CHAPTER VI
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6.1 Summary

The Indian Constitution guarantees equality and social justice in all walks of life including education. In fact, policy pronouncements have viewed provision of free and compulsory elementary education for all as a critical prerequisite for achieving this end. Successive policy statements have pledged to initiate special measures to rectify the historically inherited inequalities in education that have hindered the progress of such groups as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For eradication of social inequity the provisions were made in the constitution which have been clearly pronounced in various Articles and the steps undertaken in pursuance of these constitutional provisions for ST/SC could be categorised as protective, developmental and preferential. For this, education needs to ensure its access and benefits to each and every citizen, for it is now reckoned both as an entitlement and an instrument of freedom from all sorts of socio-economic bondage.

In the context of modernisation and globalisation, importance of education cannot be neglected as it is the most singular and important means for building human capabilities - the essential and individual powers to reflect, make choices, seek a voice in the society, improve personal endowments, overcome constraints and in the process, enlarge their available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement. In short, education is one of the most powerful instruments known for reducing poverty and
inequality and for laying the basis for sustained economic growth, sound governance and effective institutions.

The school education, during the 6-14 years of age, is the crucial means of spreading literacy that raises the capacity of men and women to perform their social, economic, political and other functions efficiently. It is a well recognised sector which is essential for the sustainable development of a country. If we need to develop and compare ourselves in the race for development in the world we will have to begin from elementary education in terms of quantity, quality and equity.

In the present dissertation the investigator has made an attempt to study the effect of psychological, social and institutional variables on school going children which causes dropout in some cases. The study has made a special reference to the tribal children (6-14 years) who attend schools in the Goalpara district. It also tries to find out the significant difference between the tribal-non tribal and dropout- non-dropout binaries in relation to the magnitude of effect of various responsible factors stemming out of the said variables.

In the first chapter the investigator has tried to bring focus on the status of school education with special reference to the children of 6-14 years. Since 1950, from the commencement of this constitution, Article 45 states, "The State shall endeavor to provide within a period of 10 years, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years" Universalisation of Elementary Education in our country means making education available to all children in the age-group of 6-14 years offering universal access, universal retention and universal attainment. In the 73rd and
74th Amendments of the Constitution a statutory base for decentralised education planning was made to attend the goal i.e. UEE up to 14 years. Article 51(A) assigns a fundamental duty to every citizen who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to all children up to 14 years of age. Further the Supreme Court in its epoch-making judgement in the Unnikrishnan Case (1993) has held that “all citizens have a fundamental right to education” up to 14 years. The Government of India introduced 83rd and 86th Constitutional Amendment Bill in parliament in 1997 and 2002 respectively, to make education a fundamental right of all children of 6-14 years age-group under article 21(A).

The Government of India has chalked out a lot of plans and programmes, to materialise the above constitutional amendments in the true spirit. From the very beginning of the first five year plan the provision of free and compulsory primary education has been stressed, especially in fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth five year plans. The schemes/programmes like Operation Blackboard, Mahila Samakhya (MS), Non-Formal Education (NF), Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), Bihar Education Projects (BEP), Lok Jumbish Project (LJP) and Siksha Karmi Project (SKP), Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme, National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education or Mid Day Meal Scheme and the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and in recent years Sarva Siksha Abhijan (SSA) etc. were launched to achieve the long cherished goal of UFE. Besides some Non-Government Organisations and International Organizations like the World Bank,
European Commission and specialized agencies of the United Nations (UNICEF, UNESCO, etc.) have been collaborating with the Government and the private sector as well for promotion of school education by increasing primary school enrolment and completion as a significant Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to be achieved by the year 2015.

Secondly, in this chapter the investigator has highlighted the concept and issues of Schedule Tribes and the challenges that the tribal children face in education sector. There are 573 scheduled tribes living in different parts of the country, differing in their racial traits, social organisations and cultural patterns etc. of which 75 are Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG). They have their own dialect and many a times no scripts. The tribal classes, that form the grass root at the base of our indigenous culture, have had their contribution no less than any other sections of the society. But still they remain backward socially, culturally, politically, economically and above all educationally. With the advent of independence the Scheduled Tribes of India have been emerge out from isolation and entitled to access in the process of development of the nation under various articles of the Indian Constitution. The most important Article 46 states “the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the ST/SC and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.” Article 15(2) and 15 (4) 17, 19(5), 29(2), 30, 30(1), 30(2), 275(1), 339(1) and 339(2) of the constitution are also responsible for providing social, economic and educational development of ST/SC people. In post-independence period, through successive Five Year Plans and in particular in the last two decades the government has made
concerted efforts to bring education within the reach of all, and to make them literate and skilled. But despite the said efforts, there exist certain problems of enrolment and low retention, which are more acute in case of weaker sections of our population who are subjected to various kinds of deprivations and discriminations. The school completion rate of the children, belonging to ST communities, is found to be low indicating the high rate of dropouts and non-enrolment in comparison to others. The main challenges being faced by the tribal children are diverse in psychological, socio-cultural, economic and in pedagogical context.

Thirdly, in this chapter the investigator has tried to look into the various issues of school dropout and their significance. In spite of a supportive, comprehensive constitutional policy framework and strenuous efforts of the government, the country is yet to achieve the elusive goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education and the millions of primary school going children are yet to enjoy the benefit of education, either they never had a chance to enroll in school or they have left school (dropout) without completing the primary school cycle due to various reasons. The reasons, as indicated by various researchers, scholars and experts, are the prolonged deprivation of better institutional facilities, better socio-economic condition of the family that make the children mentally vulnerable with low motivation, low level of aspiration, disinterest in studies and inability to adjust with various situations of school as well as society and they tend to withdraw themselves from studies or do not want to continue schooling.
In the second part of the study the investigator has made an attempt to throw a light towards the field of study along with its significance, assumptions and limitations in the light of above mentioned facts. Goalpara district is surrounded by Kamrup, Dhubri, Bongaigaon district and East Garo hills of Meghalaya in east, west, north and south respectively. The district comprises of a mixed population having one-fifth of its population mostly tribal covering the vast rural areas. The said tribal population comprises mostly of Bodo, Rabha, Garo, Hajong etc. Economically and educationally the Goalpara district is lagging much behind with a very low development index. The chronological development of elementary education of the district shows that the number of schools as well as the number of school enrollment is increasing much particularly since five years through SSA, but still there exists a difference among various social groups in the attainment of elementary education. The problem of out of school children (non-enrolled, dropouts and repeaters) are mostly found in rural and tribal community.

The exclusion /dropout of children from formal school framework effectively denying their right to education and it also lead to a great waste of human resources in the society. Therefore the first and foremost step in resolving the crisis should begin with the study of the magnitude of the effect of the responsible factors that causing large number of child dropouts and especially among the tribal communities, through a careful analysis. Because a consolidated knowledge of magnitude of the effect of the responsible factors may help the educational planners, policy makers, educators and other concerned authorities in preparing and planning the effective policy to
universalise elementary education and to empower the tribal children to compete with their non-tribal counterparts/contenders in the society at large for ensuring peaceful and sustainable development in the district.

The study has some assumptions (hypotheses) that there exists a significant effect of those variables on tribal dropout children. The study also assumes that there exists a significant difference between tribal dropouts and tribal non-dropouts and also between tribal dropouts and non-tribal dropouts in relation to their psycho-social and institutional variables. The study also makes an assumption that there may be a significant difference between the tribal child dropouts in both the sexes in terms of the above-mentioned variables.

The present study is limited to the children of provincialised/recognised primary schools of Goalpara district, the child-dropouts and non-dropout (regular) children of the above mentioned schools, the children between the age group of 6-14 years. The investigator has not included the non-tribal regular students in her study.

In the second chapter of the thesis the investigator has tried to review the related literature conducted in the Assam, India and Abroad. The purpose of the review was to avoid unintentional duplication of well established findings and to know about the recommendations of previous researchers. There have been studies related to dropouts, wastage and stagnation of primary/elementary schooling by different researchers at different periods. But here the investigator has thrown a glance towards some related studies with regard to the problem from 1980-2008.
In the third chapter of the thesis the investigator has tried to examine the significance of validity of the stated problem in the present day context by adopting various research design and statistical design. Under research design the investigator applies the descriptive survey method with stratified random sampling techniques as a basis of the investigation. With a sample of 700 children and 155 schools from both tribal and non-tribal areas, data have been collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary data have been collected through the use of various standardised tools, i.e. Level of Aspiration Test, Adjustment Inventory for School Students, Socio-economic Status Scale and the self-developed Institutional Schedule. The secondary data have been collected from various reports and information of DEEO office and all the four BEEO offices of the district. The district SSA office and the Economic and Statistic Office have provided a major source of information.

As a statistical design both descriptive and inferential statistics have been used. The simple percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and Range have been calculated for descriptive statistics and for inferential statistics F test and t test have been used to find out the significant effect and the significance of difference between means of various samples and sub-samples. The analysis and interpretation have been done according to the statistical design.

In the fourth chapter of the thesis the investigator has tried to analyse and interpret the data according to statistical design. Percentage analysis reveals that 88 percent of tribal child-dropouts are affected by low level of aspiration, 87 percent of them have low school adjustment ability, 93 percent of them have lower socio-economic status and 63 percent of tribal child-dropouts are affected
by their inadequate institutional facilities. The analysis also shows that 92 percent of tribal boy dropouts are affected by low level of aspiration, 88 percent of them have low school adjustment ability, 88 percent of them have lower socio-economic status and 62 percent of tribal boy dropouts are affected by their inadequate institutional facilities in case of tribal girl drop outs these are 96 percent, 86 percent, 90 percent and 62 percent respectively. The study also finds, more than 60 percent of tribal schools are inadequate in various aspects of institutional facilities. In case of difference between tribal dropouts, non-dropout and non-tribal dropout children in terms of their psycho-social and institutional variables, it has been observed that tribal non-dropout children have better percentage in all most all the variables in comparison to tribal dropout and non-tribal dropout children of the same school.

It is observed from the inferential analysis that the calculated F-ratio of 116.527 is much higher than the critical value of 2.61 at 0.05 level of significance and 3.80 at 0.01 level. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and it can be inferred that there is a significant effect of all the variables e.g. level of aspiration, school adjustment abilities, socio-economic status, and institutional variables, on tribal child dropouts with a significant difference among the variables. The test of significance of difference between the mean scores of tribal dropout and non-dropout children in relation to their psychological (level of aspiration) and institutional variables is not significant at 0.05 level as well as 0.01 level which implied that the tribal child-dropouts and non-tribal child-dropouts do not differ significantly in the said variables but they differ significantly at both the levels in terms of school adjustment and socio-
economic variables. Further, in case of tribal dropout and non-tribal dropout children, the test of significance of difference between the mean scores is not significant at 0.05 level as well as 0.01 level which implied that the tribal child-dropouts and non-tribal child-dropouts do not differ significantly in relation to their psychological (level of aspiration) and institutional variables but they differ significantly in terms of school adjustment and socio-economic variables at both the levels of significance. In the same test it was observed that the tribal dropout boys and girls differ significantly only in certain psychological variables, i.e. school adjustment, with a significant t score but no difference is found out in level of aspiration, socio-economic conditions and institutional variables as the result is not significant at 0.05 level as well as 0.01 level of significance.

It has been observed during the analysis of the study on tribal child-dropouts (6-14 years) of elementary schools of the district that they are quite vulnerable in relation to their psycho-social variables. Level of aspiration and adjustment in school are two important aspects of personality. Many studies reveal that the person who is poor in relation to the above two variables have low self-esteem and strong sense of inferiority in school environment which happens to be the major cause of early dropping out of school among tribal children. The cause of low aspiration emerges from their parents at home and teachers at school.

The parents of the tribal children with very little or no educational background show much the least interest to send their children to school. So children, who come to school under extraneous pressure with no stable
aspiration or motivation, are obviously susceptible to dropping out of it. Further, when the teaching and learning becomes increasingly cumbersome for those children to follow and therefore quite dull and they drop out of school as quickly as possible. As there is no push from the home and no pull from the school the child adopts the normal behaviour of escape from such a painful and constrained situation.

Of course, this is not only true of tribal children but is also characteristic of any other group of culturally deprived and socially disadvantaged ones.

The study also observes that the poverty of the parents with low social status acts as a major constraint to schooling of their children. They have to help their parents either by working for wages regularly or by participating in other economic activities of family. The educational level and occupational structure of parents have also a significant effect on their children. The study reveals that the children of educated / literate parents possess a much better degree of adjustment and stronger motivation for attending school.

The analysis of the study also reveals that although the number of schools has increased but their overall quality in relation to their teaching-learning facilities and desirable provisions in various aspects is not at all satisfactory. The non-tribal schools are more adequate in infrastructure /physical facilities, i.e. school building, classroom size, sanitary provisions, drinking water etc., instructional variables and co-curricular activities than tribal schools although the percentage of adequacy is not satisfactory. Hence, the study establishes that the inadequate institutional variables have a direct effect on the poor psychological condition i.e. level of aspiration and level of
adjustment of the children and it is considered as one of the important causes of dropping out among the children in tribal areas.

In the fifth chapter the investigator reported the major findings on the basis of the objectives and hypothesis framed before the investigation. The study found that most of the tribal children are affected psychologically with low level of aspiration and low school adjustment ability, low socio-economic status of their parents and inadequate institutional facilities.

The tribal child dropouts are affected more by the low school adjustment abilities and socio-economic status of their families than the non-dropouts. Better socio-economic condition leads to the better school adjustment among children non-dropouts. The tribal child dropouts have low school adjustment ability and socio-economic condition than their non-tribal counterpart.

The tribal child dropouts do not differ significantly with non-tribal dropouts and tribal non-dropouts in relation to their level of aspiration and institutional variables.

The tribal dropouts of both sexes do not show any difference significantly in relation to their psychological, socio-economic and institutional variables, even if the tribal girl-dropouts show a little better adjustment abilities in social situation of the school than the boy-dropout.

The present study has some implications for policy makers, educational planners, school administrators, teachers, committee members and parents who have a direct link with the education of our children. The policy makers should be sensitive enough in making various policies for the children of socially
disadvantaged and culturally deprived groups. The policies should be user-friendly and should also focus on their socio-cultural, economic or occupational needs and their development. The educational planners should have an insight in framing curricular structure for the children of tribal community. The educational patterns at the elementary level should be more need-based, diversified, vocational and practical. It should endow the children with better and greater scope for training with an entrepreneurial dimension in conformity to their socio-eco-cultural needs and locally available resources.

The school administrator should have a positive attitude to implement the plans and policies with utmost care and responsibility for enlightening the children of the tribal community. He should try his best to serve the society as a good manager as well as a good social engineer.

The teacher, who shoulders this Herculean task to shape the child, should be utmost sincere, moralist and true to his/her service in the school. (S)He should be very sensitive towards the children who are shy / aggressive / fearful in nature. (S)He should be trained enough to teach the child in a novel and friendly manner by creating a congenial and pleasant atmosphere in the classroom so that the children can learn with more interest and self-confidence. (S)He should also help the children realise their emotions, tensions and anxieties and channel them in a desirable way.

The society/community members should encourage the children so as to continue to attend school. They should be conscious of their future generations upon which they can transfer the responsibility of the society — its culture, economy, belief etc. The community members should help the school authority
and teachers in planning and implementing policies and programmes for the
greater and more rapid development of their children.

The study has its bearing for the parents also. The parents should
develop a positive attitude towards the education of their children. Because
parental involvement and behavioural control are associated with greater social
and emotional adjustment of children towards schools who are less depressed
and withdrawal.

Besides the above implications the study has also a message for NGOs
that are presently dedicated to the upliftment of the under-developed and rural
communities. Because their role might prove to be pivotal in achieving the
universalisation of elementary education by reducing the extent of out of school
children, school drop-out, poor and irregular attendance. Our past experiences
have already established that the target of universalisation only through the
government agencies would continue to remain a mirage. In fact this Herculean
task needs a stronger private-public partnership with better coordination,
transparency and accountability. Or else the government records would
continue to hoodwink all of us with their most satisfying facts and figures
whilst the underdeveloped children would remain deprived from their
fundamental right of primary education consequently resulting in a continuous
waste of human resources of the nation.

In addition to the above provisions implicating various persons or
agencies the investigator has suggested for an action-plan for quick
implementation as the remedial measures to check dropout and non attendance
especially among the tribal children of the district.
• Awareness campaign to increase enrollment.

• Involving community leaders to school management committee to ensure the sense of ownership.

• Involving the representation of ST members in village Education Committee.

• Development of tribal coordinators/officers the state as well as in district level to monitor the different activities of the govt. in co-ordination with the Tribal Welfare department.

• Organizing special camps for the tribal children who are not benefited by the common school system, by recognising the diversified needs of the tribal children.

• Enrichment programmes are to be designed to develop and enlarge the child’s perceptual and conceptual repertoire and his communicative skills.

• Remedial programmes for slow learners or socially disadvantaged children.

• Amending school calendar in tribal area to fit the availability pattern of local children.

• More women trained teachers should be appointed in tribal schools particularly of up level.

• Provision of more government grants to each district for special innovative activities to promote education in tribal areas with proper inspection.
• Establishing more residential schools in tribal areas with better educational facilities.

• Ensuring compensatory health, nutritional and social welfare programmes by the government.

• Focussing girls education through Community based organisations viz. Mother Teacher Association, Women Motivator Groups should be activated to motivate parents to send girl child to school.

• Day care centers/ cretches should be extended by strengthening existing Anganwari Centers and also through participation of NGOs, to make girls free from sibling care at school time as well as to help the working parents.

• Programmes of adult education should be strengthened to make them aware of the education of their children.

6.2 Conclusion:

Education is fundamental to human development. It opens new worlds and provides access and mobility, in the process of enlarging opportunities and choices. Every human being and especially every child have a right to education, to knowledge, and to learning. The acquisition of knowledge information helps an individual to improve his/her own quality of life as well as participate meaningfully in community life. There is a great societal benefit too, that is, education being an investment in human capital leads to higher productivity and earning power. Key indicators of human development such as infant mortality, health, status of children, empowerment of women, and size of
the family are positively linked to educational attainment. Education thus becomes essential for achieving social mobility and income redistribution.

It is important to give a clear shape to the involvement of private providers based on systematic assessment of the potential, need and appropriateness of increased involvement in achieving the goal of UEE. It is necessary to recognize that the education landscape is changing fast within the wider framework of transformation characterized by liberalization of the economy. It is important to understand these external forces and the ramification they bring to the education sector in the country, particularly in terms of equity and quality. At the same time, it should be remembered that the Constitutional commitment for free and compulsory education entitles everyone—rich or poor to benefit from State support. This was once elucidated by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen at a seminar in New Delhi when he said, “No country in the world has been able to educate all its children without state intervention. Even if children went to terrible schools, it had an impact.” He was responding to a suggestion from the corporate sector about increasing its own role in school education. It is high time the government heeded the advice from experts.

To conclude, one has to note that providing access to education with equity in focus is not just a matter of opening more schools and investing more resources. It demands a change in the mindsets. Old notions of excellence and progress have to be replaced with new sets of values. Objectives of education will have to focus more on collective rather than individual intelligence that supports the position that all are capable rather than a few. No doubt, the task is daunting, but not unachievable. In fact, Assam is placed among the
intermediate level States in terms of the status of elementary education and can move quickly towards universalising primary education, with the right policy thrust and focussed implementation.

6.3 Suggestion for Further Research

No research work is complete in itself. It is just a small step of a long process in which one string joins another to form a chain to eradicate the problems in a particular field. Hence the investigator suggests some areas for further research which are beyond the scope of the problem and may stimulate prospective research workers to undertake some useful researches in this area.

The investigator suggests the following areas for further research:

- A study can be undertaken on the effect of cognitive abilities and other psychological dispositions of children necessary for successful participation in the school.
- A study based on the construction of culturally sensitive programmes in school education.
- A study on government initiatives and the extent of its implementation in rural as well as tribal areas.
- Different issues of dialect, mother tongue, language of evaluation need to be examined at a greater length.
- Studies can be conducted on the effect of teachers’ training with special emphasis on their transactional processes with tribal children in elementary schools.
• Investigation may also address the educational needs of children belonging to particular socio-economic and/or socio-cultural groups.

• A study on psycho-social problems of dropout at secondary /tertiary level among the children of scheduled tribe/caste or any other backward community belonging to some particular locale.