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∞: Research Article

Virtual Teaching to Tribal Students with Particular Reference to North Bastar

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Abstract

The present research article portrays the existing scene of virtual teaching of the tribal students in Bastar during Pandemic, with the most possible solutions. This study meant to deal with the main problems and anxiety faced by the tribal students during online education. It focuses on the vital chains of their distance learning and the probable solutions. It even explores teachers' insightful preparation process that has been developed during the Pandemic situations. Online teaching has generated ample ways in which a child can be taught. The article reveals the

challenges faced by the tribal students as well as teachers in attending the online classes and students' struggle to cope up with the tough situation. There were certain barriers that hamper their learning process and upset them. The main goals of the virtual teaching were to reply the expected queries and requests from students and to provide them proper guidance and advice.

Keywords- Virtual Teaching, Tribal students, Anxiety, Pandemic, Learning Barriers

Virtual teaching, Open distance learning and online learning in higher education are not new. They have become the sphere of the early adopters and those brave enough to continue. This sort of teaching most commonly took place in an online environment. The teaching activities are carried out online where the teachers and students are physically separated and can see each other via camera only.

Due to the Covid-19 situations, the tribal students of North Bastar faced innumerable problems in their studies at various stages including Primary, Secondary and even Higher education. It has worsened the conditions in the tribal areas. The students were totally cut off from the outer world and forced to lock down in their huts in villages.

Eventually, all the schools, colleges and universities were closed and the education system unexpectedly shifted from offline mode to an online mode. Such online arrangements were possible for people in metropolitan cities which had better online infrastructure. Since there was the scarcity of electricity and internet connectivity in the rural areas, such techniques were destined to fail. Worldwide all the institutions tried their level best to teach their students online but the ground reality is that the online tuning of tribal students from North Bastar remain disturbed due to numerous unavoidable reasons.

COVID-19 imposed the speedy upskilling of teachers and students to teach and learn remotely in such ways which were literally unfamiliar to most. No one was ready and equipped for such an emergency situation and in the absence of prior training or preparation or remedies, a new technique of teaching was abruptly adopted by all. It was the demand of the time and was forcefully accepted by the teachers and students. It was a big challenge to the teachers especially those belonging to tribal areas as Virtual teaching takes as much if not more preparation than teaching in a traditional classroom. The teachers have to think twice and even thrice on how to present materials, coursework, and daily assignments to students from tribal and remote areas.

Input of Audio-Visual Aids

Audio-Visual aids play a vital role in virtual teaching and learning process. It is undoubtedly one of the most innovative methods used by a teacher. The teacher can form class/subject wise separate groups through the teaching apps and study materials can be distributed to the students. The students can be given required time to respond and submit the work online.

The audio-visual aids used for virtual teaching, to the tribal students, at the time of lockdown, during pandemic were as follows:

a) Use of loudspeakers

During the lockdown when execution of online classes was a big deal in the tribal areas as everyone was not having their personal mobile. In due course, a new technique of teaching was developed in one of the villages of *Bastar* district to teach school children.

The initiative was taken by the *Bhaatpaal Panchayat* of *Bastar* District in *Chhattisgarh* where the children learned with the help of loudspeaker. The Panchayat people with the support of the administration installed loudspeakers in the eight streets of the village. Children used to come out of their houses getting alert by the sound of the loudspeaker and sit outside their house in a row to study by following the guidelines of the administration and maintaining the social distance. This unique experiment of *Bhaatpaal Panchayat* has become a paradigm and inspiration to the neighbour villages as well and they have also started implementing the same technique of teaching.



Figure 1. This image shows the loudspeaker placed on the electric polls of Bhaatpaal Village taken by Tameshwar Sinha on 13th July 2020. Image downloaded from <https://www.gaonconnection.com/desh/unique-way-to-teach-children-studying-at-home-through-loudspeaker-in-bastar-chhattisgarh->



Figure 2. This image shows the small children from the primary and middle school of Bhaatpaal Village studying through loudspeaker outside their houses maintaining social distance taken by Tameshwar Sinha on 13th July 2020. Image downloaded from <https://www.gaonconnection.com/desh/unique-way-to-teach-children-studying-at-home-through-loudspeaker-in-bastar-chhattisgarh->

b) Use of Android Phones

During the pandemic when everyone was helpless and all have taken the support of internet in the form of online classes through audio-visual aids, various difficulties arose before the teachers who were teaching in tribal and rural areas.

Consequently, this medium of teaching not succeeded in many subjects as the tribals are not technically sound. The only favourable part was that they started exposing themselves and even their parents took interest in supporting these resources. Further, it was not an easy task to approach at every nook of the tribes, due to the absence of internet access.

The teachers from tribal areas, in the absence of laptop and computers took the help of Android mobiles and various apps to carry on the online classes and even taught the students to make power point presentations and do the presentations.



Figure 3. This image shows the power point presentation on the topic of life cycle by a tribal degree student, from kanker (North Bastar) during the online class of Zoology.

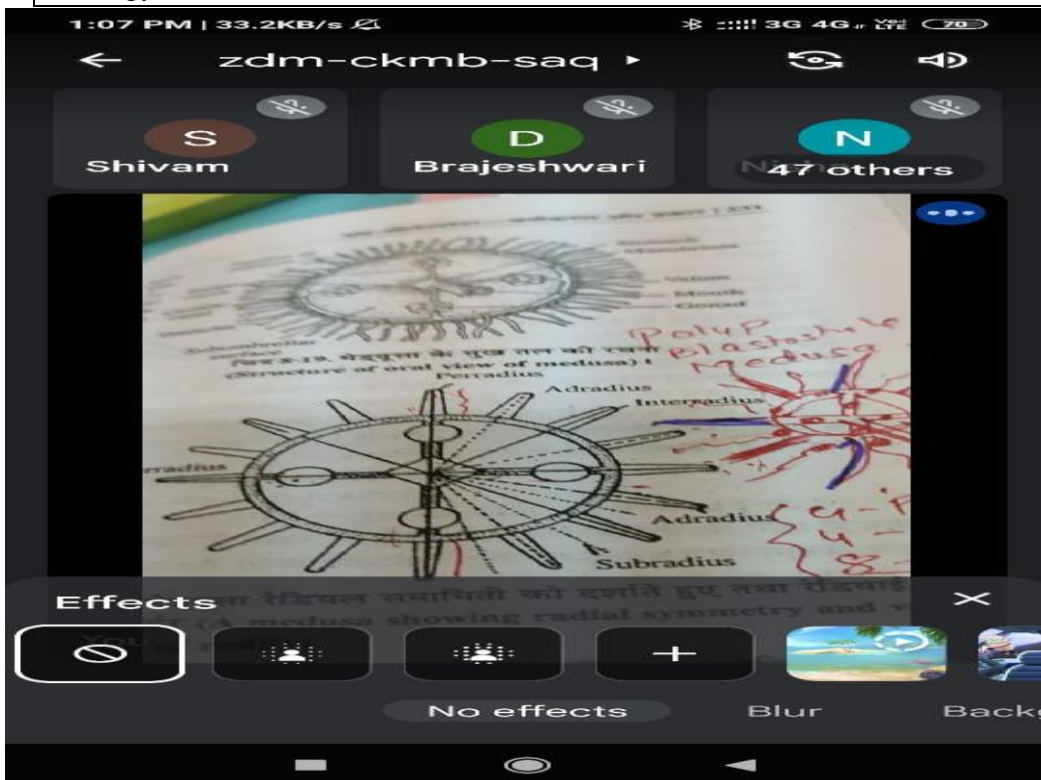


Figure 4. This image shows the explanation of *Medusa* with the help of a diagram to the degree students of Kanker (North Bastar) in an online class of Zoology.

c) Use of Online Whiteboard/Jam board:

Online whiteboards played a vital role in the virtual teaching to tribal students, as a result the students somehow experienced the familiar atmosphere as if classroom teaching.

The usage of jam boards creates super excitement and curiosity among the students and they got motivated to attend the class regularly. It was a successful experiment over the tribal students.

It was well tried through laptop teaching in the English classroom where grammar portion was taught through several examples and exercises were solved smoothly. The most crucial part of this technique was that students were able to note down the exercises/work without any spelling mistakes. The bonus part was that they can take the screenshots and even save the answers for the future reference. Such jam boards were also beneficial from the point of view of date wise records of the classes taken. It was the gem of the online classes and left the teachers with a pure gratification.

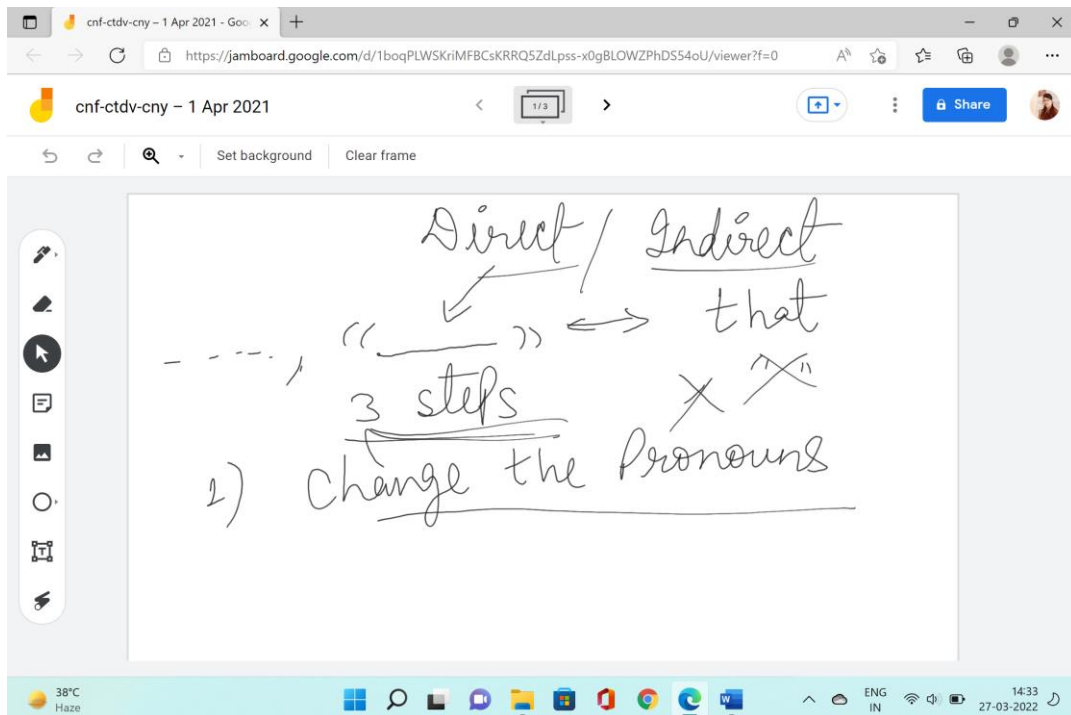


Figure 5. This image shows the jam board from an English language grammar online class for degree students of kanker (North Bastar) describing narration taken on 1st April 2021.

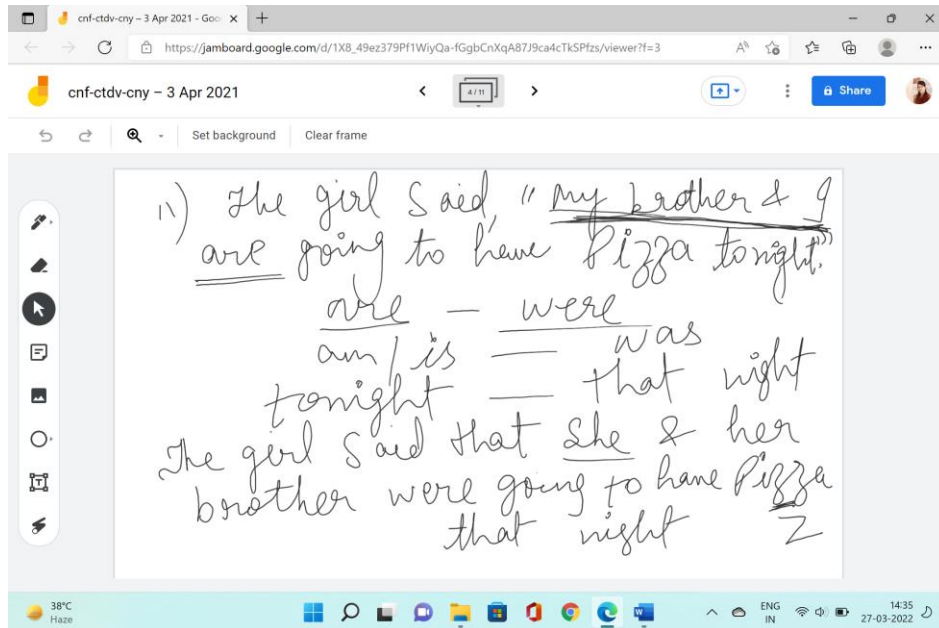


Figure 6. This image shows the jam board from an English Language grammar online class explaining narration through examples to the tribal degree students of kanker(North Bastar) taken on 3rd April 2021.

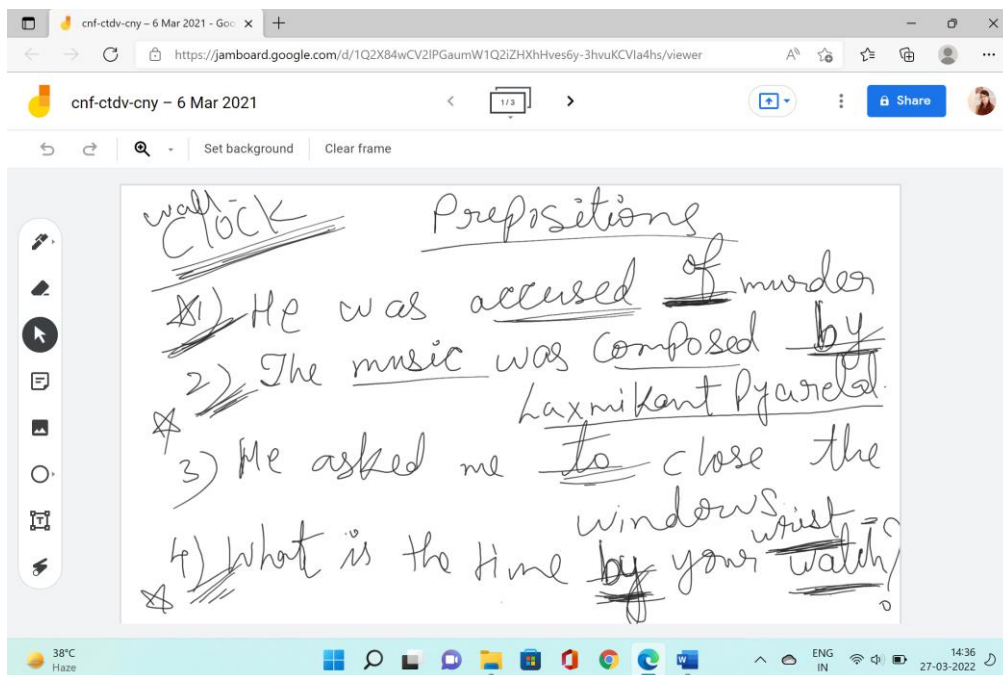


Figure 7. This image shows the jam board from an English language grammar class explaining prepositions to the tribal degree students of Kanker (North Bastar) taken on 6th March 2021.

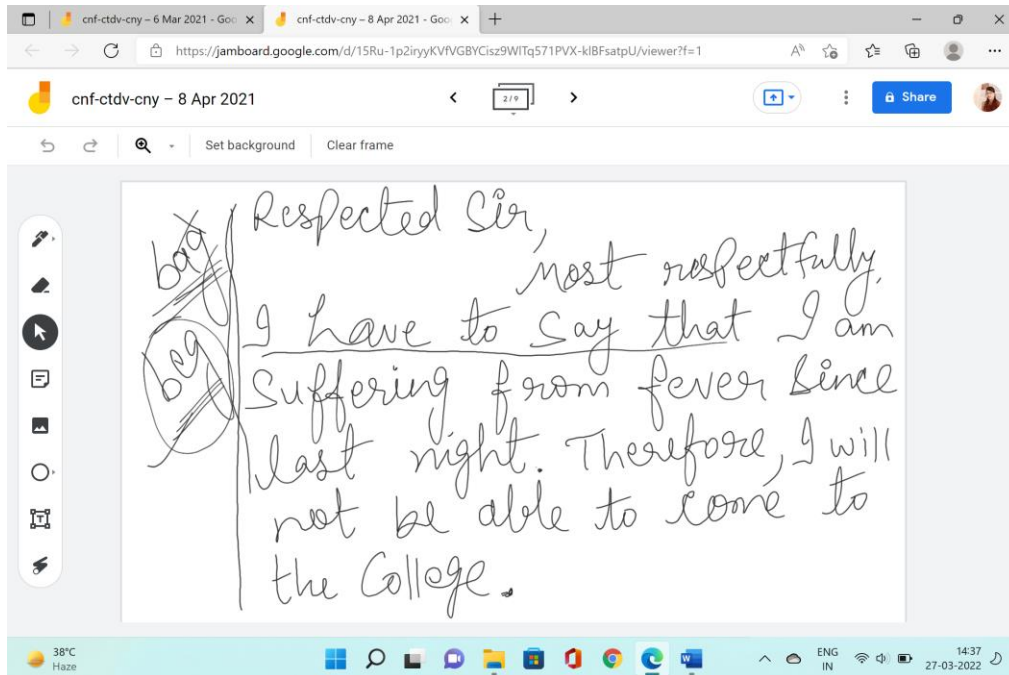


Figure 8. This image shows the jam board from an English Language online class explaining the tricks of writing formal letter to the tribal students of kanker (North Bastar) taken on 8th April 2021.

Barriers to Virtual teaching-learning

The majority of the students who belong to tribal community are the first-generation learners, hence it becomes more difficult at the college level to bring them despite of all optimistic approach, empathy and strategies of the government. Although, these tribal children are unique in their cognitive context and learnings. In spite of their hesitation and psychological problems, these students also have a distinct curiosity towards learning.

Unfortunately, the excellence of virtual teaching gets affected by barriers such as poor network connection at the time of online classes, Failure of electricity, problem in connectivity from one or the other side, limitation of google meet, interruption of class when anyone forgets to off his/her mic, lack of seriousness from some students' side, background sound of the family members, lack of proper set up including a separate room, late submission of online assignments, devoid of personal mail id's of students, time limit for a particular class as students' have to join the link for other subjects too, feedback of very few students, lack of technically sound students' in the tribal area, negligence of class due to nervousness, lack of sufficient data and many more obvious hurdles.

Diverse background also creates a big barrier in the acceptance of the new environment and the learning process of a tribal student. It is very difficult to teach such students whose home environment is totally different from the school or college settings.

Some tribes are still in the practise of speaking their native language. While the grown-up males are often multi-lingual, the women and children speak tribal tongues almost

completely. Now when a tribal child enters school and is suddenly expected to understand the state language, it is quite impossible for him.

Consequently, the tribal students face many problems namely:

- 1) Language problems.
- 2) Level of understanding problems.
- 3) Medium of instruction.
- 4) Problems of school/college atmosphere and educational system.
- 5) House hold work caring of younger brother & sisters and allied work.
- 6) Health problems increase absenteeism in online classes.
- 7) Lack of motivation towards education.

Many students from the tribal area have never met teachers or classmates in person. Absenteeism is the serious problem in tribal areas, which creates a big barrier in transmission of innovative ideas and knowledge among most of them. Many at times it can be seen that teacher is too much equipped to teach, expecting the registered attendance of the students but when he/she meets them in actual, they are only few of the enrolled one. Admissions are taken in bunch due to the greediness of scholarships and other attractive incentives but on ground these students fail to understand the importance of education. Their college WhatsApp group contains a message from the teacher intimating about the online class of the day but even after several efforts some students were unable to join due to connectivity issue, disinterest or any other personal reason.

It is very important to have the designing of the proper syllabi. The lessons in the text should be related to the students' actual life (pragmatics). It becomes difficult for a student from a tribal area to study the British or American or European context given in the lessons of the text. The student cannot appreciate the lessons written in English without proper context. It is very important to have the designing of the proper syllabi. The lessons in the text should be related to the students' actual life (pragmatics). It becomes difficult for a student from a tribal area to study the British or American or European context given in the lessons of the text. The student cannot appreciate the lessons written in English without proper context. It is very important to have the designing of the proper syllabi. The lessons in the text should be related to the students' actual life (pragmatics). It becomes difficult for a student from a tribal area to study the British or American or European context given in the lessons of the text. The student cannot appreciate the lessons written in English without

Conclusion

The problem of lack of system in North Bastar is that there is no proper network in the area, nor do people have smartphones. The situation is such that on a record Only 50% of the students took the advantage of attendance and had been enrolled in an online class. The figures for the rest of the days also did not exceed 30 students.

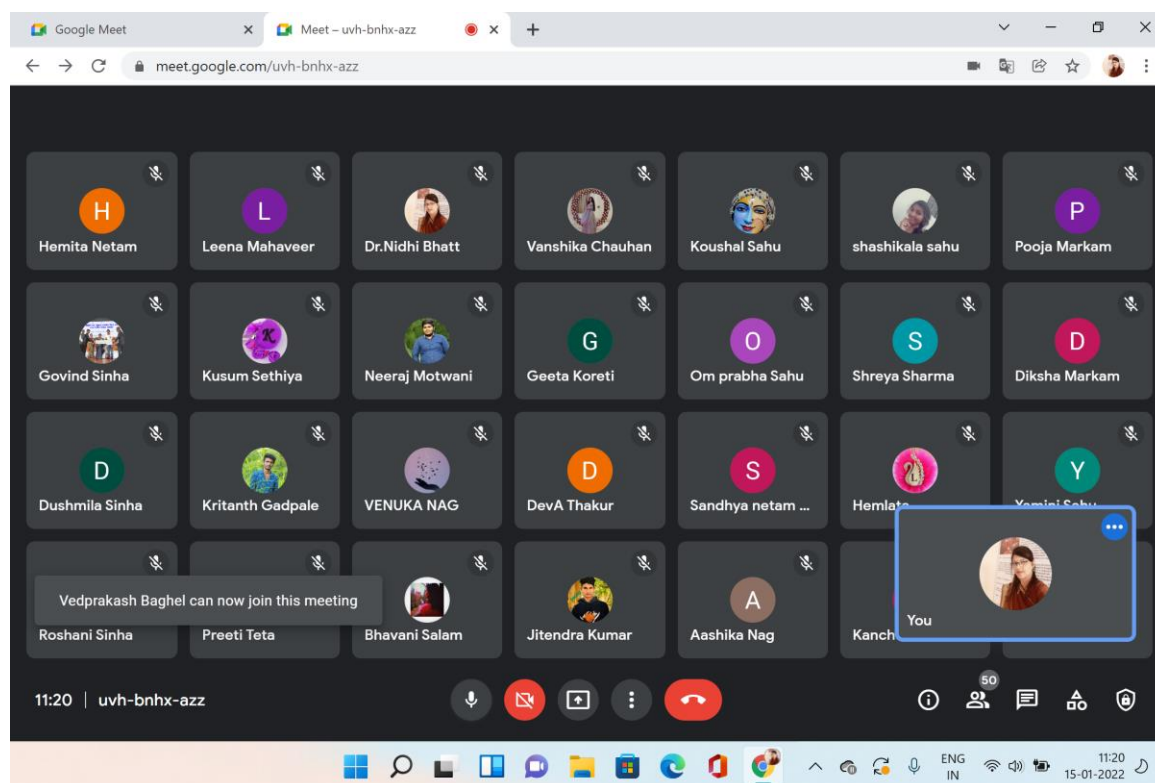


Figure 9. This image shows the 50% attendance of students during the online class of Degree students from Kanker (North Bastar) taken on 15th January 2022.

One of the students from interior village told that Google class has been told but even after entering the ID-password, the online class has not been held. Students of Bastar also said that they did not get the benefit of online education. Some Parents complaint that teachers have not got proper training, so they were not able to teach children properly.

If we look at the statistics of education in Bastar division, then the literacy percentage of the entire Bastar division is 51.5. Sukma district of Bastar division has the lowest literacy rate of 44 percent. On the other hand, the literacy percentage of Kanker is 68, which is the highest in Bastar division.

It is noteworthy that on 8th April, Chhattisgarh government started online education portal '*Padhai Tuhar Duar*' i.e., studies at your doorstep so that studies are not affected, but online education is not proving effective in Bastar division.

It is very clear that despite of every possible effort, the virtual teaching for tribal students suffered a lot due to several reasons. It is miserable to state that the rest of the tribal students lamented due to the countless identified problems.

Suggestion:

As a teacher, it is our moral responsibility to understand the problem of tribal students and find out the root cause of their problems. When a beginner at school, they should be well practised by their teachers through several communication skills (LSRW). Such practises can boost them up and decrease their hesitation up to some extent and they will start uttering and sharing their problems. Teachers should encourage them to start from the grassroot level and

then to excel. The students should be asked to face the audience by sharing their daily routine works in English, in this way to get upgraded.

The teachers should focus on the reading and writing skills of the students. The tribal students should be encouraged to take part in the debate competitions, essay writing, story writing in English and so on. The weaker ones should be given one or the other responsibility in the schools and colleges like class representative or the WhatsApp group admin. Such steps will boost them up and will increase their confidence level and they will learn the new techniques of studying. Proper awareness should be developed for the importance of education in their life. In short, the teachers have to put some extra efforts apart from their normal time to make the tribal students excel not only in India but in the world as well.

COVID 19 has stirred the pot on glaring issues affecting tribal communities living in remote rural pockets of India such as North Bastar. The lack of strong leadership in addressing these issues can no longer be ignored. Coronavirus pandemic has become the lens that has magnified glaring gaps and discrepancies in government programs and support, especially the fundamental human rights of access to quality education and stable livelihoods.

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