CHAPTER-3

TRIBAL WOMEN IN ORISSA: A STUDY OF HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN GAJAPATI DISTRICT
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There are as many as 62 communities, which have been recognised as Scheduled Tribes in Orissa under Article 342 of the Constitution. Section 4 of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) order 1950 as amended in 1976 notifies some communities as Scheduled Tribes. Some of the major tribal communities are Bondo Poraja, Chenchu, Didayi, Gondo, Kandha, Kol, Kotia, Koya, Lodha, Munda, Paroja, Santal, Saora, Sounti, etc. The total tribal population in the state of Orissa was 70.32 lakhs which worked out to be 22.16 percent of the tribal population. According to 1991 Census, the growth in the tribal population is lower than that of others is evident from the fact that the percentage of tribals to the total population which was 22.39 percent according to 1981 Census in the state got reduced to 22.16 percent in 1991. The females (33.45 lakhs) outnumber the males (33.25 lakh) and except a small portion of their population, which resides in urban areas (3.62 lakh), they still live in the rural areas and in relative isolation.¹

As this study focuses on the development of tribal in general and Saora tribal women in particular, it is imperative to know about their socio-economic background before taking an in-depth study about this particular tribe.

¹ Dr. Tara Datt, Tribal Development in India (Orissa), Gyan, Publishing House, New Delhi, 2001, p.56.
Tribal development experiences of about five decades suggest that despite all intervention programmes, the Saoras of Ganjam district of Orissa still continues to be relatively underdeveloped as in the past. They are extremely on the lower side in terms of development indicators and demonstrate a case of extreme deprivation. It has been further realised that owing to drastic degradation of environment, particularly the gradual depletion of forest resources and diminution of land productivity, the economic base of the Saora society has weakened. The society is now fraught with severe forms of imbalance and disharmony in maintaining a ‘happy life’. It is said, “development has rather led to mal-adjustment” among the Saoras, and the strategies of development adopted from time to time have been partial and haven’t responded to the basic needs of the tribal people. Therefore, this study intends to analyse the way of life of the Lanjia Saora (a section of the major tribe Saora) from the development perspective. Tribal Population and area covered under Tribal sub-plan including pockets of tribal concentrations are indicated in Table 1.

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2. Ibid., pp.169-174.
3. Ibid., p.176.
Among the major states under the Union of India, Orissa has the highest percentage of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population taken together. The strategy adopted for the development of tribals in the state has been the same as elsewhere in the country. The Tribal sub-plan approach was supplemented by introducing 21 Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDPs). The details or ITDPs/ITDAs are shown in Table 2.

### Table 1

**Tribal Population in Sub Plan Area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>State/UT</th>
<th>Area (Sq.Km.)</th>
<th>Population (in millions)</th>
<th>ST Population (in million)</th>
<th>Percentage of Sts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A.P.</td>
<td>276754</td>
<td>66.51</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>6.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>7823</td>
<td>22.41</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>12.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>94162</td>
<td>64.63</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>135100</td>
<td>17.61</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>32.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>195984</td>
<td>41.31</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>14.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>H.P.</td>
<td>55673</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>79714</td>
<td>21.84</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>27.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>191773</td>
<td>44.98</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>38864</td>
<td>229.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>M.P.</td>
<td>307041</td>
<td>46.47</td>
<td>9.72</td>
<td>20.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Maharastra</td>
<td>307762</td>
<td>78.94</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>9.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>22356</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>34.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>155842</td>
<td>31.66</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>22.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>33214</td>
<td>44.01</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>12.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>7000</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>22.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>130069</td>
<td>55.86</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>10477</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>30.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>U.P.</td>
<td>238568</td>
<td>132.07</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Uttaranchal</td>
<td>55845</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>87853</td>
<td>68.08</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>A&amp;N Island</td>
<td>8293</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>9.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Daman &amp; Diu</td>
<td>3813</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.0011</td>
<td>11.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 1991
### Table 2

**ITDPs/ITDAs in Orissa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Name of the ITDP/ITDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Balasore</td>
<td>1. Nilgiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mayurbhanj</td>
<td>2. Baripada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Panposh</td>
<td>8. Bonai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Champua</td>
<td>12. Parlakhemundi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Jeypur</td>
<td>18. Malkangiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Gunupur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Orissa State Gazette 1991.

Considering that a significant section of the tribal population remained in pockets outside the tribal sub-plan blocks, a special programme was drawn to cover the contiguous villages having ten thousand population and above in the non-TSP blocks with tribals accounting for 50 per cent or more. A programme known as Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) was drawn for tribal families of such pockets. Accordingly, 46 MADA pockets had been identified in the TSP blocks of the state as shown in Table 3.
### Table 3
#### MADA Pockets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the district</th>
<th>Name of the MADA Pocket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jaipur</td>
<td>1. Sukinda-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Sukinda-II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Sukinda-III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Danagadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Khurda</td>
<td>5. Banapur Renapur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Gania Daspalla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Anandpur-II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Hatadihi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Ghasipura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Angul</td>
<td>13. Pallahara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ganjam</td>
<td>15. Kankadahad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19. Khrapakhole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20. Tureikela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21. Tentulikhunti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22. Deogaon Patnagarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. Saintala Muribahal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sambalpur</td>
<td>24. Dhanakauda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25. Jujamura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27. Lakhanpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28. Jharsuguda Lakhanpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29. Laikera-Kirmira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31. Paikamal-Jharbandh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Deogarh</td>
<td>32. Barkote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33. Tilebani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Kalahandi</td>
<td>34. Bhawanipatna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35. Kesinga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36. Junagarh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37. Madanpur-Rampur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38. Jayapatna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39. Narla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Nawapara</td>
<td>40. Komna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41. Boden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42. Nawapara-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43. Nawapara-II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44. Khariar-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45. Khariar-II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46. Sinapalli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Study Area:

The area under study forms a part of the Gajapati District, formerly parts of Ganjam District. The Scheduled Tribe of the district constitute 9.40 percent (1991 Census) of the total population of the state, and the Paralakhemundi subdivision has the highest concentration of Saora communities. In Paralakhemundi, besides ITDA, a micro project at Serango under the C.D. Block, Gumma, started in August 1979, with the objective of improving the living conditions of the Saora families within five years.

Study Villages:

Out of the eleven blocks of the sub-division, C.D. Block Gumma was choosen because of the numerical preponderence of the Saora households. Again, five villages from the micro project known as the Lanjia Saora Development Agency (LSDA), Serango were identified for an intensive study. The population of study villages were relatively smaller in size and the population varied from 94 to 633. All the villages were located in different directions and difficult to access them.

The Saora, one of the most ancient and primitive tribes of Orissa (Elwin, 1955) are called by various names such as Savara, Saura, Sora, etc. and show their racial affinity to the Proto- Australoid group. Their language which is called Sora belongs to South Munda branch of Austric language family. G.V Ramamurti, an author on Saora language says "it varies considerably not only

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4 Dr. N. Patnaik (ed.), The Saora, Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute, H&T.W. Department, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, 1989, p.3.
between villages but also between individuals”. In fact the language spoken by
the Saora in Gumma area varies from the language in Rayagada areas. Most of
them are bilingual and a few are trilingual and are capable of communicating in
Oriya, Telegu or both with outsiders.  

It is well known that like other tribal communities, the Saoras are the
indigenous inhabitants of India in the sense that they had been long settled in
different parts of the country particularly in the plains and river valleys and
other fertile areas. Many of the Saoras are in a food gathering economy and a
few were perhaps on the threshold of a real food producing economy. On the
whole, they were in all respects primitive, wild and underdeveloped.

The Saoras regard their house as a temple, because all kinds of sacrifices
for their ancestors begin at home. In all important places of the house, protecting
deities reside and they are regularly worshipped and propitiated. The houses are
mostly single roomed, rectangular in size and fairly high. They are fitted with
one door or in some houses the back door lies in line with the front door and
there is no window. Around the house, one finds a small garden where tobacco,
maize, ginger, turmeric and vegetables are grown for domestic consumption.

Village:

The areas where the Saoras are found in great compactness are the
Paralakhemundi sub-division of formerly Ganjam district and the Gunpur sub-

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5 Ibid., p.6.
6 Ibid.
division of Koraput district. They generally live on slopes of hills or hill tops surrounded by deciduous forests. Their forest habitat abounds in trees and plants like jack fruit, mango, citrus, guava, palm, banana and pineapple. Among others, the Salap, Sal and Mahua trees are vital to their life. The Saoras have a history of adaptation to this environment which has an unmistakable identity of its own as it distinguishes the geography from the surrounding plains in the neighbourhood. Their villages are built in the most difficult and inaccessible sites but are convenient to keep close watch over the swidden land. There are both large and small villages, ranging from 3-4 to 20 houses. Villages are often divided into separate hamlets and the residents of each hamlet belong to a birinda, an organisation of paternal extended families. The birinda is the pivotal and functional institution in the village. On the whole, Saoras lead a virtually collective life and usually act in common.

Family:

Each person during his life time lives in or forms a part of a family. In a Saora family, parents are quite devoted to their children, filial piety is the most important code the parents teach their children. At home the children are socialised to help others, to be truthful and honest, hard working and religious minded. They also learn lessons regarding hospitality as well as taking care of home, property and animals. The elders are the most respected members because they know the traditions and history of the family units.

Their family is primarily characterised by its nuclear structure, neolocal residence and patrilineality. The women don’t have property rights in their
family. The Saora families are tied together by the bonds of economic relationship and co-operative help. The most fascinating feature in the family is that the mother often abuses and punishes the child, but the father always refrains from these. From their very childhood, Saora boys and girls enjoy a great deal of freedom in the family and community.

The Saoras are unique due to the absence of clan or sib organisation common to most of the tribal communities in the country. Their main exogamous unit is the extended family descended from a common ancestor. This is called birinda which is based on patrilineage. 8 Marriage is prohibited within a birinda as the members of birinda stand to each other as brothers. All the birinda members participate in Guar (second death ceremony) and Kariya (final death ceremony). When one dies the birinda performs the funeral rites and participate in Gaur ceremony which is held to admit the dead to the underworld. The birinda also inherits the property of a heirless member. A remarkable feature among the Saoras is that a woman belongs to her father’s birinda even after her marriage. After her death the members of her father’s birinda claim to perform her funeral rites and Guar. 9 Nevertheless, birinda isn’t synonymous with clan or gotra where members living in far off places observe common rules of exogamy. Birinda members live in one village and its membership is limited to 4 to 5 generations, or even less. It resembles the Hindu Sapinda or Kutumba. 10

9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
On rare occasion some may migrate to another village but he retains the birinda of his own and after death his bones etc. are required to be brought to his original village.

Among the Saoras family is the smallest social unit. It is mostly of nuclear type comprising of married couple and their unmarried offsprings. The compound families having more than one wife and their children are most common among the well-to-do Saoras. The extended families having parents and their married sons and grand children living together are comparatively less. Joint families with several married brothers staying together are rarely found among them.\(^{11}\)

The size of family is usually small consisting of 4 to 6 members. The residences is patrilocal and descent is patrilineal. Membership in the family is acquired by birth but girls after their marriage leave parents family and stay with their husbands. Economic cooperation, common residence and common cooking are common features of the Saora family.\(^{12}\)

Among the Saoras the women have their distinct position. It has been told earlier that they don't charge their birinda after marriage. This is a remarkable trait.

**Marriage:**

Besides monogamy, polygamy and levirate are still the recognised forms of marriage in the society. In Saora marriages without the consent of the girls no

\(^{11}\) Ibid.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.
marriage is fixed. The girl enjoys the freedom to refuse to marry a particular boy or she may show preference for somebody. Moreover, the women being an economic asset aren’t treated as chattels.

There are various forms of marriages for acquiring mates. To mention a few of them are, marriage by arrangement, marriage by capture and marriage by service. Of all these types, marriage by arrangement is most common and held prestigious in the society. The arrangements are made by parents and relations of the groom who take initiative in the matter. In a stratified society as the Saoras have negotiation is made between two parties having equal economic and social status.\textsuperscript{13} The Saoras don’t observe the village is inhabited by the members of one birinda. In big villages having more than one birinda marriages are often arranged within the village. Since a women doesn’t change her birinda after marriage as it happens in other tribal societies where are woman adopts the clan or gotra of her husband’s family, marriages are possible between a man and woman of his maternal side.\textsuperscript{14}

Among the Saoras both child and adult marriages are allowed although the practice of latter is more than the former. Pre-marital relation is not a serious offence in the society. A Saora can marry a step-mother after his father’s death, which called Yayangkoi in order to keep the property undivided. In Saora society, polygyny is regarded as a symbol of social status for the number of wives one has indicates the important position of a man in the society. This is


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
practised to derive economic advantages. Each wife in a polygamous household has her own house and establishment and her family comprises mainly herself and her children. In Saora society, men are mostly dependent on the women for their livelihood. As a result women get equal status in festivals and ceremonies.\(^{15}\) They even get sometimes a higher position than man. They do all household work, rear children, prepare food and do the cultivation.

The existence of female share, called kudanboi shows that even gods and ancestors pay due regard to the women. Thus, have still maintained their status in Saora society although their society is patriarchal and marriage is polygynous. Although polygamy is allowed polyandary isn’t socially approved. There is of course no objection for the marriage of widows or divorcees.\(^ {16}\)

**Birinda Organisation:**

The Saoras have no structural divisions, like clan, phratry and moiety but next to family, birinda appears to be the only exogamous unit that constitutes the members of paternal extend families. All male members of a birinda are believed to have descended from a common male ancestor.\(^ {17}\) Another important feature is that women all along retain membership of their respective birindas.

In all life cycle rituals and on other occasions birinda members carry out the tasks as their obligation. A member often adopts an orphan child of his birinda by preferring the guar (death ceremony) and takes the charge of his


\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) Ibid.
property, and also repays the debts if his father had any. It thus acts as a socio-economic corporation by controlling estates and mitigates the problem of inheritance and succession.\(^\text{18}\) For this typical mechanism of social organisation the Saora society is remarkably different from other ethnic groups.

Each and every birinda has its distinct territory within a village. Every adult Saora is entitled to a patch of common land for swidden cultivation according to his working capacity and need. Usufructuary rights can be exercised as long as one cultivates the land, but he has no right to alienate or to lay fallow for years. In that case, the land is reallocated to some other person by the head of the birinda (gomango). Therefore, the Saoras have a different concept towards possession of land. For them land has no economic value, but carries enormous cultural value pertaining to one’s social status, identity and means of living.\(^\text{19}\)

Virtually the birinda has been asserting an exclusive right over the natural resources, especially the land and forest available within its demarcated territory. The members owe their allegiance to the head of the birinda and the local chiefs who are responsible for administering the resources.\(^\text{20}\) And the members regard the land and forests as the common property resource for self and collective sustenance and well being. Finally, the birinda provides the members security against all kinds of contingency.

**Economic Life:**

\(^\text{18}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{19}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{20}\) Ibid.
The Saoras constitute a pre-farming society in which their economic life is blended into their kinship structure. Therefore, a Saroa produces and consumes with his relatives who are normally organised around family and birinda. As stated earlier, the birinda is a unique social and economic organisation in which all the members are intimately interrelated throughout their life to fulfil the necessary conditions of existence. The economy of Saoras is less productive, the production technology and the exchange systems are simple. They are still restricted to small farming and the produce rice, maize, pulses etc, are more for consumption than for the market. The principal objective of production is to guarantee the continuation of the household system. Household labour is used to exploit the environment by gardening, cultivating the swidden, terrain and plain lands and grazing the domestic animals, the economic system is viewed as a traditional alternative strategies for survival.

**Division of Labour:**

Though there is little specialisation of work, sexual division of labour is distinctly marked in different activities, particularly in the agricultural and domestic fields. In general women normally perform about 80 percent of the work, while the man do only 20 percent. The male members are usually lazy and get drunk most of the time. The women normally work in the field, forest and kitchen garden in addition to all the household chores. Women in Saora society need to be trained properly to utilize their skills and aptitude for the development programmes.
Political Organisation:

The Saora villages are as much social entities as they are political, with a good deal of cohesion and continuity. Every village is more or less an independent unit with little relationship with the more distant villages. But within the village, people lead more or less a collective life and usually act in common.

In a Saora village, the secular headman, i.e. the Gomango, is synonymous with the lineage lead. In the past, he was a man of great prestige. Equally important is the village religious head, the Buyya. The offices of the Gomango and the Buyya are normally hereditary, but there are exceptions. The Gomango and the Buyya aren’t very different from the common people of the village except for their leadership in secular and religious matters. The Saora society is democratic and matters concerning the village are decided in village meetings over which the Gomango presides and at which attendance of family heads is obligatory. Decisions are arrived at by consensus and not by majority vote.

Punishment for various types of offences consists of levy or fines in the form of liquor, bowl and goat which are offered to the village deities and a feast is prepared in which all village people take part. The community feast serves the purpose of preserving village solidarity, providing the Saora an occasion for having a good meal and satisfying the hunger of their deities. Some amount of it

21 Ibid., p.6-11.
goes to the village fund that serves the needs of the people at the time of requirement. In addition to Gomango and Buyya, there is an astrologer, the Disari, who determines the auspicious time for performance of rituals in agriculture, social activities as well as hunting expeditions. Barik is another village functionary who takes messages to different villages and also within the village as per the instruction of the village head.

The Saora lived undistributed in their hill fastnesses. But changes in administrative set up, political organisation and developmental administration have exposed them to external influences. For example, abolition of the intermediary system set the Saora free from the clutches of the Zamindars, Muthadars and other classes of intermediaries modernised their political organisation. Many outsiders infiltrated into the Saora country as soon as it was opened up with the development of road communication and establishment of market centres and started exploiting them, acquiring their land and extracting from them manual labour by various means. Sometimes, the Saora rise in revolt in what are called “Fituris”, but the British authorities stamped out the uprisings with an iron hand and maintained law and order through stern administrative measures. The discontent and frustration among the Saora grew in the absence of strong internal leadership which could find means of resolving them.

23 Ibid.
Religion:

The Saoras live in the world of spirits and deities which are believed to direct and control with their superior powers, the course of nature and human life. The life of Saoras centres round their deities and spirits and their religion is called Darangma. The religious beliefs and practices of the tribe are more elaborate than other tribes of Orissa because their deities are incorporated and worshipped. That is why the concept of supreme god is almost non-existent among them. Saora gods often differ from one religion to another, both in names and in functions. As a result, they devote a good part of their time, energy and money to propitiate and please them. They worship the benign spirits with a sense of gratitude, appease the wrath of the malignant spirits with customary offerings and sacrifices aimed at keeping them in good temper and occasionally worship the indifferent or natural spirits to avert or seek relief from the evil spirits.25

The religion of Saora is based on the belief of polytheism. Every part of the world and every object is possessed by a deity or spirit. The hills, trees, streams, lands, market-places, villages, houses, hearths, pots and pans, in fact every nook and corner of the Saora world, area repository of different spirits.26 Verrier Elwin has devoted a whole volume, the Religion of an Indian Tribe, to describe the elaborate system the Saora religion has developed into. He observes that the Saora life is completely dominated by their religion. According to him,

25 Ibid., p.105.
26 Ibid.
the Saora eschatology is confused and its doctrines vary from place to place, but it is possible to define certain broad principles that are generally accepted:

1. Man has two souls, the Suda Puradan or big soul which can exist independently of the body both in life and after death and the Sanna Puradan, the little soul, which doesn’t outlast the destruction of its physical integument, its departure signifying death.

2. When a soul leaves a body at death, it becomes a shade and then an ancestor. The Gaur ceremony changes a shade into ancestor and admits him to the under-world.

3. There are any member of Saora gods, but the following classes can be distinguished: the Sonumanji or gods among whom some are aloof sky-gods, local deities of limited cult, and malevolent authors of human tragedy and pain, the Kittungaji, most of whom aren’t worshipped, there being a sort of collective deity called Kittungsum who is the object of a widespread and important cult and is the creator of the world and author of human institutions, and lastly, the dead called Kulbanji, the shades, human souls not yet admitted to the company of ancestors and not the object of worship.

4. Only a few of the gods receive regular worship and fewer have shrines erected or icons made in their honour. But the great company of sprits surrounds and often invades Saora existence and neither the social, domestic nor economic life of the tribe can be understood without a knowledge of who and what they are.
The deities differ from one another in nature, function, character and activities. Some are benevolent, some neutral and others malevolent. It is believed that mishap, drought, famine, disease and death are accused by offended deities.\textsuperscript{27} The spirits keep a vigilant eye on whether the Saora are observing the rituals properly. Any lapse or indifference in observance leads to the spread of disease and famine which the Saora dread most.

**Rites and Ceremonies:**

The religious functionaries, the shaman (khudan) and shamanin (khudanboi) mediate between men and deities while in a trance. Their distinctiveness is expressed in complex ritual idioms involving ancestor worship, without which they hardly begin any work.\textsuperscript{28} The strong belief is that, unless their ancestors are satisfied, nothing is going to success, and unless their ancestors are made happy how can they remain happy?\textsuperscript{29} Therefore, they maintain an elaborate form of ancestor related religious practices. Certain human actions (ersi) are regarded as ‘sin’ which can only be redeemed through supernatural sanctions.

Sitapati distinguished two classes of ceremonies and festivals, i.e. those which relate to individual families in their village and those which relate to the village as a whole. The former consists of those connected with the birth of a child, marriage and death; the later belong to agricultural operations, harvest festivals, etc. The former are the concern of individual families which bear the

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., pp.102-7.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
expenses and are responsible for their performance according to “Ukka” or the prevailing custom. However, the society isn’t indifferent to their performance. In the case of Gaur, the expenses are borne by the families of the deceased for whom the memorial stoneslabs are fixed but every family contributes to the feast that follows Gaur in the village. Elders of every other house in the village are invited to attend the ceremonies and rites performed in anyone house. The festivals included in the second group belong to the village as a whole. They are celebrated with the conjoint efforts of all the families in the village.

It is noteworthy that the Saara don’t eat a single grain of the new crops or a new leaf of the herbs or a fruit or even taste them until and unless the related festivals are celebrated. The rule is strictly observed even by the children. This is indicative of their disciplined conduct.

**Religion and Economy:**

Religion is a heavy drain on the saara economy. The sacrifice of animals, e.g., buffalo, pig & fowl prescribed for appeasing the deities on the occasion of disease or death or other adversity followed by feasting with food and drink is expensive and the saara isn’t usually in a position to defray the expenses in cash. The saara takes money from the local Dom, resulting in indebtedness, which is hard to recover. The ceremonies also make serious inroads into the working time of the family of families. On the credit side, religion is an incentive to

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30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., p.4-5.
produce more in agriculture so that its demands can be met. It strengthens and boosts the saora’s morale.

Language:

According to Belley, Saora and Gadaba were the principal Munda languages spoken in Ganjam and Koraput district. The Saora language was said to be very similar to that of Juangs, a primitive tribe inhabiting Keonjhar, Pal Lahra and Dhenkanal. To Elwin, the Saora language appeared closely allied to the Gutob and the Parney, but it had some affinities also with Kharia and Juang. The language of the hills was remarkably pure, containing only a few Telgu and Oriya words. “Although the great majority of saoras in their dispersion across India have lost their own language and now speak that of their neighbours, the hill Saoras have preserved their ancient tongue, and very few of them speak any others”.

Development Intervention Through C.D. Project:

Since 1951, the Government of Orissa has been making systematic plans to help the tribal people to move faster along the path of development towards the realisation of the national goals. In this effort various areas and target group oriented welfare programmes have been launched to benefit the tribal population, since 1975. The IADP, SFDA, MFAL, CSRE, RLRP, MNP, FWP, etc. are the major development programmes which were launched in the state through the C.D. Blocks by the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan. However, these

32 Ibid.
couldn't substantially benefit the tribals nor could they gain any kind of popularity among them. But, in the Sixth Five Year Plan, a new strategy, IRDP, was introduced in the Gumma Block in 1979, including 114 Blocks of the State in order to improve the lives of the backward communities below the poverty line. The basic method of the IRDP to improve the economic status of the poor through the criteria of proper identification of beneficiaries was through institutional credit by providing subsidy, and interest free loans for different types of programmes which were largely on the lines adopted in the earlier programmes.\textsuperscript{34}

The total expenditure of the Community Development(C.D) Projects in Gumma under the IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) scheme during the Seventh Plan Period is given in Table 4.

\textbf{Table 4}

\textbf{Expenditure under IRDP during the Seventh Plan Period}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Year</th>
<th>1\textsuperscript{st} Dose (in Rs.)</th>
<th>2\textsuperscript{nd} Dose (in Rs.)</th>
<th>Total (in Rs.)</th>
<th>Percentage of increase from the base year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>18,4000</td>
<td>8300</td>
<td>19,2300</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>31,6017</td>
<td>23,6083</td>
<td>59,2100</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>31,2683</td>
<td>14,8863</td>
<td>46,1546</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>31,7658</td>
<td>8,3519</td>
<td>47,1177</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>49,1200</td>
<td>3,1498</td>
<td>52,2698</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It shows that an amount of Rs. 19,2300 was spent in the base per year, 1985-86. In the next year the expenditure increased more than 200 percent from the subsequent years, and then the trend of investment in the subsequent years for the scheme was significantly higher for the area.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
It is observed from Table 5 that during the first year of the programme of a total of 329 beneficiaries identified from the Block area, about 61 percent belonged to ST, 35.56 percent to OC (other caste) and a very low percentage (3.34) of beneficiaries belonged to the SC communities. The number of tribal beneficiaries increased to as high as 82.62 percent in 1987-88 and on an average they alone constituted more than 70 percent. Although the beneficiaries among the SC rose every year they comprised only 6.62 percent of the total beneficiaries of the Block.

The unprecedented rise of ST beneficiaries indicates that the IRDP wasn’t only very popular in the block area, but it also kept enhancing the rate of participation of the tribal people in the development process. The major incentives behind the schemes were that each beneficiary in the first year added a value of Rs. 584.50 to one’s assets and in subsequent years the economic benefit became almost three times more as indicated in Table 6.
The above data suggest that the net gain out of the IRDP went to the Lanjia Saroras mainly, compared to the OC and SC communities. The major constraint of the scheme was that the gains had been concerned by the affluent sections of the tribe because the commercial banks didn’t advance loans to those poor families who had no assets. Therefore, the poorest of the poor were opted out of the scheme. In order to eliminate this difficulty, the State Government introduced another component programme called Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor so as to cover the poorest of the poor families.

From my field analysis, it was found that altogether 1328 persons of the block area had directly benefited from the ERRP scheme, and of them 76.88 percent were tribal beneficiaries, whereas the other caste (OC) and Scheduled Caste (SC) beneficiaries constituted only 18 percent and 5.12 percent respectively. While analysing the impact of the C.D. Programmes on the beneficiaries of the five sample villages, it was revealed that out of 506 households only 38 (2.37%) and 13 (0.98%) tribal households had benefited from the IRDP and ERRP respectively. The projected number of beneficiaries of the study villages showed that the extent of benefit the C.D. Project had offered to the Lanjia Saora was significantly low. Hence, it can be concluded that the contribution of the C.D. Programmes towards the development of Lanjia population was quite inadequate and almost negligible. That apart, during the

36 Ibid.
transaction of goods and services, the tribal beneficiaries are usually seen to be
victimised in various ways by the block level officials. Therefore, the C.D.
Project has utterly failed to meet the needs of the Lanjia Saora of the study
villages.

An objective analysis further suggested that the Lanjias belonging to the
Micro-Project villages had benefitted more than those of the villages under C.D.
Projects, because the number of beneficiaries was a little more in the former
villages and these beneficiaries too derived benefits from the programmes of the
Micro-Project. But the most important factor for the failure of the C.D. Schemes
was its implementation in a uniform way without any consideration of the social
structure, value system and the prevailing techno-economic conditions of the
people and their habitat. It was, however, a noteworthy effort on the part of the
government that the existing gap between the people and intervention
programmes had been bridged to a large extent by the Micro-Project in the
Saora area.37

The Micro-Project and its Impact:

During the Post-Independence period tribal development policies had
been consistently shaped by the central government, and all the programmes
implemented for the tribal areas under C.D, T.D. Blocks and ITDA, were
broadly based on the macro approach. Though these programmes solved some
of the generalised problems of all categories of population, they hardly delved
into the basic needs of the Lanjia Saoras living in the interior and inaccessible

37 Ibid.
villages. Thereby the tribal people of the peripheral villages continued to be grossly deprived of the benefits of such programmes and to overcome the difficulty, a new approach in development called the Micro-Project for the development of primitive tribal groups was introduced during the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79). Thus, economic development for the tribal people in the country gathered momentum with the implementation of micro level planning as a fundamental tribal development strategy with a view to catering to the needs of a specific tribal group.\textsuperscript{38} It needs to mention here that such micro-level planning operated under the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) covered a total of 516.29 lakhs in 18 states and 2 Union Territories by the end of 1990 (1991 census). Moreover, during the Seventh Five Year Plan, an amount of Rs. 16,000 crore had been invested through the TSP for the purpose.

**Lanjia Saora Development Agency:**

The LSDA, as a Micro-Project block with the objective of raising the living conditions of 813 households of 21 villages within five years, as all of them were under the poverty line. It was envisaged to spend Rs. 10,000/- per family during the plan period, so as to enable each household to earn an annual income of Rs. 4,000/- and above.

The project since its inception had taken steps for land development and improvement, minor and lift irrigation, crop demonstration, renovation of tanks, agriculture and horticulture, supply of bullocks, ploughs, pigs, goats and poultry,

in addition to minor works, housing, repair, training in rural industry and education. Considering the primitive levels of socio-cultural conditions, needs and capabilities of the tribe, the programmes that required simple technology and skills were launched to benefit the individual households in particular and the Saora community in general. These programmes were also designed to intensify efforts for a gradual change in the quality of life with a minimal exposure to modernity. Some of the development programmes suitable to the Saora’s social-cultural values and geographical conditions, were launched during the plan period so as to ensure adequate benefit to the Saoras.\textsuperscript{39} The trend of financial investment of development schemes in the area suggested that quite a large share of money was invested on plantation of various types of fruits including their maintenance and clothing apart from the expenditure on infrastructure developments like housing, health, education and communication.\textsuperscript{40} Some of these are discussed below to highlight the elements of success and failure programmes for better implementation.

**Clothing:**

As the Lanjias were mostly half-clad, the project authorities provided for distribution of free clothing to the most needy tribals of the project area. Accordingly, free clothes were supplied to 20 girls student in each year, in addition to 343 people in the plan period in order to bring them into the mainstream of development. It is a matter of regret that the tribal beneficiaries

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., pp.14-16.
of the scheme instead of using the supplied material sold it to the non-tribals at a nominal price in order to meet their daily necessities. As a result, the schemes was neither popular nor could it achieve the expectations of the project authorities.\textsuperscript{41} In this case, the project personnel should have discussed the implications of the scheme with the people before launching it, and should have ascertained as to what extent the supplied clothings were in conformity with their tradition and culture.

**Housing:**

The field experience of the researcher suggested that making a traditional house for the Saora wasn’t a big problem as the land, labour and material for the construction were easily available and they had been doing it without seeking assistance from the government. But, without realising the urgent need of the Saoras, 200 houses were constructed outside the village. But the allottees preferred their own broken houses to the newly constructed ones since they didn’t want to remain isolated from their birinda, and some also felt that the houses weren’t constructed in accordance with their religious prescriptions and traditions, while some others refused these on grounds of being substandard. A few of them complained against the system of allotment which allowed a non-convert to stay in the adjacent quarters of a tribal-convert (Christian) as his neighbour. This was completely contrary to their cultural ethics and values. Thus, the housing scheme couldn’t bring any benefit to the intended beneficiaries.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
Horticulture:

The trend of financial investment and the developmental activities of the project suggest that a substantial share of the allotment had been invested in raising horticultural crops with a view to generating higher income for the tribal households. The most important advantage of the area was the climate which was most suitable for raising citrus, orange, lemon, mango, cashew nut, pineapple, papaya, etc. Moreover, for raising such crops, it required less care, low maintenance cost, and simple technological knowledge. In view of these advantages and the Saoras traditional skill and practices, the project of horticulture was initiated in the area. The project authorities had taken suitable steps to help the tribal households to generate higher income through suitable horticultural practices.

Crop Demonstration:

It was observed that crop demonstration wasn’t done properly, hence many villagers were deprived of gaining the implications of modern knowledge and technology. It was natural that a tribal person would hesitate to have a close watch on the agricultural field of another tribal belonging to some other village. Therefore, each and every village should have been selected for the purpose of crop demonstration in a phased manner to familiarise the Lanjias of the newer methods and technology of crop production. By this process a greater participation of tribals could have been ensured.

The tribals who were exposed to demonstration felt that new technology turned out to be expensive as the high yielding seeds required large doses of
fertiliser and regulated supply of water. Moreover, the crops were vulnerable to
diseases and insects which needed to be controlled by the application of
pesticides and insecticides. Therefore, the Saoras refused to go in for such
schemes as they couldn’t afford the expenses with their limited income base
along with water scarcity in this area owing to irregular monsoon and meager
irrigation facilities. 42

Education:

It was observed that Rudhei and Tumalo had each a primary school
within the village, while the children of Kujasingh and Gira have access to
education upto the primary level within one kilometer from their respective
villages and for other villages the educational facilities were available beyond
one kilometer. Besides these, the functioning of six Anganwadi centres and
seven Adult literacy centres contributed to the growth of literacy in the study
villages. Moreover, there was a High School at Serango. The C.D. block and the
micro project during the Seventh Plan invested more than Rs. 4.00 lakh for the
development of formal and informal education in the area. The Table-7
represents educational standard of the study villages.

### Table 7

**Educational Standard of the Study Villages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Villages</th>
<th>M Illiterate</th>
<th>Upto Class II</th>
<th>Upto Class V</th>
<th>Upto Class VII</th>
<th>Upto Class X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Tumulo (633)</td>
<td>176(61.97)</td>
<td>259(79.69)</td>
<td>30(10.56)</td>
<td>25(7.69)</td>
<td>20(7.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Surangi (626)</td>
<td>159(49.38)</td>
<td>254(85.52)</td>
<td>70(21.73)</td>
<td>19(6.39)</td>
<td>30(9.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kujasingh (288)</td>
<td>61(46.21)</td>
<td>113(75.82)</td>
<td>31(21.48)</td>
<td>14(10.00)</td>
<td>13(9.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Barba (216)</td>
<td>61(57.55)</td>
<td>81(73.64)</td>
<td>13(12.26)</td>
<td>18(16.36)</td>
<td>15(14.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rungrungba (205)</td>
<td>46(51.11)</td>
<td>66(63.46)</td>
<td>20(22.22)</td>
<td>25(24.03)</td>
<td>10(11.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Rudhej (251)</td>
<td>67(54.47)</td>
<td>99(75.57)</td>
<td>30(24.39)</td>
<td>15(11.45)</td>
<td>12(9.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. (Gira) (244)</td>
<td>102(87.18)</td>
<td>119(93.70)</td>
<td>7(8.55)</td>
<td>3(3.94)</td>
<td>3(2.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. (Janglar) (199)</td>
<td>78(74.28)</td>
<td>75(79.79)</td>
<td>11(10.48)</td>
<td>9(9.57)</td>
<td>8(7.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Angada (149)</td>
<td>37(49.33)</td>
<td>54(72.97)</td>
<td>18(24.00)</td>
<td>14(18.92)</td>
<td>8(10.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Pastagadjung (94)</td>
<td>22(50.00)</td>
<td>25(59.52)</td>
<td>11(25.00)</td>
<td>14(33.33)</td>
<td>7(15.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong> 2851</td>
<td>809(100.00)</td>
<td>1145(100.00)</td>
<td>241(8.45)</td>
<td>165(5.78)</td>
<td>126(8.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From the research study, it has been found that there was an appreciable improvement in equation in the two villages under the micro-project. Male literacy in Angeda and Pastagadjung showed an increase upto 50 percent and the female literacy in the latter village was as high as 40 percent. Such an impressive growth was due to the rise of female literacy at the lower primary stage to an extent of 33.33 percent, which was the highest among the male and female populations of all the sample villages. However, the level of percentage gradually decreased at the higher stages of education in all the study villages.

The most distressing feature was that in all the five villages under the Micro-Project, not a single female had continued her study beyond class VII (ME Level). Education beyond ME level among males was also quite low, except

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43 Ibid.
in Angeda which had the distinction of having 9.33 percent of males educated upto class X.

On the other hand, there were also villages under the micro project which showed an unfavourable trend of literacy. In village Gira, 87.18 percent males and 93.70 percent females were illiterate, and not a single female had attained education beyond class V (primary level). In another village Jungtar, male and female illiteracy rates were 74.28 percent and 79.72 percent respectively.

Increase in literacy in Lower Primary Level evidently was due to more number of children joining schools as well as a number of persons who were educated through the adult literacy centres. But after two or three years of schooling, most of them discontinued their studies. The rate of discontinuity or drop out largely affected the educational progress in the area and this was a major educational problem.\(^{44}\)

On the basis of the information collected from various socio-economic categories of respondents, it was found that most of the parents were apathetic towards their children pursuing education as it seemed irrelevant to them. They instead engaged their children in traditional economic pursuits to enhance the living standard of the family. There were allegations against the teachers that they were only interested in taking their salary, but never bothered to come to school regularly. In the study area most of the teachers were non-tribals and belonged to distant non-tribals districts, they didn’t like to stay in such remote situations.

villages or take interest in the tribal students for improving their educational standard.

Most teachers openly pointed out that they had been appointed in these villages against their will and were trying immediate transfer on health grounds. Therefore the tribal students didn’t like them and quite often didn’t extend their cooperation to them. The teachers had also several justified reasons to complain against the administration. One of these was an inordinate delay in sending reading and writing materials for the tribal students. As a result, the teachers had no other option than to close the school most of the time. There was no provision of accommodation around the school, hence a teacher was bound to follow a policy of absenteeism. Unless such genuine grievances were removed, educational development in the tribal area was likely to lay behind.

Like all other sectors of socio-economic life, educationally the tribal people are at different levels of development but, on the whole, formal education has made very little impact on tribal groups. In the light of the past efforts it is not shocking because prior to 1950, the Government of India had no direct programme for the education of the tribals.45 With the adoption of constitution, the promotion of education of Scheduled Tribes has become special responsibility of the central as well as of the State Governments.

The growth of formal education among the tribal populations of the country may be gauged from the facts yielded by the census data. The census figures of 1931 disclosed that only 0.7 percent of the tribal people were literate.

45 Nadeem Hasnain, Tribal India, Palaka Prakashan, Delhi, 1994, pp.200-06.
This percentage rose to about 167 percent in 1991 against 39 percent for the entire country. The literacy rate among the tribal women is obviously much lower. So the total picture of spread of education isn’t very encouraging barring a few tribes of Orissa who benefited more from the vast network of Christian missionary institutions.46

Since education is probably the most effective instrument for ensuring equality of opportunity, the tribal people are lagging far behind their more fortunate fellow countrymen due to lack of education. The following factors have been analysed for this state of affairs of the tribal people in general and women in particular.

Social Factor:

More allocation of funds and opening of schools don’t go far in providing education to the tribal people. Social factors play a very important role in this respect. Formal education hasn’t been necessary for the members of tribal societies to discharge their social obligations. Hence, they should be prepared to accept education and it should be presented to them in such a way as to remove the barriers of superstition and prejudice.

Barring the tribal communities of few regions in Orissa, it is still a widespread feeling among the tribals that education makes their boys defiant and insolent and alienates them from the rest of their society, while the girls go astray. Since some of their educated boys felt alienated and cut off their links with their families and villages after getting education and good employment.

46 Ibid.
Some of the tribal groups vehemently oppose the spread of education in their midst. Besides, some of their groups believe that their gods shall be angry if they send their children to schools run by ‘outsiders’.

**Economic Factors:**

Some economic factors, too, are responsible for lack of interest shown by the tribal people in getting education. Since most of the tribal people are living in abject poverty under subsistence economy, it is not easy for most of them to send their children to schools, thus losing two healthy hands in their struggle for survival. Verrier Elwin (1963) very appropriately sums up the situation in the following way:

“For a tribal family, to send its grown up girl or boy to school, is essentially a matter of economics, and entails dislocation in the traditional pattern of division of labour…..many parents can’t just afford to send their children to school”.

The poor economic condition of the tribal societies is a great hindrance to successful education. Almost all the tribes – whether food gatherers, hunters, fishermen, shifting cultivators, or settled agriculturalists lack enough food to maintain the family for the whole year. Education, therefore, a luxury to them which they can hardly afford. Each school going children a tribal family is an economic unit and contributes to the family income. If the child is taken away from his normal economic work to attend school, the family is deprived of the

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47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., p.107.
little income which he brings. Instead, the parents have to feed the child out of their earnings which further reduces the economic stability of the family. According to the present system of education, any economic benefit a tribal child can bring to his/her family will be only after ten or fifteen years of schooling. The parents have neither the patience nor the foresight to wait for such a long period. They can, however, be convinced easily if the education for them can be made productive right from the very beginning.

**Lack of Interest in Formal Education:**

In many states tribal children are taught through the same books which from the curriculum of non-tribal children of the urban and rural areas of the rest of the state. Obviously, the content of such books rarely appeals the tribal children who come from different cultural backgrounds. Stories of scientific and technological progress, founders of modern India, history and geography of the country, etc. Of course, from necessary part of any curriculum but the situation demands that their education should start with the teaching of demography, history and ecology of their own region, their neighbourhood and the state. National consciousness shouldn’t be imposed from above or outside, but they should be made aware of it in a systematic manner. L.R.N. Srivastava (1968) puts the problem in a more lucid way by saying that “the tribal child who lives in an isolated and far off place untouched by the currents of modern civilization can hardly assimilate any information about history and geography of the country, about the industrial and technical development, uninteresting and outdated stories and about the important personalities unknown and unheard of in
tribal areas. He has to be given a complete information about his neighboring communities, his village life, social organization, belief and practices, and then pass on to the national scene where we can introduce him to India which is his country. Then only he/she can be able to understand what is happening in his/her village, in the state, in the country, and if possible, in other countries of the world”.

This is a well known fact that education in India has spread in a haphazard way without taking care of future needs. Tribal education also couldn’t escape this anomaly and became instant failure due to apathy, indifference and lack of interest of the tribal people in formal education. S.N. Rath (1981) has put forward the following scheme which is not only recommendatory in nature but also analyses the malady with clarity.

(1) Under the traditional tribal set-up a child enters adulthood with confidence. He knows his environment thoroughly, he knows how to construct his own house, cultivates his field, weave his cloth, in short he acquires all the skills to lead a reasonably comfortable life within the limitations of his culture. The simple skill of reading and writing acquired in an overformal school is no match for this. Therefore, a balance should be struck somewhere to evolve a system of curricula where the tribal school, in addition to being a part of the national scheme, should have a supplementary curriculum adopted to the specific local conditions.
(2) The supplementary curriculum should be based on crafts learning and should inculcate a sense of dignity of labour, qualities of cooperation and social discipline.

Certain tribal activities like, agriculture, dancing, haunting, tribal games and extra-curricular activities of the school, thus providing some continuity of the traditional values and forms of organisation.

(3) A scheme is to be worked out through which the school children shall be able to link up the school and the teacher with their parents the tribal activities. The school has to act as a centre of dispersal of simple technical know-how beyond the skills of reading and writing and become an effective agent of social change. This student-teacher-parent continuum should be able to generate a congenial atmosphere, so that the broad purpose of education, which is to enable an average citizen to comprehend the social, political, economic and other processes and forces around him, is fully served.

(4) Needless to say this utopian scheme largely depends upon suitably trained and dedicated teachers, cooperation of students and parents also.

**Suitable Teachers:**

Lack of suitable teachers is one of the major reasons for the slow growth of education in tribal areas. Most of the teachers employed for imparting education to the tribal children show little appreciation of the tribal way of life and value system. They approach the tribal people with a sense of superiority and treat them as 'savage' and 'uncivilised' and hence fail to establish proper

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49 Annual Report, 2001-2002, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India.
rapport with their students. The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribe Commission’s Report has analysed this situation in the proper perspective. It says that a teacher in the tribal areas must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak the tribal language which is the most important thing to make the students understand the course. Only so can he be in a position to act as a friend, philosopher and guide to the tribal people.\(^{50}\) Actually the gulf between the teacher and taught can be best reduced by appointing teachers from the tribal community itself or a separate cadre of teachers for tribal areas, with some inducements, should be created to serve the educational needs of the tribal society.

**Lack of Facilities:**

One of the major problems in tribal education is that of language. Most of the tribal languages and dialects are in the most rudimentary stage and there is hardly any written literature. Hence, the problem of medium of instruction has been a great obstacle. Most of the states impart education to tribal and non-tribal children alike through the medium of regional language, thus making education uninteresting to many of the tribal people. It also hurts tribal sentiments for his own language. Hence, some way out has to be found to make education meaningful and productive for the tribal people.\(^{51}\)

Nature of habitat of the tribals is also responsible for slow growth of education. Most of the tribal villages are scattered. This entails long travels to

\(^{50}\) Annual Report, 2001-2002, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India., pp.40-46.

\(^{51}\) Ibid.
attend schools. Unless the school is situated very close to their villages and its site approved by the local people the result shall not be encouraging.

School building in some cases, also plays an important role in the growth of education among the tribal folk. Due to mismanagement, bungling and sometimes financial constraints, the building is seldom suitable to run an educational institution. S.N. Rath (1981) has given a very graphic description of the situation by saying that dilapidated, often roofless structures standing as lone sentinels in the midst of a featureless sport away from the village are often pointed out as schools.\(^{52}\)

Another factor related with the problem is the number of teachers. Most primary schools in tribal areas are “single teachers- managed whose presence in the school is more an exception than a rule”.\(^{53}\) Overburdening may be one of the possible factors for this state of affairs. It will be unjust to expect a teacher to follow a non-stop six hourly schedule of teaching as a matter of daily routine.

The enthusiasm of tribal people in the education of their children also depends considerably on the timing of school hours in different seasons. The school timings shouldn’t dash with their important socio-economic activities and events. People running school for the tribals have often killed their interest in education by their unimaginative planning. Local conditions and requirements of the people should get top priority in any scheme for running

\(^{52}\) Tara Datt, Tribal Development in India, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2001, pp.46-52.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.
these schools and a balance has to be maintained between the needs of the family and the needs of education.

**Stagnation and Wastage:**

To many observers of the situation, the problem of education in tribal areas is the problem of wastage. It is not that wastage and stagnation are peculiar to the tribal communities alone but the extent of wastage is much larger in their case. The problem of absenteeism is a serious one in tribal areas. One sees a large number of students on rools but the actual attendance is really low, and the number of students passing out at the final examinations is even lower. The real problem is to create such economic conditions as could be conducive to the students developing sufficient interest in their studies.\(^{54}\) The tribals in general and Saora tribe in particular aren’t given any special treatment in the sphere of education till recently. Now the Ashram schools are being set up them to bring them into the mainstream development.

The state had a duty of promoting education had been developed steadily by the British Indian Administration from about 1833. In the beginning, education was a responsibility of the Government of India. But from about 1870 started a phase of decentralisation of educational administration, which culminated in the provision of the Government of India Act 1919 transferring education to the control of provincial ministries. In 1828 the policy of leaning education to provincial administration was much critisied by the Hartog Committee. It persuaded the Central Government to resume the leadership in

\(^{54}\) Ibid.
educational planning. In 1935, the Government of India set up two special bodies, the Central Advisory Board of Education and the Central Bureau of Education for coordination and policy making. In the debates on the budget of 1951-52, a member of Orissa Legislative Assembly, says that:

“Education must occupy the first and the foremost place in our budget because without education nothing can be appreciated, without education what is good and what is bad. What is real and what is unreal- all these can’t be distinguished”.

The Government showed its earnestness in expanding facilities for a kind of primary education, called Basic Education.

**Basic Education:**

The main difference between primary education as developed in British India since the middle of the 19th century and the system of basic education was that the latter, unlike the former, didn’t confine itself principally to the three R’s, reading, writing and elementary arithmetic. The system of basic education, as developed in the 1940’s and as introduced in Orissa since 1947, was practically the same as the Wardha system of education. It emphasised imparting to boys and girls not only the tree R’s but sought to develop their aptitude in arts and crafts, using their limbs, as much as their memory, in some form of reproductive work. The number of basic schools in Orissa in 1950-51 was 133 and 9,742 boys and girls were receiving instruction in these schools.

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55 Ibid., p.52.

56 Orissa Legislative Assembly Proceedings, 1951-52, pp.17-35.
In the initial year of the First Five Year Plan, the spread of basic education was a fixed principle in Government's policy. On February 21, 1951, in his budget speech, Nabakrushna Chaudhury, the chief minister of Orissa, said:

“Our Government has taken up basic education in right earnest and we expect to be able to introduce basic education in all our primary schools in the next four or five years. The Board of Basic Education training to be whole inspecting staff in the State”.

The new policy in the primary education was embodied in the Orissa Basic Education Act of 1951 for making better provision for basic education at the primary stage. The Act defined basic education as follows:

“Basic education means such a system of all-aided education to be imparted through a productive craft in the local environment in which pupils live with a view to making it self-supporting and inculcating a true sense of dignity of labour, as shall be recognised by the State Government from time to time”.

The Basic Education Act of 1951 was the first step towards the introduction of free, compulsory education in the state. It provided for compulsory primary or basic education not in all parts of the state simultaneously, but in those areas where a sufficient number of primary schools and basic schools, and adequate staff, existed already to meet the needs of the school-going children of the locality. Initiatives in introducing basic education

57 Ibid.

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was left to the local authorities, the Basic Education Board, the District Board, the Municipalities, and the Grama Panchayats.

The Basic Education Act of 1951 appeared as the culmination of the five-year programme drawn up in 1947 by the Orissa Board of Basic Education under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education. The number of Basic institutions had increased steadily every year since 1947. By the end of 1950-51 there were in Orissa 123 Basic schools teaching up to Grade IV, ten up to Grade V, three upto VI, and one full-fledged Basic school. For teachers training there was one Pre-Basic Training school and six Basic Training Schools.

The Education Report for 1950-51 expressed satisfaction at the increase of enrolment in the Basic schools and well summarised the benefits of the experiment in Basic education. It said:

"In spite of manifold difficulties, the new scheme of education has given us during these teacher-pupil relationship, workmindedness, fellow-feeling, willingness to take up work and responsibility, rendering of social service, growing tendency of smartness and inquisitiveness, reform mindedness and attempts at intelligent understand of immediate surroundings on the part of our pupils. Basic educational institutions have continued the attempt to break the barriers that used to exist between the educational institutions and the society in general by attempting different kinds of welfare work, viz., (a) arranging medical aid to helpless parents in the village, (b) to undertake social education, (c) to fight untouchability in the society, (d) to clean public roads and unhealthy surroundings, (e) to create sanitary conditions, (f) to make profitable use of
refuse in preparing compost manure, (g) to organise moral and national festivals and celebrations, (h) to organise village meetings on occasions".59

In the 1950's, the Government of Orissa endeavoured to implement the Constitutional directive regarding introduction of compulsory primary education for all children. However, there was no change in the state’s policy of gradual introduction of compulsory education in Orissa for which a plan, called the ‘Plan for Education in Orissa’, was presented by the Government to the Legislative Assembly in the budget session of 1954. This plan actually covered the whole field of education in Orissa, but it is notable feature related to primary education. The plan called for full assumption by the state of the responsibility of primary education. “primary education”, said the plan, didn’t perform well under the local bodies. Nor could such a vast responsibility be successfully shouldered by any agency other than the state.60

Having affirmed boldly the state’s responsibility in this field the Education Plan of 1954 elaborated a scheme of universal, free, compulsory primary education for all children between six and eleven years of age. So in 1954-55 Orissa started implementing a novel scheme for the ‘Relief of educated Unemployment and Expansion of Primary Education’, sponsored and financed by the Government of India. Under this scheme Orissa was aided in opening a large number of new primary schools, 1,200 in 1953-54, 1,350 in 1954-55 and 100 in 1955-56.

60 Ibid.
At the end of the First Five Year Plan in 1955-56, by the efforts of the Government, there were 13,793 primary schools for boys and girls compared to 9,582 in 1950-51. The Second Five Year Plan of India published in 1956 observed: “The goal set in the Constitution about free, compulsory and universal education (primary and middle) yet far away.... It is, however, necessary to make every possible effort to fulfill the directive of the constitution within next ten to fifteen years”.\textsuperscript{61} To improve the position of elementary education the planning commission suggested early measures for adequate teacher’s training, more incentives to women teachers, the spread of co-education and scheduling school holidays to coincide with busy agricultural seasons when school attendance was poor.

In the Second Plan Period the acceleration of the pace of expansion of primary education was a constant endeavour of the Education Ministry. By the end of 1960-61, Orissa had 20,289 primary schools, an increase of 10,134 since the beginning of the First Plan in 1951. Nearly 16,000 were Government-aided primary schools, 4,000 Government Primary Schools while no more than 115 were managed by Municipal Boards. The total number of male teachers was 34,150 of whom only 13,174 were trained, and 923 female teachers of whom as many as 912 were trained. The total number of boys in primary schools was 8,59,466 and of girls 4,05,032.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{61} Second Five Year Plan, 1956, Govt. of India, p.503.
Secondary Education:

Since the Constitutional directives on education related to children upto the age of 14, and the primary education course ended with the first five years of schooling, or roughly at the age of 11, the state was obliged to promote the secondary education also. The First Five Year Plan of India called for a programme whereby secondary education in the country could be given a vocational bias and close integration with Basic education.

Following the policy laid down by the Planning Commission the Government introduced in 1950-51 several new features in the curricula of secondary schools so that “the boys and girls have out door life and physical work to make them study, understand, improve living conditions of the people living in villages round the schools”.

The statements of objects and reasons of the Orissa Secondary Education Bill, 1952 offered the following justification for the Bill:

“The existing system of teaching in the secondary schools doesn’t provide facilities for all types of students so as to enable them to choose a career after the school course. It is, therefore, not uncommon to find young men after their secondary education, stranded in life and found misfit in society.... The purpose of the Bill is, inter alia, to provide for necessary statutory powers for reorganising Secondary Education in such a way that besides imparting general education, it shall include agricultural, industrial, commercial education in their practical sides and these
in turn would include training in Dairy farms, Agricultural farms and industrial institutions which will, therefore, have to be integrated and associated with the secondary schools wherever they are available or will be made available”.

Though the increase in the number of high schools was about 73 percent within a period of five years from the commencement of the Orissa Board of Secondary Education there were complaints in the Legislative Assembly that the rate of growth in secondary education wasn’t first enough. There was a demand that rules of recognition of newly set up High Schools should be relaxed to encourage non-official initiative in educational expansion.

**Adult (Social) Education:**

The history of Adult Education movement in Orissa may be said to have begun with the Puri District Education Conference convened by Pandit Gopabandhu Das at Sakhigopal near Puri in June 1912. A leader in Oriya cultural renaissance in the twentieth century, Gopabandhu launched a new popular movement of educating people of all age groups without consideration of sex, caste or creed. Gopabandhu’s cry for universal education inspired a whole generation of nationalist leaders in Orissa, his newspaper, The Samaj, became a powerful mass media for the adult education movement in Orissa.

It was in the years following Independence that the Government assumed a direct responsibility for adult education in the country. A scheme for the spread of adult education, drawn up by the Central Advisory Board of

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Education of the Government of India in its Report of 1948, was gradually implemented in Orissa from 1949-50. The policy in adult education in the country was no longer limited to making people literate, it had an extended objective: ‘Education for Citizenship’. As recommended by the Central Advisory Board the emphasis in the objective of policy was shifted from the spread of more book learning or literacy among adults to an understanding of human relationship in a democratic polity and the strengthening of self-confidence in adults in dealing with problems of community living. The scheme, named, Adult (Social) Education, now introduced in Orissa as in other states of the Union, included provision for literacy classes, reading rooms, libraries, talks, discussions, radio programmes, cultural and recreational activities, instructions on healthy and hygienic living and removal of untouchability.  

The principles of social justice in a welfare state demands for its fulfilment not only equality before law and equality of opportunity for all individuals, castes and classes; it requires, especially in the Indian society, positive measures by the state for promoting the education, health, employment opportunity, and economic condition generally, of the comparatively ‘backward’ or the weaker sections of the society. Article 46 of the Directive Principle of State Policy of the Constitution laid down:

“The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in

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particular, of the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribes, and
shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of
exploitation. 65

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are defined in Articles 341
and 342 of the Constitution. Briefly, such castes, and tribes are those castes,
races, tribes or groups of tribes, whom the president of India, after consultation
with the Governor of State, would specify by public notification, as the
Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State. Parliament was
empowered by Articles 341 (2) and 342 (2) to make law for either including or
excluding any caste, race, or tribe, or group in the lists of Scheduled Castes and
Scheduled Tribes notified by the President.

The Constitution contained several other provisions regarding the
Scheduled Caste and Tribes. For the people of such castes and tribes (i) seats
were to be reserved in the House of the People and in the State Assemblies, (ii)
special helpful considerations were to be made in selecting candidates for the
Union and State Government services, (iii) the President of India was authorised
to appoint a Special Officer for the SCs and STs, one Commission on the
administration of Scheduled Areas, and another Commission for investigating
and suggesting measures relating to socially and educationally backward
classes, (iv) in each state continuing Scheduled Tribes, a Tribes Advisory
Council was to be constituted to aid the State Government in promoting their
welfare, and (v) in each of the States of Bihar, Mandhay Pradesh and Orissa,

65 Ibid.
“there shall be a Minister in charge of tribal welfare, who may in addition be in charge of the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and backward classes or any other work”. 66

All the above constitutional clauses were of fundamental importance in shaping the welfare policies in Orissa in the 1950s, because more than one-third of the total population of the State belonged to the category of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Thakkar Committee on Tribal Problem:

The Scheduled Tribes were those 42 aboriginal tribes and clans of Orissa who were specified as such by the President of India in the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, made in accordance with clause (1) of Article 342. The number of these Tribes was revised, and raised to 62 by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (modification) Order of 1956 made by the President.

According to the Census of 1951 the population of STs in Orissa was 29,67,334, that is to say, 20.25 percent of the State’s total population. In no other State in India, except in Assam where the aboriginal tribes accounted for 19.18 percent of the State’s population, the Scheduled Tribes constituted so large a proportion of the total population. With the addition 20 new tribes to the Scheduled Tribes list the total tribal population in Orissa rose to 30,09,580 in 1956.67

66 Ibid.

In 1950 the Scheduled Tribes were found to be inhabiting all the thirteen districts of Orissa. But their largest concentration was in those parts, called the Scheduled Areas, comprising more than one-third of the total area of the State. The following four factors together constituted the criteria for determining a Scheduled Area: (i) the concentration of the tribal population should not be less than 50 percent in that area, (ii) its compactness, (iii) its generally underdeveloped character, (iv) the marked disparity in the economic conditions of the people living in the area. On the basis of these criteria the President in his ‘The Scheduled Areas (Part A States) Order of 1950’, declared the following to be the Scheduled Areas of Orissa - the districts of Koraput, Mayurbhanj, and Sundargarh, the subdivisions of Kondamals and Baliguda in the Boudh-Phulbani district, and the agency areas of the Ganjam district, namely, Thumba, Mohona and R. Udayagiri Taluk.\(^{68}\)

The Scheduled Tribes locally called the ‘Adivasis’ (the earliest inhabitants), mostly live in the hilly and forest areas of the State. Among the 62 tribes designated by the President as the Scheduled Tribes of Orissa the following are important because of their numbers and higher level of tribal culture - Birhor, Bhuiya, Gadaba, Gond, Ho, Jatapu, Khond (or Kandha), Kolha, Koya, Munda, Mundari, Oraon, Paroja, Santal and Saora (or Savao, or Saura). In general the Adivasis are simple, honest, straightforward, brave and truthful people. They have a great love of freedom, deep attachment to tribal customs

\(^{68}\) Annual Administrative Report of the Year 1967-68, (Govt. of Orissa, Tribal and Rural Welfare Department), 1970, pp.4-5.
and traditions. They are fond of communal dance and music. In the tribal society women enjoy high respect. The Adivasis live on cultivation and hunting, they use forest products, like bamboo and grass, for making baskets and other household crafts sold in villages. They collect their firewood from the forests, and in some areas they deal in leather, kendu leaves and other forest products.

Education was acknowledgedly the key in plans for tribal development. The Thakkar Committee recommended that Government must assume fully the burden of educating the tribal people and supplement the literacy drive with vocational training for them. The Government was advised (i) to open a large number of primary schools, higher elementary schools, industrial or craft schools for children and evening schools for adults in tribal areas, (ii) to grant stipends and scholarships in addition to full fee concessions to the Adivasi children, and (iii) to open evening schools for adults, especially in the Ganjam tracts and Khondmals.

The Committee recommended that the aboriginal people should be enfranchised and be adequately represented in the provincial legislature. The Committee also suggested revival of village panchayats in tribal areas, for training the Adivasis in self-government and bringing political awareness among them.

**Special Education Scheme:**

The Official Report of the Orissa Government for the year 1950-51 reviewed the position of education among the Scheduled Castes and Tribes says:
“The tribals and the scheduled castes have remained almost in the same position educationally during the last decade. Figures of 1951 Census in this respect are not yet available for this state, but there hasn’t been any appreciable progress and tribes and other backward classes of Orissa continue to be still in the lowest rung in the whole country.”

In 1947-48, following the recommendations of the Thakkar Committee, Government had established special primary and middle schools, called Sevashrams included vocational training for Adivasi children. By the end of 1950-51 there were in Orissa 490 Sevashrams; special teachers, called Sevaks, were trained to teach pupils in the Sevashrams.69

Ashram schools were residential institutions with a six-year course of study. In addition to literacy instruction of the standard of middle schools (without English), students in Ashram schools received training in carpentry, agriculture, spinning, weaving and poultry farming, subjects of everyday interest to tribal life and economy.

With the implementation of the First Plan in 1951 the aim of the Government was to provide to the children of the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes education up to the primary level at least. For this purpose the Sevashrams already established were maintained and 205 new sevashrams were set up. The Sevashrams were day schools teaching the Adivasi

69 Tribal and Rural Welfare work in Orissa in 1951-52, (Govt. of Orissa), TRW Dept. 1952, p.7.
and Haijan children the three R's and training them in elementary crafts like spinning, gardening and minor handicrafts. To attract boys and girls to the Sevashrams no tuition fees were charged, clothes were distributed among the pupils, and books, slates and pencils were provided free of cost to the students of Sevashrams.

In the Second Plan Period (1956-1961) 120 new Sevashram hostels were constructed. Stipends and mid-day meals were supplied to the pupils in Sevashrams. In this period the TRW Department introduced a programme to train Sevaks (teachers) for Sevashrams. The training centres were established at the district level. A few tribal women were trained as Sevaks. The TRW Department organised educative exhibitions for the students of the Sevashrams.

Between 1951 and 1956, 28 Ashram schools (eight already sanctioned in the pre-plan period and 20 new in the plan period) were established. By the end of the First Plan in 1956, the State had a total of 48 Ashram schools with a total of 3,000 students, 8 for boys and 4 for girls, were set up. These residential schools of the middle standard were intended exclusively for the children of the Scheduled Tribes.

The Government extended similar financial support to Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste students reading in the High Schools and Colleges of the State. For tribal students reading in schools or colleges in towns, two special hostels were constructed in the First Plan Period. While the TRW Department was responsible for establishing and managing Ashram schools and Sevashrams for tribal children, the Education Department of the Government of Orissa
opened in 1951-61 a large number of schools of all levels, Primary, Middle and High in the Scheduled Areas. These schools were open to all students including students belonging to SCs, STs and other backward classes.

**Health:**

The tribal suffer from many chronic diseases but the most prevalent heavy toll of them are water-borne. This is mainly due to the very poor drinking water supply. Even when it is available in plenty, it is mostly dirty and contaminated and consequently the tribals are easily susceptible to intestinal and skin diseases. Diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, guinea worm, tape worms, etc.. are often the results of this situation.

Deficiency of certain minerals and other elements is also one of the diseases. In the Himalayan ranges there is goitre, a disease of the thyroid gland due to iodine deficiency. The incidence of venereal diseases is also high among the tribals of certain parts of Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. Tuberculosis which is intensified by nutritional deficiency is also common in many tribes. Besides, most of the tribal people haven't yet developed an immunity and when they come in contact with new diseases they fall an easy prey to them. According to Dhebar Commission, one of the diseases of which the tribal is mortally afraid is yaws which occurs in the northern region of the Agency Area in Andhra Pradesh, Southern Orissa and Bastar district of Madhay Pradesh. Leprosy is common throughout India and hasn't sored the tribal people. It is extremely bad in the Agency Area in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bankura and Purulia districts of West Bengal, Santhal Paraganas of Bihar, from
Mayurbhanj upto Puri in Orissa. Scabies, ringworm, small pox and anaemia are also common.

Dhebar Commission is of the view that there is no lack of will on the part of the State Government to do as much as possible in the direction of the health and medical facilities. There are four principal reasons for the shortfall:

(a) the need for a correct approach;
(b) problem of personnel;
(c) inadequacy of communications; and
(d) rules about supply of medicine.

It is often seen that in many interior areas, tribals are reluctant to come forward for medical treatment because they have got their own system of diagnosis and cure. It is a popular belief among many tribes, especially those inhabiting far flung interior and isolated areas, that disease and misfortune are caused by hostile spirits, ghosts of the dead or the breach of some taboo. It leads to the ‘logical’ conclusion that what is caused spiritually should be cured spiritually and that is why the tribals of interior areas prefer their own witch doctors, sorcerers, shamans, etc. Medical personnel are contacted as a last resort. This state of affairs becomes further agonising when the physicians starts considering the local witch doctor-priest as his rival. The local sentiments, sensitivities and susceptibilities should be well taken care of if the fruits of the modern medicine have to reach this section of the society. The essential thing for the medical personnel is to take the right attitude to tribal medicine and the tribal priest. “The most successful doctors have been those who have interested themselves in what we may call medical sociology, in which things as the tribal
medicine, the tribal theory of the influence of dreams on health, tribal methods of diagnosis" (Report of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribe Commission). 70

Another problem in public health among the Indian tribes concerns the shortage of medical personnel and qualified nurses in the face of continued belief in the old system and a steadily rising faith in the new. A majority of men and women of the medical profession are very reluctant to offer their services in the rural and tribal areas. This is due to a number of problems. There are difficulties of housing, education for their children and contact with the mainstream world outside. According to Dhebar Commission, the solution lies in having a special cadre for a period of twenty years to secure the medical personnel required for the tribal areas. Simultaneously, efforts must be made to train the local people, so that after twenty years or so, they will be able to staff their own hospitals. Besides, the use of Ayurvedic and herbal medicine should be encouraged because of the fact that the tribal people are already used to herbal remedies and hence there will be little problem of acceptability.

Due to local geographical and ecological condition and relatively not easily accessible areas of tribal habitations, the mobile dispensaries and health centres shall be more purposeful than the static one. However, it is also not realistic to provide these mobile centres with ambulance or large vans which

often can’t get along the rough roads or tracks even in fine weather. It requires sincerity and dedication to work under such conditions.

Another very important problem concerning health in the tribal areas is the addiction of the tribals to spirituous and highly intoxicating liquors and drinks. The indigenous liquor is prepared by fermentation of the rice, millets and other grains. This is the traditional liqueur of the tribals which is prepared within the family members. The only practical solution is the banishment of liquor from the tribal areas so that they may be left free to brew their own liquor and fulfil one of their important nutritional and cultural needs by themselves.

The Saoras of the study villages didn’t have any abhorrence towards modern methods of treatment, although they still had firm faith in their traditional curative practices. They normally resorted to their traditional beliefs and practices owing to the following reasons.

In the study area, besides a government run Primary Health Centre (PHC) WITH THREE DOCTORS, THERE WAS ONE MISSIONARY HOSPITAL AT Serango. It was commonly believed by the people that the missionary hospital was better services to the patients. Therefore the tribal people from far off places come to the hospital with a desire to receive better treatment, but they were usually deprived of the benefits of health facilities for the reason that the missionary hospital usually demanded exorbitant charges towards admission, particularly from the non-Christian tribal patients, while the same facilities was provided to the Christian tribal free of cost. This sort of discriminatory attitude towards non-Christian Saoras had caused distress and
hostility towards the government, because the latter had never interfered in this matter, nor had provided similar health opportunities for the tribal people.

The other problem was that the PHC had no jeeps of its own, hence the doctors had to make the tour programme according to the convenience of the CDPO (panchayat officer). The doctors for this reason usually hesitated to visit villages although it was one of their duties. The tribal residents of Gira, Jangtar and Patsagadjung reported that during the year 1989-90, no doctor visited their villages to check the health condition of the residents.

For the promotion of health care facilities, the government didn’t seem to be interested in opening any new hospital or dispensary for this area as it had a thin population. As there was a PHC at Serango, it was decided to organise health camps in some selected villages under the micro-project. Accordingly eight general health camps, two eye camps and the dental camp were organised during the plan period to identify the persons affected by the diseases. The total beneficiaries under the health programme was 313.

In order to check water borne diseases like gastrointestinal disorders, the project had initiated a programme to provide potable drinking water facilities to all tribal villages. As per the programme, nine cisterns and seven wells were constructed besides the repairing of five more wells in the area. There were seven open wells and wren tube wells within the study villages, yet three such villages still lacked potable water facilities as six tube wells were out of order for the past three years. The women and girls spent a lot of time in fetching water from a nearby stream.
Comprehensive studies pertaining to health and nutritional status among primitive tribes of Orissa are very scanty. Data necessary for an evaluation of health, nutrition and genetic problems among these tribal communities are inadequate and often completely lacking and therefore very little or nothing is known about these and correlated aspects of the primitive tribal groups. Hence the health problems faced by most of the primitive tribes are yet to be identified and health and nutritional status to be assessed.

There is almost total lack of research into what are the actual health needs of the people. Because of this lacunae the health programme for tribal areas have been developed either intuitively or by adopting some models of health care programmes which have been successful somewhere in an altogether different geographical, ecological and socio-economic background. Thus these models are poor imitations, which aren't suitable for tribal areas of Orissa. Moreover lack of basic epidemiological data in tribal areas makes it even more difficult to effect a rational allocation of limited resources which are available for health care.

The tribal groups living in different eco-system face health, genetic and nutrition problems of varying nature. Due to lack of appropriate and dependable data there is a greater need for establishing a profile of health and nutrition problems of each tribal group in the context of micro situation which can provide basic epidemiological data on frequency and distribution of different

diseases (including nutritional deficiencies, genetic disorders, communicable
diseases, etc.). 72

There has been in recent years considerable developmental inputs for the
upliftment of tribal population. Therefore we felt the immediate need to
undertake a comprehensive study to assess the health status of tribal in general
and tribal women in particular in the context of overall development of tribal
population in Orissa. The informations obtained on these aspects would not only
help in the planning of activities to meet their needs but action-oriented health
programmes with problem solving and result oriented approach could be
adopted so that effective measures could be taken in order to improve their
health and nutritional status depending upon the recommendations emerging out
of the present study.

Data on hygiene, sanitation, religious beliefs about health practices,
traditional methods of treatment, present health condition and health facilities
and medical care available in the village were collected by observation and by
interviewing people of the village. In the field study, the health problems of the
women was given more emphasis.

From the present study the following health problems have emerged.
Their knowledge regarding health and nutrition is rudimentary. Their isolation
and backwardness and their faith and reliance on the traditional medico-
religious methods are the main reasons for the low degree of awareness about
modern medical practices. Other factors which attribute to poor health are the

72 Ibid.
lack of environmental sanitation, personal hygiene, poor living condition including improper ventilation and the like. My study revealed that many of the recognised threats to health like diarrhea, upper respiratory tract infections, malnutrition, worm infestations, etc., which are common among the Saoras are preventable. Therefore an effective programme of preventive medical care can be taken up. In the existing health care system in these tribal areas not much emphasis is given to preventive and promotive aspect, main bias being on curative side. So there is need to revise the priorities in tribal areas. Therefore preventive and promotive health and nutrition should be given the top priority. Preventive public health measures can make great headway in improving the level of health in these areas.

There is also need of feeding back the necessary information's and important facts brought to light through our health survey regarding their disease, deficiencies and alarming situations of their health. One of the most significant observations that has emerged from these studies relates to the high incidence of genetic disorder, i.e., the deficiency of red-cell enzyme Glucose-6-Phosphate dehydrogenate (G-6-PD) among the Saoras. The incidence of sickle-cell disease was also quite high. Malaria was very common among them. Presumably the hilly areas of the Saoras are hyperendemic for malarial infection. Therefore, the medical and paramedical personnel operating in these tribal areas should be aware of this fact. It was also found that the water of the hill streams of Agency area which the Saora use for drinking and cooking
purposes contained graphite.\textsuperscript{73} The Saoras complain about indigestion and irritation in stomach often. These troubles may be due to graphite content in water. The study also indicated a high incidence of tuberculosis among the Saoras. Low blood pressure was found to be very common and not a single case of hypertension was recorded. This may be attributed to their low salt culture. The common disease seen in the present times, like diabetes, cancer and other types of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases are rare in both the primitive tribes.

The level of nutrition in these area is unquestionably low. The disruption of the ecological balance has adversely affected their nutritional status. Slash and burn type of cultivation results in considerable degradation and shrinkage of forests. The disappearance of wild life have in turn deprived them of their traditional source of protein. The change in vegetation pattern of the area, as well as the new usage’s of minor products of forests, lack of method of preservation, believe system concerning established food habit, coupled with poverty, illiteracy, superstitions and ignorance have adversely affected the diet of the tribal leading to malnutrition.

Among the health hazards present in both these tribal areas nutritional diseases occupied a unique place. High incidence of nutritional deficiency was present specially among the vulnerable segment of population, infants, children, pregnant women and nursing mothers. Infection and worm infestation lower the

nutritional status, therefore widen the gap of deficiency and aggravate malnutrition. Malnutrition coupled with lowering resistance makes the child more vulnerable in infection. Among most of the tribal children who die early of gastro-intestinal and respiratory infections, the real cause of death is the underlying malnutrition. The study also reveals that their diet is deficient in both quality and quantity as compared to the accepted standard. Even the basic calorie requirements aren’t met by them.\textsuperscript{74}

**Health Policies for Tribal Women:**

Improvement in the health status of the population has been one of the thrust areas for the social development programmes of the country. This was to be achieved through improving the access to and utilisation of health services with special focus on under-served and underprivileged systems of the population. The Constitution of India provides that health is a state responsibility. India is a signatory to the Alma-Ata Declaration 1978, and the National Health Policy adoption in 1982, clearly states that India’s commitment to the goal of ‘Health for All’ by the year 2000 through the primary health care approach could be achieved. Health development is recognised as an essential and integral part of national socio-economic development and every efforts being made to see that health and health related activities are systematically planned and co-ordinated at all levels.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{75} Ministry of Tribal Welfare, Govt. of Orissa, 1996-97, pp.42-44.
State Health Programmes:

As per the National Health Policy, a number of Central Plan Scheme and Centrally Sponsored Schemes are being executed in the State with 100 percent central assistance.

Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS):

This scheme is being implemented in the state through 279 ICDS Projects in 261 Blocks. The schemes offer a package of health care services covering supplementary nutrition, immunization, pre-school education, health check-up, referral services and health education to children within the age group of 0-6 years.

The Orissa State Council for Child Welfare is implementing the scheme “Care and Protection of Street Children” since 1990-91, in order to provide integrated community based non-institutional basic services for the development of street children. The Schemes being implemented through NGOs.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA):

DWCRA is a sub-scheme of IRDP introduced in 1983-84. The primary objective of the scheme is to provide opportunities to the women members of rural and tribal families below poverty line to secure for themselves gainful self-employment improve their economic status and thereby to promote their empowerment. It has been realised that if any programme has to be successful in tribal areas, it requires awareness campaigns and education. There is an urgent need to take cognizance of the needs and interests of tribal women while formulating schemes for their development.
Education Policies for Tribal Women:

The Constitution of India puts an obligation under Article 45, on the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years. The literacy rate in Orissa in 1951 was 15.8 percent against the all India average of 18.3 percent which increased to 49.1 percent in 1991, against the all India average of 52.1 percent. While the male literacy rate of 63.1% in the State in 1991 was nearer to the national average of 64.1 percent, the female literacy stood at 34.7% in 1991 which was significantly lower than the national average of 39.3 percent. The literacy rate of SC and ST population was also very low at 36.8 percent and 23.3 percent and it is distressingly low among tribal women (14.7%) respectively as per the 1991 Census.76

Children who constitute 10.83% of the state’s total population, are being motivated towards primary education under the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCEP) with the aim of Universalisation of Elementary Education by the year 2000. The Integrated Child Development Schemes and agencies like State Council of Child Welfare and State Social Welfare Advisory Board are administering the pre-primary stages education through Anganwadis, Balwadis and Crech Centres.

Primary and Upper Primary Education:

The goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), covers three aspects of elementary education i.e. (I) universal access and enrolment; (ii) universal retention of children upto 14 years of age and (iii) substantial

improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning. Universalisation of primary education has been included as a component of the basic minimum service programme under which certain thrust areas of development have been identified by Government of India for priority implementation.

Various projects with UNICEF assistance like Early Childhood Care and Education, Area Intensive Education Projects, Integrated Projects for the Disabled, Development activity in Community Education which are being operated in specific areas of the state are contributing to the achievement of the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education. With a view to increasing retention of children in primary schools, the Govt. has introduced a mid-day meal programme from July 1995.

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), a centrally sponsored scheme with a fund sharing pattern of 85:15 between the central and the state, was launched in the state from the year 1996-1997. DPEP is being implemented in the state through Orissa Education Programme Authority (OPEPA), which formulates District Plans and implements them for tribal women by adopting measures to secure convergence of primary education with related services like ICDS, Early Childhood Care and Education Programmes and School Health Care.

Non-formal Education:

Non-formal education, a centrally sponsored scheme is in operation in the state to supplement the formal scheme of primary and upper-primary
education. The objective of the scheme is to impart minimum levels of learning, to create awareness among children (especially girl children and children of backward areas) and to enable them to join the mainstream of education.

For better administration and effective implementation of developmental programmes, scheduled areas have been demarcated taking into consideration the concentration of population in different parts of the state.

**Tribal Sub-Plan Approach:**

The tribal sub-plan strategy was evolved by an Expert Committees set up by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in 1972 under the chairmanship of Prof. S.C. Dube, for rapid socio-economic development of tribal people. The strategy was adopted for the first time in the Fifth Five Year Plan and is continuing since then. The objective of this plan is to improve the socio-economic conditions of the tribal population, strengthening of infrastructure in the tribal areas; protecting the tribals against exploitation and promoting tribal interests through legal and administrative report 73. In tribal areas, developmental programmes are being implemented through 21 Integrated Tribal Development Projects and 17 micro-projects. During 1997-98, 53912 tribal families have been assisted under different income generating schemes and 639 educational buildings and 153 drinking water wells have been completed and 176 tribal villages have been electrified.

**Modified Area Development Approach (MADA):**

Modified Area Development Approach aims at developments of tribals staying outside the ITDA areas. About 5.67 lakh tribals (as per 1991 census) in
46 pockets covering parts of 47 Blocks of 17 districts are covered under the above programme. For development of tribal female education, educational institutions have been established exclusively for girls. Kanyashrams have been established in low literacy tribal areas for girls.

**Educational Complex in Low Literacy Pockets for Development of ST Girls in Tribal Areas (Central Sector Scheme):**

The scheme was introduced in 1993-94 for improving literacy among ST women in districts with less than 10% female ST literacy. It is implemented through Non-Governmental Organisations/Organisations or institutes set up by Government as autonomous bodies/educational and other institutions like Local Bodies as Cooperative Societies. A total number of 136 Districts in 11 States are cover under the scheme. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs provides full assistance for running of the educational complexes. A complex is meant for girls studying in class I to V with a strength of 30 girls in every class with a provision for training in craft/vocational education. Food and lodging is free for the students. There is a provision for supply of two sets of uniforms per year per student, free periodical medical check-ups for the children and adult education for the parents of the girls in the evening. An incentive of Rs.50 per student per month is to be paid to the parents for sending their daughters to these educational complexes.

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77 Economic Survey, 1996-97, Govt. of India, Planning and Coordination Department, pp.13-21.
Vocational Training in Tribal Areas (Central Sector Scheme):

This scheme staged in 1992-93, the main aim of the scheme is to develop the skill of the tribal youth in order to gain employment/self employment opportunities. This scheme is implemented through the State Governments/ UT Administrations, institutions or organisations set up by government as autonomous body, educational and other institutions like local bodies and cooperative societies and non-governmental organisations. Each centre may cater to five vocational courses in traditional skills depending upon the employment potential of the area. Each tribal boy or girl will be trained in two trades of his or her choice, the course in each trade being for a duration of three month. Each trainee will be attached of six months to learn his skill by practical experience. There is provision for monthly stipend and grant for raw material for the trainees.

Village Grain Bank (Central Sector Scheme):

As a part of Government efforts to prevent deaths of children in remote and backward tribal areas due to fall in nutritional standards, a scheme of Village Grain Banks has been launched during 1996-97. A onetime grant towards purchase of grains, storage facilities for the grains and purchase of weights and scales is provided by Ministry of Tribal Affairs through TRIFED, as the canalising agency. The grain bank is to be managed by a village committee elected by the beneficiaries themselves who as members of the bank can borrow grains from the grain banks at times of scarcity and repay subsequently with a small interest.
Development of Primitive Tribal Groups (Central Sector Scheme):

There are certain tribal communities who are having a low level of literacy, declining or stagnant population, pre-agricultural level of technology and are economically backward. 75 such groups have been identified and have been categorised as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). Their problems and needs are different from other scheduled tribes. As Primitive Tribal Groups constitute the most vulnerable among the STs, and priority needs to be accorded for their protection and development. It was observed that the schemes for scheduled tribes development were not really reaching them. Therefore, in 1998-99, a 100% centrally funded scheme for exclusive development of scheduled tribes was initiated. The scheme is flexible and covers any activity not exclusively covered by other schemes.

Post-Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Tribes Students:

The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to students belonging to scheduled tribes pursuing post-matriculation recognised courses in recognised institutions. The scheme covers professional, technical as well as non-professional and non-technical courses at various levels and the scheme also includes correspondence courses including distance and continuing education. The scheme is implemented by the state governments and UT administrations, which receive 100% central assistance over and above the committed liability of the state governments. The scheme committed liability is equal to the expenditure reached in the last year of the preceding plan period.
The value of the existing scholarship includes maintenance allowance, reader charges for blind students, study tour charges, thesis typing/printing charges, book allowance to students pursuing correspondence courses and compulsory non-refundable fees charged by the educational institutions.

**Girl's Hostels for Scheduled Tribes (Centrally Sponsored Scheme):**

The scheme of girl’s hostels, started during 1962-63, is a useful instrument for spreading education among ST girls. Under the scheme, Central assistance is provided to States/UTs for construction of new hostel buildings and/or extension of existing hostels. This is a centrally sponsored scheme where the cost of the construction of the hostels, building and/or extension of existing hostels is equally shared between the Centre and the State in ratio of 50:50. In case of UTs, the central government bears the entire cost of the building. It covers both school and university/college level hostels.

**Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub-Plan Area (Centrally Sponsored Scheme):**

The scheme of Ashram School was launched in 1990-91. It provides for establishment of residential schools with staff quarters for scheduled tribes to enable them to study in an environment conducive to learning. The cost of construction is shared 50:50 with the State Governments, while cent percent assistance is provided to UTs. The scheme covers primary, secondary and senior secondary level of education.
Women and Child Development:

Schemes and programmes of the Ministry are largely spotlighted on improvement of living standards, education, health care and skill upgradation among the tribal populace without any gender bias. Nonetheless, the Ministry in consideration of the profuse and high levels of illiteracy amongst tribal women, implements a scheme of Educational Complexes in low literacy pockets for women in tribal areas, exclusively for girls. Through this scheme, educational complexes are run to educate tribal girls for literacy as well as vocation in 134 districts in the country where literacy among tribal women, as per the 1991 census, is less than 10 percent. This apart, a scheme of Girl’s Hostels is also implemented for the promotion of education of tribal girl child. The Ministry also implements various schemes such as Ashram Schools, Residential and Non-Residential schools, Hospitals, Mobile Dispensaries and Grain Banks for promotion of education, delivery of health services, food security, employment, etc., through the agencies of the state governments and voluntary organisations, with a special focus on women beneficiaries.

Development of Tribal Women Through Five Year Plans:

Development of tribal women during the first plan period was mainly welfare oriented. The Central Social Welfare Board was established by the Government in India in 1953 which undertook nationwide welfare measures for the development of women and children. During the Second Plan Period, women were organised into Mahila Mondals in rural and tribal areas for facilitating convergence of health, nutrition and education. Third and Fourth
Plans accorded high priority to women’s education, immunization of pre-school children and supplementary diet for children and mothers. In the Sixth Plan, a multi-disciplinary approach was adopted with thrust on health, education and development. In the Eighth Plan, a shift was made from development to empowerment of women and a number of measures were taken for their social and economic emancipation. The establishment of National Commission for Women at the State level and launching of Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) for sensitizing women at the grass-root level in the rural areas. The State Commission for Women makes in-depth studies on the economic, educational and health situation of the women in the state with particular emphasis on tribal districts and areas which are underdeveloped with respect to women’s literacy, mortality and economic development.

Condensed Course of Education for Adult Tribal Women:

The scheme of Condensed Course of Education was started by the State Social Welfare Board with the objective of extending education and training to the needy widows and destitute, deserted and economically backward women so as to enable them to require eligibility for suitable employment.

Although it is difficult to arrive at a complete and fully reliable conclusion, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to conclude that during the Seventh Five Year Plan the impact of development programmes in the areas seems to be remarkable, particularly in the spheres of agriculture, animal husbandry, health and education. Irrespective of the success of failure of the
schemes, the most important feature was that the programmes could instill a sense of awareness and desire for greater participation among the Saora beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries also. Nevertheless, there were disturbing signs also among some tribal people who backed out even after the approval of benefit in their favour mainly due to the grouping skepticism about the prospect of the programme. Such drop-out cases needed constant inducement to reorient their views towards development.

The status of Saora tribal women has been observed to be somewhat better than that of women in other societies. Traditional and customary tribal norms are comparatively mere liberal to women. But in certain respects they don’t get the equal status as enjoyed by the men.