CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
1.1 **Introductory**

"In our national perception education is essential for all. This is fundamental to our all-round development, material and spiritual", affirms India's National Policy on Education (1986). Obviously, it implies that the education of the disadvantaged groups of India, i.e. the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Scheduled Tribes (ST), is basic for their development. Owing to the age-old rigid caste system of India, the SCs and STs have suffered from distinct social, economic and educational disabilities. One of the important objectives of education is to equalize opportunities for all, enabling the underprivileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever for the improvement of their conditions. Inequalities of educational opportunities arise on account of the following reasons: (a) non-existence of schools, (b) poverty, (c) high standards of schools, (d) home environment
of a family, and (e) wide disparity of educational development between the backward classes and the advanced classes.

Needless to say that the SCs and STs are important sections of our Indian society. According to the 1981 Census of India, the vast territory of India with diverse ecological, cultural and linguistic zones has given shelter to 685,184,692 souls, who include 51,628,638 tribal people with 26,038,535 males, and 25,590,103 females, and 104,754,623 Scheduled Caste people with 54,210,594 males and 50,544,029 females. The tribals, who constitute 7.76% of the total population in India, come under the fold of four hundred odd tribal groups. While the majority of them are found to reside in very remote areas, particularly in forests and hilly tracts, a good number of them also live in the urban centres, industrial belts, mines and collieries, tea gardens and such other places. They are found to inhabit in all States and Union Territories except the States of Punjab, Chandigarh and Pondicherry.

Madhya Pradesh is the State where the highest number of these tribals (23.22%) live. Next in order come Orissa (11.46%), Bihar (11.26%) and Maharashtra (11.18%). While Gujarat has 9.39% STs, Rajasthan bears 8.12% of them. Each of the other States has less than 4% of the tribal population of India.

The first Backward Class Panel, led by Kaka Kalelkar, had identified 2,399 communities as backward, the criterion for determining backwardness being the caste. The Scheduled Castes constitute 15.75% of the total population of India. Thus SCs
outnumber the STs. There are about eleven hundred castes and
sub-castes spread all over the country (Sachchidananda, 1979).
There is no State in India where no SCs reside. Madhya Pradesh,
however, has the highest density (23%) of the total SC population
of India. Thus, almost every sixth Indian belongs to the
Scheduled Castes. If we add the number of STs to it, every
fourth or fifth Indian falls into this category. The combined
SC/ST population of India is larger than the population of
England or Germany and equals the population of Japan or Indonesia.

1.2 **Who are STs?**

The word 'tribal' in general refers to a member of a
social group made up of people of the same race, beliefs, customs,
language, etc., living in a particular area often under the
leadership of a chief. In Anthropology, the term has been defined
in the following terms:

A social group with territorial affiliation,
endogamous, with no specialization of func-
tions, ruled by tribal officers, united in
language or dialect, recognizing social
distance from other tribes or castes ...
following tribal traditions, beliefs and
customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas
from alien sources, above all conscious of a
homogeneity of ethnic and territorial inte-

The tribals are the descendants of the primitive tribes, the
oldest inhabitants of India. Guha (1944) has broadly divided
the primitive tribes of India into the following six categories:

1. Negrito  
2. Proto-Australoid  
3. Mongoloid  
4. Mediterranean  
5. Western Brachycephalous, and  
The Negrito group is virtually extinct in India. The Mongoloids are generally found in the north-eastern region of the country and also, to some extent, in Central India. The Proto-Austroloids are the largest single group of primitive tribes in India. Most of the tribal communities in Central and South India belong to this family. The present tribals are, therefore, rightly called the 'Adivasis'. This justifies their contribution to Indian life and culture. A good rendering of 'adivasis' in English would probably be 'aboriginals' without the stigma attached to the English word. A better equivalent is 'Bhumiputra' — sons of the soil, which is used in Indonesia to identify the people native to the country.

The Commission for SC/ST in its report for the year 1952 has listed eight common features of tribal communities:

1. They live away from the civilized world in the inaccessible parts lying in the forests and hills.
2. They belong to one of the three stocks: Negrito, Austroloid, and Mongolid.
3. They speak the same tribal dialect.
4. They profess primitive religion known as 'Animism' which prescribes the worship of ghosts and spirits as its most important feature.
5. They follow primitive occupations such as gleaning, hunting and gathering of forest products.
6. They are largely carnivorous.
7. They live either naked or semi-naked using tree barks or leaves for clothes.
8. They have nomadic habits and a love for drink and dance.
It seems, however, that most of these features have lost their relevance for identifying the tribals. In the present context there is no clear indication of the criteria for specifying them. The following three aspects were instead taken into consideration for including a tribe in the Scheduled Tribes List (1950), modified in 1956, selected for a privileged treatment:

(a) Tribal origin,
(b) Primitive way of life, and
(c) General backwardness.

The main test now seems to be whether the tribe in the past had been denied rights and opportunities and whether it needs care and special measures for its uplift to level it up with non-SC/ST communities. If the levelling has already taken place in the case of a community, it is not included in the list, though from a theoretical point of view it is still a tribe. The case of the Raj Gonds of Surguja may be cited as an example (Kundu, 1980). Except for this shift of focus, the government's point of view is similar to that of an anthropologist.

The diverse groups included in the list prefer to identify themselves by their traditional tribal names. In the present Indian context, however, the term 'tribal' has become a catch word for the political consciousness of a particular group of people, which has become symbolic of privileged treatment. For others who do not belong to that group, the term has become symbolic of an inferior status (Mathur, 1972).
1.3 Who are SCs?

The social structure of Indian society is vastly differentiated and hierarchically graded. The caste system, as the religio-social instrument, has provided the fundamental base upon which the rubric of this hierarchy has been devised. This system has divided the whole population into many groups, which are designated not only high and low but have been cut apart from each other by many rules of 'social intercourse' (Paul, 1971). The lowest segment of this caste hierarchy has been treated as untouchables and have been designated with many euphemisms (like 'Harijans', 'Depressed', 'Dalit' classes), the latest being the Scheduled Castes. These caste groups have not only been placed at the lowest rung of the social hierarchy but have also been economically deprived and are the most backward section of Indian society.

The Scheduled Castes in different parts of India do not form any solid mass. They are split up into hundreds of castes and subcastes. There are about eleven hundred such groups spread all over India. In different regions nevertheless some of them retain and share a common identity and sometimes a common name. Each group in the SC population has a name, a separate occupation, its own set of rules and, more often than not, its own mechanism for social control. These groups are not equal in social status. They are arranged in strictly hierarchical order as caste/sub-caste and practise untouchability among themselves. Endogamy is widely practised among them (Sachchidananda, 1979).
1.4 Ethnic orientation

The words 'ethnic' and 'ethnical' are adjectives of 'race' (of mankind). But these days these words mean a host of other things due mainly to the recent rise of ethnic conflicts and the resurgence of ethnic identity — a sudden increased tendency to insist on the significance of group distinctiveness and identity, and also stronger personal pride and self-respect in lineage. This has given rise to the noun form of the term 'ethnicity', a word not found in the 1963 edition of the OED and making its first appearance in the 1972 Supplement. This term is often defined as one of 'contrasting, conflicting and contradictory' terms (Fishman, 1977). Some scholars have described it as 'an aspect of humanism', 'a natural process', 'a dynamic anchorage' to the modern sense of rootlessness (Bell, 1976) while others call it 'a pejorative property of unnatural persistence' (Dasgupta, 1975) in describing others' attitude to it and brand it as 'a disguise for the economically insecure and politically opportunistic' (Patterson, 1977). All this, in turn, has affected the original connotation of the terms 'ethnic' and 'ethnical'.

Ethnic minorities are ethnic groups who, because of their less numerical strength and low socio-economic status, occupy a subordinate position in a state in relation to the dominant group whose distinctive culture and/or physiognomy is established as superior in the society (Kundu, 1986). But with the revival of ethnicity, ethnic minorities have also come to mean 'self-
conscious units bound together by the special traits which their members share and by the special disabilities which these special traits bring (Wagley and Harris, 1958: 10).

Ethnic minorities can be broadly divided into two groups:

(i) the original inhabitants of some countries like the Maories of New Zealand, the American Indians of the USA and the SCs/STs of India, who were once the owners of the land but were later reduced to minority with an inferior status;

(ii) ethnic groups who migrated from their native states to foreign countries in search of better living, often due to war and state policies, as immigrants and refugees, e.g. the Chinese, the Indians in the USA and in the European countries.

It is absolutely essential to preserve the language and the culture of the first group because, once depleted, their language and culture can never be restored (Saville-Troike, 1978).

1.5 SCs/STs as disadvantaged groups

Numerous terms such as "deprived" (Clark and Clark, 1953), "psycho-socially deprived" (Kirk, 1958), "Culturally deprived" (Reissman, 1962), "socially disadvantaged" (Havighurst, 1964) have been used by educationists, psychologists, particularly in America after 1960s, to identify the children of the poor and the ethnic minorities. The term 'disadvantaged' has further been generalised to include all those who are prevented from fulfilling the human potential (Fantini, 1968).
Frost and Hawkes (1966:13), in their attempt to find who the disadvantaged are, speak of such labelling and inform us that "during recent years, the term 'disadvantaged' has gained common usage as a label for those children of the very poor who suffer various social, emotional and physical restrictions". The disadvantaged is always a relative concept. Havighurst (1966:16) remarks: "Disadvantaged is a relative term. When we speak of child as being socially disadvantaged, we mean that he has a disadvantage relative to some other child ...". Lack of proper education may be one of the chief reasons for being disadvantage.

Passow, Miriam Goldberg and Tannenbaum (1967) have indicated that education is insufficient where there is discrimination and education is minimal where inequality prevails. They have shown that many children, when they come to school, bring with them scars of bigotry and poverty. These children face an early difficulty in mastering basic intellectual skills. The main reason for this can be traced to negative self-image: orientation to present against future gratification in terms of status, independence, etc. The general inability to perform satisfactorily in the academic field seems to be due to the lack of ability to carry out tasks which make the learner appear 'good' to a teacher (Japegnanam, 1989).

But whatever the expanded concept, the words mentioned above are used for the poor and the underprivileged and the ethnic minorities who form the lower social classes. Thus the
term 'disadvantaged' includes the lower classes and the ethnic minorities. The SCs/STs have been accorded officially the status of "disadvantaged" classes. The Constitution of India, specifically identifying them among the weaker sections of the society, has made ample provision for their integral development. In addition to the Preamble of the Constitution, a series of Articles provide for their protection and welfare. While Article 342 of the Constitution has kept provision for notification of the STs, Article 366(25) has defined the term Scheduled Tribe. Articles 15, 16, 19 and 20, dealing with the fundamental rights of the Indian citizens, have authorised different States to adopt special provisions for the advancement of different Backward Classes. Articles 332 and 335 provide reservations of seats for the STs and SCs in the Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies. Claims of the SCs and STs to services and posts have also been recognized. Article 338 has provisions for the post of Special Officer for the SCs/STs to look after their interests. Article 244 (1 and 2), read with the Fifth Schedule Parts A and C, deals with the administration of the Scheduled and Tribal Areas. Part B of the V Schedule provides the establishment of the Tribes Advisory Council. Article 275 has given opportunity to the States to draw grant-in-aid from the Consolidated Fund of the Central Government for the welfare of the STs and SCs. Similarly, Article 46 of the Constitution looks after the educational development of the SCs and STs. It states: "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the
people and in particular, of the SCs and the STs, and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

1.6 **SCs and STs in Madhya Pradesh**

Madhya Pradesh (See M.P. : A Profile) has almost 23 per cent of the country's total tribal population. Now almost 14 per cent of the total Scheduled Caste population lives in the state. The population of the ST/SC classes was recorded in the 1981 Census as 11,987,031 and 7,358,533 respectively. Thus every third person in the state belongs to SC/ST classes, as against every fifth in the country.

**TABLE 1**

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**Madhya Pradesh : A profile**

| Area       | 4,50,000 sq.kms. |
| Population | 5,21,78,844      |
| Urban      | 1,05,00,000      |
| Rural      | 4,15,00,000      |
| Population of SCs/STs | 1,93,45,00,000 |
| Scheduled Castes | 73,58,00,000    |
| Scheduled Tribes  | 119,87,00,000    |

Contd.
Predominant Harijan Districts : 57.78% (26 out of 45)
Predominant Tribal Districts : 22.22% (10 out of 45)
Cultivable land : 43%
Area under irrigation : 21%
Forest cover : 28.9%

**Education**

| Literacy rate |  
|---------------|-------------------|
| Male          | 39.38%            |
| Female        | 15.53%            |

| SCs/STs |  
|---------|-------------------|
| SCs     | 18.97%            |
| Male    | 30.26%            |
| Female  | 6.87%             |

| STs |  
|-----|-------------------|
| Male | 10.68%            |
| Female | 17.74%            |
|       | 3.6%             |

**Source:** Census of India 1981.

The tribal population of the state is spread over a large area and the problem of logistic approach is serious. The tribals of the southern and eastern regions belong to Gond and Dravidian tribes. Mudia, Maria, Parja and Mathara tribes inhabit the Bastar district; Pandos and Korbas live in Surguja and Oraons in Jaspur. The Mundas and Korbas live in Betul and elsewhere, and Gonds and Baigas live in Mandala district. The Bhils live in Western regions, some of them residing even in the Bhopal district (Shrivastava, 1985).
The Scheduled Caste population of the State is also spread over a large area. Chamars, for example, are concentrated in the districts of Bilaspur, Raipur, Morena, Sagar and Durg. Mahars (Mehra, Mahar) reside mainly in Indore district, and Balahis (Balai) live in Ujjain, Dewas and West Nimar districts. A large number of Bhangis (Mehtar, Balmik) reside in the districts of Mandsaur, Sagar, Indore and Ujjain.

1.7 Govt's measures for SCs and STs

During the pre-British and British periods the deprived classes were denied equality of opportunity in social, political, economic and educational matters. The Social Reform Movement initiated in the 19th century was instrumental in awakening consciousness for their uplift. The significant role played by non-official agencies and individuals like Gandhiji, Jotirao Phuley and Dr. Ambedkar is praiseworthy in this regard. But the formal recognition of SCs and STs as the 'weaker sections of the society' and the adoption of planned programmes for their uplift came about only after independence.

For our convenience, all the Central Government's measures in this respect can be grouped broadly under two heads: 1. General, 2. Educational. The general measures include: (a) adoption of legal provisions such as the abolition of untouchability as per Emancipation and Untouchability Offence Act of 1955; (b) community development welfare activities such as the setting up of Community and Tribal Development Blocks, declaration of the
Scheduled Areas with the twin objectives to assist the SCs and STs in enjoying their existing rights unhindered and to develop the areas to promote economic, social and educated progress among the SC/ST groups and the abolition of the Bonded Labour system; and

(c) "Protective discrimination", such as protective legislations to check their exploitation by the dominant society, reservation of seats in government jobs and relaxation of age limit, special drive for SCs and STs recruitment, etc.

The education of the SC/ST people was neglected before independence, although some Christian missionaries (e.g. Jesuit Priests from Belgium) contributed a lot in this direction. After independence, the Constitution of India recognized the value of education as the main instrument for their upward mobility and status equalization (cf. Article 46 of Constitution of India). There are three identifiable stages in the spread of education among SCs/STs:

(i) The opening of separate schools for SCs/STs

Initially, such attempts by the missionaries were encouraged by the government. Later the Government itself started separate schools for them. A good number of such schools exist even today throughout the country. In Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh all such schools are managed by voluntary agencies. In Orissa and Kerala, most of these schools are run by the government. In Madhya Pradesh these schools are run by both private and government agencies.
(ii) The struggle for equality in the joint schools

Earlier, students from the SC/ST groups were asked to occupy back benches in the class. This practice was forbidden by law and they were given equal opportunity in the joint schools.

(iii) Introduction of special incentives for their education

This includes reservation of seats in educational institutions and hostels, provision of stipends and special scholarships, remedial coaching for SC/ST students who join the national institutes like IITs against reserved seats, preparatory coaching for IAS, IPS, IFS, Banking and other services. Recently, the University Grants Commission has decided to extend monetary help under the Faculty Improvement Programme to colleges even when they fail to satisfy the minimum requirements, if they have more than 20% tribal and Scheduled Caste students. Moreover, the UGC has sanctioned a large amount of money for SC/ST teachers to give them advanced learning and research facilities.

Apart from the special steps taken for the integral growth of SC/ST classes by the Union Government, the Government of Madhya Pradesh has taken some concrete steps for an all-round development of SCs/STs in the State. The State Tribal Welfare Department is responsible for the preparation, planning and implementation of welfare programmes for SC/ST classes. Under the State Plan, a high priority is given to the programmes aiming at the expansion of education amongst these people. Scholarships are awarded to SC/ST students up to Post-graduate level, textbooks are distributed among them free of cost (Rs. 55/-
upto graduate level; Rs. 80/- upto post-graduate level), residential facilities are provided in the shape of hostels at places where these boys have to come and stay to pursue their studies. Primary, Middle and Higher Secondary Schools are run by the Tribal Department in all the Scheduled Areas as well as the areas under Tribal Development Blocks.

In schools and colleges and hostels 15% and 18% of the seats are reserved for SC and ST students respectively. The SC/ST students are exempted from paying tuition fees upto post-graduate classes. Special study centres for the preparation of IAS, IPS, IFS, PSC and other competitive examinations are instituted in various parts of the state. Industrial Training Institutes and Training-cum-Production Centres are also run so as to enable SC/ST pupils to acquire skills for getting employment opportunities. Through Tribal Development Blocks, Promotion of Cooperatives and enforcement of Debt Relief measures, their economic uplift is attempted.

In November 1984, M.P. Government, on the recommendation of SC/ST Commission, recognized 81 Hindu groups and 25 Muslim groups in the category of SCs/STs, by which many people have benefitted.

In spite of various endeavours by the Central and State governments, the achievement of SCs/STs in respect of their integral development is far below the expectation. Although 44 years have elapsed since independence, yet no Scheduled Area,
Caste or Tribe has reached a state which would necessitate its descheduling. The administrative and legislative measures taken so far have produced some political and economic changes in the status of the SCs/STs, but they have not resulted in the abolition of the caste system or the transformation of the tribals into ordinary Indian citizens who can strive for and achieve self-improvement on the basis of individual training and ability. The legal safeguards protecting them have also not made the dominant castes more willing to accept them as equals. As observed by the Education Commission (1964-66), caste seems to have extended its sphere of influence under the very democratic process of the Constitution itself. What Ogbu (1978: 296) has said of the SCs stands true of both SCs and STs:

The modernists point to the preferential treatment given to the SCs in scholarships, college admission, and Government jobs as evidence that the untouchability is no longer a factor, but beneath these lies the powerful assumption that the SCs are inferior to the upper castes, that every member of a SC holding a scholarship or a good job got it because of government's preferential treatment and not because of his own ability.

The education system has not been adjusted to their needs and in spite of the constitutional provision for education in their mother tongue, scarcely any attempt has been made to do so.

Little attention is being given to the development of tribal languages and culture. In spite of repeated advice by the Tribal Commissions for a 'system of planned contact and adjusted exposure', the exposure for the tribals seems to be
abrupt, which has resulted in psychological maladjustment and cultural impoverishment. This has often led to 'detribalization' and to some attempts at 'passing' by change of place and adoption of higher class-surnames (Chitnis, 1978: 228). The main reason behind this seems to be the ethnocentric attitudes of the persons who implement these programmes, who still have a 'melting pot' set of expectations. The Study Team on Tribal Development Programmes (1966) rightly realized this fact when it stated that there is a "complete lack of rapport between the officers and the tribal population".

All these factors are partly responsible for various revolts and protests. On 30 June 1980 about a thousand Adivasis marched all the way from the Red Fort to the Boat Club in pouring rain, demanding a separate Jharkhand State and submitted a memorandum to the President (cf. National Herald, 1.7.1980). The Jharkhand Movement is still active and its members have been elected to the Parliament and the State Legislative Assembly in 1989 elections. The violent clashes at Tripura in early June 1980, where-in a four-day rioting and arson about 400 people were killed and over 50,000 dwellings destroyed, are also a case in point. The Bodo Students' Movement of 1989-90 also indicates the graveness of the problem. Though the issues behind the demand for a Jharkhand State and the tribal clashes in Manipur, Assam, West Bengal and Tripura are said to be different, the real cause may be the same, i.e. discontent over the present state of the tribals.
We also observe a retaliating attitude of non-SC/ST people against SC/ST groups. The Anti-Reservation stir in North India in December 1989 and August-September 1990 can be attributed to the defective policies of the government.

1.8 Linguistic competence of SC/ST

The Deficit Theory, which is also known as the Concept of Verbal Deprivation, claimed that compared with students of school-age from advantaged dominant groups, children of the same age from poor and ethnic minorities are incompetent even in their first languages. Some scholars even claim that such children come to school with hardly any language at all (Bereiter et al., quoted in Labov, 1972). According to Ulibarri (quoted in Saville-Troike, 1976 b), "the child coming from an impoverished environment has had little language development in either his native vernacular or in English".

Bernstein, who came out with a neat version of this Deficit Theory, posited two types of codes -- Restricted and Elaborated, which are associated with the working-class and middle class respectively. According to him, these two classes are differently oriented in their structural and lexical choices. A number of investigations (e.g. Bernstein, 1962a, 1962b; Lawton, 1963, 1964; Robinson, 1965a, 1965b) have established the distinction between restricted and elaborated codes by revealing a number of grammatical, lexical, semantic and paralinguistic differences in the language used by working-class and middle class people.
The language of the working-class people is characterized by short, simple and unfinished sentences, simple and repetitive use of conjunctions, limited use of subordinate clauses, rigid and insufficient use of adjectives and verbs, and repetition of the same word. Although this helps these people to retain their group integrity and status by excluding 'outsiders' from sharing the ingroup communication, this also prevents them from communicating effectively with outside groups. The language of the middle class people, however, is characterized by accurate grammatical and syntactical order, frequent use of prepositions and logical modifications, careful selection of adjectives and verbs, expressive symbolism and explicit exposition.

This concept of verbal deprivation has been subjected to severe criticism by Labov (1972) and others. But in our context, we feel, Bernstein's theory may prove true especially in the case of SC/ST people. The SC/ST people are poor in learning English as a second/foreign language because of 'cultural deprivation' resulting from their 'Restricted Code' as against the 'Elaborated Code' of non-SC/ST group.

1.9 The need of English

Down through the ages, languages have played an important role in the life of all nations. This is because we need a language to communicate with each other. Languages are essential in binding peoples together. Political and social ideologies have to be conveyed to the masses and language is an important factor used by the media in achieving this. The important
functions of any government include public administration, commerce, industry, education, health care, law and order, administration of justice, etc., and the one common thread that runs through all these areas is language. No individual can function as an effective member of any particular community unless she or he can use the language effectively.

After achieving independence in 1947, Hindi was constitutionally accepted as the national language. But Hindi was opposed in many non-Hindi speaking areas and in the post-independence days, the leaders of the nation assured the people of these areas that Hindi would not be imposed on them against their will, and the people of these areas still insist upon the Union Government's abiding by this promise with the result that though we have a national language, we are in need of a link language and this need is satisfied by English. Owing to the peculiar situation arising out of the non-acceptability of a constitutionally accepted language and the need for people in various states to hold dialogues with each other, English, though primarily a foreign language, has many more users and uses than a foreign language normally has.

As suggested by Lewis and Massad (1975: 18), English can be studied at one of the three socio-historical levels. First, it is the traditional language of countries like England, USA, Australia as well as parts of Canada. Second, it is an ex-colonial language in countries like India and some African nations where the indigenous languages have remained strong. Here it continues
to be used in partnership with the indigenous languages and plays an important role in fundamental education. Third, it is one of the major "languages of wider communication" and thus plays a significant role in higher education, particularly in science and technology. Owing to the long colonial rule, the English language enjoys a "may-not-be-native-and-yet-may-not-be-foreign-either" status in India. It has become the language of the elite. Reacting to the suggestion of introducing other foreign languages in place of English, Suniti Kumar Chatterji (1954: 11) states:

English is now the most important European language, or world language—, and fortunately, as there is in India more than a century old tradition of English studies and there is the atmosphere of English, it is comparatively easier for us to learn it than any other foreign language.... That being so, I would suggest that in our education there must be a place for English.

The existence of Indian literature in English and its appreciable growth prove that English has become a part of the Indian ethos. Realizing its practical value in the Indian context, almost all the Education Commissions have stressed its value for Indian education. The Secondary Education Commission (Government of India, 1972: 70) wanted English to be a compulsory subject in secondary schools, beginning with the middle school stage. The Education Commission (1964–66) recognized its importance as a 'library language' in higher education and a 'window-on-the-world'. The Study Group (1964) appointed by the Ministry of Education, Government of India also emphasized its value as a means of access to the vast treasure of modern scientific knowledge.
In higher education in India, particularly in science and technology, English is the medium of instruction and it forms a major subject in selection tests for any class I or II position in the Central government. Interviews and *viva voce* are very often conducted in English. Thus, the SCs/STs' need for English is great. Furthermore, as reported by the Harijan and Adivasi Commission (1978–79), higher education among tribals and their representation in the Class I Central Government services, which require such higher education, are far from satisfactory. The problems they face in learning and acquiring English may be one of the main causes for their lagging behind.

Speaking of the contribution of English to the cause of education in our country, the Education Commission (1964–66:192) in its report summed up:

> English will continue to enjoy a high status so long as it remains the principal medium of education of the university stage, and the language of administration at the centre and in many of the States. Even after the regional languages become media in higher education in the universities, a working knowledge of English will be a valuable asset for all students and a reasonable proficiency in the language will be necessary for those who proceed to the university.

According to the National Policy on Education, English will continue to play an important role in our educational system not as the main medium of instruction but as an associate medium, an associate official language, and as one of the languages in our three-language formula. At the national and international levels, English continues to serve as our 'window-on-the-world'
and as our link with the outside world. It will continue to be a source language, providing access to the vast and growing knowledge in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social science, management, law and also humanities. English has become today the main language of transnational and international communication. The continuation of English is therefore important if our science and technology, trade and commerce are to be truely international. It is heartening to note that English-based Indian bilinguals constitute the third largest pool of trained and technical manpower in the world (Verma, 1989).

As an associate official language, as the official link between the Central Government and the Governments of the non-Hindi speaking states, as the language favoured by all-India institutions, all-India seminars, workshops and conferences, the legal and banking systems, trade, commerce and defence, English performs important functions. It is an important promoter not only of social mobility but also of geographical mobility. It has been playing an important role in bringing in national unity and integration. Where the medium of instruction is some language other than English, Indian students and researchers find English useful as a 'library language' and a 'language of wider communication'. At the individual level (at the level of educated bilinguals), English continues to be 'the language of opportunity', 'the language of upward socio-economic mobility'. Any individual seeking socio-economic advancement at the national level will find proficiency in English an asset. Jobs that require inter-
state movements demand a fairly high level of competence in English.

The state and privilege of English language being like this, a backward state like M.P. should also avail itself of the opportunities created by English. It still plays an important role in M.P. Although Hindi is the official language of the state, English continues to be the language of administration and courts of law, though on 2 April 1990, the State Government banned the use of English in governmental transactions. It is taught as a compulsory subject from Class VI to XII and also at the graduation level. English is a significant component of the Foundation Course of B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. Parts I, II and III. In 1990-91 session, it is mandatory for all the First-Year students to get pass marks (at least 17 marks) in English language. English is also taught at the First Year of B.Sc. (Agriculture), Engineering and Pharmacy courses. Even though it is not a compulsory subject in colleges of Medicine, the medium of instruction is English. Besides, all the selection tests for Class I, II, III services generally include a paper on English. The most important of all is the favourable attitude of the government and the people to the English language.

Since English plays so important a role in M.P., proficiency in English is a must for the SCs and STs, particularly for technical studies and for higher jobs, where they have a very poor representation. So it is imperative that special opportunities are made available to help the weaker sections of our
society to acquire an adequate competence in English so that they do not remain for ever disadvantaged in areas of higher education and in terms of upward social mobility. It is obligatory on the part of the government to take necessary steps to produce methods and materials designed to help students coming from the tribal, rural and other neglected sections of society who, though gifted and intelligent, feel alienated and handicapped at institutions of higher learning because they did not have the opportunity of acquiring English and find themselves incapable of using it even as a 'library language.'

1.10 **Review of the earlier work**

The study of tribes in M.P. has been neglected from the very beginning. In 1916 a Handbook on the Tribals and Castes of Central Provinces was published by Russel and Hiralal. W.G. Grierson (1938) published a monograph on the Maria Gonds of Bastar. However, it was Verrier Elwin who pioneered ethnographic research in M.P. He wrote a series of monographs on the Baiga (1939), Agaria (1942), Maria (1943, 1950), Muria (1947) tribals and brought to light the rich heritage of the tribal culture of M.P. Elwin (1952) advocated the policy of planned acculturation and suggested that if a genuine protection was given and real life was restored, there would be a happy future for these tribal people who were suffering from a loss of nerve. He also made a very valuable contribution to the study of tribal art (1951), folktales (1944) and myths (1947) which are contained in his three seminal publications. The contributions of Griffiths (1946),
Stephen Fuchs (1960), T.S. Wilkinson and Mathias Hermanus (1952) are also notable.

Among Indian anthropologists, a mention may be made of T.B. Naik and S.C. Dube, who were initiated in field work by D.N. Majumdar to work on the tribes of M.P. Naik worked with his team among the tribals of M.P. The Tribal Research Institute, Chhindwara, collected tribal folk songs and tales which have been published in Hindi in several volumes. S.L. Kalia (1961) and B.R. Chouhan (1966) also studied about the tribals. Besides, Syed Ashfaq Ali (1973) and O.S. Shrivastava (1985) have made valuable additions to the study of tribals of M.P.

As for the SCs no substantial works have been done particularly on the Scheduled Castes of M.P., though the SCs in India evoked sufficient interest in the researchers in the areas of education, sociology and psychology, particularly during the 1970s when the Government of India stressed the need for integrating the weaker sections of the society into the mainstream and emphasized equalization of opportunity for all. Most of the studies have been conducted in the field of sociology by socio-economists. Very few studies are found to have been conducted in the field of education by teachers or teacher educators or researchers in the field of education (Gupta, 1978).

Research on education of the SC children was brought under priority by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 1975 when a number of research problems were suggested for investigation. These problems were:
1. Discovery of solutions for the educational needs of the children from the poorer section of the society.

2. Interdisciplinary research aimed at finding out solutions to problems existing in the field of education.

3. Research related to identification of talent and its development at all levels of education.

4. Research related to the fulfilment of constitutional directive of Article 45 providing for compulsory and free education for all children upto the age of fourteen.

5. Recognition of the significance of non-formal education.

6. Finding solutions to problems arising out of increased population.

7. Studies on education of the SC/ST children.

8. Relevance of education to socio-economic needs of the country.

In 1982, the NCERT issued a list of 30 specific problems of research and development on the education of the SCs and STs. In the early studies the researchers (e.g. Jha, 1974; Anand, 1972, Patwardhan, 1973; Sinha and Sinha, 1960) tried to study the attitudes of the non-SC students towards untouchability or the SCs. It was found that the SC students are highly upward social-mobility oriented, that their aspirations for entering the professions are limited and that more often they settle down to school teaching and clerical services mainly on reserved quota (BHU, 1975).

Naik (1972) and Goyal (1972) have reported the historic development and progress of depressed classes. Diverse problems
pertaining to the education of the SC students in India have been revealed by Miseshia and Ramanathan (1979), Lal (1979), Gangrade (1974), Singh (1979), Vyas and Chaudhary (1979), Singh, Pandey, Dubey and Yadav (1979), Sachchidananda (1979), Rajagopalan (1979), Pimpley (1979), Nayar (1979), Chitnis (1979), Bindu (1979) and others. Mostly, these are problems of socio-economic nature. A few of these relate to their enrolment and academic performance. Most of these studies have reported that the SC students are inferior to other caste students in their calibre and performance. Some other studies have also found that the SC students largely feel that the facilities provided by the governments to them are needed and satisfactory, but they are not administered properly. The linguistic competence of SC/ST learners of English and their learning strategies have not been examined in detail as yet.

An attempt has been made in the present study to investigate the linguistic competence of SC/ST learners of English in India. The methodology of the study has been outlined in Chapter II. Chapter III gives socio-economic profile of SC/ST learners vis-a-vis non-SC/ST group. The linguistic performance of SC/ST learners has been analysed in Chapter IV to have an idea of their language competence which is a composite measure of ability in the four skills of listening/understanding, speaking, reading and writing. For the purpose of this investigation, the English language competence of a student is determined on the basis of his performance relative to other students in his class. The study aims at identifying the learners' relative competence and at seeing how it relates to the independent variables.
Chapter V considers the learning strategies of SC/ST students of English. Learning strategies include both general approaches to studying language and specific techniques or study habits. A learner's approach to language study is determined by how he views language learning. He may see it as habit formation or as the discovery of a rule system. The approach he adopts will influence his choice of learning techniques, whether they be inferencing, inductive learning of linguistic patterns or memorization of sentences, pattern practice, etc. The findings of the present study along with recommendations and suggestions are given in the last Chapter.