Abstract

The main concern of this research work is to discuss the relationship between social context, marginality and school participation in a social location shared by three tribal communities and one non-tribal community. The broad aim of this research study was to explore how school participation of children belonging to different social groups are influenced by various contexts, conditions and cultures that constitute their social worlds. To answer this broad question, the current research attempted to explore socio-cultural and economic characteristics found among tribal and non-tribal groups in the field site. The study also attempted to understand the interplay between political, economic and social factors within home, school and communities that affect school participation. Further, it aimed to explore factors and processes that pave the way for drop-out or completion of school education among different groups.

Towards understanding the social and educational context, the study draws from the work of Bernstein and Bourdieu. Bernstein's work provides an analytical framework for understanding the structure and organisation of schooling and school practices. This study attempts to examine how these influence student’s orientation to and learning in school in the selected field site. Bourdieu’s (1973) framework, which describes how uneven access to cultural capital by children of different communities provides differential educational opportunity within a complex of family, community and larger socio-economic contexts, have also been explored in the study.

The research was largely based on understanding these contexts and processes as they influence children belonging to both tribal and non-tribal groups in the village. To understand the social and economic characteristics of the village and communities, a household census was carried out and heads of 171 households were interviewed. The study also looked at students belonging to cohorts of 2014-14 and 2005-15; students who completed Class X in the 2014 and 2015 and drop-outs included those students who dropped out in any of the Classes(I-X) between 2004-14 and 2005-15. Towards understanding the processes of schooling, in-depth interviews were done with those children who are currently in school, those who are drop-outs, and with parents of different categories of students. Along with these
methods of data collection, observation data from school and the community setting were also taken into account in studying the phenomena in the sample field site.

The thesis is structured into seven chapters. The chapters in the study aimed to explore the following questions: What are the issues related to the marginalisation of Scheduled Tribes, particularly within the educational context in Odisha? How do various social contexts and lived realities influence educational practices? What are the key aspects of the lives of different communities including their socio-economic and political, cultural, religious beliefs and practices in the village? How do students experience formal education in relation to what they learn at school, at home and the community? How do interactions between economic condition, cultural processes, social relations and power dynamics that emanates from social context of home, school and communities affect school participation, completion and withdrawal from school education? The study attempts to bring out, within the context of one village, how cultural and material resources available in the family and community and also school factors facilitate/hamper educational opportunities and affect the processes of schooling. Located within a village where four different groups, three tribal and one non-tribal, occupy different positions with regard to status, power and resources, the study attempts to explore the wider as well as locally mediated relationships between social structure, cultural capital and education.