

Food Security In Tribal Ashram Schools In Maharashtra: Issues And Challenges

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Abstract

The food security is important component of nutritional safety of students. Literacy leads to awareness in society and contributes in improvement of economic and social manner. In this paper an attempt is made to understand food security statues in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra and the related regions. Most of the tribal live in difficult to reach and hilly areas which is some time inaccessible, if the hill tribes can take part in main flow of nation building and related activity it gives guarantee to achieve progress and this opportunity is provided to tribal population through the education and ashram schools is viewed as effective institutions to achieve the educational needs of tribal who living in backward and scattered situation where starting of normal schools is not practicable. In this inaccessible hilly areas ashram schools education is best for them and in this tribal ashram schools there is a need to achieve food security along with the nutritional security and this requires awareness and education in students about the need of eating seasonal vegetables, seasonal fruits and other nutritional food. The main two objectives of this research paper are 1) To study the status of food security in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra. 2) To evaluate the issues and challenges of food security in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra. Secondary source of data collection is used for the research and analysis. Methodology has been discussed on food security following a discussion on food availability, food stability, and food access and food utilization in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra. This study makes an attempt to examine policy implementation and present status of tribal ashram also be discussed and provide a view and analysis situation of tribal ashram schools and food security of students. Therefore, this study has economic and social significance.

Keywords: Food security, Tribal Ashram, Accessibility, Eklavya model

Introduction:

Education determines the level of progress of people. The educational resources available to children in India are not same in all over India and all communities due to many reasons, especially to the tribal community's children and the reason of this parental illiteracy, ignorance, affordability of resources and accessibility in tribal area.

In the constitution of India, the promotion of education of scheduled tribes has a special responsibility of the central government and the state governments. Therefore, the Indian government focused on the tribal people education, and welfare and spending large amount for the tribal people to improve the literacy rate. Both central governments and state governments are extending facilities in various shapes areas for the promotion of tribal

education. The facilities extended are provision of teachers, school buildings, scholarships, free boarding facilities at ashram school.

Ashram School: Ashram School creates positive atmosphere for teaching-learning of this atmosphere in generally not available in tribal households. This and helps to develop the total personality of the child and impart skills of Tribal Community to improve employment opportunities. They are provided with free boarding facilities. All education material is also provided free of cost to them. With the formal education, Ashram School are provided training and guidance, which will be useful in their day-to-day and future life like training in farming, dairy, bamboo craft etc. During the First Five Year plan there was an attempt by the Central Government of India to open such kind schools. But the increase of starting opening Ashram schools in tribal area started increasing from the Third Five Year Plan.

Food Security

Food is a fundamental human need. Two common definitions of food security come from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):

- Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (FAO)
- Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum, (USDA):

Food security, considered as a basic human right, exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy and active lifestyle.

1. The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods
2. An assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Food insecurity can refer to not having sufficient food, eating a poor-quality diet as a result of limited food options, concern anxiety about acquiring food. Ensuring food security is a major in tribal ashram school challenge, particularly in the tribal area.

Objectives of the Study:

- 1) To study the status of food security in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra.
- 2) To evaluate the issues and challenges of food security in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra.

Research Methodology:

Data collection:

Secondary source of data collection is used for the research and analysis. Such as Book, Report, internet, Newspaper etc. In this paper an attempt is made to understand food security status in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra and the related regions.

Data Analysis:

Methodology has been discussed on food security following a discussion on food availability, food stability, and food access and food utilization in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra. This study makes an attempt to present status of tribal ashram discussed and provide a view and analysis situation of tribal ashram schools and food security of students.

Government Ashram Schools: As per the 2011 census report half of the ST population is concentrated in only in five states which are Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan, Orissa. Government Ashram Schools work to promote education and improve lifestyle in tribal and inaccessible areas. These types of schools are completing residential. Children from food-insecure households which are in tribal community intakes of calories, nutrients and the contribution of school meals to their daily intakes it essential part of their life. The initiative of tribal ashram school was started in the year 1972. There are nearly 552 Ashram Schools running under Tribal Development Department of Maharashtra State.

Eklavya model residential schools for tribal students: The Government opened 72 Eklavya Model Residential Schools in tribal areas the pattern of Navodaya Vidyalaya. As per the norms, Government provides one time grant of Rs. 250 lakh for the hostels, quarters, school building, library, teacher's laboratories and associated infrastructure and up to Rs. 30 lakh per school annually to meet the recurring expenses to run the school. State Governments are to form autonomous societies to run these schools and also made arrangements for teachers.

State wise Number of Eklavya model residential schools for tribal students is as follows:

Eklavya model residential schools for tribal students		
Sr. No.	State	No. of EMRS functioning
1	Andhra Pradesh	8
2	Gujarat	8
3	Himachal Pradesh	1
4	Kerala	2
5	Karnataka	3
6	Madhya Pradesh	8
7	Maharashtra	4
8	Orissa	10
9	Rajasthan	7
10	Tamil Nadu	1
11	Tripura	3
12	West Bengal	5
13	Jharkhand	4
14	Chhattisgarh	8
Total		72
Ministry of Tribal Affairs (2014)		

The Government of Maharashtra with the assistance of the Central Government has established four English Medium Eklavya Residential Schools at District Nashik, Chikhaldara District Amravati, District Thane, Mundhegaon Taluka Egatpuri, Taluka Ramtek District Nagpur, Kambalgaon Taluka Palghar, Khairee-parsoda. Further these schools are affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi. The objective of setting up of these public schools is to provide quality education to tribal students and meet their day today need. These schools are managed by Maharashtra Tribal Schools Society and Tribal Development Department.

Status of food security in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra:

In the tribal population there is more than 80% are illiterate since they are so poor that they could not send their children to school as if they earn some money for the family. The drop-out ratio in the schools of tribal areas is a worry for the Maharashtra state government which is making considerable budgetary provisions of tribal student education.

Food security is not available to the tribal community. It is a major problem as far as the question of their existence is concerned and there is a big question on their existence if the food security program. In Maharashtra many ashram schools for tribal, a mid-day meal was sometimes the teachers making the arrangements for the student's meal with their own and using their own money. The arrangements are not satisfactory and the teachers managing the food grains and feeding the students. Many students have run away from a place and situation because they are not getting facilities like food.

Food Availability: Food availability is a necessary condition for food security. The role of tribal ashram school food programs in addressing food security has been recognized. Ashram School meals contribute to the daily fruit and vegetable intake. Recommendations to address food security in Maharashtra and in tribal ashram schools include a funded meal program to provide safe and nutritious foods for children and youth in their everyday life.

Healthy school food can also increase school connectedness and of children and community because of that student health and well-being are valued. As part of the school community, school food programs have the opportunity to further of Tribal Students by providing caring and opportunities and a commitment to nutrition education and a positive school environment. While many people are aware that ashram school food programs exist, but the many various benefits are not as well known. Food security supports the positive effects of nutrition on academic achievement of student's mental health, while also promoting inclusion, health, safe and accepting schools. Diet pattern includes the facilities like balanced diet, non-vegetarian food, eggs, milk, fruits, clean drinking water and availability of special food for Tribal students.

Food Stability: This element of food security is sustainability which indicates the stability of food supply in terms of availability over the period as continuous source of supply. Sustainability here covers both the quantitative aspects of food availability and quality aspect. All children deserve the best positive start in their life. Students without reliable access to food can face a barrier to achievement and wellbeing. Food insecurity refers to a lack of food due to availability, accessibility and affordability and is associated with poor diet. Food

insecurity has been associated with developmental consequences for children, both nutritional and non-nutritional. Food insufficiency is associated with decreased school attendance and it cannot be affecting by the stability of food for children and teen agers.

Food Accessibility:In ashram school, food is one of the most important essentials of survival in a tribal ashram school away from home. It has effect on the student's health it is the reason of student's illness. While most of blame on the quality access of mess food for that, it is important to analyze food security and accessibility of food in ashram school campus. It is not possible to tribal ashram schools students buying food, this becomes a problem. Buying the food from outside is extremely costly. This is a major problem that needs to be addressed in terms of food security in ashram school. It is clear that there was a very strong correlation between security in terms of food that the students enjoyment and education. It is clear that one of the major reasons for the tribal children to join the tribal ashram schools is the provision of free food and shelter.

Food Utilization:Food safety affects food utilization, and can be affected by the preparation, processing, and cooking of food in the tribal ashram schools student Nutritional values. The school determines food choice and whether food meets cultural preferences is important. Given a certain basic level of food acquirement, a student's food security level would depend on how well this food was utilized. The utilization of food requires both preparation and storage. Good nutrition is essential for the proper growth and development of children and youth. Healthy eating contributes to academic achievement, as well as physical and mental growth of tribal ashram schools. Providing healthy food at an early age supports for lifelong to healthy living. The quality of children's diets is having an effect on their academic performance.

Issues and challenges of food security in tribal ashram schools in Maharashtra

The tribal parents whose children study in Ashram Schools would be engage in agriculture and their traditional activities, which will not support them to provide better education to their children. Educational expenditure includes boarding and food and also have cost on note books and stationeries. This expenditure put economic pressure on poor tribal parents such poor children could join Ashram Schools and get better education with residence and food facilities at free of cost.

Maharashtra also has its own schemes of funding ashram schools. The Government of Maharashtra has invested in establishing its own ashram schools and ashram school complexes and schemes that provide grants-in-aid to non-governmental organizations for the establishment and running ashram schools. In recent started a scheme for junior colleges attached to ashram schools, which provides infrastructural support to higher classes after the completion of secondary education.

The government is committed to providing the best quality education to the tribal children in their own environment. The literacy rate of ST population has increased from 8.53% in 1961 to 58.96% in 2011. Compared to scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes are much

more backward. It is important to make space and create opportunities for them to enter the democratic benefits.

The Education emphasizes four foundations for student well-being Positive Mental Health, Equity and Inclusive Education, and Healthy Schools. The impact of nutrition on academic outcomes is clear, it showing a relationship between diet and improvement in performance, attendance.

1. The diet pattern followed in the Ashram schools was adequate to at some extent but in the case of non-vegetarian food and special food for sick students. This might be because of insufficient allotment of funds to the tribal Ashram schools.
2. Good balanced diet enhances the mental abilities of students and poor nutrition can negatively effect on learning ability of student.
3. The Student Nutrition Program is be implemented but not all the tribal ashram schools operate a school food program. There is an opportunity for program growth and implementation of nutritional program across all ashram schools.
4. The teachers were managing the food grains and feeding students who show up hungry. They do this out of compassion but also because they know that a hungry child does not have an equal opportunity to learn and absorb the knowledge. Tribal Ashram School food programs can also be a place to celebrate cultural diversity and connect students as they share a meal together.
5. Now more than five decades since the establishment of ashram schools for tribal students in Maharashtra. Even after, it turns out the tribal students have not taken the basic necessities. The Maharashtra state had planned nutritious meals that include roti, fruits mixed vegetables and eggs would be served for breakfast.
6. Teachers in tribal area are not providing good accommodation and good salary for teaching staff because of that tribal ashram school dropout ratio is high.

Finding

1. Tribal ashram school food programs have a key role to play in all aspects of tribal student's well-being.
2. Ashram schools students are experiencing poverty Ashram School students may be at risk of food insecurity.
3. Many students complained about the quality of the food provided in the Ashram School and say that it is extremely poor quality of food. This grain used in the mess is very poor quality, it not cleaned properly before cooking, the chapattis were not cooked properly and the curry was mostly tasteless and watery.
4. Most ashram schools in tribal area have no provision for regular health check-ups of tribal students. The doctors have special schedules for different ashram schools and this has to be regularly monitored. There are not taken special classes on health education and hygiene.

Suggestions

1. Percentages of school lunch portions Consumed by the ashram school students have to analysis in daily bases, it can help to keep the students healthy and assure their food

security and also extra care has to be taken to provide food rich in iron and calcium which is essential for young students especially for girls.

2. The Government has introduced Cash Awards to Ashram Schools where the food security is good in Ashram Schools for bring healthy competition among tribal ashram schools.
3. Tribal Ashram schools should be upgraded to standards like 'Eklavya' schools and should be established in each block in these areas.
4. The budget sanctioned for the food bill for tribal ashram school was not sufficient. The food budget has not been increased despite the rapidly escalating food prices.
5. Food grains which are given to the tribal ashram schools in the consumption scheme are not a fine and good quality and amount is also insufficient for the need of tribal ashram school.
6. Tribal ashram school food programs have to encourage student for healthy living and healthy schools.
7. Tribal ashram school food programs have to use volunteers to prepare and serve nutritious foods in school breakfast, lunch and snack programs to have a positive impact on student well-being.

Conclusion

Nutrition and education these two things are inter related and inter dependent with each other and plays a vital role in building up of the society. The present study conclude that that Ashram School students seem to be at risk of food insecurity, government policy promotes tertiary education participation with inadequate financial support and other student supports. The diet pattern followed in the tribal ashram school might have helped the children to become better learners. Majority of the tribal ashram schools receive the quality of the grocery for tribal ashram school is not good. The vegetables are poor quality, pulses are adulterated and the quality of food is not good. Proper diet is very important as it enhances the development of mental abilities like concentration, intelligence and attention. The Poor quality of diet will hamper the tribal student's academic performance. Majority of the tribal ashram schools receive the quality of the grocery for tribal ashram school is not good. The vegetables are poor quality, pulses are adulterated and the quality of food is not good. Healthy eating is essential part for tribal students to achieve their optimum potential and also the physical and mental growth.

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