CHAPTER VI

IMPACT OF ASHRAM SCHOOL EDUCATION: STUDY OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY AND CHANGE
The students' participation in the formal educational process is a continuous experience, especially when contrasted to the traditional home environment, wherein the immediate relevance and social value of the child's knowledge is directly related to his observation of and participation in the daily routine of the adult society. If one thinks that education brings about a complete change in a tribal child and his society, it would be a mistake. No external influence under normal conditions has the capacity to change the entire life ways of a community or even individuals. What actually happens is that changes occur in certain spheres while in others tradition continues to persist. This would be clear when we analyse continuity and change among the population under study.

Expression of Social Hierarchy

Traditionally Jatapus are ranked at the top in the social hierarchy because of their wealth, non-eating of beef and high degree of acculturation. Lack of all these characters among Savaras makes them lower in social status to the Jatapus. Jatapu students of Ashram Schools still hold the
same view and they do not accept, the food touched or served by the Savara students. Because of the notions of hierarchy between these two tribal communities of this area the cooks employed in the dormitory are from Jatapu community. Even those who have left the school and employed in government services still hold the same views of hierarchy and act accordingly. The Jatapu students in Ashram Schools do not have close association with the students from the Savara tribe.

**Participation in Tribal Shandies**

Shandies - the weekly market places play an important functional role in the socio-cultural life of the local community. Traditionally the children visit the shandies regularly along with their parents. Even after joining the schools, the boys and girls of Jatapus and Savaras visit these shandies. On the days of shandy, most of the Ashram Schools in this area will have a desert look because all the children attend and participate.

This habit of visiting shandy still exists not only among the present school-going children but among those who have left the school and who are employed. A shandy in this area is not only a place of market, but a place of recreation for social gathering, a centre for exchanging information etc.
Religion

The religion of the tribes is composed of three elements, namely, the worship of gods and spirits, the death rituals and the totemic ceremonies. Traditionally the Savaras have supreme faith in the spirits and deities which are believed to guide their destiny. They believe that all the ailments are caused by the evil spirits whereas good is done by benevolent ones.

The Savaras worship mainly two deities namely 'Sandhidemudu' and 'Jakaradevatha'. Jatapu worship Jakara and 'Durga', the village goddesses. The Jatapu join together on special occasions in the year to worship the community deities like 'Tivasaramma', 'Jakara Devatha', 'Durga' and 'Goddalamma'.

The school-going children and the employed youth still continue to worship these traditional deities because according to them they still have faith in the efficiency of these deities.

The festivals celebrated by the tribal communities in this area can be categorised into two first belonging to the tribal communities and the second consists of Hindu festivals.

Celebration of Kotha festivals are common among the tribal communities. After harvesting every crop, before they
consume, the whole community celebrates a festival as a form of thanks-giving to the supernatural. From the list of 'Kotha' festivals one can infer the cropping pattern and the food habits. There are 'Dhanyam Kotha' (pertaining to paddy), 'Kandi Kotha' (pertaining to redgram), 'Kondem Kotha' (pertaining to variety of millet), and 'Ippa Kotha' (pertaining to mohwa flower). The tribal children including school-going girls enjoy participating in these festivals. On the days of these festivals Ashram Schools are closed.

Ceremonies

The traditional ceremonies like Naming ceremony, Tonsure ceremony, Puberty ceremony, and Death ceremonies are common among the local tribal communities. These traditional ceremonies still continue among the educated tribal youth.

Education and Cultural Change

Education when conceived as a means of change, assumes the role of directed change. Although directed change is based on planning, it need not always result in positive response from the people. A positive response can be visualized only when the recipient group feels the need for it, and when the content of education reflects the needs, aspirations and in general the way of life of the group. In the context of the school system in tribal areas, Gezi (1971: 196) points out that "the school as a micro-society is unavoidably influenced by the social structure around it, and its
contributions to its community are determined not only by the relevance of its curriculum to society's problems, but also by the preparedness of the society to take advantage of their expertise".

After India's Independence the Government has been making efforts not only to improve the educational standards of tribal people but their overall economic and social development. Further improvement in transport and communication has also brought the tribal communities closer to the mainstream of Indian life. In any process of continued and accelerated contact situation, the local cultures are bound to be disturbed and put under stress. Here education can play a useful role in equipping the local population with the necessary skills to cope with these new challenges.

An attempt is made in the following few pages to understand the impact of Ashram Schools in particular and the spread of education in general on the tribal communities of this area. It is proposed to look into the impact first on the school-going children and then on the educated tribal youth.

The changes that have been brought about by Ashram Schools and the spread of education in the modern context can be analysed in two spheres. They are impact on material culture and non-material aspects of culture. Formal education has
changed the way of life, the social aspirations, the attitudes towards education both in material and non-material aspects and has a tendency towards the destruction of tribal norms. One innovation leads to chain-reaction which ultimately produces a change in the related aspects. For instance, the change occurs in the dressing pattern of the people. It may be the change in their hair style and even in the expenditure pattern of the people, or it may change in food habits. However it may be mentioned here that changes in material aspects of a community are likely to occur more quickly than in non-material aspects. T.B. Naik (1969) observes that "education has brought changes in the modes of living, dress, economy and some of the less important customs but there is hardly any much change in the social values and ethical codes". Further the degree of change depends on the degree of preparedness of the community to receive modern education.

Changes in Non-Material Aspects

The schools have helped tribal students in acquiring certain habits which are supposed to be good. First and foremost students have new acquired time sense. Once the children join the school the activities are regulated according to time and this habit continues even after they have left the school. This time sense also helps the educated tribals in doing things at appropriate time.
Education and Aspirations

Education has brought some drastic changes in the student's aspirations. The Table 25 clearly indicates the level of occupational aspirations of the Ashram School students.

Table 25
Occupational Aspirations of the Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Occupation</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>45.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>40.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>District Tribal Welfare Officers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>187</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to the occupational aspirations of Ashram School-going children it is interesting to note that majority of the respondents would like to become teachers. Perhaps the aspiration of becoming a teacher indicates the high esteem the children have for the teachers. Further the teacher is the first person with whom the tribal school-going children came into contact and naturally the teacher acts as a model for them.

On the other hand when the same number of non-school-going tribal children were contacted to enquire into their
aspirations level it was found that nearly 50 per cent of them did not respond at all while the rest said that they would like to continue their traditional occupation of agriculture, food gathering and hunting activities.

**Table 26**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Percentage of respondences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>45.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>10th Class</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>44.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>187</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of educational aspirations of the tribal students indicate indirectly the absence of post-matric educational facilities in the tribal areas. They have aspired to achieve the level of education with which they are familiar within their areas.

**Education and Breaking of Joint Family**

Modern education has affected some of the traditional institutions of the tribals. In the villages around Seethampet Mandal where tribal concentration is to be found, the joint family system which is a traditional institution of the tribals, is undergoing a rapid change. The educated tribals living
in this area find it most difficult to adjust in a joint family. Modern education which helps individuals develop independent personality does not fit in with the tribal patriarch-dominated joint family. The concept of freedom of opportunity to develop individual personality is against the concept of joint family where great amount of adjustment, understanding as well as toleration of different types of personalities is required.

The educated tribal house-wives do not want to continue their life of monotony and drudgery under a joint family. Due to wife's pressure the educated husband prefers living separately from his parents thereby giving a jolt to the joint family system. "Throughout the world, the process of modernization has tended to strengthen the nuclear family as against extended family, to increase the degree of mutual sharing of responsibility between the spouses, in contrast to more traditional sharp differentiation of responsibility by sex; and to encourage the free choice of partner by the individual, rather than by his parents or some other authority" (Inkeles, Alex, 1965: 89).

**Education and Marriage System**

Marriage by elopement and capture are common among the tribal communities of this areas. Education has brought some drastic change in the marriage system. The traditional type
of marriages are disliked by the educated tribal youth and they do not resort to them. Another aspect is that today while the educated tribal boys want to marry only educated girls and educated girls want to marry only educated boys. There are instances where the educated tribal girls have married the educated non-tribal boys. Sita Toppo has observed that, "the institution of marriage has also undergone some change due to education among the orans and other tribals. Though even now in a vast majority of cases, the orans, however educated they are, marry among the orans but there are several examples of educated oron boys marrying another tribal or non-tribal girls similarly there are instances where we find that an educated oron girl has married an educated boy of another tribal or non-tribal (Sita Toppo, 1978: 249).

Some of the educated tribal boys in Southampet area, it is reported, have insisted that their marriage should be performed according to the procedure followed by non-tribal communities. There is an increasing trend among the Jatapus to call the Brahmins to perform the marriage rituals. Thus we see that the process of sanskritization is also operative among the Jatapus. This is a process of integration of the tribals into the social system of the non-tribals. Recently a few cases of dowry payments at the time of marriage of few educated tribal boys have been reported.
Education and Relationship with Kinsmen

Traditionally very intimate relations exist between the tribal children and their parents, brothers, sisters and other relatives. They accompany their parents wherever they go. They look after their younger siblings when their parents are busy in agricultural activities and collection of minor forest produce. The tribal parents are generally fond of their children. When once the children are in the Ashram School the discontinuity in their routine activities occurs for both the parents and their children. A few children after a few days of stay in the Ashram Schools adjust themselves out for a few it takes a long time to make this adjustment. The second category of students often run away to their homes and the teachers have to bring them back. Another category is those who fail to adjust themselves in the Ashram Schools and these boys and girls ultimately drop out of the school.

In the initial stages when the tribal students are admitted in the Ashram Schools, the tribal parents are seen regularly visiting their children in the school, and gradually the parents learn to live without their children.

Education has affected the close ties of kinship among the tribals of this area. It is observed that educated tribals behave intimately with their kins who lack education. L.P. Vidyarthi (1969: 239-240) observes that, "if two or more
kinds were found to be of the same occupational status, it was observed that greater intimacy was maintained between them. A well educated converted tribal does not wish to associate himself with a kin who lacks education". Many tribal parents in this area have complained that their children particularly their sons after getting educated behave in a strange manner not only with them but with their other relatives. It looks that the educated tribal youth are getting themselves alienated from their relatives.

Education and Occupation

Traditionally the tribal communities of this area are engaged in various types of occupations like shifting cultivation, settled cultivation, wage labour, food gathering and hunting. Education definitely has made a difference with economic pursuits of the educated tribal youth.

In terms of solid impact of education it is seen in the employment opportunities some gains have been made by the educated tribal youth. Some of them have acquired employment in the lower rung of the Government services. A few of them are found in various jobs like school teachers, clerks, health visitors etc.

Education and Tribal Dance and Songs

Traditionally the children and adults are more interested of their performing folk arts i.e., the traditional songs and
dance. But school-going tribal children and educated tribal youth are not interested in learning these songs. They are more interested in learning the cinema songs taught to them by the non-tribal teachers' in the Ashram Schools.

The educated tribal youth consider dancing as old-fashioned. School teachers who are generally outsiders and do not know dancing derive the performance and point out how mixed dancing in the evening or at night promote immorality. All these influences leave a deep impression on the minds of tribal children and at most places they have forgotten the art. Even when they know it they know it they are too shy to dance as it carries the stigma of tribalism.

**Education and Value System**

Change in the attitudes and value systems of the educated tribal boys is clearly seen. For example many of the educated and employed tribal youth are slowly and gradually acquiring the attitudes and value systems of non-tribal communities. They no longer give absolute importance to kinship network and relations. The traditional values of kinship, family etc., are being displaced by individual values and aspirations.

At the community level the Ashram Schools have changed to a certain extent the negative and passive attitude of the tribal parents to a positive attitude. Today many tribal parents have favourable attitude towards education and many
of them are willing to send their children to schools. The change in the attitude of the tribal elders towards education is also due to the provision of facilities like better food, clothing etc., in Ashram Schools. Parents are not required to meet any additional expenditure on account of the education of their children because every aspect of their sons and daughters is being taken care of by the Department of Tribal Welfare.

However, it may be mentioned here that the changes that have occurred due to education are clearly perceptible among Jatapus than among Savaras. This is mainly due to the utilisation of educational institutions by the Savaras to a lesser degree when compared to the Jatapus. In the case of the Jatapus of this area one important fact has to be mentioned very clearly. It is the Jatapus who participated more vigorously and openly in the Leftist oriented movement in this area to fight against injustices perpetrated on them by the trader, land-lord and businessmen nexus. It is education which has given them a clear understanding of the methods of exploitation, degree and intensity of exploitation perpetrated on them by the outsiders. Jatapu educated youth have started questioning even some of the Government policies. Today these youth boldly face the Government officials and Development Administration to demand their share of programmes of development.
Education and Political System

The educated tribal youth are more matured politically. They are able to understand and even assess the ideologies of different political parties. Many of them clearly say that when they vote in Legislative and Panchayat Elections, they contemplate on the political ideologies of different political parties and also about the candidates contesting on behalf of these parties. Some of them are even active members of political parties like Congress, Telugu Desam, Communism and Janata Dal.

Education and Change in Material Culture

Changes in the material culture can easily be assessed because it can be seen with the naked eye and can be observed without any difficulty. It is also true that in culture, the material aspects of a culture change faster than that of non-material aspects.

Dress Pattern

The immediate change that can be observed among the school-going children in this area is the change in their dressing pattern. The school-going boys and girls are seen in shorts and shirts and blouses and petticoats respectively. The moment a boy or a girl is enrolled into the Ashram School dresses (shirts and shorts for the boys, shirt and petticoat for the girls) are supplied by the school authorities. Once
the students yet accustomed to this dress they do not want to be seen in their traditional dress even when they return home to their villages for vacation. Number of dresses supplied by the school authorities to the students are not sufficient, so both the boys and girls students pester their parents to buy them the same type of dresses. Change in the dress pattern of the tribal children who are not going to school may also be observed. A few of them regularly wear shorts and shirts, a definite impact of the school-going children. The tribal students particularly boys attending High Schools are now-a-days using pants and bush-shirts.

Use of Cosmetics

School-going boys and girls have learned to keep their body in clean condition by acquiring the healthy habits of taking bath daily or once in two days, combing their hair neatly and putting on clean clothes. Keeping one's own body clean incidentally brings him to the use of cosmetics. Boys regularly use soap and toothpowder, while the girls soap, toothpowder and toilet powder.

These habits of the school-going children have gradually been adopted by many non-school-going children and even some of the elders, particularly the non-school-going elderly women and girls. A few non-school-going elderly girls have mentioned that they have acquired the habit of using cosmetics from their
younger sisters who are attending Ashram Schools. Here it may be mentioned that the school-going girls are no longer interested in using their traditional ornaments. Now-a-days these girls are more fond of using plastic as well as German silver ornaments and other types of ornaments which are popularly used by many tribal women.

Food Habits

Food habits of the tribal boys and girls attending Ashram Schools have changed drastically. In their homes their traditional food consists of gruel prepared from millets, occasionally some non-vegetarian food besides roots, tubers, nuts, and fruits gathered from the forest. Once they join Ashram Schools they gradually start relishing the food given to them in the hostel. It consists of rice, dall, tamarind soup and sometimes even butter milk. On festive occasions they are also served with special dishes like sweets, eggs etc. Most of the food served in Ashram Schools is consumed by the non-tribal people. This habit of eating non-tribal food continues during the vacation as well as after leaving the school. Another important change is that the Ashram School-going children quickly acquire the habit of consuming beverages like coffee and tea as well as snacks popular among non-tribals. These snacks consist of iddli, dosa etc.

This change in the food habits of school-going children has also brought some changes in the food habits of the elders.
When the children come home either in vacation or after completing school education they tend to ask for the same food they have been eating in the schools. Parents try to provide at least a few items of this food, and for the sake of their children the elders also get accustomed to eating the food they prefer.

It may also be said that there is some change in the preparation of food in the households of the school-going children. To prepare rice and other items of food for the children a slight change in the procedure of preparation is required and this skill is quickly acquired by the tribal women to satisfy their children. Today many of the tribal elders, particularly men take beverages like tea and coffee, a habit mostly acquired from their school-going children.

Household Articles

It is also observed that the school-going tribal children have also brought about some changes in the consumer goods of their respective households. A few tribal students have even forced their parents to buy transistors, radios, one or two chairs, bedding material etc. The school-going children also force their parents to buy soaps, face powder and other items of cosmetics.

The tribal parents have definitely complained about the increasing expenditure due to the demands made by their
school-going children. They say that prior to the admission of the children into schools they were very judicious in spending their meagre income, but today they are forced to spend some part of their income on items which are essentially not necessary but only to satisfy their children. Expenditure on better clothing, new foods, new consumer goods etc., is very common now-a-days in tribal households.