-reporting hypothesis. The literacy rate for STs in Kerala is 75.8%, which means that tribal communities there are much better educated than those in most of India. Because of this level of education, along with the state's high political awareness and active civil society, ST people are more aware of their legal rights under the PoA Act and more comfortable talking to the police. The high crime rate is, therefore, less an indicator of exceptionally high levels of violence (though violence certainly exists) and more a reflection of a higher propensity to report crime. It signifies that the law is being used, which, paradoxically, is a positive sign of legal empowerment.

Group 2: Low/Moderate Literacy and High Crime Rate (e.g., Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh)

These states represent the "classic" scenario of vulnerability. Rajasthan (ST literacy 52.8%, crime rate 23.0) and Madhya Pradesh (ST literacy 50.6%, crime rate 17.1) both have social structures that are very feudal and patriarchal. There is both increased reporting and increased frequency of crimes occurring here, with many going unpunished. Many times, the reasons for violence relate to land disputes, accusations regarding caste superiority, or sexual harassment. Consequently, a low level of literacy makes individuals especially vulnerable. Because they lack the ability to read complex land documents, apply for government assistance, and access the legal system properly as a result of their low literacy, ST people are particularly disadvantaged. A high crime rate indicates to us just how extreme the situation is for those caught in a system that oppresses them. The problem is compounded by the fact that ST people will continue to be disadvantaged, as increased literacy among them does little to change power structures.

Group 3: High Literacy and Low Crime Rate (e.g., Mizoram)

On the contrary, when we refer to Mizoram, as an example, where ST people have a 91.5% literacy rate and where the crime rate is only 0.4%. The social context in this state is not one of a small Adivasi minority fighting against a large non-tribal majority. Instead, over 94% of the population is tribal. The PoA Act, which was made for the latter situation, isn't very useful. Conflicts, when they arise, are typically intra-tribal and resolved through different social and legal mechanisms. This case demonstrates that the socio-political context is a critical mediating variable. High literacy in a tribal-majority state leads to overall development and well-being, naturally resulting in low crime rates.

Group 4: Low/Moderate Literacy and Low/Moderate Reported Crime Rate (e.g., Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat)

This is the most unclear group. Jharkhand (ST literacy 57.1%, crime rate 5.0) and Odisha (ST literacy 52.2%, crime rate 7.0) are two states where people are often forced to move, there is a lot of fighting between Naxalites, and mining companies and moneylenders take advantage of tribal communities. The low official crime rates are very suspicious and probably mean that a lot of crimes go unreported. In this case, the lack of reading and writing skills, along with extreme poverty, fear of retaliation from powerful vested interests (like the government and businesses), and a lack of trust in the police and courts, make a “culture of silence.” There is a possibility that victims are unaware of their rights, or that they may believe that reporting a crime is either worthless or even harmful. There is a high probability that the statistical data in these states conceals more information than it discloses regarding the actual incidence of victimization.

6. Findings and Discussion

Several significant findings arise from this analysis that contest oversimplified narratives:

No Direct Inverse Correlation: There is no straight-forward, universal inverse correlation between the literacy rates and crimes against STs. It’s complicated and influenced by so many other things.

The Empowerment-Reporting Effect is Real: In highly socially developed states, in terms of literacy, for example, Kerala, higher levels of literacy and awareness translate to greater amounts of reported crimes, which reflects heightened utilization of the justice system rather than any increase in crime itself.

Structural Violence Overwhelms Literacy Gains: In those states where feudal hierarchies are strong and competition for resources is fierce, atrocities continue at a high rate even while literacy rises. The structural causes of crime are so powerful here that education alone cannot protect people from victimization.

Context is Paramount: The socio-political context is a key factor. Tribal-majority states like Mizoram are very different from mainland states where STs are a small, weak group. In tribal-majority states, STs have political and social power.

Underreporting Masks Reality: Low official crime rates in states with low literacy and known social conflicts - for example, Jharkhand and Odisha - probably reflect underreporting of crime and malfunctioning state machinery rather than the peacefulness of the social environment.

The Literacy-Justice Gap: The following analysis implicitly reflects a difference between basic literacy, or the ability to read and write, and functional/legal literacy, or the ability to understand and use information toward obtaining rights. The latter is what really equips people with the power to demand justice.

7. Conclusion

It is anticipated that a considerable period of time and effort will be required for the gap between the promised constitutional protection for Scheduled Tribes (ST) in India and the practical application of this protection to be sufficiently bridged. This article has focused on one element of this effort, namely the significance of both literacy and literacy development, in respect of Scheduled Tribes (ST). The relationship between literacy and other correlates of Scheduled Tribes (ST) has been statistically that there is a correlation between increased literacy levels and an increase in reported crimes. However, the relationship does not imply that increased literacy levels are “bad” for ST communities; rather, when properly interpreted, it strongly supports the assertion that literacy development creates empowerment to recognise crime, resulting in an increased likelihood that crimes will be reported. Therefore, literacy development will often be associated with an apparent increase in crime when, in reality, it is an indication of increased recognition of crime and subsequent reporting.

Given these challenges, policymakers, along with society, must consider two important tests concerning literacy among disadvantaged groups. First of all, literacy for Adivasis needs to be not only an accomplishment of technology but also a means of creating a consciousness about their role and position in power and society. Adivasis must be taught how to read - both the law and politics, as well as the operation of the justice system - so they can understand how to function within it and ultimately effect change in their own lives. Second, this type of education must be complemented by a sensitive and aware state that will put in place structures to protect and uphold individual rights to property and livelihoods, and endeavour to dismantle the systemic and entrenched prejudices that allow such atrocities to occur.

Lastly, to bridge the gap, we need to build a bridge on the two pillars of giving citizens power via education and holding institutions accountable through justice. We can't construct a society where India's indigenous people can live with the dignity, safety, and freedom that is their birthright unless we have both of these pillars in place.

8. Suggestions and Policy Recommendations

Based on such facts, an interdisciplinary approach is required to leverage literacy for the protection of STs:

8.1. Reimagining Education for Empowerment

Curriculum of Rights: Curricula at schools located in tribal areas have to be improved so that they go beyond literacy. Among the protective statutes that should be included are the PoA Act, the Forest Rights Act (FRA), and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA). Additionally, it should include modules on the Indian Constitution and the right to dignity. It is important that the information be broadcast in the indigenous languages of the tribes so that it may be comprehended.

Focus on Functional and Digital Literacy: An emphasis should be placed on functional literacy, which equips the populace with the skills necessary to enter the market, conduct banking transactions, and navigate government websites. For the purpose of avoiding fraud and gaining access to information in the modern day, digital literacy is also essential.

Empowering Adivasi Women: To bridge the gender gap, the most significant focus should be placed on education for young women. To combat the high rates of females dropping out of school, it is necessary to increase the number of residential schools of the EMRS type, as well as to implement economic incentives and local area mobilisation.

8.2. Strengthening the Justice Delivery System

Legal Aid and Awareness Clinics: Legal aid clinics should be established at the block level in regions that are controlled by tribal communities by the government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Not only should these clinics wait for victims, but they should also conduct informational efforts on the PoA Act to raise broad knowledge.

Sensitization of Law Enforcement: The need to provide police officers, administrative officials, and lower-level judges with regular and mandated training in sensitization cannot be overstated. For the purpose of overcoming institutional prejudice, they need to get training on the socio-cultural background of tribal societies as well as the spirit of the powers of attorney act.

Ensuring Accountability: There is a pressing need to remedy the appallingly low conviction rates under the PoA Act. It is vital to take the following actions in order to

complete this process: establishing exclusive special courts in situations where they are required, employing public prosecutors who are committed to their profession, and making certain that investigations and trials are carried out in a timely way. When this is done, there will be an increase in faith in the system, and there will be an encouragement to report.

8.3. Integrating Educational and Economic Empowerment

Effective Implementation of FRA and PESA: Land alienation is the root cause of many varied conflicts. Without authority over their resources, communities cannot benefit from education and awareness efforts. To ensure that tenure rights are secured and Gram Sabhas are granted more authority in decision-making, the government should ensure that FRA and PESA are effectively implemented. Consequently, the root source of vulnerability is reduced.

Livelihood Linkages: Education needs to be linked with livelihood opportunities that are culturally appropriate as well as economically and environmentally sustainable. Because of this, dependence and the risk of exploitation through bonded labor among other ways are minimized.

8.4. Nurturing a supportive social ecosystem

Support for Civil Society: The role of CSOs, or civil society organizations, and social movements taken up by the Adivasi groups is very significant in bridging the gap that exists between the community and the state. They are also watchful, besides providing legal assistance and mobilising people. These should not be perceived as an enemy by the government but rather perceived as a partner.

Public Dialogue and Combating Prejudice: Violence against STs reflects discrimination in society. The country needs a debate on the false ideas perpetuated about Adivasis, their culture, and their rights. Schools and the media need to push this.

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