CHAPTER II
IMPORTANCE OF TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EDUCATION.
2.1 A SERIOUS NATIONAL CONCERN:

A Nation aspiring for vivacious and vigorous growth and development of its people, determined to traverse the path of democratic socialism, imbued with the fragrance of liberty, equality and fraternity fervently striving to build a resurgent nation can not eschew its solemn duty and responsibility to uplift the fallen, the downtrodden, the disadvantaged, socially and economically backward people.

Where there is no benevolent positive response towards the downtrodden and the backward, there humanitarianism fails and civilization dwindles into barbarism. To nurture and nourish the precious human resources, to harness innate potentialities and to save them from dissipation must be the sacred duty of any civilized and cultured society.

In view of such perception it is significant that
Article 46 of the Indian Constitution lays down a Directive Principle of State Policy, which reflects the lofty idea that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the people in particular of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."

Enormous and complex developmental problems concerning the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes stare India in the face. In the context of Tribal Development and Education, it is worth mentioning that India as a nation has accomplished nothing significant to control and tackle the problems, even though four decades have elapsed after Independence. Redemption of the Adivasis (Tribal people) from the shackles of poverty and ignorance still remains an up-hill-task.

Transformation of a primitive society into a modern one is certainly an onerous task. There is no magic wand to perform miraculous changes overnight. The task entails that we should wage a persistent and tough war against obscurantism and regressive factors and hostile forces that play havoc in tribal developmental process. Before launching the war, we must collect the "sinews of the war". And education would constitute the chief sources of "sinews" by disseminating desirable knowledge and information, preserving sound values congenial to growth and development.
Education holds the key to development. Development is not just change in terms of saving income-ratio of export G.N.P. Ratio, development is an enormously complex process involving changes in customs, habits and ways of doing things. A basic purpose of education, both formal and informal is to produce individuals whose actions are motivated by interests, attitudes and values that are gratifying to them and beneficial to society at large. Education imparted to the tribals should aim at instilling a genuine urge for conducive changes in life pattern.

The things that can make a people really great and progressive are education, industry and agriculture. Education is the pivot on which progress in all other fields of life and activity revolves. Now education plays a vital role in the process of transformation since it has unlocked the doors of modernisation and paves the path for national integration. As education is capable of attacking and revolutionising the basic thinking and attitudes of the tribals, it is regarded as one of the most effective and forward looking instrument of tribal social transformation.

Before venturing to lay down war-strategies against forces of obscurantism and ignorance in tribal society, we must thoroughly acquaint ourselves with their life situations and the burning problems that have direct impact on educational
endeavours and are correlated with spread of education.

2.2 EDUCATION VIS-A-VIS TRIBAL PROBLEMS:

In the developing countries social change comes limping owing to cultural anaemia. Hence it is profitable to recognise in proper perspective, the factors that resist and accelerate social change aimed at. The tribals are, by and large children of Nature, their life-style being conditioned by their eco-system. Education can aid these primitive people by supplementing their knowledge about their environment and by providing logical and scientific explanations for external phenomenon which fall within their ken. The tribals must be well fortified to combat the evils besetting their society. It is essential that education must play its role for their fortification.

2.3 PECULIARITY OF HABITAT AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION:

Tribal people generally live in inaccessible remote forest areas where condition of life can be very tiring. Some of them live in small concentration in the midst of non-tribal population but the larger section of tribal people live in areas, which are predominantly inhabited by the tribes themselves. The problem is comparatively less complex in case of tribals who live in small patches, or are mixed up with the rest of the population and constitute a smaller portion. In such cases special attention
will have to be paid to the needs of the tribal to ensure that
they receive a fair share of the benefits of educational
development. But the situation is quite challenging in thickly
populated tribal areas.

Education Commission of India 1964-66 observes:

"Different tribal people are at varying stages of economic
development. There is much difference in the skills they have
attained and the technologies they employ. Therefore, in
predominantly tribal areas, each group and the area in which it
lives should be studied closely and appropriate pattern of
development worked out in close co-operation with the people. In
terms of such a design of development, the educational
programmes, institutions and priority should be proposed." (PP
142-143)

Scattered habitats amidst the inaccessible tracts
surrounded by intractable hills and dense forests make them
virtually lead an isolated and segregated life far from the
wholesome contact and influence of the civilized society. Modern
means of communication and transportation have hardly touched the
fringe of interior tribal regions. Lack of communication
facilities contribute to perpetuation of social immobility and
cultural stagnation of the Adivasis, and the process of
acculturation gets jammed thereby.

2.4 HEALTH AND COMMUNICATION:

The tribals are utterly ignorant about modern health
care opportunities and devoid of hygienic awareness. They lead a
carefree, happy-go-lucky life, even a prey to intoxicating 'toddy' and malarial parasite, diseases like venereal disease and sickle-cell. They are quite vulnerable to various superstition and blind-beliefs. They staunchly believe in evil spirit and witch-craft. For the treatment of diseases, the tribals approach the Ojha (one kind of tribal priest) who diagnose the diseases and effects cure by magico-religious rites and by prescribing herbal medicines. As per the observation of Devi and Mohanty(1971-72):

"The more primitive Lanjia Saoras of Ganjam and Koraput agency propitiate the malevolent spirits by the help of spirit-medium called Kudang. The Kudang is competent enough to relay the wishes of malevolent spirit or ancestors to the people. The belief is so strongly entrenched in the minds of the saoras that even those living near the Hospital also sacrifice fowl, pig etc. to cure the ailments".(P. 4)

The Missionaries are taking advantage of callous attitude of the native non-tribal people towards the tribals. They have provided free medical facilities and sometimes medicines are distributed free of cost. In villages the preachers advise the people to avail the modern amenities of medical treatment. The illiterate tribals are of the strong opinion that fate and supernatural powers are responsible for diseases malnutrition and unhygienic habits. The aim of education is to explain the tribals about the scientific causes of diseases and to make them realise the swindle and deception perpetrated in the name of witchcraft and blackmagic. They should be conscious of
their own abilities to fight all evils, social economic or anything. Perspiration and perseverance can go a long way in bringing about beneficial changes in their life.

2.5 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STATUS:

The socio-economic condition of the tribal people is deplorable. The tribals maintain their livelihood by primitive occupations like hunting, fishing, collecting forest materials. In some cases, they take to professions like rearing goats and pigs. As they are far from developed societies, they are deprived of the positive and favourable influence of the civilized world. The tribals are ignorant of modern techniques and do not avail the benefit thereof, thus social change is very suggestive and their apathy for modern invention and innovation retard their developmental process.

A clear picture of their poverty-stricken condition has been given by the Link correspondent (1976):

"In Parlakhemundi Sub-division of Ganjam district found most of the tribals belonging to the Tosavra and Lanjia Sora communities still living in primitive conditions. The women wear nothing about the waist, except some crude ornaments and males are almost without any clothes. Gorsanga Sabara an Ex-Congress M.L.A. said that the economic condition of Sora has improved during the last few years and they have learnt to use clothing. Some of them even wear slacks and kurta". (P. 19)

Inspite of the promises of protection announced in the constitution of India, the tribals are wallowing in poverty. In practice they have been thoroughly exploited by the so-called
advanced educated tribals and unscrupulous officials. For instance, the tribals in some states have the right to collect minor forest produce without payment of royalty and monopoly fees to the forest department. But unfortunately the tribals are not yet aware of this provision. Petty contractors and traders continue to purchase minor forest produce at extremely low prices from the tribals. The sale of goods whether forest or agricultural fetches the tribals extremely low remuneration due to lack of awareness of Government policies, price-support operation, market rate etc. The reason for this is that while the price-support operation is announced widely for the literates or advanced world, the isolated tribals have no means of access to this information. The petty traders and contractors do not have in their interest to inform the community of different high prices. In town and cities we have a highly developed system of redressal whether legal or institutional. The daily requirements and essential information relating to urban people's occupations are well-advertised and the literate man has no difficulty in deciding whom to approach and for what purpose. In the traditional world there is no such organised system available to him for immediate redress for different day to day problems. A tribal man's best friends continue to remain the money-lenders and the petty traders who, paradoxically enough, are the real exploiters. It is a just task now to educate the tribal community
and disseminate information, so as to enable them to avail the benefits of various governmental provision meant for redressal of their grievances.

Forest resources are the main-stay of tribal life and livelihood. Depletion of forest resources poses a serious problem for the tribal people as they are being deprived of sources of easy earning of livelihood. With the reckless deforestation in a terribly rapid pace, the tribals are badly affected in economic sphere and they are thrown out into the gorge of unemployment and starvation.

2.6 SOCIAL CUSTOM AND TRADITION:

The tribal societies are extremely closed and often afflicted by isolation. More often than not, they have very low or very bad contact points with communities, outside their own. In most cases, the contact-points are middlemen, contractors, petty traders or the lower level functionaries of the forest, revenue and police administration. In all these cases, the contact is invariably a bad contact as the tribal is always on the losing end in this relationship. The other type of contact with other communities is the employer-employee relationship. The third type of contact is with the teachers (wherever a school exists). More often than not this contact is also not beneficial as the average teacher is either absent for most of the year or he dislikes to stay with the community or a superficial contact
all responsibilities to the women folk and children.

In order to change their social customs, blind-beliefs, and unhealthy traditions they should be educated formally and informally. In this regard Das (1967-68) has rightly remarked:

"The tribal may be economically poor but he is still culturally and socially rich and colourful. The laudable qualities of fellow-feeling and co-operation which are so much sought after in modern societies are still considered to be important social qualities in the tribal communities." (P. 26)

The tribals feel that any change which are not in accordance with their established traditional culture are necessarily baneful and unwelcome and alien. In more explicit term, it is argued that the tribals should be approached only with such schemes of development which would smoothly infiltrate into their culture without drastically, changing their dearly loved attitudes, colourful rituals and possibly witchcraft.

2.7 NATIONAL INTEGRATION:

The crux of the problem is how to absorb the tribals in the main stream of national life. How to rescue them from an isolated and segregated life-style? Economics and social disparities must be done away with to bring them on par with other civilized sections of society. The present simmering of discontent among the tribals in different regions of India is symptomatic sign of disintegration, foul play of separatist and divisive forces in the body politic of India.
within the teacher usurps the role of the vested party and manages to corner some benefits from the tribal community himself. His teaching on the average is perfunctory and an active involvement with his students is extremely rare.

In this way in all these three types of contacts the tribal people have been worst sufferers. Alienation of lands, chronic indebtedness, labour with low remuneration, isolation of educated youth, have all become familiar features of tribal way of living. But they behave all these contact-persons as "God" on account of their innocence and ignorance and social custom. The tribals' assimilative power is very low, because he has no access to outside experience and has not himself gone through the process of beneficial changes. In this way, his natural resources have been depleted or exploited by the advanced communities. In areas where the opening-up has not taken place the tribal continues at the level of isolation and a skill endowment, which is sufficient to permit him to eke out a living from the land and the forest. The tribal society is rife in blind beliefs and superstitions. It is quite embedded in their old way of life.

Animal-sacrifice in the corn field for a bumper harvest and addiction to country wine to inebriety point are practised. Unwholesome customs and intoxication tell upon their health and economic life. They are quite accustomed to a happy-go-lucky life. Often the male adult members indulge in lethargy shifting
Education should play its role in eradicating fear and suspicion prevalent in Adivasi society.

2.8 ROLE OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION:

The teacher’s role as the torch-bearer, disseminator of knowledge and enlightenment is of paramount importance. It requires that the torch he bears must be a blazing one, the light emanating from the torch (i.e. education) must lead the tribals to stability (social, cultural and economic). The teacher must be well-equipped to reckon the problems of the tribals and provide effective guidance to them for solving the problems. Any kind of true service presupposes sincerity, devotion and real love for the receptor of service by the server. Hence the teacher should be imbued with love and sympathy for the tribals. The teacher has to motivate the children and their parents. So the teacher must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak the tribal language only then can he be in a position to act as a friend, philosophers and guide to the tribals.

The successful missionary organisations, who have been able to bring about healthy constructive changes in tribal life should be followed as models. Love and sympathy are such impelling forces which can win hearts and can perform wonders in
effective communication. That spirit of love is unfortunately lacking in our teacher-community serving in tribal areas. The teachers and educational workers must be inspired by emotional involvement and sense of belongingness.

In this connection the teachers should delve deep into the tribal minds as to find out the reasons—i) why they become reluctant to embrace educational efforts or (ii) why they just cannot afford schooling on account of socio-cultural-economic factors. The teacher should also try to know if the curricular are completely congenial to the tribal life-style. Under the prevailing circumstances, the teachers should come forward with a committed stand and boldly suggest and recommend necessary measures to eradicate the barriers.

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