

## Liberal education implication as per NPE 2020 and its implication to solve tribal educational issues in India.

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**Abstract:** Liberal education allows its practitioners that much space and liberty to get enlightened his/ her life on their terms. It allows students to choose subjects from different disciplines according to their aspirations and choices. More options for professional, as well as vocational fields, are opened for the students. In India, there is the second-highest concentration of the tribal population. There is more ratio of retention, dropouts and illiterate persons viewed among them than others. The main reason lies in the compartmentalisation of subject groups. Liberal education provides them enough space to opt for subjects and languages as per their world views. Again, vocational education that is offered by liberal education allows them to enhance their existing skills and efficiency that extend the scope for them to access higher mobility and broaden the scope to generate revenues for the country. In a developing country where a lot of anomalies are prevailed in the path of equity and development, by implementing liberal education those barriers can be overcome and it allows the tribe to excel as per their aspirations and motivations. The present paper tries to evaluate how much extent liberal education helps tribal students to encourage them to take entry into the threshold of education and to carry on their studies. Again, it also tries to bring out the probability of how it helps tribe students to get them excelled in the job field and enhance their socio-economic conditions by creating more taxpayers in the society from the tribal community.

**Key Words:** Liberal Art education, Tribes, Tribal Education, National Education Policy 2020.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

In our expeditious alteration global economy with millennials averaging five to seven professions switches over in a lifetime (Laal & Salamati, 2012). Therefore, the new structure of a professional career allows for adjustment with changing scenarios, demands for the synthesis of knowledge requires certain skills and criteria. The new era of the Educational Industrial Revolution (Lase, 2019) desires to have some special training specialities which provide an individual more professional mobility and compliancy to changing social settings. The industrialisation of the economy is altering the way we live and work. To keep with the pace, the structure and the pattern of education is transforming around the world as a consequence of the first changing structure of the global economy and the kind of employees and mastermind it claims as to the best. We are now touching on the point of knowledge revolutions. Humans now achieve the capacity to reckoning huge numbers of data (Sharma, 2019). Acquiring the skills and attitudes for lifelong learning is the necessity for making a smooth transition to enter into the world of automation economy (Kuriakose & Iyer, 2018). The need for liberal arts education becomes prominent day by day.

India composes the second largest concentration in tribal population. They are the most vulnerable groups who are lagged in every aspect and scenario of life. The main reason is their world views, perspectives and approaches towards life are completely different from ours. After plucking from their natural habitats when they are dumped into the ambience of a completely different scenario, the level of their performance is decreased and as a result, retentions, drop-outs are highly perceived among them. The prevailing education systems have been developing imitating the European education system which is in its fragrance, colour and culture don't carry on any tints of non-European flavour and they never came in close contact with the British even in colonial time, therefore, it was very hard for them to adopt such situation and accommodate them accordingly. Liberal Arts Education at least will provide them with the choice to choose curriculum as per their world view and culture which helps them to adjust with the curriculum and make competent in this competitive world and provides help to excel them.

To fulfil the need for an automation economy and to satisfy the interest of every learner, a draft of the Education Policy has been produced to the Indian Government to modify the existing education system and works as a lubricant to adopt the speed that needs to exist in the race. The introduction of liberal arts education is itself a revolutionary step in this transitional period of automation economy because it demands that individuals will grow up acquiring cognitive flexibility and accommodate with the habit of possessing lifelong education. The capacity to adopt new skills, accept new methods, amalgamate self with the needs and cope up with continual social is the basic criteria to exist in the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. Liberal art education can instigate those qualities in an individual.

The present paper will throw the light on how the gate of establishment and fulfilment of the dream of the tribal student may be opened by introducing liberal arts education in conjunction with describing different features and probable learning outcomes of liberal education.

## 2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The very philosophical concept of Rabindra Nath Tagore, “Where knowledge is free” fuels the very concept of Liberal Art Education place in NPE 2020. A new horizon is opened for the students of liberal arts education not just for their career but for their life. The present research paper highlights the benefit of liberal arts education to solve the issues of tribal education.

## 3. METHOD:

The present study is qualitative descriptive research. To conduct the research secondary data are collected from various sources like NPE policy draft, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tribal affairs, Delors Commission report, various reports of UN agencies. The data from sources are interfaced to get the result.

## 4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS:

### Liberal Art Education:

The motto and assurance of liberal arts education are to ensure equality, equity and liberty in education in order to touch the zenith of the highest goal. The process of this study provides an amalgamation of professional and general education to animate its highest goal. As a result of this amalgamation, many subjects fall within the periphery of this category and students have ample opportunity to select and adopt the subjects of their choice. The barrier of division among streams becomes abolished.

The emphasis in liberal education is given on critical thinking, solving of creative problems, self-expression on research and lifelong learning helps to accommodate a better professional portfolio and a well-lived life. It serves as a lifelong resource to overcome existential problems and increase the potential to maintain a desiring living pattern. Life itself is an interdisciplinary process. The skills students have achieved are not the same to take decisions how, when, where, what, and with whom they face in practical life to apply those skills. Rather, they cannot apply it directly, it needs a synthesis of knowledge and their acquired skills Education and disciplines in multiple subjects create depth and versatility for success in a highly competitive and changing job market as well as in the essence of human experience – relationships.

### The Probable Reasons to Introduce Liberal Arts Education:

The intermingled subjects that enrich the periphery of liberal arts education are arts, humanities, social and natural sciences. By strengthening the critical reasoning skills, and by exercising the arts of discussion, collaboration and embracing both the skills of interaction inside and outside the classroom, students are supposed to develop the skill to discuss the issues of public importance and to conclude the matter in a more fruitful ending with their peer groups in the political and civic spans in a more fruitful way (“Delors Commission,” 1996). In the era of post-industrial development and knowledge revolution, the skills such as creativity, the ability to think outside the box and openness to multiple perspectives are more desirable perspectives that an employee should have. And only, liberal arts education has only the ability to syringe those skills in the blood of future generations who prove themselves to as most able candidates for elite class jobs in the global market. This is done through a living and learning environment which make them capable to mingle themselves with ideas in which environment they are uncomfortable and unfamiliar (MHRD, 2019). In the ethical ground, liberal arts education enhances the capability to evaluate our prejudices and assumptions by cultivating the qualities of self-awareness and self-criticism.

It will add some extra butter in the case of tribal students. Tribal students badly lack communication skills and the skill to think beyond their world views. It will cultivate the skills among them to make themselves more competent in respect to the global market and economic scenario of the present world. Again, because of entry norms and marks, which horizon is seemed to the layout of their reach, because of introducing Liberal Arts Education, they can sharpen their tools through professional touch. Even for the benefit of tribal students, the new branch of study can be introduced

to bring back them to the threshold of education. One of the mottoes of education is to create employability and sustainability in society. If the age-old knowledge about the world, environment, plants, crafts and handicrafts, their art forms and the economy of tribes can be incorporated into the liberal arts curriculum then can be proved beneficial for society as well as tribal students.

### **Curriculum and Pedagogy of Liberal Arts Education:**

‘Liberal Arts Education is a system of higher education designed to foster in students the desire and capacity to learn, think critically, and communicate proficiently, and to prepare them to function as engaged citizens. It is distinguished by a flexible curriculum that allows for students choice and demands breadth, as well as depth, of study, and by a student-centred pedagogy that is interactive and requires students to engage with critical texts within and outside of the classroom’. (Schmitter & Karl, 1991). In terms of curriculum, the essential criteria of liberal arts education are student choice. Students perform a major role in shaping their curriculum to study.

### **Changing of Economic Pattern and Necessity for Liberal Arts Education:**

With the change of times, the economy has transformed itself as per society’s metamorphosis. From the agricultural society, it has transformed itself into an industrial society and now service society reckons this place (Soni & Mungila Hillemane, 2020). Service Economy generates ample opportunities to create heterogeneous work fields from a CEO of a company to a delivery boy, from a professor to a laundry boy, from a marriage planner to a sweeper of road. If those who are working in the unorganised sector and work as a part of the gig economy, are trained and their skills are developed; then our Indian economy can able make a high jump in the path of economic development. Education is the very tool that acuminates the skills and proficiency in addition to the ability of the individual. Education does not mean that only the creamy part of this section can get employment and earn bread and butter. For sustainable development of the society and greasing the wheel of the service economy, it is the hour need to make every individual trained who is best in whatever fields. Therefore, the compartmentalised barrier of the curriculum has to be broken and ample provisions to improve skills and proficiency have to be calculated in the curriculum to boost up the economy and to elevate sustainability in the society.

One example can be cited in this section to bring out the picture more accurately. A large portion of the tribal population lives within the diameter of 5km near the forest. Their economy is based on minor forest products. For selling those products they have to depend on the middle man who decisively deprives them by giving them very little money for those minor forest products. The recently central government has introduced a policy named ‘Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana’ in which their existing skills are developed and professionalised and Government takes the initiative to help them by providing minimum reasonable price and supports for those minor forest products that bring a revolutionary change in their socio-economic scenario and create the desired ambience for their sustainable development.

If this skill improving learning can be integrated into Liberal Arts Curriculum, this approach not only draws the attention of tribal students but also assimilates the sense of economy and management into their doorstep which is absent from their worldview. The economy does not revolve around a handful of erudite persons. The affluence of the economy centres around how many people participate and assemble their contributions to it.

### **Various subjects from Tribal World that can be incorporated in Liberal Arts Education:**

Whatever care and manure can be used for a mango plant, it can never able to produce orange. Rather, if the care and inputs are used for benefit of mango trees, there is a probability that the production and quality can be improved. The case is the same with all students. The curriculum should be assembled with all probable subjects that can help to create sustainable development and stimulate economic progress. After Africa, India has the second-largest population of tribes. Due to different constraints, a lot of students still are out of school. In addition, those who are fortunate enough to cross the doorstep of the school, a high proportion of drop out and retentions have prevailed among them. Any dish can satisfy the hunger but not all dishes satiate the inner curving of liking a preferred dish. Therefore, it is a wise input to serve the plate as per choice and taste to quench inner yearning and impulse. This case is equally applicable to tribal students.

Jarawa tribes belong to Andaman- Nicobar Island is famous for gathering honey from wild bees from lofty trees. The skill and techniques are completely absent in other tribes residing even in Andaman –Nicobar Island or other parts of India. If we can able to integrate these wise inputs in our curriculum, a huge knowledge generation can be created and the survival of this skill can be optimised (*The Jarawa*, 2019). Santhal Tribes are famous for their cultural practices in dancing and singing. If their cultural instincts have collaborated with the skill of stage presentation, this can be popularised throughout the country as well as Worldwide and can be a cause of resource generation(*The Indigenous Colour of India – The Indian Tribes*, 2020). The Basta and Jhabua tribal community of Madhya Pradesh are famous for

making terracotta pottery and jewellery (Saxena, 2018). The great Madhubani art, jewellery from tribes residing in Bihar can be incorporated into the syllabus for greater outputs and generate huge employments (Halder & Pandey, 2018). Is Ayurveda treated as a branch of study and Ayurveda products are promoted worldwide as a brand, then where lies the fault being not treating the indigenous knowledge of ethnobotany as a stream of study? If we merge that aforesaid tribal indigenous knowledge as curriculum and acuminate them with professionalism and touch of management that can bring a hike in tax generation for the countries and in addition to it, it acclaims and establishes a worldwide recognition for the tribal community. Again, in addition to it, tribal concept on ecology, organic harvesting using natural resources, profound able knowledge on maintaining bio-diversity, world view of tribes regarding sustaining of bio-diversity, dope about soils and seeds can be blended with the curriculum. Liberal Education is such a buffet that offers the opportunity to excel and progress more by satisfying head and heart.

**Tribal Knowledge in Liberal Art Education Promotes Sustainable Development:**

With the progress of civilisation, education has been segmented into smaller to smallest parts as possible to generate different work fields along with creating various kinds of human capital to stand in the front line of the world economy. With the motto of ‘education for better livelihood’, education always peruses its target towards a better answer to the economy by generating knowledge and labour force. But in any policy of NPE, neither the tribal knowledge is celebrated as a genre nor there is seen any effort to breed a work field based on tribal indigenous knowledge and innovations. Rather there is a continuous effort perceived to assimilate them with the so-called civilised culture and it is also anticipated from them that they easily are accommodated with the changing situation and let flourish themselves. But a tree whose root is hacksaw never thrives. How can then the tribal proliferate? Being the second high enthrallment in India, tribes are the most endangered group than any other community. Rather than extracting them from their soil, let them help to flourish in their ambience and embody their knowledge with curriculum in liberal arts education as branches.

Education has been divided into three segments: in-formal education is being one part of it where young brains learn from their community and their world. The world view and the knowledge that tribes carry on, due to non-exposure to the outer world, is limited to their periphery and threshold. the young generation being uprooted and due to displacement pass over all those knowledge and culture. It is high time to bring back those age-old treasures to the doorstep of formal education. For good measure, with a little bit of training the responsibility to the contribution of knowledge to students have to be centred only in the hand of tribes and give them an appointment as teachers in the teaching-learning process, although they can be illiterate in the sense of formal education. This helps to regain the lost confidence of tribes and breeds the setting where tribal students rather getting fear to enter the doorsteps of schools celebrate the legacy and adhere to it which not only creates a skilled workforce but also grease the economy and moves towards a more sustainable living with more economic freedom.

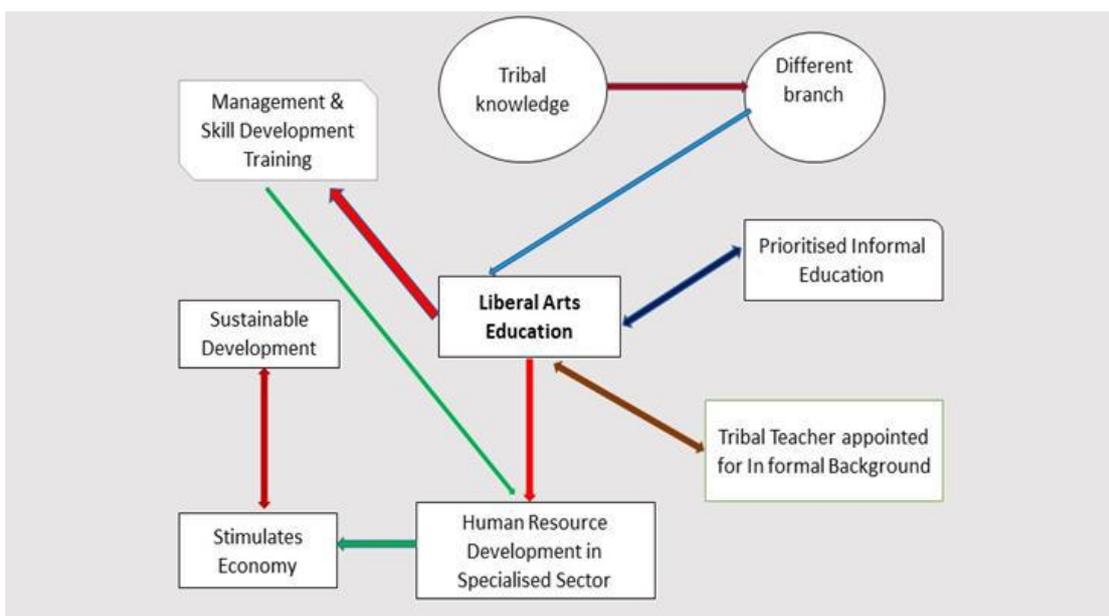


Figure 1: proposed implications and outcome of liberal education

Source: Authors.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The main aim of Liberal Arts Education is to create skilful labour forces with the essentialities and qualities mind, body along with spirit for a blissful entity with the proficiency of leadership and ability to work in diversified fields as per requirements and necessities with an open hand along with an open mind.

As a developing to stand and combat in global market, in the draft policy of NPE 2020, there is a recommendation to introduce Liberal Arts Education from secondary level. India has a large education system with minimum resources. The fund allocation from both ends is very nominal to bear the great expense of liberal education. Therefore, it is high time to allocate some strategies so that liberal education can be implemented in the education system with low costs. A few suggestions are brought here which can help the policymakers to introduce:

- Clusters of schools have to be made at circle end
- Teachers have to be given appointed on per circle basis
- Special labs for liberal education have to be made per cluster end wherein a specific allotted time that special class is done having all students of cluster per subject end
- One type of evaluation should be carried on to evaluate throughout the country basis to keep symmetry in the evaluation process.
- DIET should play the role of assimilation and keeping connections among different clusters and schools
- Flipped Classroom plays a crucial role to promote liberal education.
- In higher secondary, under the 'Taruner Swapna' scheme tabs are distributed in West Bengal. If this scheme can be started from the eighth standard, and free Wi-Fi connection can be provided with a specific identity and with limited data, then without moderating institutions a lot for liberal education, a suitable environment can be created.
- If the whole country can avail the same specific software and data service at the government end, easily a knowledge hub can be created where video recordings, simulations can be stored for future use and also students.
- Emphasised and priority should be given to skill development programmes and vocational training.
- Choices of subjects should be provided based on locality, the necessity of locality, opportunity in the locality and also considering the probability of job sector in the area because sometimes students can't do the right preference and the result will be fatal.
- Pre and post counselling sessions should be organised to help the students to select proper subjects as per their aptitudes or knacks otherwise the outcomes will be calamitous.
- U learning technique should be initiated to address the goal of liberal education.

### The Implementation Problems Our Country are Supposed to Face:

The first most important criterion of liberal arts education is giving importance to students' preference on subject choice. The very right to choose any subjects and majors in their discipline democratises the education process a lot. Therefore, every institution needs a lot of manpower for different curriculum and pedagogies from which every institution and college are struggling. The basic infrastructure of liberal arts education demands a lot of school and college rooms with basic facilities. To meet up this need, infrastructural development is the prime concern for every institute to cover up the basic needs of liberal arts education between demand and supply. It is also going to be difficult for an institute to schedule the classes and to provide justice to every discipline in the matter of hour distributions. Even again, there can be conflict in class scheduling between two streams even when there is consistency in the calendar and credit system. The particular framework of liberal arts education depends on the number of times students spend with their disciplines and the number of disciplines they have taken. But both two criteria cannot be met up at one time. As creative thinking, innovative thinking, divergent thinking are the prime concerns of liberal arts education; the size of the class has to be small otherwise, otherwise interactive teaching is not possible. Students only depend on what their teacher has made them learn and the aim and ambition of liberal arts education can't be attained. In a nutshell, it is an expensive process of teaching-learning. In a developing country like India, fulfilling all basics of liberal arts education is going to be a huge financial burden.

Apart from that, a lot of issues are amalgamated with this system of education which are mentioned below:

- The process of admission has to be fair, neat and clean. It is impossible to have a democratic form of education if the process starts with corruption and nepotism.
- Guidance and pre and post counselling sessions have to be organised to help the students to celebrate the students' choices otherwise the aim of liberal arts education does not attain its goal.
- There should be a coherent and transparent credit system that is translatable across national boundaries which also ensures that the institution produces quality products by counting the students' mobility.
- Credit systems should be transferrable across the country and in the country.
- The curriculum should satisfy the need and demands of society as well as fulfil the demands of people.

## 6. CONCLUSION:

The campus and periphery of school and college are a kind of coliseum where they sharpen their skills and potentialities to construct a world of their kinds. They experience their virtuous world there – a place where they satisfy their curiosity, nourish the Self, remould themselves, examine their creative and divergent thinking to enrich themselves and prepare themselves to meet with the new bureaucratic world waiting for them outside the campus. Liberal arts education incubates students who have their own voices and perspective to meet with society. They are made capable of the quality of true tolerance and the quality to accept the world as it is. That's why NPE 2020 has proposed to introduce liberal arts education to bring a new horizon in the development of Indian society and its prospects. It not only accelerates the speed of India's economic progress but also helps to make global citizens and to stop brain drains by bringing tribal indigenous knowledge forefront with other streams and branches.

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