CHAPTER-II

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON EDUCATION
OF TRIBES IN INDIA

Since the beginning of the present century, various scholars and administrators have been working on the Indian tribes. In the pre-independence period, studies on tribal society had mostly focused on the distinctive characteristics of their life - such as the institution of marriage, kinship formation, religion, magic, rituals, customs, etc. Therefore, while numerous books focusing on the tribal cultures have been published, various problems of the tribals often remained neglected. As for example, the early works of Mills, Hutton and Shakespear were mostly descriptive ethnography and did not deal much with the problems of the tribals.¹

However, after the attainment of independence, the Government's policy on tribal development seems to have altered this situation to some extent. Studies are now directed towards the problems of the Scheduled Tribes. The Government's acceptance of education as the key factor for tribal development has attracted the interest of many social scientists. As a result, numerous studies have been carried out on the different aspects of tribal education.
In order to develop a national profile of education for the tribes of India, the Anthropological Survey of India undertook a study of the educational situation of 50 selected Scheduled Tribe Communities from different parts of the country. The study was conducted during 1978-79. The reports were compiled and edited by Das Gupta and Danda in 1984. It was found that in spite of the wide range of socio-economic backgrounds represented by these tribes, there are certain common features regarding their educational problems. Some of the important common problems of these tribes are as follows:

(a) Though primary education is within easy reach in many areas, secondary schools are not within easy reach of most of the villagers under study.

(b) There is an existence of communication gap between the teachers and the students, on the one hand, and the text books and the students' mental preparation to receive anything from them, on the other.

(c) Majority of the literate population is within the age group of 8-15 which means that the spread of education is rather a recent phenomena.

(d) The tribal people in the remote areas suffer from a sense of shyness to send their wards to educational institutions.
Lastly, there is a high frequency of drop-outs every year due to lack of awareness about the significance of formal education.²

It is an accepted fact that the Scheduled Tribes are lagging behind the general population in their educational development. The reports of the 'Backward Class Commission 1956'³ and the 'Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission 1962'⁴ have pointed out that the slow progress of education among the tribes in India is due to inadequate provision of schools for these communities. The tribals generally live in inaccessible areas in small and scattered villages and therefore schools cannot be provided for all of them. In particular, the geographical spread of secondary schools in the tribal areas is inadequate and highly uneven. This has serious consequences for the education of the tribals. Firstly, by this stage the children become real help to their parents. Therefore, if the child wishes to continue further studies, he/she must move out of home and become unavailable to the family. Secondly, because there is hardly any assistance of the state in the form of scholarships and stipends at this stage, the family must support the child away from home which is impossible for ordinary people. The girls' education is the worst hit on account of this phenomenon.⁵
Srivastava\(^6\) studied the educational problems of the Saora tribe of Orissa. He found that in spite of the educational facilities provided by the tribal and rural welfare department of the Government of Orissa, the progress of education among the Saora is not satisfactory. The progress of primary education is hindered by administrative problems such as lack of school buildings, trained teachers, teaching materials, proper school inspection, etc. Further, teaching through the Oriya language leads to inferior educational performance because most of the Saoras do not know Oriya. He also found wastage and stagnation as the major problems of the Saora. There is a high drop-out rate because the Saora students have to help their parents in the economic and other walks of life. Economic hardship is found to be the main cause of the educational backwardness of the Saora tribes.

Dinesh Sharma\(^7\) in his book ‘Education and Socialization Among the Tribes’ has studied the educational system of the Gujjars of Kashmir. His sample includes 121 households from 6 villages in the district of Kathua. His findings revealed that educational facility is available to only a small section of the Gujjars in the form of mobile primary schools (i.e. there are only 12 mobile primary schools in the district of Kathua). Enrolment among the Gujjars is also very low. Moreover, the girls are not sent
to school because there is no separate school for girls, and the schools are usually located far away from their settlements. The participation of children in the household activities and the apathetic attitude of the parents towards education are found to be the root cause of low enrolment among the Gujjars.

Agarwal\textsuperscript{8} gave a survey report on the problems of wastage and stagnation in the Mahendragarh Tribal Development Block of Madhya Pradesh. The survey includes 736 Scheduled Caste and Tribe students from all the schools in the Mahendragarh T.O. Block. His findings showed that the wastage rate was above 98 per cent in primary stage in the Government schools and the Tribal welfare Department schools. The main reasons found to be responsible for the high rate of wastage were - the poor economic condition of the tribes, the apathetic attitudes of the parents towards education, lack of interest in education on the part of the students, the students are needed at home to look after the youngsters, etc. A similar problem is also found among the tribal communities of Gujarat by Masavi\textsuperscript{9} and among the Kannikkars of Trivandrum district in Kerala by Joshi.\textsuperscript{10}

Another important finding in the literature on tribal education is the unequal spread of education among the Scheduled Tribes. Shah and Patel\textsuperscript{11} revealed considerable inter-tribal variations in the educational development of
the Scheduled Tribes residing in the Tribal Sub-Plan area of Gujarat. Their analysis is based on the interview data collected from 884 heads of households from 64 villages in the Tribal Sub-Plan area. They found that tribes like the Dhodias and Chaudharies are far above the average level, while Varlises, Rathwas, Dublas and the Katwalias are far below the average level of educational development of tribals in general. Shah and Patel also examined the social context of tribal education and found that various factors - such as type of community of residence and the facilities of education in it, social class background, occupational status of the household head, the level of awareness of the household head regarding the available facilities and assistance for education and his perception of the importance of acquiring education - has greatly affected the educational attainments of the tribals.

Naik also revealed the unequal spread of education among the Bhil society. Working on data from the Dhar and Jhabua districts of Madhya Pradesh, Naik found that the children from the economically well off sections of the Bhil society get the maximum educational benefits. The children of the upper crust of the Bhil society have also been able to go to school and take advantage of the scholarships or hostel facilities made available by the Government. Whereas, the poorer sections of the Bhil society find it
difficult to spare a child for education as their service is required at home.

K. Sujatha has studied the education of the Yenadi children in the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh. Her study is mainly based on data collected through a sample survey covering 640 Yenadi children between the age of 6 and 11 years. She found that enrolment of the Yenadi children in primary school is better in roadside villages, tribal colonies, and in coastal talukas. The children tend to come more from higher income groups, have literate parents, and live more often in joint families than in the interior villages, mixed schools, upland talukas, lower income groups, illiterate parents and nuclear families respectively. She also pointed out that exposure to outside world has adverse effect on enrollment due to employment of children in households situated near the mica mines or due to the distracting town atmosphere. She further argues that the curriculum of formal education is not related to the life and needs of the Yenadi community. So, they find schooling meaningless, suffocating and unrealistic. Lastly, she shows that absenteeism, stagnation, wastage and drop-out rates are much higher among the Yenadi girls than among the Yenadi boys.

Rathnaih showed that exposure to outside forces facilitates the enrolment of tribal children. Enrolment is
higher in the villages with hostel facilities than in the villages without hostel facilities. He also pointed out that the enrolment of children from salaried employees and petty businessmen is more than from the cultivators and labourers. Enrollment of children from higher income groups is also found to be higher than those of the middle and lower income groups. He also pointed out that the single teacher schools, medium of instruction, textbooks and contents were other constraints on the educational development of the tribals.

Kusum Premi and others\textsuperscript{15} analyzed the regional disparities in education among the different groups of Scheduled Tribes. The analysis was made at four levels - i.e. inter-zonal differences (eastern zone and central zone), inter-state difference, inter-tribe differences within the same state and inter-state difference of the same tribe. Their findings indicate that great disparities exist across space and among different tribal groups in the same state. The performance of the same tribe differs widely in different states. In general, females in rural areas were found to be at a very low level of educational development. Male tribes in urban areas, in most of the cases, have a very high literacy rate and compare favourably with non-tribes. Within the same state, the performance of tribes differ significantly in terms of rural urban residence and male-female distribution.
Patel\textsuperscript{16} made a comparative study of the educational development of the tribal women with that of the Scheduled caste women, non-SC/ST women and the tribal men in Gujarat and found that the tribal women have the lowest literacy rate among these groups. In terms of enrollment too, the tribal women are in a much lower position than the tribal men. The co-efficient of equality for tribal women starts declining as they move up towards higher level of education. This indicates a higher drop-out rate among tribal girls than among tribal boys. Singhi\textsuperscript{17} also pointed out the poor representation of tribal women in the educational institutions of Rajasthan. He describes the distribution of education among tribal men and women in Rajasthan as 'alarmingly disproportionate.'

According to Shah and Patel\textsuperscript{18} the main factors hindering the education of tribal girls are that - the girls in tribal society are required to help their family in its occupational and household activities; the poor economic condition of the tribals could not afford the expense of education; and the tradition of not sending girls to school. Similarly, Sachchidananda and Sinha\textsuperscript{19} found that a majority of the tribal girls in schools and colleges are unable to devote much time for their studies due to great deal of work that they have to carry out at home.
State-wise studies of the Scheduled Tribe school and college students by the Indian Council of Social Science Research\(^20\) throws some light on their social background and on their educational and occupational aspirations. The study was conducted in the early seventies and covered fifteen different states. The findings indicate that the tribal students and particularly college students come from a fairly literate background when compared to the literacy rate of the general population of the Scheduled Tribes. It is also found that a majority of students are from poor financial background. Another important finding is that there is a high concentration of students in Arts courses. The percentage of students in Science and Commerce is very small. The students have high educational aspirations. Majority of them wanted to obtain post-graduate degrees.

Sachchidananda and Sinha\(^21\) studied the academic life of the Scheduled Caste and Tribe students studying in different schools and colleges of Bihar. Their samples include 243 college students and 223 school students. Besides, 144 college teachers and 144 school teachers were also included in the study. The study revealed that a majority of the tribal school and college students in Bihar offered arts subjects. Sachchidananda and Sinha state that preference for arts subjects have been conditioned by the availability of resources at home and also at educational institutions.
Science subjects are expensive and very few tribals can afford to pursue science education. Besides, rural schools do not generally have adequate facilities to teach science subjects. They also found that a majority of the tribal students have experienced discrimination on account of ethnic differences. They further pointed out that the non-tribal and high caste Hindu teachers look down upon tribal students. Some of them even regarded these students as uneducable. Not only this, they do not hesitate in downgrading the tribal culture. They, thus, create in the minds of the tribal students a deep seated inferiority complex.

Several studies have been undertaken to assess the impact of education on the Scheduled Tribes community. Naik made an attempt to examine the effect of education on the cultural life of the Bhils in Madhya Pradesh. He points out that education has little influence as far as social life of the Bhils is concerned. At the same time, he noted that "with the increase of education (though the process is very slow), a new leadership is emerging where the younger educated are gaining ground and becoming more popular."22

Toppo's analysed the various aspects of Oraon education from the primitive Dhumkuria stage to the modern stage of University. She discussed the effects of modern education on joint family, village community, kinship
relations, on their dance and songs, on marriage and on material culture. According to her, "education has certainly enabled the Oraons in changing their lives for the better. It has granted them better social status and opened flood gates of aspirations for their children."  

Ambasht discussed the cultural setting of the Bihar tribes, their traditional system of education, agencies of modern education, the village schools and the impact of education on the life and culture of the tribals. He found that the introduction of modern education among the tribals has brought a number of changes in the educational and material aspects of their culture. The use of modern amenities, knowledge and dress are some of the indicators of change in the tribal life.

Phadke and Shukla examined the impact of higher education on the tribal students of Vyara College and found that education has affected the self-interest of the tribal students. The selection of subjects, adding more qualifications, and appearing at various competitive examinations were some instances not only of realizing self-interest but also of developing self-confidence. Due to interaction with the non-tribal students, the tribal students have developed a sense of responsibility and a sense of consciousness of justice and propriety.
According to Kamat modern learning initiated two processes of change for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population in India. Firstly, education enabled them to participate in the new pattern of economy and secondly, it provided the necessary ideology to visualize the economic and social transformation. The spreading of modern education results in opportunities for occupational mobility for a few tribals which leads to the formation of new tribal elites. Kamat also discussed the mobility of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the context of the wider society. He sees the mobility of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as that of a horizontal nature rather than a vertical one - that is, they are moving from traditionally disadvantaged tribes and castes to a disadvantaged class in the modern society. He pointed out the low representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the government services, especially in the two higher categories of Class I and II services which entails a higher socio-economic status. The majority of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are to be found in the lower category of Class III and IV services. This indicates that inspite of the educational incentives, reservations and other privileges of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes tend to remain in the lowest ring of the social hierarchy.
Sachchidananda\textsuperscript{27} briefly mentioned the educational and employment situation of the Scheduled Tribes in Bihar. According to him, most of the tribals who are at the secondary schools and at universities do not go back to work in their villages, but look for employment outside. Consequently, the number of tribals in Government services or in professions like teaching, medicine and law, has been rapidly increasing year after year. With the growth of education, unemployment among the educated tribals has been mounting fast. Again, the growth of education also leads to the emergence of middle class among the tribals of Bihar.

Talesra\textsuperscript{28} studied the impact of education on regional integration among the tribals luring in the Tribal Sub Plan Area of Rajasthan. Her study includes all the secondary schools within the sub-plan area. She found that for the well-off tribals, education is an excellent opportunity for climbing higher in the social hierarchy. Education has prepared the tribals in a larger way to accept non-agricultural occupations. It also helps them to integrate better in the regional mainstream.

Nambissan\textsuperscript{29} examined the extent of educational inequality within the Bhil society. She also examined the relation between education and occupational mobility among the Bhils. Her study include three Bhil villages in the Kherwara tehsil of Rajasthan. Her findings indicate the
presence of educational inequality among the different sections of the Bhil society. According to her, the economic status of the household appears to be a crucial factor behind inequality of educational opportunity. Because, households which are economically weak in each section of the tribal community are characterized by relatively low percentage of enrollment of children. Regarding occupational mobility, she found that only a small proportion of tribals have entered the service sector. Moreover, a majority of them are found in lower grade supervisory occupations and only a negligible number have been able to enter higher grade supervisory occupations. Further, intergenerational advancement in educational attainment has not been accompanied by an equal magnitude of upward occupational mobility.

Sharma30 studied the educational life style of the tribal students vis-a-vis the non-tribal students in Madhya Pradesh. He pointed out the various problems faced by the tribals while studying in non-tribal institutions. Despite the fact that free boarding and lodging, scholarships and other facilities are provided to the tribals on a liberal scale, the socioeconomic structural constraints have been operating in the diffusion of education among the tribals which is different from the one operating in the non-tribal regions.
Some studies have also been conducted to examine the impact of education on the Scheduled Tribe Communities of north east India. Dubey\textsuperscript{31} analysed the role of modern education in bringing about social change and political awareness among the tribal of north east region. According to him, there is a direct relationship between high percentage of literacy, motivation for change, and a gradual break from the past traditions and customs. High percentage of literacy and growing education brings a change in the pattern of family and marriage, and in the economy and occupational structure of the tribal people. However, the growth of education also influences the political participation and awareness of the tribal communities of north east India.

Sarkar\textsuperscript{32} made a critical study of the impact of western education on the AO tribe of Mokokchung district of Nagaland. His study revealed that education brings a significant and positive change on the AO Naga Society. The growth of education results in progress and development in different fields. A significant positive change can be seen in their social life, dresses, social hierarchy, marriage, political role, occupations, trade and commerce, etc.

Gupta\textsuperscript{33} observed the educational situation of the Purum Communities in the southeastern part of Manipur. He
discussed the available facilities for education in the Purum villages and the distribution of students in the village schools. He also briefly mentioned the educational attainment and the employment situation of the educated Purums.

Hungyo\textsuperscript{34} gives some information regarding the educational development of the Tangkhul Nagas. According to him, the coming of Christianity and the introduction of modern education brought a significant change in the socio-economic life of the Tangkhuls. For instance, old tribal institutions such as the 'Longshim' (boys' dormitory) and 'Ngalalong' (girls' dormitory) were abandoned after the introduction of Christianity and modern education. The Tangkhuls show keen interest in education and there is a tough competition among the Tangkhul villages for having government schools in their respective villages. With the rapid expansion of education, there is an increase in the number of Tangkhuls in the service sector. The problem of unemployment is also found among the educated Tangkhuls.

So far as the Hmar tribe is concerned, Pudaite\textsuperscript{35} gives a comprehensive account of the historical background and socio-economic conditions of the Hmars. He briefly discusses the development of formal education and also points out the various lapses in the educational administration and planning of the Hmars, and gives recommendations for their future development.
Summary

Thus, from the literature reviewed above, it is found that a large number of studies have been carried out on the different aspects of tribal education. A majority of the studies are concerned with educational facilities and the problems of primary education among the tribals. These studies indicate a high rate of drop-out, wastage and stagnation among the tribal children. The main factors associated with these problems are the poor economic condition of the tribals and their apathetic attitude towards formal education.

Another important point is the unequal spread of education among the tribals. Various studies have detected the presence of inter-tribe as well as intra-tribe disparities in educational development. The economically better-off section of the tribal society - such as the rich farmers and the salaried employees - and those living in less isolated geographical areas, are found to be in a relatively better situation than the poorer tribals and those living in a remote and isolated areas. Further, the tribal women are found to be educationally disadvantaged relative to the tribal men.

Several studies had also attempted to assess the impact of education on the tribal society. It is found that the introduction of education leads to certain changes in
the material as well as recreational aspects of the tribals. Education has also enabled many tribals to shift from their traditional occupations to occupations in the modern economic sector. However, majority of the tribal employees are concentrated in the low-status occupations, and only few of them have managed to reach high-status occupations. Therefore, when seen within the context of the wider society, the movement of tribals appears to be horizontal in nature rather than vertical - i.e. they are moving from traditionally disadvantaged tribes to a disadvantaged class in the modern economic sector.

So far as the Scheduled Tribes in Manipur are concerned, in-depth studies have not been made to assess the impact
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5. Twentieth Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 1986-87 (Govt. of India, New Delhi), p.36.


9. M. Masavi, 1976, Wastage and Stagnation in Primary Education in Tribal Areas (Tribal Research and Training Institute, Ahmedabad).


32. S. Sarkar 1979, A Critical Study of the Impact of Western Education on the AO Tribe of Mokokchung (Gauhati University).

