Chapter III

SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES OF ORISSA
3.1 WHO ARE SCHEDULED CASTES?

The scheduled castes, as the name denotes, are the castes listed in the schedule to the order by the President under the constitution of India. Articles 341 and 342 of the constitution refer that the President of India is empowered to specify, the list of scheduled castes for each state and union territory. In accordance with the provision of these Articles, scheduled castes are listed under presidential order for each state or local area. Only these communities are entitled to be enumerated at a census as scheduled castes in these areas.

3.2 ORIGIN OF SCHEDULED CASTES

Caste in India is a social institution which derives sanction from and is inextricably inter-wined with the Hindu religion. There were originally three main castes, namely Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya and the persons belonging to these castes were called 'twice-born'. It was they only who were believed to have the right and duty to perform certain ritual ceremonies. The Sudras, however, were put below the vaisyas.
and were menials and servants. They were assigned no rank. All these four castes were Arya or the Aryan speaking people. From these four main castes emerged hundreds of sub-castes.

The untouchable section of sub-castes constitutes a fifth group, sometimes referred to as exterior castes. For ages, these dispressed classes suffered various socio-economic and political disabilities in the hands of the higher castes. The worst suffered are the so-called untouchables contact with whom is believed to result in pollution. In some states, there were also castes of "unseables" seeing whom would pollute a "twice-born". The untouchables were forbidden from drawing water from a common well or from entering into the village temple. These exterior or depressed castes are not "depressed" in all states. The same castes may be depressed in one state but may not be suffering in another state.

Till 1935, these castes were generally known as the depressed classes. But the term "Scheduled Castes" appeared for the first time in the government of India Act-1935. With the constitution of India coming into force, the list of
scheduled castes for each state was notified by the President in accordance with Article-341 of the constitution.

3.3 CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS AND WELFARE OF SCHEDULED CASTES

After the attainment of independence and with the constitution of India coming into force, promotion of the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people (particularly of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes) became the primary responsibility of the state.

There are many provisions in the Indian constitution which apply to all the citizens but acquire a special significance when viewed in the context of tribal and other backward communities. The preamble of the constitution resolves to secure to all its citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Among the Directive Principles of State Policy, Article-46 of the constitution lays down that the state shall promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
Apart from these general provisions, there are some special provisions laid down in Indian constitution to safeguard the interest of the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. Article-164 provides for a Ministry of Tribal Welfare in each of the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The Department of Tribal Welfare in Orissa is the result of this provision. Article-244 provides for the inclusion of Fifth Schedule which incorporates provisions for the administration of scheduled areas and tribes of states.

Grant of special funds by the central government for promoting the welfare of the scheduled tribes and for providing them with better administration are laid down in Article-275. Articles-330 and 332 reserve seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the House of People and Legislature respectively. Article-335 assures that scheduled castes and tribes be given special attention while filling posts in the service. It is incumbent on all employers to reserve a certain percentage of vacancies for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and for appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes in general and suggest ameliorative measures.
3.4 STATE OF EDUCATION AMONG THE SCHEDULED CASTES

The scheduled castes form a section of Indian society which has been socially, economically and politically backward. Therefore, before independence, welfare programmes were launched in order to enable the scheduled castes to move abreast and for their upliftment.³

But after independence both the central and state governments have taken greater interest in improving the situation of the scheduled castes. The major programme launched in order to enable the scheduled castes to move abreast with the rest of the society has been that of education. Both the central and state governments have made special provisions for the education of scheduled castes. The central government programme consists of two educational schemes namely post-matric scholarship scheme and Girls' Hostel. The main schemes of the state governments are pre-matric stipends, reimbursement of tuition fees and hostels.⁴
As regards the education of the scheduled castes, the research team of the Central Institute of Research and Training, New Delhi observed:

*School education is the cornerstone of special and economic betterment in the contemporary society. It is also one of the most powerful instruments of social change and development. However, in a caste ridden and hierarchical society of India, distribution of access to educational opportunities is most uneven, iniquitous and unjust. The upper castes having a tradition of learning and backed by economic power had almost monopolised educational opportunities in the pre-independence days and lower castes, specially the Harijans, because of their inherited social and economic handicaps, could do no more than marginally utilise them.*

Since independence, efforts have been made on various fronts to improve the social and economic conditions of the scheduled castes. Some state governments like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Rajasthan and Karnataka have their own supplementary scholarship schemes. Some of the states have introduced schemes like free supply books, stationary and dress to primary class children. Tamil Nadu and Kerala are providing
mid-day meals to the students of primary schools. Some state governments like Bihar and Gujarat have established Ashram schools or Residential schools for the children of scheduled caste committies. 

Despite these efforts at the governmental level, the educational progress among the scheduled castes is far from satisfactory which has been observed by the research team as follows:

There has remained a wide gap between the educational attainments of the general population and that of the scheduled castes. To take a simple instance, the literacy percentage among the former was 24, while among the latter, it was only 10.27.

While identifying the factors responsible for educational backwardness, the committee on untouchability (1969) argued that:

No attempt is being made to control more and more scheduled caste children at primary stage, as a result, there is no appreciable increase in their enrolment at primary stage. These difficulties have slowed down the progress of education and in fact resulted in huge wastage and stagnation in our education without gaining the expected result.
After a review of the progress of elementary education among Harijan children, the committee concluded that it was unsatisfactory in most of the states. There are many reasons behind the slow progress of education in adequate number of schools, shortage of trained teachers and irregularities in attendance of teachers in schools were the main factors that adversely affected the education of Harijans in Maharastra.

Poverty of parents was stated to be the most common reason behind the educational backwardness of the Harijans. Lack of incentives like mid-day meals, stationary etc. were responsible for the low enrolment ratio. In Karnataka for example, the percentage of enrolment of Harijan students (children) to the total enrolment in the elementary stage, was only 10.5 per cent. In Bihar, there was an estimated wastage of about 60% in education even at the elementary stage. Even in Tamil Nadu, where the scheme of mid-day meal was operated on an expensive scale, the wastage in primary schools was estimated to be on the high side. Apathy of the Harijan parents was considered responsible for this problem. As regards Uttar
Pradesh, the committee on untouchability made the following observations.

The progress of elementary education is very slow due to lack of incentives. Though the population of scheduled caste is the highest in the country, unfortunately even elementary education is very slow compared with other states.\textsuperscript{18}

Wastage in education occurs in two major ways. First, there is a failure to recruit children into the system: Secondly, there is a failure to hold children within the system.\textsuperscript{19}

The second category comprises dropout cases or premature school leavers. Wastage takes place through stagnation also, i.e. children participating in the school system, repeat grades or classes because of failure or absenteeism. But so long as the repeaters remain within the system and do not drop out, it is assumed that no serious educational wastage has occurred. The Educational Commission (1964-66) observed:

Having enrolled every child in a school, it is essential to see that he progresses regularly from year to year i.e. there is no stagnation and that he does not leave the school till he completes the prescribed age or class.\textsuperscript{20}
The Commission has expressed deep concern over the phenomenal extent of wastage and stagnation in the educational system and woefully remarked:

"The evil (of wastage) was first highlighted about forty years ago by the Hartog Committee; and altogether the issue has been discussed almost continuously since, very little effective action has been taken to reduce it."\(^2^1\)

A good number of research studies have been conducted on wastage and stagnation in the education system and all of them state that the rate of wastage and stagnation is high among scheduled tribes. Giving the reasons of high drop out among the scheduled castes, the research team stated:

*In a nutshell, they are living in a culture of poverty and deprivation. Secondly, their social status, particularly in villages, is far from satisfactory; social disabilities and other subtler forms of degradation are still intensely practiced in many villages. These two i.e; poverty and low social status are expected to influence adversely the educational prospects of the Harijan community. As a corollary, there are bound to be more drop out cases among the Harijan than among the non-Harijan.*\(^2^2\)
A monograph prepared on the subject of educational backwardness of the scheduled castes throws some light on the crucial aspect, viz. enrolment position among the Harijan community. It states that the coefficient of equality for India, as a whole, was only 84.7 in 1960-61 and it increased only to 68.4 in 1965-66. On the basis of these findings, the report concluded, "the scheduled castes have still a fairly long way to go to even-up with the educational development of the other communities."

Observing that there is a sharp reduction in the co-efficient of equality as one moves up the educational ladder, the report stated that the rates of wastage and stagnation among the scheduled castes are comparatively higher than those in the other community. It has been further argued that a similar conclusion would hold good for the secondary stage also where co-efficient of equality drops still further to 45.5.

The scheduled castes in different parts of India do not form any solid mass. They are split up into hundreds of castes and sub-castes. There are about eleven hundred of castes on such groups spread all over India. In different regions of India,
some of them retain and share a common identity and sometimes a common name. Each group in the scheduled caste population has a name, a separate occupation, its own set of rules and more often than not, its own mechanism for social contact.

These groups are not equal in social status. They are arranged in strictly hierarchical order as caste sub-units and they practise untouchability among themselves.25

Needless to say that even after five decades of planned development, Indian society presents a clear picture of inequality in the development of education between the privileged sections of the society and the social deprived groups. The National Policy on Education (1986) regarded scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, women, minorities handicapped and other economically backward sections as the deprived groups needing special attention. The 1968 Education Policy Resolution called for a strategy of educational development to correct regional imbalances and minimisation of intra and inter-group disparities. Further under Article-46 of the Directive Principles of State Policy, special care should be taken for the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the society and in particular of
S.C., S.T. and girls. Realising this fact, various special efforts have been made to reduce the inequality in the educational development by the government from time to time, but the results are far from expectations.²⁶

3.5 SCHEDULED CASTES IN ORISSA

Scheduled castes are a special feature of the population of Orissa. In Orissa, 93 communities have been notified as scheduled castes.²⁷ (Appendix-F)

Table 3.1 presents the population of scheduled castes in different districts of Orissa with their percentage to the total population for 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 census.
### TABLE 3.1
DISTRICT-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED CASTE POPULATION IN ORISSA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>S.C. POPULATION</th>
<th>% OF S.C. POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balasore</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolangir</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuttack</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>6.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhenkanal</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganjam</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalahandi</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keonjhar</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koraput</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayurbhanja</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phulbani</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puri</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sambalpur</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundargarh</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A glance at Table 3.1 reveals that the distribution of scheduled castes is fairly even in all the districts of Orissa baring two viz. Sundargarh and Mayurbhanja where their proportion in 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 census is very low. The pattern of distribution among the districts remains the same in all the above censuses.
In 1961 census Phulbani, with its scheduled caste population forming 19.3 per cent of state's total population heads the list closely followed by Kalahandi (18.9%) and Balasore (18.8%). This district (Phulbani) was also the first among the districts in 1971 census with 8.9 per cent, Balasore with 8.5 per cent was second among the districts in 1971 followed by Cuttack (18.1%). Again Phulbani was also first among the districts in 1981 census with 18.5 per cent followed by Balasore (17.9%). But in 1991 census, Cuttack was the first among the districts with 20.4 per cent followed by Balasore (19.8%) and Phulbani (18.7%). In 2001 census also, Cuttack stood first with 22.2 per cent SC population.

The district of Mayurbhanja and Sundergarh continued to remain at lower level of percentage always in comparison to other districts.

A close analysis of Table 3.1 reveals that the proportion of scheduled castes to total population had fluctuations in all the districts except Koraput where it marked an increasing trend from census to census.
3.6 WHO ARE SCHEDULED TRIBES?

The term "Tribe" is derived from the Latin word 'Tribus'. It was used for three divisions among the early "Romans". It was also used for "poor" or the "masses". In English dictionary, it is used for the people claiming descent from a common ancestor. In large parts of Africa and in certain parts of Asia, there live many tribes. Generally, the forest living people, who have vigorously opposed the outside invader, such as the Britons, were regarded as separate social categories other than the Hindus and Muslims. These nature worshippers do not follow Hinduism as their religion. Therefore, they were called 'Animists' by the Christian Missionaries or British anthropologists. Dr. Ghurye has described them as "so-called" aborigines or 'backward' Hindus. Even they are known as Adivasis and 'submerged' humanity by many scholars.

In 1981 census, the term "forest tribes" was used for them. In 1931 census, a serious attempt was made to list them as the 'primitive tribes'. In 1935, thirteen of them were called "backward" tribes. The constitution of India used the term
'scheduled tribe' for them. Therefore, in general, it was applied to people who are considered primitive, living in backward areas.\(^{30}\)

In India, it is difficult to distinguish the tribal and the non-tribal in terms of religion, occupation and racial features. Now after so many improvements in their life patterns, habits and culture, the task of distinguishing them was difficult. However, the purest of the tribal groups which have been resisting acculturation or absorption possess certain features, which can be considered as common features possessed by all the tribal groups. In India, the tribal communities are dispersed all over the country differing very much from one another in racial traits, social organisation, social relations, cultural patterns attitudes and world views.\(^{31}\)

Some of the attributes of the 'tribes' are as follows.

(i) They live in forest and hilly areas, isolated hamlets away from so-called civilized world and own some unfertile lands.

(ii) They belong to the oldest ethological sections - Negritos, Austo Loids and Mongoloids.
(iii) They are distinct group with their political and judicial tradition, customs and culture and speak the same tribal dialect in their groups.

(iv) They are nature lovers and profess a primitive religion commonly known as "Animism". It is in some ways similar to the early Hinduism.

(v) They are not within caste fold but have started caste hierarchy.

(vi) They are following primitive or backward occupation such as traditional farming, hunting and gathering of forest produce and are therefore backward in terms of economy and education.

(vii) They were in the habits of living naked or semi-naked.

(viii) They seem happy at their own subsistence level. They have a liking for non-vegetarian food, drinks and dance.

(ix) They fellow strong kinship bonds with endogamy and distinct taboos and have the greatest regard for their cultural tradition.
In the last fifty years, tribal society has gone into considerable modernisation. Therefore, most of the above attributes are found among only one-fifth of the tribal population. They have come under the contact of the general mass in their area and incentives provided by the government and social organisation have brought them closer to the national stream. Now, they participate in the politics, socio and economic system of the country. Education is spreading rapidly among them. Regarding their development, S.N. Singh stated:

"From the nakedness they jumped into the marked modern fashion. From illiteracy or ignorance they are taken to literacy and open world views. In their path of modernization and development education has played a role as human resources development. It has enabled them to make better of life in the well-paid Government and semi-Government jobs. They are becoming skilled labourers."

Articles-341 and 342 empower the President of India to specify the list of scheduled tribes for each state and union territory. In accordance with the provisions of these Articles, scheduled tribes are listed under a Presidential Order for each state or local area. Only these communities are entitled to be
enumerated at a census as scheduled tribes in those areas. Some have called them "Autochthones" - the true sons of the soil. Others say that they are an integral part of the Indian social milieu and heritage. Whatever be their racial origin, these scheduled tribes are known as "Adivasis".

3.7 CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS AND WELFARE OF SCHEDULED TRIBES

Since independence and with the constitution of India coming into force, promotion of the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, particularly of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes became the prime responsibility of the state.

The preamble to the constitution of India resolves to security to all its citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Article-46 of the constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to provide special care for the promotion of the educational and economic and interests of the weaker section of the people and in particular of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Article-164 provides for a Ministry of
Tribal Welfare in each of the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Article-244 provides for the inclusion of a fifth schedule which incorporates provisions for the administration of scheduled areas and tribes of states. Article 335 assures that scheduled castes and scheduled tribes be given special attention while filling up of posts in the services. It is incumbent on all employers to reserve a certain percentage of vacancies for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The constitution also provides for appointment of special officer for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and for appointment of commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes in general and suggest ameliorative measures. The government of India has been implementing special programmes for the socio-economic development of the tribal groups. The broad objectives of these programmes have been to develop these traditional communities in the direction of modernity so as to enable them to secure for themselves an equitable and rightful place in the national system.
3.8 EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE SCHEDULED TRIBES

For a long time, the tribal communities managed to live in isolation, away from civilisation, and maintained their cultural uniqueness. But owing to the advancement in transportation, communication and rapid industrialisation, it has become difficult for these tribal communities to isolate themselves any longer. In fact, there is no social group today which may be said to mark the 'zero' point of cultural contact.37

Sociologists, social anthropologists and also some others have observed that culture-contacts, without proper education and preparation, have been harmful to the tribals and have created many adjustment problems. As W.V. Grigson has aptly described:

"......With the increasing pressure of population in better lands, there is a growing demand for the opening of the aboriginal lands to the modern methods of cultivation. While the fact that these lands contain not only many of the forests in India but also some of the richest mineral-deposits every year increases the economic and other contact of the backward man with modern world without
education to fit him to stand up to this culture contact or invasion, every where the tribes man is in great danger of being suddenly caste adrift from his cultural and social anchorages upon the waters of the social, economic and industrial revolution in progress else where in India".  

The literacy rate of the scheduled tribes was 16.35 per cent in 1981 census (24.52% males and 16.53% females). As compared to All-India literacy and also S.C. literacy, the literacy rate of the STs was very low. The literacy rate of STs varied from state to state. In some states and also union territories the literacy rate of STs was higher than the S.T. national average. These states were Nagaland (40.32%), Manipur (39.74%), Sikkim (33.13%), Kerala (31.79%), Meghalaya (31.55%), Himachal Pradesh (25.93%), Gujarat (21.14%) and Bihar (16.99%).  

The states where the literacy rate of STs was below the S.T. national average were Andhra Pradesh (14.04%), Arunachal Pradesh (14.04%), Madhya Pradesh (10.68%), Orissa (13.96%), Rajasthan(10.27%) and West Bengal (13.21%). These states account for 55.73 percent of the total scheduled tribes population in India.
Like differential rate of literacy of the STs in different states of India, differential rate of literacy was also notified in different regions of India-central-Southern Region (7.80%), central-Northern Region (10.57%) Western Region (15.13%), Southern Region (16.22%) and Oceanic groups (32.43%).

The Inter-tribal difference in literacy rate is significantly large. The Mizos of Mizoram with 67.8 per cent literacy rate were highly advanced in the country. But in neighbouring Arunachala Pradesh (in the same North-Eastern Region) only 0.8 per cent Panchen Monpa were literate. This inter tribal difference was prevalent all over the country.

During the fifth five-year plan (1974-78), the government of India realised the gravity of tribal tension and a separate tribal sub-plan was prepared for their development. Therefore, a large plan allocation was made for the tribal areas. As regards the plan allocation for the tribals, S.N. Singh commented:
“Tribals are most backward section in India. It requires more allocation of funds for their all-round development. But government is not providing sufficient resources to remove their economic hindrances. Therefore, the pace of development is very slow.\(^4\)

Ranjan Kumari and S. Radhakrishnan, in their project carried out under the sponsorship of the Viswa Yuvak Kendra on the impact of education among the tribal groups, stated:

*The tribal population of India, nearly 7.7 per cent of the total Indian population (as per 1981 census) is in the midst of the flux, both situationally and in socio-cultural terms. Developmental changes, increased communication with and exposure to non-tribal neighbours, penetration of influence of education and even political, administrative, economic and market forces and processes, are at last beginning to tell on them and cultural values. In brief, development and concomitant social change, as is delivered to them or thrust on them has amounted to a cultural shock. The trauma of such a shock to their psyche, and the ways in which they are trying to cope up with and adjust to it, need careful study.*\(^5\)
Education has been regarded as the most potent instrument for dealing with both the problems associated with India's tribal population. On the other hand, it has been believed that education can help tribals to better their economic conditions and to become socially mobile. This follows from the idea that entry into educational institutions confers the equality of opportunity that is guaranteed under constitution. Given a little help through these privileges, tribal students can compete on an equal footing with others. Education, in short, has been made out to be the great equaliser.

At the same time, it was anticipated that education will promote the integration of tribal people into the wider society. Along with the benefits of modern education, tribal students have been expected to imbibe the values of the national culture. The small number of tribals who would receive education would form the channel through which the national culture would gradually reach the uneducated mass of the tribal population. Education thus, would also serve as a means of cultural integration by introducing new values and symbols into tribal society.46
3.9 SCHEDULED TRIBES IN ORISSA

Orissa is the abode of as many as 62 different tribal communities (Appendix-G). Each tribe has its own peculiar cultural manifestations. According to 1971 census, 23.11 per cent of the state's population belonged to scheduled tribes which records an increase of 16.62 percent over a decade. Next to Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa comprise the largest tribal population in the country. Out of state's total area of 155849 Sq.Kms. 697885 Sq. Kms. (constituting 44.73%) have been declared as scheduled area of tribal concentration.

The scheduled tribes are distributed in two distinct geophysical zones in uneven proportion (i) The Northern plateau which includes Sundargarh, Mayurbhanja and Keonjhar districts, Kuchinda sub-division of Sambalpur district, Pallahara sub-division of Dhenkanal District and Nilgiri sub-division of Balasore district, and (ii) The Southern mountain ranges which comprises Koraput and Phulbani districts, Parala Khemundi sub-division of Ganjam district, Thuamul, Rampur and Lanjhigarh blocks of Kalahandi district.
There are 15 major tribes in the state each of which has a population of more than one lakh. The tribes are Kandha (8,69,965), Gond (4,99,267), Santal (4,52,953), Saora (3,42,757), Kolha (3,09,588), Sabara (2,40,344), Kishan (1,80,025), Oraon (1,64,619), Bhumji (1,46,978), Bathudi (1,30,792) and Kharia (1,20,983). The population of these major tribes constitutes 84.18 per cent of the total tribal population of Orissa.

Commenting on the socio-economic condition of the tribals in Orissa P.C. Rout said:

Almost all the tribals are in the lowest economic bracket. Their literacy level is as low as 13.95 per cent with a female literacy of 4.76 per cent. Inter-district disparities are very much pronounced.
FOOT NOTES


12. Punalekar, op. cit, p.3.


41. Singh, *op.cit.*, p.15

42. *Ibid.*


47. Census of India, 1981, Table No. 1. 02.

