CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Social change and development are relative terms. They are important characteristics of any living society. They, no doubt, play significant role in the developed as well as developing societies of the contemporary world. It may be rightly stated that social change, as a complex and all-inclusive process, involves cultural, socio-structural, political, economic and ideological changes which seek to alter, modify or transform the lives of the concerned people in various ways.

Development is also a very broad and comprehensive phenomenon which means promotion, constitution or establishment of a well-coordinated, harmonious and balanced growth and vitality in the given social system of a community or a country. Since a well-planned social change is expected to lead a proper development, therefore, very appropriately the various strategies for social change are planned in such a way that they result in the betterment and harmonious growth of the given social system, fulfilling the proposed aims and objectives.

From amongst the various agents and instruments of social change and development, education is considered to be one of the most suitable and effective instruments, although it shows results slowly over long periods of time. It will be appropriate to state that education not merely imparts instructions in certain limited contents of knowledge, prescribed for a course, or training, in certain skills, but rather it helps us to understand the underlying layers of meaning which are believed to have been intended by the philosophers, educationists and social scientists. They have put forth a comprehensive process of socialisation,
awakening, enlightenment, enfoldment of personality transformation, progress and development in a wider ramification in the recent past. It is well argued in the following words of Jeane Moffat:

"Development education is a teaching and learning process that helps people to relate issues of international development, not only in an abstract manner, but in such a way that people come to understand the impact of issues on lives of human beings. If it is dynamic development education, it will facilitate the constructive transformation of many relation between rich and poor countries.

Central to this process, as I understand development education, is the perspective of the poor, of the people who have been pushed to the edges of their societies and of the world's economic arrangements. This is the critique which guides our work and our understanding of the kind of the partnerships we undertake abroad and the goals and objectives of our development education network in Canada."¹

Thus, it may seem inevitable to comment that education being an agent of social change and development might involve action-oriented changes in attitudes, values, skills, world view aspirations and transformed social relations in the existing institutions and social structures. Education, therefore, emerges as a very potent agent or media of social change and poses new challenges for development.

1.2 THE NATIVES OF CANADA AND THE TRIBALS OF INDIA

PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

Tribals in Canada and India

Looking at Canada as a whole, approximately 74 percent of the country's status Indians live in 561 bands on their 2281 reserves and 85 "crown land" settlements. There are about two dozen reserves within or adjacent to cities (such as Caughnawaga near Montreal or the Sarcee outside Calgary), but generally speaking, the reserves are rural, very small, and scattered across the country. A common characteristic of Canadian Indian reserves (and rural communities of non-status Indians and Metis as well) is the fact -- to varying degrees - that they do not have the resources and/or the infrastructure to financially sustain their ever increasing population. They constitute patches of a "third world environment" within the framework of a western industrialised nation.

Tribal communities in India are much older, varied and deeply rooted in all parts of the country. They have been closely integrated

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2 Status Indian are the natives who are registered with the Canadian Government.

3 Bands : The families of the Natives who have the same tradition and culture.

4 Reserves : An area assigned by the Government to the natives for their settlement.

5 Claudia Notzke, "The Development of Canadian Indian Reserves" (The university of Calgary, 1982).
into the older civilisation during the colonial and post-colonial periods. In the colonial phase the tribal societies faced agrarian struggle and threat to their land environment and resources. Before independence little efforts were made for tribal development in India. It is only after independence that special efforts were made to improve the conditions of tribals in India. The post-colonial period in India identifies some important tribal movements such as movements for political autonomy, agrarian forest based movement. Sanskritisation process and cultural movement based on script and life style led to an indigenous literature in Tribal languages which may be seen as a part of an overall effort to define a distinct tribal identity.

Canada and India apparently may look dissimilar to each other in some ways - the former a part of North America, the latter of South Asia; the former a young civilization, and the latter the most ancient one; the former has the largest area with a skeleton population, the latter has limited area with exploding population. Yet a close look at the cultural history of both the countries make us believe that they have a very strong bond to share; Canada and India were both parts of the British Empire and had passed through the experiences of colonial rule. This state of affairs made the people of both the countries subject themselves to instructions from a centre of power located outside their cultural domain viz. Britain. Even in the post-colonial period, both the countries faced more or less similar problems. For instance, both Canada and India are multilingual and pluricultural; both face the paramount problems of educating millions from a variety of religious, linguistic and ethnic background. Particularly in case of India, the success of
Macaulay's Minute consisted in alienating a set of Indians from their roots and training, providing them such education in English that was best suited for the maintenance of the Empire.

Education imparted to Native Indians in Canada and Tribal communities in India has often been a part of oral tradition inherited from their forefathers. They are not homogenous people as they speak a number of languages. Native Indians in Canada are members of different communities such as Metis, Crees, Stoneys, Innuits etc. They form a part of the spirit of original place in Canada and may be stated to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the land. Native Indians in Canada are divided into two categories, those who are registered with the Canadian Government after signing the treaties, they are known as Status Indians or Treaty Indians; and those who have not signed any treaty and preferred to remain un-registered such as Metis.

1.3 THE PRESENT STUDY

It may be stated that a good number of studies have been done on tribal education both in Canada and India. For instance, John Snow, Hugh A Dempsey, J. Rick Ponting, James S Frideres, Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert and Don McCaskill are some of the eminent scholars in Canada who have studied some aspects of educational development of the native Indians in general and the Stoneys in particular. Similarly, we can mention the names of Indian scholars such as T. B. Naik, S. E. Verma, Tara Patel, B. B. Sinha, M. L. Patel and S. P. Ruhela who have

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made significant studies of Tribal education in India. These studies are good, but they either deal with the Native Indians of Canada or the Tribals of India. As such, no effort has been made to study them together with a specific focus on a comparative study of the two tribes belonging to these countries.

The present study, therefore, fulfills the need of a cross-cultural study of education of the two tribal communities identified as the Stoney Natives of Canada and the Tribals of Rajpipla (Gujarat) India. The study is based on the fieldwork using interview and observation technique during the years 1989-91. Further, the study investigates such social variables as they seem to have influenced the educability i.e. the educational possibilities of the two communities during an almost identical colonial and post-colonial situations in Canada and India. The study, therefore, presents a comparative perspective of the educational problems of the two tribal communities, one hailing from the technologically advanced country, Canada, and the other from a developing country, India.