



A Synoptic View of Maa-Baadi Schools in Tribal Dense Area of Southern Rajasthan Working For Primary Education of Tribal Children.

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Abstract

Primary education act as one of the main foundation stone upon which a nation establishes pillars of their futuristic planning for its holistic development. In India, many programme and policies have been implemented to promote and attain universalization of elementary education. despite of that, several tribal areas still lacking universalization of elementary education due to poverty and geographical restriction. Several such tribal dense areas have been notified in southern Rajasthan which comes under Pratapgarh, Udaipur, Banswara, and Dungarpur districts. To attain universalization of primary education of tribal children, a special education centers named, Maa-Baadi have been established in remote areas of these districts. The present study makes an attempt to examine the status of Maa-Baadies, their impact on primary education of tribal children and facilities provided through these centers in above mentioned areas of Southern Rajasthan from academic session 2021-2022 to 2023-2024.

Key words: Maa-Baadi, Day Care, elementary education, tribal children.

Introduction:

Education is essential for the overall development of a human being as well as a nation. Realizing its importance, every government has invested in this sector to improve the quality and reach of educational institutions to every child across the country. One of the primary goals of the school system is to ensure universal enrolment and attending of school by all children (NEP 2020). The goal to achieve complete literacy in country like India is a challenging task, because of its huge population, diverse geographical regions, culture and languages. The efforts of Indian government

to achieve universal literacy are evident from the increase in its literacy rate from 18.32% in 1952 to 72.98% in 2011 (Census, 2011). Even after putting many efforts, India is far from achieving universal literacy. Some social group such as tribal people are yet far from even the minimum benchmark of elementary education. The tribal people are still lagging behind the rest of the country's population. As per the 2011 census data, the literacy rate among the scheduled tribe is 58.96% compared to 72.99 % for the overall population of India (Ottaplackal, 2022).

Challenges in tribal education span personal, social, institutional, and geographical aspects, including domestic duties, economic constraints, cultural beliefs, institutional barriers, and remote locations. Despite progress, government initiatives are crucial to bridge educational gaps and ensure inclusive learning for all (Raziq & Papat, 2023).

India, with its diverse cultures, religions, castes, and tribes, boasts the world's largest concentration of Scheduled Tribes after Africa (Mani, 2022; Gautam, 2013; Velusamy, 2021). India constitutes the second largest tribal population globally with more than 104 million tribal people. Tribes living in different parts of India are enormously diverse in their culture, tradition and modes of living. These are evident as India has 705 notified tribal groups from heterogeneous and varied backgrounds. One of the unique characteristics of tribal communities is that they primarily reside in remote hilly areas and deep forests. They also live in scattered habitation, which makes them very hard in accessibility (Sujatha, 2002).

Tribal development has been a significant concern for the government, voluntary organizations, NGOs, and social reformers which should not be studied in isolation with a few affluent individuals' growths. Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen indicated that education is a crucial parameter for inclusive economic growth. The inclusive growth of all sections of society is an essential aspect of development for a country. Given this, it is imperative to bring the marginalized, and weaker sections of society together with main stream. Keeping this in view, Indian government set free compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 to 14 as a fundamental right under various articles of the Indian constitution (Batra, 2005).

In India, two types of institutions are working to provide education across the country. First is regular Government Schools which are running across the country; second is non-Government schools. Approximately 80 percent of all recognized elementary schools are run or funded by the

government, making them the country's largest education provider (Bhatty, 1998). Government of Rajasthan established a special Tribal Area Development (TAD) Department which dedicatedly work for the development of tribal area. UNICEF and SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) have started a joint project named SWACH (acronym for Sanitation, Water and Community Health) in 1986 in Dungarpur and Banswara districts. The Project was later spread to entire Rajasthan to support government of Rajasthan in providing rural water supply and sanitation. Apart from that, SWACH supports government in providing professional, financial and administrative support. Later SWACH is registered as a Non-Government Organization (NGO). A flagship initiative has been taken jointly by the TAD and SWACH for universalization of primary education in tribal populous areas of Rajasthan by establishing a new kind of school named Maa-Baadi. These Maa-Baadi schools provide free education to tribal children up to class four especially in the tribal areas lacking regular government school in vicinity.

Features of Maa-Baadi centers

These are special Schools opened to provide elementary education from class first to fourth to tribal children living in difficult and isolated regions. The operation, function and working are maintained by SWACH and TAD department. One Maa-Baadi center can enroll a maximum of thirty children. Further there are two types of Maa-Baadi centers; first is known as simply a Maa-Baadi which provides education for limited hours each day. One teacher is appointed to each Maa-Baadi center. Second is known as Maa-Baadi day Care center which additionally take care of students for the entire day. Two teachers are appointed to each day care center. The primary purpose of day care is to engage and educate a child for the whole day as their parents used to go to work distantly every day. The stationary materials, School bags, dresses, food and other assistance are provided at free of cost to each student. The teachers were recruited from the locality so that students at centers could feel homely and culturally similar environment. Teachers were paid according to their qualifications. Any two mothers of all beneficiary students are appointed rotation-wise to cook meals in the center for all the children. A Project officer (PO) works at district level to monitor all the Maa-Baadi centers in all blocks of a district. At present, 3069 Maa-Baadi centers are working in entire Rajasthan out of which most of the centers are located in six districts namely Banswara (801), Udaipur (368), Dungarpur (536), Pratapgarh (390), Baran (330) and Jaipur (117).

(<https://tad.rajasthan.gov.in/pages/sm/departement-page/68037/579>)

Objectives of the Study:

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine and analyze the status of primary education for tribal students provided through Maa-Baadi Schools in tribal dense areas of three districts named Banswara, Udaipur and Pratapgarh of Rajasthan for sessions 2021-22 to session 2023-24 in terms of following parameters: (a) number of Maa-Baadi schools, (b) student enrolment (c) male and female students and (d) teacher- student ratio.
2. To examine the important facilities and activities in Maa-Baadi centers.

Database and Methodology:

In the present study, data such as tribal population and their percentage, literacy rate among tribal population are collected from Census of India, 2011, Ministry of Human Resources, National Commission for Scheduled casts (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST), Committee reports on tribals and Government of India. Data such as number of Maa-Baadies, facilities in Maa-Baadies, number of teachers and students in Maa-Baadies are collected from Annual report of SWACH project and TAD Department of Rajasthan Government.

Results and Discussions

(1) Status of Maa-Baadi centers in Banswara, Pratapgarh and Udaipur Districts

Maa-Baadi centers were opened to assist government in providing elementary education to children of 6 to 12 age group of tribal areas who usually don't have regular government schools in the locality. The students are given education to class 1st to class 4th in these Maa-Baadi. After completion of 4th class, the student is helped to register in 5th class of nearby regular school. Each student is provided with a meal and one breakfast according to the pre decided menu. The primary goal of Maa-Baadi is to bring those tribal children into mainstream education and to undernutrition problems in the region. Table 1 shows that Banswara district which is considered as highest tribal population region of Rajasthan, had 672 centers in session 2021-22 which is highest among other districts. The success rate of these centers increased and government has decided to increase number of centers up to 794 in session 2023-24.

S. No.	District	Blocks	Maa-Baadies in 2021-22	Maa-Baadies in 2022-23	Maa-Baadies in 2023-24
1	Banswara	11	672	700	794
2	Pratapgarh	9	374	385	398
3	Udaipur	9	330	341	368

Table 1: Total Maa-Baadi and day care centers running in three districts of Rajasthan

Similarly, Pratapgarh, another tribal district has 374 centers in 2021-22 which were increased to 385 and 398 in successive years. Udaipur district heterogeneous in its way of living and social lifestyle. On one hand it's a world-famous tourist destination with urban lifestyle while on the other hand its rural population in majority are tribals. In session 2021-22 there were 330 Maa-Baadi Centers which were boosted to 341 and 368 in the following years. The Head office of TAD department is also situated in Udaipur city which regulates almost all southern Rajasthan.

(2) Enrolled students in Maa-Baadi Centers in Banswara, Pratapgarh and Udaipur Districts.

As mentioned earlier, each Maa-Baadi or day care, are assigned to take a maximum of 30 students. More than 90% of population in Banswara are tribals who used to live in scattered habitation. The tribal families have very less connectivity to mainstream world in terms of mobile networks, road transport, internet, education and medical facility. The government has opened Maa-Baadies to spread elementary education among this deprived section of the society. In just session 2021-22 its evident from the table 2 that 20123 tribal children were benefitted to education through Maa-Baadi schemes. Out of them, 10205 were boys and 9918 girls which shows that almost everyone is getting benefits of the project despite of gender. The strength increased to 22797 students in past session which is a great sign of happiness to people who dreamed about this project. In the same way, there were 10870 students studying in these centers in Pratapgarh district in session 2021-22 which were later reached to 11400 in 2023-24 session.

S. No.	District	Blocks	Enrolled students in 2021-22			Enrolled students in 2022-23			Enrolled students in 2023-24		
			Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Banswara	11	10205	9918	20123	10197	10338	20535	11421	11376	22797
2	Pratapgarh	9	5506	5364	10870	5556	5512	11068	5638	5762	11400
3	Udaipur	9	4768	4836	9604	4963	4968	9931	5553	5330	10883

Table 2: Total enrolled students in Maa-Baadi centers in three districts of Rajasthan

In Udaipur district, the scenario is same as seen from table 2. Table reflects that more girl students got benefits of the scheme than boys. In session 2021-22 there were 9604 students which are later increased to 10883 in 2023-24 session in Udaipur district.

S. No.	District	Session 2021-22			Session 2022-23			Session 2023-24		
		Total Capacity	Enrolled Students	Percentage	Total Capacity	Enrolled Students	Percentage	Total Capacity	Enrolled Students	Percentage
1	Banswara	20160	20123	99.8	21000	20535	97.8	23820	22797	95.7
2	Pratapgarh	11220	10870	96.9	11550	11068	95.8	11940	11400	95.4
3	Udaipur	9900	9604	97.0	10050	9931	98.8	11040	10883	98.5

Table 3: Total enrolled students in Maa-Baadi centers in three districts of Rajasthan

Government spread knowledge and awareness among tribal people about Maa-Baadi schemes through mobile advertisements, mouth to mouth publicity and daily newspapers. Credit goes to the authorities that almost every center has more than 95% student admission against the designated capacity. Table 3 shows that in Banswara, 99.8% seats were filled in session 2021-22. Similar is the case followed in Pratapgarh and Udaipur districts where admission were done not less than 95% of total capacity.

(3) Teachers working in Maa-Baadi Centers in Banswara, Pratapgarh and Udaipur Districts

As per rules, one teacher is allocated to a Maa-Baadi while two teachers are allocated in a Day care center. The teachers are recruited from the local village whose selection is decided by the recommendations of chairmen and members of Janjaati Gram Vikas Samiti. This committee constitutes four female members, four male members, one chairman and one representative of SWACH. Salary of the teachers is decided with government guidelines as per candidates'

educational qualifications. If there is no qualified person found in the local village the committee can recruit a qualified person from nearby area.

S. No.	District	Session 2021-22			Session 2022-23			Session 2023-24		
		Total Centers	Teaching posts	Teachers Working	Total Centers	Teaching posts	Teachers Working	Total Centers	Teaching posts	Teachers Working
1	Banswara	672	893	893	700	907	907	794	1005	968
2	Pratapgarh	374	450	422	385	466	459	398	479	475
3	Udaipur	330	438	437	341	480	476	368	505	502

Table 4: Teachers working in Maa-Baadi centers in three districts of Rajasthan

It is evident from table 4 that almost every center is occupied with allotted number of teachers. In Banswara, 893 teachers were working against 893 posts during session 2021-22 and 907 against 907 posts in session 2022-23. The numbers dropped during session 2023-24 as only 968 teachers were working while the posts were 1005. It happened because of the fact that so many teachers in the region who were working in Maa-Baadies, recruited to regular government services. In Udaipur and Pratapgarh the availability of qualified teachers is more as compared to Banswara.

(4) Teachers Student ratio in Maa-Baadi Centers

The Success of Maa-Baadi scheme could not be achieved without maintaining teacher student ratio. One teacher is responsible for the care and education of 30 students. From the table 5 it is reflected that Udaipur district have very good teacher student ratio in all the three sessions which is very close to 1:21.

S. No.	District	Session 2021-22			Session 2022-23			Session 2023-24		
		Total Teachers	Enrolled Students	Ratio	Total Teachers	Enrolled Students	Ratio	Total Teachers	Enrolled Students	Ratio
1	Banswara	893	20123	1:22.5	907	20535	1:22.6	968	22797	1:23.5
2	Pratapgarh	422	10870	1:25.7	459	11068	1:24.11	475	11400	1:24
3	Udaipur	437	9604	1:21.9	476	9931	1:20.8	502	10883	1:21.7

Table 5: Teacher student Ratio in Maa-Baadi centers in three districts of Rajasthan

The highest ratio was found in Pratapgarh in session 2021-22 where one teacher is taking care of 26 students. The Ratio helps to maintain the regularity of student admission in consecutive sessions.

(5) Facilities and activities in a Maa-Baadi center

The main objectives of Maa-Baadi concept could be summarized in following points-

- To spread elementary education among tribal children who are living in difficult zones
- To bring tribal people in mainstream society
- To eradicate nutritional problems among tribal children

In fulfillment of the objectives, government provides so many facilities in these centers directs teachers and other workers to follow below mentioned activities.

- (i) **Education:** to provide education, one teacher in Maa-Baadi and two teachers in a day care center are recruited from the local community.
- (ii) **Nutrition:** to provide nutrition, two women helpers are recruited to cook meal and breakfast as per nutritional directions from government. The helpers are mothers of students of the same centers.
- (iii) **Encouragement:** the teacher is directed to prepare a list of new children in the start of the session. He has to meet parents, inform them about facilities available in the center and convince them to admit their child in the center.
- (iv) The syllabus of the classes from 1st to 4th must be according to the regular government schools.
- (v) Teacher should educate students with help of fun activities and games.
- (vi) Teacher should inform Janjaati Village development committee every month by a meeting about progress of students and their education.
- (vii) Every six month teacher should organize a health checkup program for the students with help of local nursing people.
- (viii) **Assistance:** every student must be provided school bag, dress, shoe, socks, sweater, stationary items free of cost.

- (ix) **Training:** teacher must attend one residential training and one teacher training in a year.
- (x) **Monitoring:** teacher should monitor the progress of each student through internal assessment or test and try to help if there is any difficulty in learning
- (xi) **Promotion:** After completion of class 4th, teacher should help student to get admission in 5th class in nearest regular government school.

(6) Limitations of Education Through Maa-Baadi center

Though the Maa-Baadi Scheme is very successful in universalization of primary education in tribal regions, still there are several limitations been noticed which are summarized as follows:

- (i) There is only one Teacher allotted to teach all the four classes (class 1st to 4th) simultaneously in a Maa Baadi center.
- (ii) The centers are constructed in hard zones thus there is no ICT enabled facilities in the centers.
- (iii) The education is limited to just class 4th only.
- (iv) There are no separate classrooms for each class.
- (v) There are no playgrounds for Maa-baadi students.
- (vi) There are very limited TLM (Teaching Learning Material) available at the centers.

Conclusion

The present study provides a synoptic view of Maa-Baadi schools with the data collected from three major tribal districts of Rajasthan named Banswara, Pratapgarh and Udaipur for session 2021-22 to session 2023-24. The objective behind opening these centers was universalization of elementary education in tribal children who lives in difficult zones such as hilly regions or in deep forests. The study reveals that the Maa-Baadies doing a wonderful job in educating children and more than 70,000 students have benefitted in just three sessions and within three districts only. The Scheme not only providing education, but also helping children to overcome nutritional problems due to poverty. There should be an increase in Maa-Baadies or regular government schools in difficult tribal areas. The government should try to assign one teacher for one class in each Maa Baadi so that students would get quality education. ICT tools help a child learning in a

smart way thus there should be at least few ICT facilities at each center. There should be some encouragement plans to the teachers working in Maa-Baadies so that they would not quit the center and also work with satisfaction.

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