CHAPTER III
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3.1 EDUCATION AND THE TRIBALS:

Emancipation of India from foreign yoke in 1947, after centuries of tyrannic and oppressive subjugation gave rise to a plethora of baffling problems posing formidable challenges for Indian leadership and statemanship. The path of progress was replete with numerous obstacles - appalling poverty sans food, sans shelter, and sans clothing. Attainment of political freedom was yet to be achieved. Harmonious and balanced growth was the cherised goal. The archenemies of peace and progress - ignorance and poverty - were to be seriously dealt with.

The Indian statesmen were confronted with the onerous and uphill task of the rebuilding a new India devoid of decadance and obscurantism but marked with renaissance and enlightenment - creating a congenial and conducive socio-cultural background was the first and foremost essential condition for accomplishing any task and achieving any goal. For the purpose,
nurturing and nourishing the human resource - the most precious wealth of a nation - was the prime need.

No sovereign state wedded to the lofty ideals of egalitarianism, democratic socialism and welfare state can eschew the responsibility and duty of adopting the integral approach for upliftment of all.

Rise of all (sarvodaya) or upliftment of all is the hallmark of civilization and culture. In view of this noble idealism let us cogitate how far the avowed promises of Indian constitution are kept to safeguard the interest of the down-trodden, the backward and the oppressed who are lagging behind. What are the endeavours of the nation to raise their socio-economic status and enhance their power and position?

In this perspective, problems of the Adivasis or the Aboriginals (Scheduled Tribes) who comprise a sizeable portion of the population warrants serious study.

The tribals are backward people - victims of cruel exploitation and extreme apathy, abject poverty and indolence, appalling ignorance and obscurantism. Who can rescue them from the darkest dungeon of ignorance? Who can bear the torch of enlightenment for them? Can Education play the role of saviour of the sinking ship of the tribals? Can Education serve as
If education can prove itself a powerful instrument of social change, it must exert its influence to bring them to the main-stream of the national progress and prosperity. But the crux of the problem is how to spread education among the tribals? How to overcome the hurdles? How to ward off the obstacles on the path of dissemination of knowledge among the tribals?

Let us make a critical analysis of the problems of education for tribals and find out remedies, concentrating our attention on the Tribals of remote regions of Orissa.

In the demographic map of India, the tribals occupy a conspicuous position constituting 8% of India’s total population. In Orissa however they present a prominent feature as about one in every four citizens of Orissa is a tribal. The tribals, constituting a huge section of Orissa population, exert tremendous impact on developmental stride of Orissa. Can light of education penetrate into dark jungles of the Adivasis who are traditionally apathetic and keep themselves aloof from modern ways of life. They adopt a pattern of life which is mainly characterised by nature of rurality, illiteracy, economic backwardness and social deprivation. The tribals alongwith their distinct physical and diverse cultural traits have developed a callous attitude to join the mainstream of natural life.
Though much has been done in the field of education of the tribals to remove illiteracy, achievement is nominal as the literacy percentage is remarkably low i.e. 22.21%. The numerous programmes of socio-economic development undertaken in tribal areas are not making much headway mainly due to the ignorance and illiteracy of the tribals. Educational development is a fundamental requirement for social and economic development of any community. This is particularly true of tribal community in our State. The isolation has narrowed their outlook. Education is therefore to play a vital role of catalytic agent to infuse new spirit for creation of confidence and to meet the new challenges of life. In the words of Patel (1991):

"Education is now recognised as the principal vehicle of social change, since it is no longer simply a matter of mastering the three R's reading, writing and arithmetic - nor is it merely a matter of skill acquisition, of preparing for a vocation or profession. Rather, it is the means to improving the quality of life, achieving social mobility and participating in the world affairs." (P. 20)

The education of tribal people should be directly linked with their real life problems. This link will help them to realise the usefulness of the education. That is why Encyclopedia Britannica (vol.7) defines:

"Education is an attempt on the part of the adult members of human society to shape the development of coming generation in accordance with its own ideals of life." (P. 764)

Then only the tribals would willingly accept educational efforts as an essential developmental process.
There have been marked changes in the sphere of education. Consciousness for the need of education is slowly but steadily increasing. This is reflected among the tribals and the State Governments are becoming increasingly aware of their duty to them. Committees like Elwin Committee, Renuke Ray Committee, Dhebar Commission have thrown light on various aspects of educational development of tribals. These Committees and Commissions have considered education as one of the developmental activities.

For successful implementation of educational programmes among tribal students, lack of suitable infrastructure is the main obstacle. The problems which stand as serious impediments may be discussed as follows;

3.2 ECOLOGY OF SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION:

The Third All India Survey of Education has brought into light that the primary schools must be available in their own habitation or at best within a walking distance of 1.5 K.M. Besides this, the size of population is taken into consideration while setting up the new schools. But in the case of tribal areas, these principles are not strictly adhered to, due to scattered inhabitations. On account of occupational convenience, the tribal families are accustomed to lead isolated and segregated life. Numerous scattered villages with sparse
population and lacking in transport and communication facilities make it a difficult task on the part of the Government to establish schools according to the established norms. In the other hand the children walking long distance without any transport facility, lack of minimum teaching materials in the school and the callous treatment of the teachers and educational affairs make the school unattractive for the children.

Apathy for education is the most serious obstacle for spread of education among the tribals. Inspite of this general apathy there are exceptions where the tribals evince strong desire, owing to lack of schooling facilities nearby, they cannot afford expenses for availing of better facilities in education.

Most of the elementary schools of the tribal areas are of lower - primary type, very often run by single teachers. In such cases, the teacher has to manage and control their classes simultaneously. That proves a tough task for the single teacher. Such schools are opt to suffer from indiscipline and consequently standard of education imparted therein is very low. To this Panda (1989) has rightly quoted Srivastava (1967) that (1) inadequacy of schools (2) one teacher schools (3) distance from home (4) lack of enthusiasm in parents (5) low percentage of trained teachers (6) and the low emoluments offered to teachers are potent causes for feeble progress in tribal education.
3.3 LANGUAGE PROBLEMS AND THE TRIBALS:

To impart successful education to tribal students, so many impediments stand on the way. The far and foremost obstacle is that the children are taught through Oriya medium. The teachers are not acquainted with the mother tongue of the tribal children. A vast majority of teachers in the tribal area can neither speak nor understand the tribal dialect. As a result, there is little communication between the teachers and the taught and it is not surprising that the Adivasi boy or girl barely succeeds in crossing the primary stage. At the very start they find themselves seriously handicapped. In Assam the medium of instruction is Assamese. In Orissa, the medium of instruction is Oriya. In Bihar it is Hindi. In this way, the tribal pupils have been forced to adopt local state language as the medium of instruction, though their languages differs completely. On the other hand, teachers find it difficult to learn the tribal languages.

The example of Santali language is interesting. It had no script of its own. The Santals are distributed in the State of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. This would mean that in West Bengal the Santal language would have the Bengali script in Bihar, Devanagari script in Bihar and in Orissa, Oriya script. Visualising the situation Pandit Raghunath Murmu of Mayurbhanj
district of Orissa developed the script for Santali language which is properly known as "Ol chick" which is also being used in West Bengal and Orissa to teach Santali language. Further the Tribal Welfare Committee of the Indian Conference of Social work (1952) also recommended that the local dialects should be converted to suitable script, preferably Devangari and special primer and text books be prepared in the same. The regional language should be introduced at the beginning of upper primary level. The primary curriculum should provide for arrangement from transition from dialect based instruction to State language based instruction. In this connection Das (1985) has rightly remarked:

"At the primary stage for such tribals as Lanjia Saoras, Dongria Konds, Bondas, Mund and Kols for instance living in inaccessible hill areas, and having little or no knowledge of the regional language, suitable text books should be prepared and supplied for the use of them in concerned areas." (P. 5)

3.4 TEACHER AND THE TRIBALS:

Most of the teachers engaged in tribal education are quite misfit - ineffective in their jobs. Negligence, absenteeism, apathy and irregularity are the hall-marks of those teachers who have earned notoriety for dereliction of duty. The teachers evince little interest and zeal to take up educational work. It has been aptly highlighted by Das (1985):

"The teachers are a bane to the schools in tribal areas. They are notorious not only for their absence from schools (for which some tribals, in some cases are said to have their schools abolished) but for being utterly ignorant of tribal dialects and worse still
It is clear that the teachers have no interest for the educational development of the tribal children. As most of the teachers hail from plain areas, they are not acquainted with tribal language and culture. They harbour a feeling that they are stranded and gasp like a fish out of water. The teachers in tribal schools rarely visit the schools. Their performance is just mechanical and perfunctory. The only steady annual work they regularly take up is that they promote the students from one class to another. The pupils go to schools just to kill time. To cover up poor attendance and enrolment in the school, the teachers add some fictitious names in the schools attendance register. The names of adult persons and even dead people and imaginary names are entered into the register. Moreover, some teachers demand some regular gifts in kind from the people for enjoying their cynosure jobs. Sometimes the schools open only 5-6 times a month, when the time to receive salary approaches. The teacher seems a foreigner to the students.

In order to do away with those evil practices among the teachers, it is recommended that the teachers should be as far as possible be recruited from amongst educated tribals, in case of non-availability, preference should be given to those who are at least familiar with the language, habits, customs and mode of life of the tribals. So special training in tribal language
should be imparted to teachers serving in tribal schools. But unless the teachers willingly come forward to serve the backward people, unless they adopt and adjust themselves with tribal way of life they can hardly prove themselves as effective and successful teachers. So a teacher in tribal area must have thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak the tribal language.

3.5 THE SYLLABUS AND THE TRIBALS:

The unrealistic syllabus poses another obstacle in the spread of education of tribals. The present curricular are defective, obsolete and ineffective as they fail to satisfy the need of the students, while they are entering into social life. Instructional materials utterly fail to provide ways and means to earn their livelihood. It is devoid of purpose, and significance from tribals point of view Panda (1989) rightly observes:

"The education is completely alien to the tribal culture. The boy of the jungle with the help of language other than his mother tongue, without the help of his tribal men proceeds in this material selfish world. The syllabus has got nothing to teach them on their problems and how to solve them. Higher educational institutions are away in the cities. The tribal life and city life are poles apart, in fact contrary to one another. The tribal boy or girl is a lost child in the town. He or she becomes a rootless person lost from both the world."( P. 11)

In the text books, there is no such topics which will create a good relation between education and tribal society. The tribal students fail to get anything remarkable regarding their culture in the text books. So the tribal people want to turn
their faces from the existing educational system.

3.6 NON-TRIBALS AND TRIBALS:

There lies a wide gap between the tribal people and the non-tribal people, so far as the socio-economic status is concerned. This difference is due to the mighty influence of the environment. The tribals have been brought up by nature. Nature is the primary source to earn their livelihood. The tribal people collect their food from different regions of the hills and forests. And maximum of their time is invested in their job. So they do not want to give emphasis on other aspect of life.

Non-tribals like political leaders, bureaucracy and the business community form a group to see that the tribals remain where they are. Even if the educated tribals have also joined them to exploit the tribals.

The tribals ensure that whatever they earn goes to the high caste non-tribals. The non-tribals business men are lording over tribal people.

In a letter to Editor, Amrit Bazar Patrika (Dt.31.10.1980), Khalko wrote that the Government is doing nothing to stop the business communities from reducing price of essential commodities. Even the political parties are no less responsible. On the other hand, the Government is applying
sophisticated methods to "balkanise" the Adivasi areas in the name of development. The natives are not prepared at all the fact this savage onslaught as they have not the united force to resist this social, economic, cultural invasion. Each of their leaders wishes to step into the shoes of the Chief Minister. Lastly, there is not a single native leader who could command obedience from the Adivasi of the tribal belt stretching from West Bengal to Madhya Pradesh.

So tribals are always in the clutches of the non-tribals. This is a major problem for the tribals in their educational development.

3.7 POVERTY AND THE TRIBALS:

Tribals are suffering a lot due to grovelling poverty. In order to supplement their earning, they do not want to send their children to school. Rather they want to engage them in different vocations. There is a wide gap between their income and expenditure. It has been observed and pointed out that poverty of the tribals is at the root of slow progress in education. The first source of income of the tribals is their manual labour. The other source is from the first product. Relating to his expenditure first place goes to food. Second to food is clothing and the third one is housing. The fourth place will go to other expenses such as liquor, festivals, religious ceremonies,
medicines, marriages, transportation. Education is the last items in the list.

They have got little cultivated land. The income from the land, labour and forest product are quite insufficient to maintain their livelihood. As the time of urgent need like marriage, illness, usually they go to money lenders. They have no other alternatives to meet the expenditure.

The tribal deficit economy which does not improve at all in the course of so many years, makes him utterly helpless. His economy steadily deteriorates. So ultimately they have little interest for education.

3.8 WASTAGE AND STAGNATION:

Dheber Commission and survey conducted by the Tribal Research Institute in some States have shown that absenteeism, wastage and stagnation are very high in the school situated in the tribal areas and these contribute for the slow progress of tribal education.

In order to supplement their income the tribals withdraw their children before the completion of primary course. Therefore wastage in tribal school become very high which acts as a bar on the way of development of tribal education.
Teacher (often as much for their own reputation as not for children's good) enforce boys and girls to go to school to swell the numbers with the result that a conflict arises with the parents, who are thereafter less inclined to co-operate with the developmental programme in other fields and the children themselves do not attend regularly. The same tendency lead to the enormous wastage, which is noticeable in most of tribal areas. Children who have been forced against their own will and that of their parents go to school, drop out as soon as they can find a reasonable excuse.

For the unattractive curriculum, the present education system has been purposeless education for the tribals which has been explained earlier.

Rao (12-1-1971) has expressed the view in "Times of India" that, the only way to raise the woefully low standard of school education in the country is to spend more money on it. The success of any educational reform will depend to a large extent on the ability of the country to increase the rate of growth, there is no guarantee that those who have acquired special skills will be able to find suitable jobs. The task of the Govt. is not only of finding more money, but also of evolving a curriculum best suited to the present requirement of the country.

So the wastage and stagnation should be checked by attractive curriculum in the tribal schools, otherwise the
education will be useless.

### 3.9 CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & THE TRIBAL SCHOOL:

The nation needs such persons who are physically strong, intellectually alert, emotionally balanced and socially well adjusted. Only such persons can be able to discharge their responsibilities perfectly. But the above allround development is impossible only through curricular activities. So some activities other than the curricular activities are essential. And those activities are essential. And those activities are known as co-curricular activities.

In tribal schools no proper focus is given to the successful implementation of co-curricular activities. The tribal student can show remarkable performance in outdoor games. So the syllabus should have higher doses of games and sports along with it actual programmes. Such a co-curricular package of activities in the school would provide opportunities to the tribals to come face to face with the non-tribals boys. Due to the absence of co-curricular activities the tribal students are sick of stereotype curricular activities.

### 3.10 METHODS OF TEACHING AND THE TRIBAL SCHOOLS:

In the modern society changes take place rapidly in
different fields. Education being an important field, it cannot escape from the influence of change. To accelerate the momentum of tribal education, the tribal teacher and students must keep themselves abreast of the recent development and invention in all fields. But it is seen that the new light in the field of education fails to reach the tribal region. Thus the teaching method, teaching techniques etc. are still lying at an unsatisfactory level. The age old methods of teaching in the class should be abandoned. The innovative method, micro-teaching, team-teaching, educational technology, distance education, use of mass media in education should be utilised by the tribal teachers. Besides, the new trend of education, the NPE - 1986 is unknown to most of the tribal teachers. Most of the teachers are not interested to know the recent thing due to their negative attitude. Besides orientation courses are not imparted to the teachers to teach different subject in innovative methods. Therefore teaching becomes very ineffective in tribal schools as a result of which expansion as well as qualitative improvement of tribal education becomes impossible.

3.11 WOMEN EDUCATION AND THE TRIBALS:

Education of woman is also neglected in tribal community. Mother plays a significant role in the life of the child. A good mother always guards her children for their future.
Although women should be educated first in the tribal community, the parents are not literate and not in favour of sending their children to schools. Two third of the girls are not enrolled in the schools. They are busy in their household work. Besides this they help their brothers and sisters.

Studies conducted by K.L. Srimali (1959) and E.M. Ekka (1973) and many other revealed that the tribal girls students, generally face problems related to poor economic condition, separation from parents, passing and examinations, fear of committing mistakes, feeling of inferiority complex in class and in common life situation, lack of books and study materials, lack of parents' co-operation for higher studies, conveyance difficulties and some other problems related to the individual and group life. So the administrators, planners and academicians should perceive these difficulties of tribal girl students and should provide education accordingly.

3.12 UNCONGENIAL HOME ENVIRONMENT AND THE TRIBALS:

The uncongenial home environment poses a great problem to the education of tribals in India. The tribal pupils spend long hours for domestic work. They totally depend upon the school for their guidance. Another cause for non-attendance of the pupils in the school is their participation in social functions.
and religious festivals.

Besides this the girls help their mother in household work while the boys are busy in collecting forest products and firewood, grazing cattle, hunting and fishing. During rainy season, they work in the field with their parents. As a result, they have neither time to attend schools nor do they have the money to spend on it.

3.13 URGE FOR EDUCATION AND THE TRIBALS:

Lack of motivation among the tribal people is the greatest obstacle in tribal education of Orissa. After Independence importance has been given for the development of tribal education for which huge amount has been spent. They have been provided stipends, scholarships, free reading and writing materials. But the result is not satisfactory in comparison with the expenditure made by the Government. Mishra (1975-81) conducted a study to find out the relative importance of various factors motivating a tribal boy towards education. It also sought to find out the hindrance in reaching the desired goal set by the Government. As per his study there were four factors of motivation i.e. 1) Govt. assistance, ii) desire to improve the socio-economic status, iii) desire for education, iv) parental guarding. Of these the first one is most forceful to motivate the tribal students towards education. So Government should take
special care for granting financial assistance to the tribal students. In order to make use of the other factors Government should take step to explain them the value of leading cultured life.

3.14 INSPECTING OFFICERS AND TRIBAL EDUCATION:

For the success of tribal education continuous efforts should be made by the inspecting authority. But in case of tribal schools, inspection and supervision are rare and not worth of name.

The attitude of the inspection officer is poor towards inspection. They are simply making inspection haphazardly, which is of no value. Also the inspecting authorities are encouraging malpractice and allow the staff to leave the school for most of the time. This poses problems for the successful implementation of tribal education.

The inspecting officers should visit the school at suitable intervals. During their visit, they should evaluate the various aspects of the schools.

Education is a key to the development of human resources and plays a major role in the process of transformation. The tribal children of the present society are the future citizens. So from the beginning of their career, all the bottle-necks should be done away with. By this they can be
potentially equipped to reconstruct a healthy society. Development of education accelerates development of community. Apart from this education is a powerful medium for all types of social changes.

To quote Swami Vivekananda as referred by Patel (1991):

"The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education to develop their lost individuality... give them ideas - that is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation comes into the law of nature... Now if the mountain cannot come to Mohammed, Mohammad must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him." (P. 28)