CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential human virtue. It is one of the primary agents of transformation towards development. Education plays an important role in the progress of an individual’s mind and country. The chief task of education is to shape man, or to guide the evolving dynamism through which man forms himself as a man. It fashions and models him for society. Human life can only be glorified through education and with its help, man; primarily an animal being can be transformed to the human being. Ideally, education is the principal tool of human growth, essential for transforming the unlettered child into a mature and responsible adult. Education can play a vital role in improving the quality of one’s life and the socio-economic condition of the nation. Its objective is to prepare the individual for participation in society, and it serves as a vehicle by which the culture of the group can be transmitted and perpetuated. Ignorance and poverty are major speed-breakers in the swift developing country and can be overcome easily through education (UNESCO, 2002).

Education is a powerful tool by which economically and socially marginalized community can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully as citizens. It is a tool of transmission of culture, accumulated knowledge and experience of a society. It is also the tool for economic betterment and societal change. Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. It promotes individual freedom and empowerment and yields important development benefits. Education not only impacts on human development and economic growth, but also is the fundamental requirement of
democracy. Through education people become more responsible and informed citizens, and have a voice in politics and society, which is essential for sustaining democracy. It is essential for eradicating poverty and it allows people to be more productive playing greater roles in economic life and earning a better living. Yet millions of children and adults in many countries, including India, remain deprived of educational opportunities, mostly as a result of socio-cultural and political discrimination (Thorat & Mahamallik, 2005; Ira et al., 2008; Karade, 2008).

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Education is central to the human resource development and empowerment in any country. Education is the single most important means by which individuals and society can improve personal endowments, build capacity levels, overcome barriers, and expand opportunities for a sustained improvement in their well being. Universal accessibility to quality education is considered essential for development. The need for improved levels of educational participation for overall progress is well recognized. Ignorance and poverty are major speed-breakers in swift developing India and can be overcome easily through education (MHRD, 2004).

India is a pluralist country, with rich diversity, reflected in the multitude of cultures, religions, languages and racial stocks. The Indian population includes different castes, communities and social groups. The prevalence of such pluralism has made the social fabric stratified and hierarchical, consequently, social and educational opportunities are differentially distributed on the lines of caste and class affiliations (UNESCO, 1999). Even a superficial glance of prevailing social scenario will reveal to anyone that the Scheduled Tribes are among the most socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged groups in India (Abdulraheem, 2011).
Tribals are one of the most exploited and deprived sections of the population in the Indian society. In all indicators of development, they remain the most excluded despite the fact that various kinds of policies and programmes have been pursued for their upliftment in the post-Independence India. Needless to say that exclusion from fruits of development has adversely affected the quality of life of the tribal people. Tribal children are no exception. Low educational attainment is perhaps the most ubiquitous social problem that afflicts the tribal children. Education has not yet been the priority of the tribal communities, not yet been an integral part of tribal culture. This has been a harsh reality despite 60 years of ‘planned development’ in the country. In their perception of life, education has failed to emerge as a part of their survival strategy. The lack of educational atmosphere and infrastructure at home, low involvement of parents in the education of children, lack of parental awareness and attitude, conventional child rearing practices, dependence on subsistence economy, low motivation etc. are all contributing to the lower educational attainment of tribal children.

The poor educational achievements of Scheduled Tribes can be best understood in the context of deeply embedded caste and social hierarchies that are enacted and expressed in everyday social interactions of community, school and economic life. Functional from pre-colonial times, the system of socially sanctioned discrimination and prejudice against communities designated as outside the caste system has had far-reaching impacts on the self-worth, dignity and economic life of scheduled tribes (Sedwal & Kamat, 2008).

The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically and educationally impoverished and marginalized groups in India (Govt. of India, 2005). Although Scheduled Tribes are a minority, they constitute about 8.22% of the total population in India, or 85 million people in absolute number, with an overall literacy rate of 32.2% as against 74.04% in the general
population (Govt. of India, 2011). Despite the sincere and concerted efforts by the government for the overall development of the scheduled tribes, they are still far behind in almost all the standard parameters of development. They are not able to participate in the process of development, as they are not aware of most of the programmes and policies made for their upliftment. This is mainly due to the high incidence of illiteracy and very low level of education among the tribal people (Govt. of India, 2010).

Tribals are one of the most exploited and deprived sections of the population in the Indian society. In all indicators of development, they remain the most excluded despite the fact that various kinds of policies and programmes have been pursued for their upliftment in the post-Independence India. One of the biggest factors contributing to the disadvantaged position of indigenous peoples is the lack of formal education (Sedwal & Kamat, 2008). In recent years government has given highest priority for education of tribal people due to the simple reason that it is key to socioeconomic development of the tribal. Education enables them to perform their role to be useful citizen in democracy. Development of the country lies with the development of the indigenous people who are socio-economically disadvantaged and educationally backward in relation to total population (UN, 2009).

Education is regarded as the most powerful instrument for emancipation and empowerment of tribal. It has been widely accepted today that education of tribal children contributes both to their individual and community development as well as to their participation in the wider society. Quality education enables tribal children to exercise and enjoy economic, social and cultural rights for their personal benefit as well as for the benefit of their community. Furthermore, it strengthens children’s ability to exercise their civil rights in order to influence political policy processes for improved protection of human rights. Taking these
arguments into consideration, both the state and central governments have taken several steps to provide quality education to tribal children (Govt. of India, 2008). However, studies undertaken in many parts of India including Kerala clearly indicate that tribal children fall far behind the national average in terms of their educational achievement due to various socio-cultural and economic reasons (Sujatha, 2002; Baruah & Devi, 2012; George, 2011; Karade, 2008). Amongst a multitude of factors contributing to the low achievement of students in our schools, there is always low awareness, involvement, attitude, and aspiration of parents in their education (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Fehrmann, et al., 1987; Bauch, 1991; Smith & Hausafus, 1998; Shim et al., 2000; Van Voorhis, 2003).

1.3 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The role of family in children’s education has long been recognized as a significant factor in educational success and school improvement (Epstein, 1996, Safran, 1996). It is often said that education begins at home. Parents are the first educators of their children and they continue to influence their children’s learning and development during the school years and long afterwards. Schools have an important responsibility in helping to nurture and teach future generations and families trust schools to provide educational foundations for their children’s future (Williams et al., 2002). A consistent body of research concludes that parents are the first and foremost influence on their children’s development and school success (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Epstein, 1985; Miedel, & Reynolds, 1999). Engaging families in the education of their children at home and at school is increasingly viewed as an important means to support better learning outcomes for children (Harris & Goodall, 2007). When families are involved in their children's education, children earn higher grades and receive higher scores on tests, attend school more regularly, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive
attitudes and behaviors, pass out from high school at higher rates, and are more likely to enroll in higher education than students with less involved families (Eagle, 1989; US Department of Education, 1994; Jeynes, 2003).

Families represent the primary setting in which most children’s lives are shaped and determined. Family members, especially the parents, can play varied roles in the total development as well as in the educational growth of children (Kellaghan et al. 1993; U. S. Department of Education, 1994; White, 1998; Trusty, 1999; Drake, 2000; Fan & Chen, 2001; Bradley & Corwyn, 2007). Socio-cultural and ethnic factors are of utmost importance in deciding the educational goals and aspirations of learner (Osborne, 1997). Researchers and educators increasingly have recognized the important role of race-related beliefs, practices and experiences in the academic achievement of ethnic minority children and adolescents (Altschul et al., 2006; Chavous et al., 2003; Mickelson, 1990; Steinberg et al., 1992; Stanard et al, 2010).

Although there has been considerable research on how parents influence children’s development and achievement in general population, less is known about the role played by family in the education of tribal people, especially in Kerala context. Studies revealing the specific role played by parents in terms of their involvement in education, attitude towards education, child rearing practices, parent-child relationship, and parenting skill in the education of tribal children in Kerala seems to be an unexplored area of research. In this context, to give a new impetus to the educational reformations targeting the tribal population, it will be worthwhile to undertake a research study to investigate the role of family in the education of tribal children.
1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present research focuses on studying the contributory role of family in the educational outcome of tribal children. The specific role played by parents in tribal children's education has been analyzed in terms of some selected parent-related variables and their relationship with academic achievement of the children. Some of the socio-demographic variables which are mostly unexplored in the area of tribal education in Kerala were also included in the study to make it more sensible and functional. Since the main emphasis of the study is upon the role played by tribal fathers and mothers in the education of their children, the topic for present investigation is entitled: “Role of Family in the Education of Tribal Students”.

1.5 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

An operational definition concisely defines a term by characterizing the functional use of that term. Such definitions focus on prototypical usage or usage in practice, and are based on the observed characteristics and how it is used in the study. The key terms used in the study are explained below for the sake of clarity.

Role

Generally the term ‘role’ means the part played by a system for the success of a programme. In this study ‘role’ refers to the functions and responsibilities of parents in the upbringing and education of children.

Family

Family is a social unit consisting of parents and the children they rear. In the present study, the term family has been used to refer the parents, both father
and mother, who live in the same house and share the responsibilities of rearing children.

**Education**

Education is the formal and informal process of acquiring experiences to develop one’s innate abilities and talents needed for a productive and successful personal and social life. In this study by education the investigator means the formal school education of children.

**Tribal Students**

Tribes are the ethnic minority groups of persons claiming descent from a common ancestor, who are united by language and customs, living as a community under one or more chiefs. The children of tribal people studying in schools which are a part of the formal educational system of the Government of Kerala are referred in the study as tribal students.

1.6 **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the study is to investigate the role played by parents in the education of tribal students in Kerala. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the attitude of tribal parents towards education with respect to certain selected socio-demographic variables.

2. To find out the relationship between tribal parents’ attitude towards education and the academic achievement of their children.

3. To analyze the nature of tribal parents’ involvement in the education of their children with respect to certain selected socio-demographic variables.
4. To find out the relationship between tribal parents’ involvement in education and academic achievement of their children.

5. To analyze the nature of child rearing practices of tribal parents with respect to certain selected socio-demographic variables.

6. To find out the relationship between child rearing practices of tribal parents and academic achievement of their children.

7. To analyze the nature of parent-child relationship in tribal communities with respect to certain selected socio-demographic variables.

8. To find out the correlation between parent-child relationship and academic achievement of tribal children.

9. To analyze the parenting skills of tribal people with respect to certain selected socio-demographic variables.

10. To find out the relationship between parenting skills of tribal parents and academic achievement of their children.

1.7 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The hypotheses for the present study were formulated on the basis of personal experience of the investigator as well as review of the related studies. The study has ten hypotheses which are as follows:

1. The attitude of tribal parents towards education will not differ significantly with respect to the differences in selected socio-demographic variables.

2. There will be no significant influence of the attitude of parents towards education on the academic achievement of tribal students.
3. The involvement of tribal parents in the education of their children will not differ significantly with respect to the differences in selected socio-demographic variables.

4. The tribal parents’ involvement will not have an influence on academic achievement of their children.

5. The child rearing practice of tribal parents will not differ significantly with respect to the selected socio-demographic variables.

6. There will be no significant influence of the child rearing practices on academic achievement of tribal students.

7. The parent-child relationship in tribal people will not differ significantly with respect to the selected socio-demographic variables.

8. There will be no significant influence of the parent-child relationship on academic achievement of tribal children.

9. The parenting skill of tribal parents will not differ significantly with respect to the selected socio-demographic variables.

10. There will be no significant influence of the parenting skills on academic achievement of tribal children.

1.8 METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

The present investigation is intended to study the existing role of parents in the education of tribal students. To provide valid answers to the specific research questions raised in the study, **Descriptive Research** method was followed and **Normative Survey** was adopted for collecting data relevant for the study. The sample for the study constituted a representative group of tribal students in Kerala.
(N = 315) and their parents (N = 315 fathers + 315 mothers = 630), selected on the basis of ‘stratified random sampling technique’. The tools used for collecting data are:

1) Scale for Attitude towards Education
2) Parent Involvement in Children's Education Scale: P-Version
3) Parent Involvement in Children's Education Scale: C-Version
4) Child Rearing Practice Scale
5) Parent Child Relationship Scale for Children (Arjunan & Nambeesan, 2009)
6) Parent Child Relationship Scale for Parents (Arjunan & Nambeesan, 2009)
7) Parenting Skill Assessment Scale for Children (Arjunan & Nambeesan, 2009)
8) Parenting Skill Assessment Scale for Parents (Arjunan & Nambeesan, 2009)

Tools 1 to 4 were developed by the investigator for the purpose of the study, whereas the remaining four tools were already available for use. In addition to these tools two General Data Sheets, one for tribal students and the other for tribal parents, were also used to collect personal as well as necessary socio-demographic information from the subjects. Average of the total marks obtained for two state wide examinations (annual examination of 2010 and first terminal examination of 2011), conducted by Govt. of Kerala for schools following state syllabus were taken as score for the academic achievement of the students. The tools were administered on the sample under standardized conditions and the data thus collected were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques such as (i) Computation of Mean (M), Median (Mdn), Standard Deviation (σ), Coefficient of Skewness (Sk) Standard error of mean (SE_M), Mean population values (M_POP) etc. (ii) Chi-square ($\chi^2$) test (iii) Computation of t-value, (iv) One-way ANOVA, (v) Computation of Pearson’s
Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation (r-value), population values of coefficient of correlation (r_{POP}), and (vi) Test of significance of the differences between coefficient of correlation.

1.9 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This investigation is aimed at studying the role played by tribal parents in the education of their children by way of their attitude toward education, involvement in children’s education, child rearing practices, relationship with the children, and their parenting skill. The findings of the present study are expected to provide proper direction while framing policies and programmes by statutory agencies in the field of education for tribes in the state.

It is expected that the findings of the present study will be helpful to plan and implement special education schemes for the social mobilization and fortification of tribal communities in Kerala. The study will be helpful to re-define the role of school and family in the educational development of tribal children. In addition to contributing to the theory of tribal pedagogy, the findings of the study may find a crucial role in planning different strategies in the educational empowerment of tribal people in the state.

The questions behind the continuous low educational attainment of tribal children, observed over many years, are partly answered in the present study. Any step taken to narrow down the gap between school experiences and family practices of tribal children will have its promising effect on their school outcome. Additionally, the findings of the present study will help the stakeholders of
education to understand the flaws and faults in the area of tribal education and may help to mitigate them.

The investigator also hopes that the findings will help the educational agencies and authorities working in the tribal areas to gain proper insight and foresight needed to play their roles effectively by bridging the gaps in current practices. The findings will act as guidelines for policy makers, curriculum framers, administrators and teachers working in the area of tribal education to correct the shortcomings in the existing system of education for tribal children and to take measures to optimize their academic achievement with the active involvement and participation of their family members.

The present study throws light into the need for local specific, life-centred and income oriented continuous adult education for tribal parents for the educational upliftment of their children. Whatever the government invest for the educational empowerment of tribal children, it should also cover their parents in the form of adult education, vocational training, income generation, community development and the like. The findings of the current study will contribute to lay down the foundation for a comprehensive educational programme aiming the total development of tribal community where the formal education of tribal children is just a part of it.

The findings of the present study will provide curriculum framers with a set of criteria upon which the (special) curriculum to meet the educational and socio-cultural needs of tribal community should be based. The outcome of this research study will act as strong foundation upon which the edifice of an active curriculum
for the socio-cultural and educational development of emerging tribal communities could be erected. It is also expected that the outcome of the study will be helpful to identify the pitfalls in the planning and implementation of tribal education in Kerala. The findings of the study may help to strengthen functioning of tribal schools in the state. The findings and conclusions arrived from the study will be helpful for the authorities of tribal schools to improve the school-home interaction for the benefit of tribal children.

1.10 FORMAT OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The study is reported in five chapters as detailed below:

**Chapter I:** Contains a brief discussion on the contextual framework of the study undertaken followed by the details regarding the hypotheses, objectives, methodology, scope and limitations of the study.

**Chapter II:** The review of the related literature pertaining to the research topic is presented in detail in this chapter.

**Chapter III:** This chapter contains the method adopted for the study, the sample selected, the tools used for data collection, the procedure adopted for the study, and the statistical techniques used for analyzing the data.

**Chapter IV:** The details of the analysis of data followed by interpretation of results are provided in this chapter.

**Chapter V:** This chapter includes the summary of the study, the major findings, conclusions and implications of the study, followed by suggestions for further research.
The report is followed by a fairly exhaustive Bibliography, and a series of Appendices pertaining to the study. In preparing the report, the format stipulated by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) is adhered to the maximum possible extent, making allowances for justifiable modifications wherever necessary.