

**THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLING
OF TRIBAL CHILDREN**

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Master Of Philosophy*

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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled "The Role of Language in Schooling of Tribal Children" submitted in partial fulfillment for the M. Phil. degree of this university has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other university and is my original work.

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We recommend that the dissertation may be placed before the examiners for the evaluation.

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**Dedicated
To
Birsa Munda**

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CONTENTS

	Page No.
Chapter I : INTRODUCTION	1-26
Chapter II: TRIBE, LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY IN INDIA	27-45
Chapter III: SCHOOLING OF TRIBAL CHILDREN : AN OVERVIEW	46-59
Chapter IV: TRIBAL LANGUAGE AND SCHOOLING: POLICY AND PRACTICE	60-76
Chapter V: CONCLUSION	77-84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	85-89
APPENDIX	90-93

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page No.
2.1	Major Tribal Groups	31
2.2	Distribution of Tribal Mother Tongues and Languages	37
2.3	Language Retention Ratio Among Tribals	39
2.4	Non-tribal Languages Prominent Among Tribals	40
2.5	Languages of the Eighth Schedule	43
3.1	Literacy Gap between ST and Other	47
3.2	Statewise Literacy Rate	48
3.3	Statewise Enrolment Percentage of Schedule Tribes at Primary Stage	50
3.4	Enrolment in Each Class as Percent of Enrolment in Class I	51
3.5	Statewise Retention of Schedule Tribes from the Primary Stage to Middle Stage	52
3.6	Gross Enrolment Ratio	54
3.7	The Gap between General and ST Drop out Rate	54
3.8	Statewise Drop out Rates of Schedule Tribes	55
4.1	States where Tribal Languages are Offered as Medium of Instruction at Primary State	66
4.2	Percentage of Official and Non-official Language as Medium of Instruction at Primary Stage	67

Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION

The tribes in India are the earliest settlers if not the original inhabitants. They live in geographical isolation in hilly and inaccessible land. As a social group they have their own distinctive culture, language and economy. They form the most disadvantaged and marginalised group in terms of educational development. Interestingly, there are different levels and degrees of educational development among tribes of various places. Whereas in states of North East the development is very high, in states of Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh it is far below.

Though lot of studies on tribal education have highlighted the political, social, historical, cultural and economic issues but not enough attention has been paid to tribal education in the context of language despite highlights of a number of studies on the significance of the language of the minority groups in the early year of their schooling.

It is through language that one organizes knowledge and experience, and cognizes the things and events, so the choice of the medium of instruction becomes very important. Especially in the multilingual and multicultural situations where the presence of

many languages and cultural groups pose serious problem for the policy makers because the issue of language involves larger issues like identity, pedagogy, life chances , self-esteem etc. The case of tribes is particularly relevant here. Most of the tribal children are the first generation learners who may not have a written language and access to literacy and have few textbooks. Without any intellectually stimulating background they may suffer more when their school language is different from the language with which they are familiar. It may adversely affect their comprehension, identity, self-esteem etc. The present study examines the tribal education with reference to language particularly medium of instruction for tribal children and tries to understand the relationship between the two.

Chapter one is divided into three sections. Section one deals with the various perspectives and debates on language in education. The second section probes the relationship between mother tongue and early education. The third section talks about the policy perspectives on language and education for ethnic minorities.

Language: Perspectives and Debates

Perspectives on language have varied in linguistic theory. Traditionally some languages have been treated as sacrosanct. This is referred to as the "classical fallacy" in language. It did not take into account the everyday usage of language. There were ideas about sentence structures deriving from Aristotle and Plato, ideas about the parts of speech from the Stoic grammarians. 'Traditional manuals take no account of present day language usage and impose norms generally derived from the language of the great authors of the previous centuries' (Roulet 1975:5). Any violation of the norm, structures and words of language would amount to sin. The rules of the languages are inviolable. In order to support the rules the grammarians used to refer to the great authors. Critics have noted that the rules of the so-called classical languages were illogical; they were inconsistent and inadequate as a description of actual language in use. However it was devoid of propositional content, the possession of such language was the hallmark of scholarship. The acquisition of such languages was highly valued and prestigious in society. Acquisition and maintaining the rules, norms and structures of language were rewarded with extra intelligence. The society was highly theocentric at that point of time. So, everything was explained in terms of God. And the language was given the attributes of divinity. The king was representative of

God on the earth. The language associated with king and God became important and its norm divine.

The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by the era of structuralism, the new approach suggested by Ferdinand de Saussure. Language was treated as system of relations and more stress was laid on the form and structure. The study of language differed from the earlier age in the nature of treatment. 'The structuralist describes a language in use in a particular community at a particular time'. (Roulet, 1975: 21) It derived the rules and structure of a language of a particular community. Though the treatment of language was objective in the sense that it took into account the actual use of language but it has also the element of prescriptivism as it did not take the corpus of data from the whole society. The rules were derived from the data obtained from a particular social community. This might be because of the dominance of a particular group in the society as in the case of India where the language variety spoken by Brahmins was taken as standard.

Language and Education

Till the 1930s and 1940s the idea of 'language deficit' was dominant in education. Some languages and some varieties of a languages was considered inferior to others, meaning thereby some

languages or dialects are inherently better than others. The languages of children who came from the so-called culturally and socially backward community were seen to be incapable of meeting the demands of education. Children were seen to perform poorly and suffered on account of their possession of so called inferior language. Such languages were seen in the need of repair.

The deficit theorists believe that 'a child needs certain tools, and the linguistic tools of some lower class children are just not up to the demands made by the school. Some even go to the extent of saying that such children come to school with hardly any language at all, either to ask questions or to make statements of any kind' (Hudson 1982: 214). In fact, some relate questions such as intelligence, friendliness and other such virtues with the speech or language they spoke. Such views tend to distract attention from the real shortcomings of many school systems policies by putting the blame for educational failure on inadequacies of the child.

The sixties saw serious question of whether certain languages and language variety are inferior or whether they are merely different. That the language of the disadvantaged is inferior was seen to have followed from anecdotal judgement often made about "poor or "odd" speech pattern of class and ethnic minorities. A number of studies emerged relating social class with language. The major source of disadvantage was seen to emerge from language.

Schatzman and Strauss (1955) made the first systematic attempt to study class differences in speech. In his study he found that lower class speech was less informative, irrelevant, particularistic, spatially and temporally ambiguous, while middle class speech was logical, meaningful, rich in abstract and conceptual terminology. While interviewing working class respondents it was felt that they assumed that the interviewer shared their contextual meanings. Templin (1957) also revealed that lower class children were incapable of producing certain forms, and complex uses of languages from their middle class counterpart. But the most significant impact on the language and education was made by the British sociologist, Basil Bernstein. Based on his study (1959) of middle class and working class families Bernstein formulated the concept of 'public' and 'formal' language, which he in his latter study (1962) termed as 'restricted' and 'elaborated' code. He characterized "restricted code" as implicit, poor syntax and vocabulary, non-symbolic, and concrete mode of expression, particularistic, informal and limited to cognition and perception. The middle class children had also at their disposal access to the more formal elaborated code, having a wide range of symbolic expression techniques, and fully formal and explicit grammar. The language of the middle class was universalistic in nature and has a relatively greater power of generalization and abstraction. Although

the speech differentiation of Bernstein was sociological, his work is used by deficit theorists to support their views. Bernstein's emphasis on class differences in speech appear to account for differential educational attainment.

Formal education is seen to be conducted through the elaborated code where it is concerned with the transmission and development of universalistic meaning. This places the working class children at disadvantage because they are limited to restricted code. The restricted code by its very nature reduces the chances of working class pupils to successfully acquire some of the skills demanded by educational system. Bernstein does not add any value judgement to his differentiation, working class speech pattern as substandard or inadequate and middle class speech pattern as superior. However, in his earlier writing (1959) he seems to suggest that an elaborated code is superior for explicitly differentiating and distinguishing objects for making generalization and handling high level concepts. Such skills and operation form an important part of formal education; the limitation of working class pupils to restricted code may provide a partial explanation for their relatively low attainment

Halliday (1973) does not agree at branding Bernstein as environmentalist. He is of the opinion that differences in working class and middle class speech is just manifestation of the

alternative ways of looking at the world. The view of Bernestien received support from many American psychologists like Martin Deutsche, Kar Bereiter, and Siegfed Enydemann. Bereiter and Enydemann (1966) started working with the premise that disadvantage child is retarded in reasoning ability and language skills. Deutsche opined that the home environment of disadvantaged children were deficit in various respects. The language of the disadvantaged is immature; they lack the most rudimentary forms of constructive dialogue and have virtually no ability to use language to process information. The ideas and views of these scholars gave birth to the concept of "compensatory education"of which language became an important component. Bereiter and Enydemann's concept of disadvantaged language is based on dominant linguistic norm, socially approved speech style. The compensatory education programme received lot of criticism as being middle class biased, prejudiced against certain speech style and showing inferior to some group.

Among the best known proponents of 'difference theory' and critics of Bernestien is American linguist William Labov. He confronted the deficit theory of language and outrightly rejected the "elaborate code" as desirable and superior variety of language. In his famous paper (1973 b) "The Logic of Non Standard Black English Vernacular' he took up the issue of Black and White language and

dispelled the myth of verbal deficiency. In support of Black English Vernacular (BEV) which was considered to be substandard or inferior variety of English, he demonstrated that it is not inadequate, substandard illogical or unsystematic. So, the Black English did not need repair. He showed that Black English is perfectly grammatical, in order of logical sequence and proportion, its meaning clear to the speaker, it is no more grammatical or illogical than any other languages which contain conventions which appear illogical in terms of standard English. *The point he made that Black English* is simply different variety of English. Those who do not know it reflect their own ignorance. Labov emphasized that low income Black children have a great deal of verbal stimulation, equal capacity to hear more well formed sentences than middle class children and participate fully in a highly verbal culture, they have the same basic vocabulary, possess the same capacity for conceptual learning and use the same logic as anyone else who learn to speak and understand English. The thrust of Labov's work was to show that although people refer to BEV as non standard, it is clearly not substandard because it is valid dialect with its own rule governed structure. Just as there are no linguistic reasons for arguing superiority of one language over others, so there also none for the superiority of dialects.

The work of Labov, brought a paradigm shift in the whole understanding of language in education. Today, it is most accepted opinion that all languages are equal; each variety of language display characteristics common to all human languages, such as being rule governed, that even the least prestigious language varieties may reveal an impressively complex set of structural patterns. There are no any linguistic grounds for ranking any of the grammar higher than others. Such views also got strengthened with the coming of the works of Noam Chomsky when he describes language as a finite system of rules by which infinite sentences can be generated and every normal child has the innate capacity to acquire the language of his immediate environment. The language faculty is not only unique to the human species in essentials.... but also common to the species, we know of no reason to suspect that there is anything like racial differentiation in the language faculty (Noam Chomsky 1994: 38). The underlying impression is that all languages have equally the property of generativity and all children irrespective of caste, creed, community, region and religion are capable of learning the language of its speech community without any formal instruction. The process of language learning is similar for all children although what is learned may vary. The language variety learned by the normal child is itself of complete linguistic validity.

Language, Power and the Minorities

The debate on language and education can also be looked at from the perspective of power. In this context two main questions arise: what is the language that is defined as standard? Who defines it?

As already discussed there is no any linguistic ground for ranking any language variety as inferior or superior. The answer may be looked in the context of power relationships – the imposition of one language variety upon another by ruling groups- either conquering from without as Britishers in India (English) or rising to power from within as Brahmins in India (Sanskrit). This power relationship exist between groups when one, the dominated group, is submitted to a system of real economic, political, judicial and ideological constraints by the other, the dominant group'. (Moureau 1984:43). Language as such has no power itself. The power in one form derive from other structure as Hudson notes 'linguistic inequality can be seen as a social inequality' (1982:193). The dominant groups impose their own arbitrary linguistic norms and patterns upon another and give official recognition in situations such as administration, education, official meeting, etc. As disadvantaged and powerless groups had historically no access to such situations, their language too, regarded as unfit for these situations. As Dittmar (1976) puts it, 'the standard is that speech variety of a language community which is legitimized as the

obligatory norm for social intercourse as the strength of the interests of dominant forces in society' (1976:8).

Although all the languages are equally potent to perform all those functions but the assigning of such roles to a certain language make it prestigious. This social status is thus the principal determining factor in the creation of a standard. Once a language is acknowledged as the standard or is in the process of becoming the standard, efforts are made to legitimize it or maintain it. Groups that come to power try to legitimize their language, norm, values, etc. and give them official recognition. But the validity of a language as a standard is likely to change. As Nicholas says, 'which language or dialect receives the highest ranking in a particular social context depends on power relationship that obtain at the time' (1984: 25).

The minority groups suffer more disadvantages due to powerlessness. Since they are powerless, their languages have no recognition in situations like court, school etc. When they confront with such formal situations, they find themselves alien and completely unfamiliar. It is precisely in middle class social situations that working class speakers experience difficulty, for instance where the standard language rules are the norm. Engel says, 'in a situation perceived as hostile and unfamiliar (the school or the court room) such speakers have difficulty drawing upon their elaborated codes, and these fail to match the elaborated codes

positively sanctioned' (1984:90). The minority groups feel as if they are lacking something; a sense of deprivation is instilled in their minds for not possessing so called standard language. As traditional cultures is full of intense and informal interaction, few opportunities are accorded to individual children to give formal verbal presentations. Any formal kind of situation would be alien for such children (Corson 1993:59). If school operates in a formal language and manner, they can not compete with their middle class/dominant group counterparts as their life operates more in formal manner. As they do not possess language required for education, their views and experiences about life also get negated. In this way the myth of "disadvantaged" is created. The fact is that so called disadvantaged groups are equally competent with other groups.

II) Mother Tongue, Minority Language and Early Education

Schooling is generally supposed to develop among children the power of abstract thinking, analysis, and reasoning, skills of verbal description and explanation on external things, events, skills of the learning to learn, expression of one's feeling, desire and emotions, and acquisition and mental manipulation of concepts, knowledge of certain sets of problems. Since all the ideas, experiences and knowledge are imparted, organized, cognized, controlled, manipulated, interpreted and extended through language, language

becomes central to the whole process of education. Language creates an atmosphere which has its effect on classroom learning, it may encourage or may discourage the learning. The important question here is whether the language (medium of instruction) in which the teaching-learning takes place facilitate or interfere with learning. It becomes important to examine the language of the classroom and in text books. This section discusses the importance of mother tongues and why are they important for early education.

Importance of Mother Tongue

Anthropologically speaking, mother tongue is the language with which one is emotionally identified and it is a marker of an individual's social cultural identity. The term here being used in the sense of a language which is acquired by a child without any formal instruction and spoken in his immediate environment. Term is also used to signify language child intimate. Such terms like 'mother tongue', 'first language', 'native language', 'home language' 'vernacular language' are used interchangeably here.

The mother tongue is the language naturally acquired by the child from the early family atmosphere and the environment the child is first exposed to. Before a child goes to school, he has already acquired a fair amount of language. He can talk happily and at great length about things that are happening or have happened

around him; can express his feelings and emotions; can symbolically manipulate his experiences and organize them into concepts which he can express through language to his fellow men. In the course of early years language becomes not only his means of communication but also the medium of thought and learning. The language used is mother tongue. To meet the need to express and understand a child acquires symbolic means for communicating with himself; for representing his experiences, reflecting on them and recognizing them. As Pattanayak says, 'Mother tongue is such a language with which one is emotionally identified. It is the language through which the child recognizes and organizes his experiences and environment around him. It is the language used to express one's basic needs, thoughts, joys, sorrows, and other feelings' (1981:51).

Language is both a part and expression of one's cultural environment and the acquisition of language is part of the process by which a child absorbs the cultural environment. Language moulds the child's early concept; it segments and interprets reality in accordance with group's cultural profile, needs and interests according to cultural model which govern them.

Language is also a marker of a person's regional, cultural and group identity. It is associated with his sense of identity, his solidarity with his family and environment and in his later life

becomes a symbol of regional or national pride. Walker holds, 'Language is an important part of group identity as it provides a link with the past, and a distinctive feature differentiating one group from those around it' (1984:164).

Thus, mother tongue is the only language through which a child often interact with his parents, neighbours and those around him. It is through mother tongue that a child links his home to school.

Why Early Education in Mother Tongue

There are a number of reasons to be advanced in support of education through mother tongue. They are based on pedagogical, sociological, political, psychological, etc. It is well known pedagogic principle that learning should take place from known to unknown, simple to complex, and familiar to unfamiliar. This principle gives prior claim of mother tongue as being the most familiar and at greater command of the child. Mother tongues bridge the gap between home and school.

When a child especially a tribal child goes to school, it is new-kind of experience to them. The freedom at home of playing, crying, singing, running is not found here. The formal setting of school is alien to them. A gap emerges between home and school. 'In order to facilitate the structural change in the child's daily life, the language used at school should be the same as used at home so that he is

not confronted with linguistics as well as social situation' (Walker: 1984:163). If the school language is the same as that spoken at child's home, the child can relate the things learned and experienced, and problem faced in school to home environment and to some extent parents can also help in education of the child. 'Pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible' (UNESCO: 1953:48).

The interaction between the child and parents is necessary for learning. If the parents do not comprehend the school language, the child will feel deprived of intellectual stimulation. This is most important in the case of tribes who are the first generation learners. Intellectual stimulation is necessary 'as it develops the child's ability to make meaning explicit in a context reduced situation, which in turn is a prerequisite for scholastic achievement', opines Walker (1984:165).

New ideas and concepts can be learned more easily through the mother tongue. It is obvious that if a child is confronted with new ideas and concepts, he faces difficulty in learning. If the language is unfamiliar his difficulty becomes more. Goel is of the opinion that 'the mother tongue provides practical usefulness both in the

reception of facts and figures and, secondly, helps in the development of expression skills. Through the mother tongue, teaching becomes more meaningful, effective and easy' (1972:6). It is only through the mother tongue that a child can develop his thinking, original ideas and critical mind as mother tongue is something which is natural to him and easier to handle.

Giving education through mother tongue is extending the idea of equality of opportunity which is based on principle of egalitarianism, an important theme of modern education. It also makes cultural revitalization and strengthen the root of democracy in a country. As one's language is marker of one's socio-cultural identity, the education in mother tongue will enhance his self esteem and, it will help him to develop positive self concept, and give a sense of recognition and pride. It will boost up the morale of those ethnic minorities who are seen as inferior and counteract the sense of inferiority long connected with minority languages. As Pattanayak puts it, 'Instruction in mother tongue helps in the search for self affirmation, establishes group identity, satisfies national urge for cultural rootedness and avoids fanaticism. It brings the child into a harmonious relationship with the environment and maximizes the opportunities offered by the early learning experiences' (1981:55).

The more adaptable and manageable the medium, the more efficient will be thinking. The command over medium of language increases understanding of other subjects like geography, history, political science etc. As other language the child cannot develop outside the class-room it is only his mother tongue over which he has greater command and greater opportunity to develop command since 'language development cannot be envisaged outside the social context in which it takes place' (Hamers & Blanc 1989:72).

Researches on bilingualism have also shown that bilingual children have greater degree of divergent thinking, cognitive control in information processing (Hamers & Balnc 1989:47,49). Most of the tribal communities in India are found to be bilingual, so the school can exploit this information. Further, oen's language is unique to one's culture. Language is a semiotic structure where each word is a sign having an idea, its meaning shared only by its members. That is why it is said complete communication is not possible between people of different cultures. The reality and experience faced by a person can not be understood until and unless there is a shared linguistic and cultural background. If teaching takes place in the language different from its pupils, the full communication and comprehension is not possible as language is something intrinsic to its members. Learning through a language different from one which one uses in one's daily life results in knowing only

words, not ideas. Consequently, the child will cram and there will be little chance of creativity and originality.

The medium of instruction should be such as to enable students to acquire knowledge with facility to express themselves clearly; and think with precision and clarity. From all these above points, the claim of mother tongue is indisputable as medium in elementary education.

III: Education and Minority Language : Policy Perspective

Wirth defines minority as 'a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore regard themselves as object of collective discrimination' (quoted in Bennett 1986: 42). Similar views has been expressed by Wagely and Harris who regard minority groups as suffering discrimination and subordination within the society; set apart in terms physical or cultural traits disapproved by the dominant groups, sharing a sense of collective identity, having membership determined by the socially invented rule of descent and marriage within the group.

Minority are the disadvantaged group of society who have suffered some or other kind of discrimination and maintain a distinctiveness from the dominant group. The number of

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explanations are being advanced in explanation of their situations.

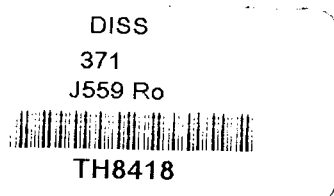
The conservatives and traditionalists say that they are inherently inferior. They are lacking in virtue or goodness. They are morally different from the rest of the society. Some say that their disadvantage is socio-cultural in nature. Their family and cultural background is inferior. So, differences in culture and family lead to different outcomes. While others say that there are disadvantages due to their poverty.

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After the Second World War, many of the nations became sensitive to the issue and considered it as threat to national unity. Many of the nations adopted the policy of 'Nationalism' where one culture and one language was selected for national efficiency while some other of the nations adopted the policy of 'Nationalism' where traditional values of each major ethnic groups fostered multiculturalism and pluralism. One of the key areas where a state attempts to solve its national problems is education. How a state solves the problem of ethnic groups that clearly reflects the nature of their understanding of the problem as well as their views and attitude towards minority community.

Functionalists regard education as positive contributor to society. Education transmits values and norms of society among



its members and this contributes to social solidarity. A society can not exist if there is value consensus among its members. Education perpetuates homogeneity by fixing in the child from the beginning the essential similarities, co-operation, social solidarity. It gives a sense of belonging and commitment that social unit is more important than the individual.

The theory of assimilation is a version of the functionalist concept of modernization. It expects a gradual, linear, relatively unproblematic assimilation of ethnic minorities to the dominant or majority culture. The minority groups will adopt the language and culture of the dominant group. The assimilationists see the value and norms of dominant groups practiced in education as the value of whole society. They are uncritically accepting and supporting the existing conditions. They do not see the dysfunctional aspects of education and expect a gradual and linear assimilation of minority groups to dominant groups.

Contrary to assimilationist view, multiculturalists see different cultural or social groups in distinctiveness. They view plurality of the society in positive light. They do not see the presence of different cultural groups as threat to society. In multicultural society individuals from both majority and minority backgrounds would have the opportunity to make use of more than one culture in their

everyday lives be it language, family life, social manners, ideology or the higher spheres of culture such as literature and art' (Smolicz 1981:21). For them culture and language of any groups are positive resources. Education system can exploit these resources. The language and culture of a group is unique to them, so ethnic children should have education in their own languages and the contents of their culture should form important component of their education.

Writings on the wisdom of multiculturalism Bullivant note :

- a) that by learning about his (sic) cultural and ethnic 'roots' an ethnic child will improve his educational achievements:
- b) the closely related claim that learning about his culture, its traditions and so on will improve equality of opportunity

(1981:236)

Therefore, multiculturalists give no importance to any particular culture and regard cultural group as distinct from each other. While assimilationists hold the view that the merging of ethnic groups to the dominant groups as essential for the benevolence of the society as well as for the groups themselves.

Objectives:

The study aims to understand the role of language in the education of tribal children. It attempts to do at different levels.

1. At the level of policy the study will analyze changing policy perspective on the role of language in the schooling of tribal children in relation to
 - a) Medium of instruction in primary school
 - b) Text books in tribal languages
 - c) Training of teachers in tribal language
2. How is the educational development among tribes in terms of drop out, literacy, enrolment, retention etc? Is there any relationship between language and education of the tribes?
3. In terms of actual school practice a) to what extent are tribal languages used as media of instruction, at what stages and how has this changed over time? b) has education policy regarding textbooks and trained teachers in tribal languages been realised? c) what have been constraints faced by children?
4. What are the perceptions and attitudes of teachers, students, parents and community toward tribal languages and how it reflected in teaching -learning processes?

Methodology

The study is based on secondary sources, which is conducted at two levels. First, it reviews debates on policy document in order to analyze the tribal education with reference to language. Second, the study analyses the data on language and education of tribal children in terms of enrolment, drop out, literacy, retention and provision of mother tongue as medium of instruction at primary level. The possible sources of such data are The People of India Series, All India Educational Survey, The Census of India, Education of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and all other relevant secondary data.

Chapterization

The study has been divided into five chapters.

The second chapter presents a brief socio-cultural and economic profile of tribes in India with emphasis on tribal language. It also looks into the place of tribal language in state policy.

The third chapter presents the actual situation of tribal education in India in terms of literacy, drop out, retention, and enrolment.

The fourth chapter discusses the various policy provision with regard to language and education particularly medium of

instruction for tribal children and actual position of tribal language in practice. The perception and attitude of teachers, students and parents towards tribal languages have also been noted in the form of opinion.

The conclusion gives the summary of the whole study and examines the relationship between language and education.

Chapter :II

TRIBE, LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY IN INDIA

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents the picture of tribal situation in India within its socio-cultural and economic context with special emphasis on languages in tribal society. The second section deals with the state policy and tribal languages.

a) Tribes in India: A Brief Profile

Defining Tribes

Etymologically the term 'tribe' has its root in the Latin word 'tribus' which was used to refer to three divisions among the early Romans. The Oxford dictionary defines a tribe "as a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having common ancestor." The definition given in the Oxford dictionary seems to have subjectivity as it is evident in the word 'barbarous' used for tribe. Scholars have varied in their definition of tribe.

According S.C. Dube, "The tribe generally refers to territorial community living in the relative isolation of hills and forests. Their comparative isolation, in some ways, has kept them apart from the mainstream of society in the country. Partly because of this isolation and partly because of their limited worldview, characterized by lack of historical depth (resulting into the merging of history into mythology) and an overall tradition orientation they are integrated in terms of certain themes rooted in the past. These integrative themes and a special cultural focus gave them a separate cultural identity and they often possess latent or manifest

value attitude and motivational system which are remarkably different from those of the other people". Though the definition of Dubey seems to be comprehensive enough and focus on isolation of tribes from the mainstream because of their own value preference, it does not talk of isolation in terms of political context.

R.N. Mukherjee defines a tribe as "that territorial human group which is found together by a commonness in respect to locality, language, social codes and economic pursuits." Mukherjee's definition gives stress on certain distinctive characteristics of tribes. Similar is the definition of D.N. Majumdar, a tribe is a social group with territorial affiliations ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect, recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes, without any social obloquy attaching to them, as it does in the caste structure, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas from alien sources, above^{all} conscious homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration."

From the above definitions, what emerge as common point of agreement are certain characteristics like common language, common name, common territory, common belief, sense of belonging, relative isolation, distinctive cultural identity, homogeneity, endogamous group etc. If we talk of these characteristics in the Indian context, most of the characteristics mentioned above overlap with castes also and certain yardsticks do not apply to all the tribes uniformly. Even non-tribes have common name, common language while one language is spoken by more than one tribes. Panji, Milang, Pokar speak the same language with slight modification. Some tribes are multilingual also. Most of the tribes such as Santhals, Mundas, Oraons, Bhils, Bodos, Tharns, Cheros, Lohras, Kons, Hmars, Paity share their territory with other

communities'. (Kumar 1998:7). Nongbri sees Indian tribes in heterogeneous category with diverse ethnic, religious and linguistic background. So there can not be any universal tribal culture (1997:327).

The Constitution of India, under Article 342, states that the President may 'by public notification specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purpose of this constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes.....' Thus, a tribe is a group which is included in the Scheduled list of tribes. The definition has mainly an administrative and legal connotation. Such a definition does not give any comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the tribal situation in India and obscures the changing social and economic context in tribal society.

Population :

According to 1991 census, the tribal population in India is 6.77 crores constituting 8.08 per cent of the total population of the country. They are spread all over the country. The states of Madhya Pradesh (22.73%), Maharashtra (10.80%), Orissa(10.38%), Bihar (9.77%), Gujarat (9.09%), Rajasthan (8.08%), Andhra Pradesh (6.20%) West Bengal (5.62%) account for 83% of the total tribal population of the country, even then the majority of the population in these states are non tribes.

In some of the states where tribes constitute overwhelming majority are Mizoram (94.75%), Lakshadweep (93.15%), Nagaland (87.70%), Meghalaya (85.53%) but they constitute a very less percentage of total tribal population in the country.

Regional Distribution

On the basis of the pattern of their spread in the country, tribal communities have been grouped into five regions: North East, Centre East, Centre West, South and North.

North East: It consists of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh and have 8.1 million (1991 Census) tribal population from 70 tribes. All tribal groups of this region are of Tibeto-Burman origin except Khasis and some of the migrants from Bihar and Bengal.

Centre-East: This region consists of Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim, Andaman Nicobar Island and have about 90 tribal groups with 17.05 million tribal population. Almost all groups belong to either Austric or the Dravidian family except Bhutia, Lepcha and Mech.

Centre-West: Eighty five tribes comprising 34.5 million population are spread in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. The major tribes of this region are Bhil and Gond which belong to Indo-Aryan and Dravidian family respectively.

South: Over one hundred tribes comprising 6.6 million population of mainly Dravidian family are spread in the four states-Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

North: Around 5 lakh tribal population consisting of thirteen tribal community related to the Bhotia group of the Tibeto-Burman family cover the region of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

Major Tribal Groups

'The People of India' project conducted by the Anthropological Survey of India records 461 tribal communities in the country, of which 174 are subgroups. Some of the major groups of tribes are Gond, Bhil, Santal, Mina and Oraon.

Table 2.1

Major Tribal Groups

Tribes	Population (1981)
Gond	7,449,193
Bhil	7,367,973
Santal	4,260,842
(Mina), Meena	2,087,075
Oraon	1,871,995

the 1981 census recorded five tribes (Haisa Tangsa, Hotang Tangsa, Katin Tangsa etc) with a single soul, 17 tribes with a population of 2-10 persons, 16 tribes with that of 11-50 persons, nine tribes with 51-100, and 17 tribes with 101-500 persons.

There are 294 tribes (46.2%) found within the boundaries of existing states/union territories, 326 tribal communities (51.3%) are spread over twostates, 89 tribes (14.1%) are spread over across

three states, only 30 tribes (7%) are found in four to six states (Singh 1994:3,4)

Religion:

Majority of the tribal population profess Hinduism. According to 1981 Census 87.05% of the tribes practice Hinduism, Christianity is practiced among 6.98%, and Buddhism among 0.6% of the tribes. This is very significant information from the identity point of view. This shows the loss of identity and assertion of dominant among tribes.

Habitation:

Around 90 per cent tribals live in the rural areas. They live in scattered habitations located in interior, and remote hilly and forest areas of the country. Some of them also intersperse with the non tribals.

Beliefs and Customs:

The tribals believe that there is life in every thing whether animate or inanimate. For them, dead do not leave them, they live with them. They continue their life's journey on the other side and therefore have to be provided with all their daily needs. Each tribe is accepted as having descended from a common ancestor, those from the same sibsect can not marry.

Tribal have very closely knit family and community live. On all important occasions each of the various members of the family has definite individual role to play. They intimately participate in worship celebration and mourning .

Festivals form a very important component of tribal life. Their rich comprehensive nature combines with intense worship, dance,

revelry and feasting. On the religious and social sides, the festivals bind the members of the community together. They forge new ties, reunite broken relationships and experience a host of aesthetic and emotional things. The festivals generally revolve around natural phenomena like seasons, agricultural operations and events of life like birth, death and marriage.

Among the tribals, marriage is a community event. Marriage is symbolic among tribal communities, the members of the two families unite, exchange or share a common act, drink from the same pot shared by all. Tribes believe that even inanimate cannot remain single.

Tribes have a great love for dance. On all conceivable occasions they perform dance. They find the highest expression of their sense of order, rhythm and delight in dance.

The tribes have evolved a specific institution 'dormitory' to train and socialize the young in civic duties and fulfilling community obligations. Dormitories are found in all the tribes. Majumdar (1967) talking about the distribution of dormitories among tribes tells us that dormitories, bisexual as well as monosexual, are found in practically all parts of the country where tribal people have their habitation'. It is called by different names by different tribes. Oraons call it 'Jonkerpao', Gonds as 'Gotul', and Bhutias "Rangbeng".

Where there is dormitory, it is obligatory on the part of the boys and girls to become its members. The age of its entry may vary from tribe to tribe. The senior members pass on what they have learnt and experienced to the juniors. The training involves story-telling, riddle-solving, festival celebration, performance of religious ceremonies, socio-economic, political and administrative activities

of tribal life. The intelligence of younger are stimulated by the challenging riddles and puzzles asked by senior members. Their stories and anecdotes speak about the sanctity of tribal discipline, social approbation, social justice, law and order in society. Practical training in arts and crafts is also given to youth. The training imparted in the dormitory proves very crucial in the coming married life of the members. The tribal education system is very relevant to their life and they were taught in very informal and free atmosphere.

What is significant in the above discussion is that tribal society is a very close knit and their whole system is based on feeling of community solidarity, co-operation and equality. This has increased tribal movements against exploitation. What sees Nongbri in tribal societies in contrast to caste 'common principles of co-operation, egalitarianism and value based behaviors running through their different cultures' (1997: 328). Despite differences in external manifestations of art, craft and language, it is these principles that 'distinguishes tribal cultures from cultural traditions of mainstream society' (Nongbri 1997: 328).

Socio-economic context in Tribal society

Tribals are the earliest settlers of India if not autochthonous. They live in the forests, hill and infertile lands, isolated from the mainstream society. They have great love for land and forests. The conception of land as property is a strange phenomenon to the tribal society. The process commodification of life and life supporting process started with the colonial conquest of India. With the introduction of the land revenue system by Britishers tribal were deprived of their land because of their inability to pay the tax and providing a documentary proof in support of their claim over

the land. The immigration of the new land purchasers, cultivators, petty traders followed in the tribal region. In this way the properly system was introduced in the tribal areas and tribes began to feel alienated and excluded from their once owned terrain, According to Rao, 'social and economic inequalities prevailing in the tribal areas have had their roots in the problem of land tenure system which was largely evolved by the colonial governance' (1998: 2). The contact with non tribal brought cultural interference and non tribals ways styles and values of life started getting acceptance among tribes due to the ownership over land, ^{and} tricks and cunningness of plain people. The self dependency, communal bond, love for freedom, co-operativeness, distinct language, and way of living of tribes if we can not say replaced, at least confused by the new system where they have relative disadvantage in comparison to non tribes due to unfamiliarity of the things. The tribal economy characterized by forest based, pattern of labour family, simple technology absence of profit in economic dealings the community as co-operative unit, periodical markets absence of competition was replaced by the feudalization of tribal society. They were rendered as labourers in their own land. More than 90% of tribes are labourers. Some of them are also in service sector due to the reservation of scheduled tribes in government jobs after Independence.

The economic marginalization of the tribes led to the marginalization in other fields as power in one structure brings power in other structure of the society. As Nongbri says 'economic deprivation and cultural subjugation go hand in hand' (1997:336). She further says that 'historical evidence suggests that so long tribes remained outside the Hindu system of production they could retain their cultural distinctiveness and respect in their status'. The tribes who have less interaction with the non tribals maintained

their distinct identity as it happened in the North East. Haimendorf writing on the Gonds stated that 'aboriginals who retained their tribal identity and resisted inclusion within the Hindu fold fared better than the assimilated groups and were not treated as untouchables' (Quoted in Nongbri 1997: 336). The problems happened the most where there was too much contact of the tribals with the Hindus. The tribals accepting the cultural dominance of the Hindus and in the process they began to look down their own culture and language.

Language and Identity

Language is the place where we store centuries old experiences and wisdom of our community. As discussed earlier the language of a community reflects its socio-cultural and ecological pattern and preferences in that way, it is unique to a community. The differing linguistic features of tribal languages are the common social, cultural and ecological features of tribal communities which differentiate them from the non tribals. Such reflections can be seen in grammatical categories then in grammatical process. The distinctive natural and cultural domain of tribes can be seen in their vocabulary as there is different kind of words for different objects and which belong to the immediate life experiences of speakers.

The tribes in India according to 1961 Census have 294 mother tongues and 92 languages which belong to all the four genetic language families of India- Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro Asiatic and Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto Burman).

Table : 2.2

Distribution of Tribal Mother Tongues And Languages, 1961

	No. of MTs	No. of lgs	% to total no of tribal lgs	% to total no. of lgs Indian family	% to all lgs. Of Indian
Indo-Aryan	36	1	1.08	1.85	0.50
Dravidian	35	9	9.78	45.00	4.48
Austro-Asiatic	64	19	2065	95.00	9.45
Sino-Tibetan	159	68.48	68048	64.29	31.34
Total	294	92	-	-	45.75

Source : Quoted in Abbi 1997 :17
tongue

MT- Mother

No- Number
Lgs- Languages

The People of India National series (1994) records Indo Aryan languages spoken by 163 tribal communities, Dravidian 107, Tribeto Burman 143 and Andamanese 4.

The number given in table 2.2 shows that around 90% tribal languages come under Austro-Asiatic and Sino-Tibetan language family. There is still dispute about Dravidian whether tribals existed before Dravidian or is part of Dravidian Society. But it is an agreed fact that tribals lived much before the Aryan. So, the presence of tribal language among Indo-Aryan is quite doubtful. Many of the scholars do not accept that tribal languages belong to Indo Aryan family. D.N. Majmudar (1955) opines that 'so far as tribal people are

concerned the Aryan speech comes into the picture only as a consequence of cultural contact since all our tribal people have pre Aryan or non Aryan social affinities and origins'. (Quoted in Hasnain: 1988, 123)

Besides that, the dichotomy between mother tongue and language in the table is not clear. Why mother tongue is not a language. There may be various possible explanations either a group has adopted the language of non tribal groups, so not a tribal language or certain mother tongues may not have the norms of languages or several dialects of a language has been just counted as mother tongue.

Language Retention:

Language retention ratio is the percentage of the number of language speaker out of total population of language speaker. That is, how much percentage of people out of total population speak the language. This is very significant because it indicates several socio-cultural phenomena - loss or maintenance of identity, cultural assimilation of the group.

Nearly half of the tribal still maintain their distinct language but its percentage is decreasing during the course of time. The language retention ratio was 49 per cent in 1971 but is was reduced to 42 percent in 1981. A large section of them tend to switch over to normally non tribal languages as their mother tongue or retain both ancestral and non ancestral languages (see table below).

It may be seen from the table (2.3) that in the state of North East, Andaman Nicobar Island the language retention ratio is very high on the other hand, most of the states have decreasing language retention ration.

Table : 2.3

Language Retention Ratio among Tribals :1971-1981

States	Language retention ratio 1981	Language retention ratio 1971
India	42	49
Norh-east		
Mizoram	89	-
Nagaland	93	92
Meghalaya	99.9	99.9
Arunachal Pradesh	83	85
Tripura	88	88
Manipur	107	81
Assam	84	86
Centre-east		
Sikkim	74	
Orissa	44	38
A & N Island (UT)	99	100
Bihar	70	78
W. Bengal	61	70
Centre-west		
Dadra NH (UT)	86	96
Madhya Pradesh	34	41
Gujarat	9	20
Rajasthan	38	27
Maharashtra	26	33
Goa DD	2.2	3.3
South		
Lakshadweep (UT)	-	-
Andhra Pradesh	12	23
Karnataka	0.04	0.2
Tamil Nadu	0.4	-
Kerala	-	-
North		
Himachal Pradeh	38	-
Uttar Pradesh	0.6	6.8

Source: Quoted in Khubchandani 1992: 46-47.

These kinds of states have two context. Most of the tribes with the exception of the North East, Andaman Nicobar Islands live in the midst of sweeping non tribal populations. One hundred and forty seven tribal communities speak the 10 scheduled languages such as Assamese (6), Bengali (6), Gujarati (18), Hindi (13), Kannada (16), Malyalam (17), Marathi (15), Oriya (23), Tamil (12) and Telgu (21). Variants of the respective scheduled language spoken by the tribal communities are Bengali (2), Hindi (64), Malyalam (1), Oriya (8), Sindhi (1) and Tamil (5).

Table :2.4

Non-tribal Languages Prominent among Tribals: 1961

Languages	Claimed mother tongue	Contact languages (in thousands)	Total	Percentage of the total tribal population
Hindi	4, 178	1, 275	5, 993	20.0
Oriya	2, 213	809	3, 020	10.1
Marathi	1, 684	151	1, 835	6.1
Bengali	454	852	1, 306	4.4
Telgu	913	301	1, 215	4.1
Assamese	459	475	935	3.1
Sadan/Sedr i	524	143	667	2.2
Chhatisgar hi	546	97	643	2.2

Source: Khubchandani 1992; 50

All of these languages are spoken in the states where tribals live with non-tribal majority. The tribals switch over to languages which have high prestige in the region. In 1981 fifty eight per cent of the tribals have claimed over non-tribal languages (including tribal vernaculars of regional languages) their mother tongue. But at the same time many of the tribals maintained their linguistic identity. The table 2.3 reveals that in tribals dominated states like the North East (Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam) and Dadra and Nagar Haveli the tribals claiming their tribal language mother tongue is quite high ranging from 83 to 89 per cent whereas in states like Manipur, Nagaland and Andaman Nicobar Island almost all tribal communities retain their ancestral mother tongues. The tribes in these states form the powerful group, they enjoy all the political, economic and cultural resources of the state.

In states like Sikkim, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Himachal the tribes are interspersed with non-tribal populations. Hence tribal languages in these regions are assigned with minimum functional load. In everyday life activities these languages are open to the pressures of assimilation from major regional languages. The social, cultural and political atmosphere is also not favourable to them. As the shift of the mother tongue depends on the sociopolitical climate of the region, there is a tendency to switch over to languages of the larger groups : they try to attain prestige by identifying with the dominant language of the region.

In most of the Southern states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Goa where they constitute a very small minority, the non-tribal mother tongue identity is claimed by more than 75 percent tribal population in each state and their tribal language identity gets marginalized with the dominant languages. In Karnataka and

Lakhsadeep almost all tribes speak a variety of the regional language that is Kannada or Malyalam.

Tribal Language and Script

Most of the tribal languages do not have own writing system. Only a few tribal languages have their own scripts. Among the tribal languages Khampati, Chakma, Limbu, Lepcha, Manipuri, Laddakhi and Bati language had their own scripts (Kumar 1998: 110). Some scholars have also invented scripts for tribal languages. Such as olcemet or Olchiki script by Shri Raghunath Murmu for Santali, Tolong by Narayan Oraon for Kurux, and Bharti script by Mr. Ananti Jeba singh. But most of the tribals have either adopted the script of the regional languages or their languages have been given Roman script by Christan Missionaries (see Appendix II).

In the North East region, their languages have writing system in Roman script. This is because of the Christianisation of the tribal people by Christian missionaries.

b) State policy and Tribal Language

In ordinary parlance, a tribal language is a language spoken by the tribes in the scheduled list of India. But the term does have certain connotations when it is used in bureaucratic circle as Annamalai has put it, in the popular worldview, a tribal language is linguistically perceived as 'speed without grammar' (1997: 16). It is true that most of the tribal languages do not have script but that does not mean they do not have a grammar. A language cannot exist without a system whether it be a language with writing system or without writing system. There is common linguistic norm unconsciously operating in the minds of its speaker which make the communication possible.

The Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution is most authentic statement on the language policy of Indian government. It was done with a view to national integration and spell out the official language at the level of the Union (the Central Government and the national policy as a whole), at the level of states and at the level of judiciary. It records a list of eighteen Indian languages (originally 14) – Hindi, Telgu, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gugarati, Kannada, Malyalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Assamese, Sanskrit, Konkani, Manipuri and Gorkhali.

Table: 2.5

Languages of the Eighth Schedule (1981 Household Census)

Language	No. of speakers	Of total population
1. Hindi	264,189,057	39.34
2. Telgu	54, 226, 227	8.20
3. Bengali	51, 503, 085	7.79
4. Marathi	49, 624, 847	7.50
5. Tamil	44,730,847	6.76
6. Urdu	35,323,282	5.34
7. Gujarathi	3,33,189,039	5.02
8. Kannada	26,887,837	4.06
9. Malyalam	25,595,966	3.92
10. Oriya	22,881,053	3.46
11. Punjabi	18, 588, 400	2.81
12. Kashmiri	3, 174, 684	0.48
13. Sindhi	1, 946, 278	0.29
14. Assamese *	70, 524	0.01
15. Sanskrit	2, 946	-
16. Konkahi	1, 584, 063	Added in 1992
17. Manipuri	904, 350	-
18. Gorakhali	1, 252, 444	-

* No census was taken in Assam.

The criterion for including the language in the VIIIth schedule is not clear. So far no any tribal language was included except Manipuri in 1992. If the criteria is demographic, there are numbers of tribal languages such as Bhili, Gond, Santal, whose population is more than Sindhi, Sanskrit. Kashmiri with millions of speaker, if it is culturo-literary, Santali has rich cultural heritage; if the criteria is standard or highly developed language, then what is the yardstick of measuring the standard and development. If the basis of inclusion is based on distinction between dialect and language, there is no criteria for branding one dialect as superior. Even then on the basis of language, the claim of Santali is deserving. Abbi and Gupta is of the opinion that the language that found strong and articulate support in the Constituent Assembly Debates plus the mother of all Indian language viz., Sanskrit got included in the Eighth Schedule. (1995:2). Tribal people had no access to power, so their languages were left out.

When the Indian states were reorganized in 1956 on the basis of language, all the states got one or other languages listed in VIII Schedule. Not a single state was carved on the basis, of tribal language. Tribals did not have their own state. They lived with non tribals. So their languages were excluded .

The languages listed in the Eighth Schedule has special prestige and recognition. It makes them prestigious and standard language. As power is a relative states, so other languages seems to be 'dialects' or 'minor languages'.

Languages in the Eighth Schedule have not only prestige but they have also certain advantages. They get grants for their development from the states, they are most suitable for being employed as state language, as the medium of instruction and as the language of the

mass media that make them powerful and prestigious. While rest of the languages not actually lose in its functions and domains of use but they also begin to be perceived as less powerful, less useful by others as well as by their own speakers. The Schedule stigmatizes several languages and many of the speakers whose language is not in the Schedule list, they try to gain prestige by switching over to Scheduled Language. In the process, they also develop a negative attitude towards their own language.

CHAPTER - III

SCHOOLING OF TRIBAL CHILDREN: AN OVERVIEW

All kinds of society in the world have a system of socializing their children. Tribals also have dormitory system where they socialize their young ones to adapt to the tribal way of life. They train their children in civic duties and community life. The membership of the dormitory is open to all the children but the entry age varies from society to society. They can stay in the dormitory till they get married. The members are divided in two groups seniors and juniors. Juniors have to follow their seniors. The senior members train the juniors by telling stories, asking riddle, celebrating festivals. These stories and anecdotes form the theme of tribal discipline, social justice law and order. Practical training in art and craft is also given. Learning takes places in most informal manner. Membership is restricted to outsiders.

As discussed earlier the tribals have different background of education, so the new formal kind of schooling is a completely new experience to them. Based on their life and culture the Kothari Commission recommended 'Ashram schools' for the tribes. The ashram schools will work as bridge between culture of tribes and the formal school. They will harmonize with the environment. Vacations and

holidays coincide with agriculture and forest operations and social festivities. The school hours would be fixed in a such a way as to suit the work of the children are required to do for their families. The teaching of folk songs, stories, riddles, tribal games and archery, tribal music and dance form the important component of curriculum.

In this chapter we will study the tribal situation of education in terms of literacy, drop out, retention and enrolment. We will also present a comparative picture of education of tribe and the general population. It will reveal us magnitude of inequality of educational opportunity among tribes as compared to the general population as well as tribes within.

Literacy

Table -3.1

Literacy Gap between ST and Others

year	1961	1971	1981	1991
General (including SC/ST)	24.00	29.45	36.23	52.21
Non SC/ST	27.00	33.80	41.30	57.69
Scheduled Castes	18.27	14.67	21.38	37.41
Scheduled Tribes	8.54	11.29	16.35	29.60

From the table 3.1 it is clear that there is a wide gap between the national literacy rate and literacy rate of STs. The most significant what emerges from this table is that this gap is widening per census. In 1961 census the gap between ST and General was 15.46%, in 1971 it

became 18.16%, in 1981 19.88% and in 1991, 29.60%. The gap is not only between ST and general, there is also perceptible gap between SCs and STs.

Table -3.2
Statewise Literacy Rate, 1991

State/Union Territory	General	Male	Female	Schedule Tribes		
	person			person	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	44.09	55.13	32.72	17.16	25.25	8.68
Arunachal Pradesh	41.59	51.45	29.69	34.45	44.00	24.94
Assam	52.89	61.87	43.03	49.16	58.93	38.98
Bihar	38.48	52.49	22.89	26.78	38.40	40.75
Gujarat	61.29	73.13	48.64	36.45	48.25	24.20
Himachal Pradesh	63.89	75.36	52.70	47.09	62.74	31.18
Karnataka	56.04	67.26	44.34	36.01	47.95	23.57
Kerala	89.81	93.62	86.13	57.22	63.38	51.07
Madhya Pradesh	44.20	58.42	28.85	21.54	32.16	10.73
Maharashtra	64.87	76.56	52.32	36.79	49.09	24.03
Manipur	59.89	71.63	47.60	53.63	62.39	44.48
Meghalaya	49.10	53.12	44.85	46.71	49.78	43.63
Mizoram	82.27	85.61	78.60	82.71	86.66	78.70
Nagaland	61.65	67.62	54.75	60.59	66.27	54.51
Orissa	49.09	63.09	34.38	22.31	34.34	10.21
Rajasthan	38.55	54.99	20.44	19.44	33.29	4.42
Sikkim	56.94	65.74	46.69	59.01	66.80	50.37
Tamil Nadu	62.66	73.75	51.33	27.89	35.25	20.23
Tripura	60.44	70.58	49.65	40.37	52.88	27.34
West Bengal	57.70	67.81	46.56	27.28	40.07	14.98
A & N Islands	73.02	78.99	65.46	56.62	64.16	48.74
D & N Haveli	40.71	53.56	26.98	28.21	40.75	15.94
Daman & Diu	71.20	82.62	59.40	52.91	63.58	41.49
Lakshadweep	81.78	90.18	72.89	80.58	89.50	71.72
INDIA	52.19	64.20	39.19	29.60	40.65	18.19

Source : Census of India, 1991

Table 3.2 indicates that there is wide variation among different states in the literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes. The variations range from 82% to 17%. Some of the states where tribal population has higher concentration in relation to their total population have higher literacy rate. Such states are Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya. While some of the states where tribal population is much larger than the North East but less in relation to total population have very low literacy rate of tribes. The states which come under this category are Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Bihar.

Further data reveals that the state where general literacy rate is lower than the national general literacy rate, the literacy among tribes is much lower, such states are Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. It shows that general educational development of the state depends upon the educational development of all sections of society.

The another point to be made here is that the educationally advanced states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka have tribal literacy rate less than general literacy rate and they are way behind the tribes of North East in literacy.

It also emerges from the table that there is wide gap between male and female literacy, almost double but this gap is found in all sections but slightly higher among tribes.

Enrolment

Table - 3.3

Statewise Enrolment Percentage of Schedule the Tribes at Primary Stage (I-V)

State/ Union Territory	Percentage of ST Population in Total Population of State (1991 Census)	Percentage of Enrolment at Primary Stage (I- V)	Percentage of Enrolment of Total Tribal Population
Andhra Pradesh	6.31	7.51	119.01
Arunachal Pradesh	63.66	72.42	113.76
Assam	12.82	19.05	148.59
Bihar	7.66	8.96	116.97
Gujarat	14.92	16.04	107.50
Himachal Pradesh	4.22	4.27	101.18
Karnataka	4.26	5.98	140.37
Madhya Pradesh	23.27	19.17	82.38
Maharestra	9.27	10.81	116.61
Manipur	34.41	40.11	116.56
Meghalaya	85.53	91.96	107.51
Mizoram	94.75	99.44	104.94
Nagland	87.70	97.25	110.88
Orissa	22.21	20.26	91.22
Rajasthan	12.44	10.95	88.02
Sikkim	22.36	19.83	88.68
Tripura	30.95	32.25	104.20
West Bengal	5.59	5.12	91.59
Andaman Nicobar	9.54	8.10	84.90
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	78.99	81.23	102.83
Daman & Diu	11.54	13.88	120.27
Lakshadweep	93.15	98.35	105.58
India	8.08	9.08	112.37

Source: Sixth All India Educational Survey National Table vol. IV, NCERT, 1998.

The table 3.3 indicates that some of the states such as Assam, Karnataka, Daman and Diu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Gujarat, Nagaland, Tripura, Daddra & Nagar Haveli, Lakshadweep have high enrolment rate. The enrolment rate of tribes in these states are more than their population. While some of the states like Madhya Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Island, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Orissa, West Bengal have enrolment rate less than their population.

It is also clear that tribal enrolment rate at primary stage (I- V) is higher than their representation in the population.

RETENTION

Table - 3.4
Enrolment in Each Class As Per cent of Enrolment in Class I (1986)

Class	Tribal Children (Rural)	All Children (Rural)
Class I	100	100
Class II	58.6	72.4
Class III	48.7	65.5
Class IV	36.8	54.7
Class V	29.1	49.1

Source : Fifth All India Education Survey, vol. II

The table 3.4 shows a comparative picture of retention between tribals and general. From the table it emerges that the retention ratio is

very poor in India (49.1%) but it is pathetic in the case of tribes (29.1%). There is also big gap between tribal children and the rest in terms of retention.

Table - 3.5

Statewise Retention of Scheduled Tribes from the Primary stage (I - V) to Middle Stage (VI - VIII).

State/Union Territory	Percentage of Scheduled Tribes Enrolled in Classes		Percentage of Retention at VI - VIII Stage from class I V
	I- V	VI-VII	VI - VIII Stage from class I -V
Andhra Pradesh	7.51	3.77	50.19
Arunachal Pradesh	72.42	66.49	91.81
Assam	19.05	18.10	95.01
Bihar	8.96	6.72	75.00
Gujarat	16.04	11.59	72.25
Himachal Pradesh	4.27	3.72	87.11
Karnataka	5.98	4.37	73.07
Madhya Pradesh	19.17	13.15	68.59
Maharashtra	10.81	7.08	65.49
Manipur	40.11	28.11	70.08
Meghalaya	91.96	87.10	94.71
Mizoram	99.44	99.26	99.81
Nagland	97.25	97.02	99.76
Orissa	20.26	11.14	54.98
Rajasthan	10.95	7.84	71.59
Sikkim	19.83	20.61	103.93
Tripura	32.25	24.53	76.06
West Bengal	5.12	3.03	59.17
Andaman Nicobar	8.10	8.25	101.85
Dadra & Nager Havdeli	81.23	70.91	87.29
Daman & Diu	13.88	12.39	89.26
Lakshadweep	98.35	96.50	98.11
India	9.08	5.85	64.42

Source : Sixth All India Educational Survey, Vol. IV, NCERT 1998.

[Note : States having less than two percent tribal population is not mentioned.]

The data given in the table 3.5 reveal that some of the states with high enrolment rate have low retention rate. Such states are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Manipur, Tripura. While some of the states have both high enrolment rate and high retention rate. Meghalaya , Mizoram, Nagaland, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu come under this category. There are some states which have low enrolment rate and low retention rate. Such states as West Bengal, Rajasthan, Orissa come in this category.

Another point what emerges from data is that there are a few states which have low enrolment rate but high retention rate. Sikkim and Andaman and Nicobar Island are of this category.

Table :3.6

Gross Enrolment Ratio 1992-93

(Percentage of Enrolment in the Respective Age Groups)

Class	Age - Group	General	Scheduled Tribes
I- V	6-11	105.7	108.19
VI-VIII	11-14	67.5	45.64

Given table 3.6 shows enrolment rate of Scheduled Tribes is higher than general at primary stage (I-V) but at middle stage the enrolment ratio of scheduled tribes went much lower than general. It is evident that the gap between Scheduled Tribes and General in education appear only at middle stage. And this gap becomes very wide.

Drop out

Table -3.7

The Gap Between General and ST Drop Out Rate

Year	Drop out rate of All Communities Non SC/ST	Drop Out Rate of ST
1984-85	47.93	69.40
1985-86	47.61	65.56
1986-87	48.60	66.12
1987-88	46.97	65.21
1988-89	47.93	64.53

Source: Educational of SC and ST 1988 - 89 , Government of India

Table -3.8

Statewise Drop Out Rates of Scheduled Tribes 1989-90 at Primary stage (I- V)

State / Union Territory	Drop out rate
Andhra Pradesh	67.22
Arunachal Pradesh	61.98
Assam	65.46
Bihar	70.83
Gujarat	59.48
Himachal Pradesh	32.23
Karnataka	49.13
Madhya Pradesh	52.82
Maharashtra	61.07
Manipur	77.95
Meghalaya	47.24
Mizoram	49.39
Nagland	39.00
Orissa	77.98
Rajasthan	73.08
Sikkim	53.73
Tripura	73.91
West Bengal	66.38
Andaman Nicobar	12.36
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	50.34
Daman & Diu	--
India	63.81

The data given in table 3.8 reveal four points. There are states which have high enrolment and high drop out rates. Such states are Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat. A few states like Rajasthan and West Bengal have low enrolment and high drop out rate. Some states like Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar have low enrolment rate and low drop out rate.

And lastly, there are states which have high enrolment rate and low drop out rate. Such states educationally considered as developed. These states are Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Karnataka and Himchal Pradesh.

On close examination of all the data given in terms of literacy, drop out, enrolment retention, the two important fact comes to fore. Firstly, there is a wide gap between Scheduled Tribe and General at national level in the above mentioned terms. The situation of tribes is even lower than scheduled castes. Secondly, there is huge variation of educational situation of tribes among various states in terms of literacy, drop out, retention, enrolment. While states of North East are doing exceedingly well, quite above the national level, some other states are quite below.

Numbers of external factors like poverty, poor economic condition, social customs, cultural ethos, lack of awareness and understanding of the nature of formal education due to uneducated home environment have been highlighted in various studies by different scholars in explanation of tribal education.

It is fact that tribes are most impoverished and economically backward section of India. More than fifty percent of tribals live below the poverty line. The children play an important role

contributing directly or indirectly by participating in family occupation and household works like cattle grazing, fuel and fodder collection etc. So any withdrawal of children from the workforce may head to danger of survival.

In terms of access of education, only 71 % (Six All India Educational Survey) rural tribal population have primary school within their habitation.

The quality of education is also one of the reasons of poor educational achievement of the tribes. Quality of education depends on the physical facilities available to children. The Fifth All India Educational survey stated that, of the total primary schools in the country, 54.49 per cent were running in pucca buildings and 8.01 per cent in the open. The survey also found that 25.83 per cent primary schools were in the need of extra room, 28.64 per cent two, 22.26 per cent three, 13.08 per cent four and 8 per cent needed five extra rooms. About 20 percent were having toilet facilities of the total primary schools, merely 17.22 per cent schools were having chalks and about 30 per cent were having dusters. Only 24.99 per cent of the schools having library facilities. The tribal area are relatively more starved in terms of facility.

Besides these extraneous factors, there are constraints from school within such as relevance of content and curriculum, medium of instruction, pedagogy which affect the schooling of tribal children.

As far as enrolment is concerned the enrolment rate of the tribal children is 9.08 percent which is more than the proportion of their population (8.08 %). Enrolment has no meaning unless enrolled child retains in the system for prescribed number of years to complete the primary level of education. The responses of the schooling can be only gauged from the rate of dropout. The drop out rate indicates the quality of classroom processes and constrained faced by the children. From the data given in table 3.4 it is clear that drop out rate of tribal children increases as they go to senior classes in comparison with other category children. There is 100 per cent enrolment in class 1, 58.6% percent in class II, 48.7% in class III, 36.8 per cent in class IV and it goes down to 29.1 per cent in class V. The All India percentage of tribal students enrolled at primary stage (I-V) is 9.08 per cent but at middle level (VI-VIII) it decreased to 5.85 per cent. Drop out trends of the tribal children clearly indicate their responses to the schooling. The tribals have their own cultural ethos, values and pattern of society. Their social need is different from others. They have different learning style. The urban based, non tribal contents of the curriculum, formal setting of school comes in contrast with tribal culture as they have culture of interaction,

indulgence, ... absence of force and they learn in groups through observation and practice.

More important than curriculum is language in the classroom process as it is through language that knowledge is imparted to children. The language can bring differences in comprehensibility and atmosphere of the class. It is above all, an identity with, which one is emotionally attached. A familiar language can induce confidence in a child and be a link between home and school. Keeping all these factors in view, there is a need to understand tribal education in actual classroom practice of language.

Chapter IV

TRIBAL LANGUAGE AND SCHOOL: POLICY AND PRACTICE

As discussed in the previous chapter that the situation of tribal education is quite dismal in comparison with other sections of society. There is also diversity in terms of educational development among tribes of various states. This chapter looks at policy provision with regard to language for tribal children and actual school practice. How the tribal languages are being viewed by teachers, students and parents? What are their concerned perception of tribal language? Such things have to be understood in close examination with school practices.

Language Policy and Tribal Education

The Article 350A of the Indian constitution states that 'it shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups, and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities'.

On the basis of the constitutional provisions, the formulae for practical implementation was evolved and it was said that 'provision of teaching at primary stage through mother tongue by appointing at least one teacher provided there are not less than 40 pupils speaking in that language in a school or 10 such pupils in a class' (Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities 1975: 5).

Renuka Roy committee (July 9, 1959) set up for the study of social welfare and welfare of backward classes agreeing with official stand on medium of instruction at primary level made the following recommendation :

'The accepted principle of imparting instruction at the primary level in the mother tongue of the child should be extended to tribal children as well.' Perceiving the linguistic multiplicity of tribal communities it further suggested that 'wherever there are minor variants in the local dialects of different communities residing in contiguous tribal areas, the main tribal language should be chosen as the medium of instruction at the primary level'.

Echoing the similar voice on the issue of medium of instruction, teacher training and curriculum Dhebar Commission (Oct 14, 1961) made similar recommendations:

'In the first two years, lessons be imparted invariably in tribal dialect so as to make them understandable to the tribal children'. In support of it, it further says, "we have found during our tour that the tribal children pick up their subjects much more easily when the subjects are taught even verbally in their own language. This means that the teachers should invariably know the tribal languages. This in our opinion is indisputable'.

Speaking on the teacher it suggests " a teacher in the tribal areas must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak the tribal language. Actually the gulf between teacher and taught can be best reduced by appointing teachers from the tribal community itself".

Tribal boys and girls who pass out VII and VIII standard can be trained as teachers and posted to schools in tribal areas".

Dhebar commission also recommended for curriculum based on tribal condition and way of life.

Both Renuka Ray committee and Dhebar commission stress in the early year of tribal children and teachers from the community itself, which are more comprehensive from the earlier constitutional provisions.

In 1964-66 a group of scholars under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari so named Kothari Commission were told to prepare a comprehensive report on Indian education where the issue of tribal education was paid attention as the matter was linked to equality of educational opportunity. Agreeing with the earlier view, the Kothari commission also supported the medium of instruction in mother tongue.

The medium of education in the first two years should be the tribal language and books should be specially prepared in these languages for use at this stage.

While the earlier position was teaching in the mother tongue only, the Kothari commission has categorically recommended ~~that~~ the books in the tribal languages. It further says, 'during this period, the children should be given instruction in the regional language and their familiarity and command of a language be improved. By the third year, the regional language should be the medium of education.'

Enumerating the reasons in support of mother tongue education it says 'the medium selected should enable students to acquire knowledge with facility , to express themselves with clarity and think with precision and vigour. From this point of view, the claims of mother tongue are pre-eminent'.

Regarding teacher it says, 'the teachers must know the tribal language and culture and a study of these should be included in their training programmers'.

While in the earlier reports there was no mention of language of the text books, the Kothari commission made it explicit that language of the text books should be in tribal languages.

But these were mere recommendations of various committees and commission, its implementation still depends on how government responds to it.

In 1968 policy, there is no mention of issues like medium, text book and teacher training. The government has totally undermined these issues. This exposes the sincerity and commitment of the government to tribal education.

The New Education Policy (1986) has dealt separately the tribal education under the title of "The Education of Scheduled Tribes" where there is proposal for certain measures to bring the scheduled tribes at par with other groups.

On the question of medium of instruction and language of text books it says "The socio-cultural milieu of STs has its distinctive characteristics including in many cases, their own spoken languages. This underlies the need to develop the curricula and

instructional materials in tribal languages at the initial stages with arrangement for switching over to the regional language'.

In the policy there is also proposal to train teacher for tribals only from tribal community. 'Educated and promising Scheduled Tribe youths will be encouraged and trained to take up teaching in tribal areas'.

Although it is implicit that language of the text book would be in the languages of tribes when medium of instruction is in their mother tongues, but it has not made any categorical statement on language of text book. With regard to teacher education, it does not give details of how they will be trained. The policy is not clear about the stages of mother tongue education-till what standard/class education will be given in mother tongue.

Tribal Language and School Practice

Medium of Instruction

According to Fifth All India Educational survey, volume I, (1992) there are 43 languages which are used as media of instruction at the primary stage (p, 192). The tribal languages mentioned there are Naga, Mizo, Khasi, Ao, Angami, Manipuri and Nicobarese.

Table-4.1

States Where Tribal Languages are Offered as Medium of Instruction
at Primary Stage

State/Union Territory	Tribal languages as medium of instruction
1. Assam	Manipuri and Bodo
2. Bihar	Instruction is also imparted thorough Santali, Mundari and Oraon.
3. Manipur	Manipuri and recognized tribal dialects.
4. Meghalaya	Khasi and Garo
5. Mizoram	Mizo
6. Nagaland	Mother tongue, Nagamese
7. Sikkim	Lepcha, Bhutia
8. Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Nicbarese.

Source: Government of India, Selected Information on school Education, 1994-95.

Apart from the languages mentioned in the Fifth survey (1992), the table includes Santali, Mundari and Oraon as media of instruction in Bihar. Chaturvedi and Mohale (1976) names Bodo, Garo, Khasi, Mizo Ho, Hmar, Kharia, Lushai, Mundari, Oraon, Santali, Ao, Angami, chakhasang, Chang Nago, Khiem nungar, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Rengama, Sangtam, Sema, Yeimchungere, Zeliang tribal languages being used as media of instruction (p. 47) Out of these Santali, Mundari and Oraon are used as media of education in Bihar. The Fifth All India Education survey vol. I (1992) have shown that out of the total languages being used as media of

instruction in Bihar, tribal language constitute zero percent, So the observation of Mohale and Chaturvedi is under doubt.

At an all India level data reveal that 96.4% of primary schools were single

Table 4.2

Percentage of Official and Non-Official Language as Medium of Instruction at Primary State

Languages	Primary School according to Media of Instruction
Official languages (listed in Eighth Schedule)	96.4%
Other Indian languages (not listed in Eighth schedule)	2.3%
English	1.3%
Total	100%

Source: Fifth All India Education Survey, vol. 1, NCERT, 1992.

medium schools where media of instruction were the languages listed in the Eighth Schedule. This percentage would rise after the inclusion of Manipuri, Sindhi and Nepali in 1992.

It is clear from the above information given that tribal languages are media of instruction exclusively in the North East States. Such states as Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra, Pradesh, West Bengal which constitute, if we include Bihar, more than 80% of tribal population do not have mention of tribal

languages as media in school. In case of Bihar it is clearly written in reports of Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities that 'the state government has not taken any action to introduce Oraon, Ho, Santali, and Mundari as media of instruction in areas where the speakers of these languages are in sizeable majority' (1980-81; 39). It means that there are provision for tribal languages in the school but they are not being practiced.

Textbooks

Renuka Ray committee (July 1959) proposes that "the textbooks in primary schools in tribal areas may have to be based largely on reading material related to tribal life". But many of the studies (Sujatha, Kundu, Ambasht) have the observations that the contents of the textbooks written for tribal children have a middle class bias; they are written from the dominant point of view. They are written in standard language. The children have difficulty in following the contents. As Sujatha writes 'The textbooks are written in standard urban middle class spoken form. There is a great difference between language of the textbook and dialect spoken by children. In fact, the medium of instruction is standard language. Language in lower classes is one of the reasons for slow learning' (1996:72)

The textbooks written for tribes have very much non tribal contents. According to Kundu, 'Existing textbooks are found to depict urban

middle class life and culture' (1994:8). Giving the instance of family situations she writes "these textbook families are urban upper middle-class families whose customs, traditions, dress, and food appear quite foreign to the tribal learner. These textbooks also contain ideas, concepts and themes alien to the tribal pupils.

In her further study (1994) she writes, 'Existing textbooks are also instrumental in creating in them a negative attitude to themselves and their culture'(P,8).

Rathnaiah has similar observations on the language and content of the textbooks. The tribal students finding it different to follow the language of the textbooks. The textbooks do not contain anything pertaining to their society and culture, they fail to create and sustain interest among the tribes (1977; 151).

Teachers

The teachers should be trained in tribal culture and life; and they should be recruited from the tribal community itself. This has been the proposal of different policies and reports. But the actual scenario is quite different. School related data indicate that only six per cent teachers who are in primary schools belong to tribal communities (NCERT 1992 : 91). The 50 % of these teachers are untrained and are mainly matriculate or only middle pass. Various studies [Sujatha , (1987, 1991) Sachidanand (1967), Ratnaiah

(1978); Hemdatha (1991) etc] have pointed out that a teacher from non tribal communities do not know the culture, ethos, values and language of tribes. They come with certain biases in their mind.

Based on his study of tribes of Ranchi district Ambasht (1970) found that the students do not like the teachers who belong to non tribal group because they do not belong to their community. Moreover, a language is a great hurdle in their way. A student of Kharia community said, 'we are finding among us a lot of non tribal, who look down upon our culture when we put up the slightest of cultural resistance we are regarded as undisciplined' (Quoted in Ambasht 1970:75). This shows that non tribals working in tribal areas are not culturally conditioned to work among them. The confusion grows more due to language.

The Perceptions and Attitudes of Teachers, Parents and Students towards Tribal Language

Teacher

As majority of the teachers in tribal schools are non tribes and untrained, they fail to understand the tribal ethos. They judge the tribal students from their own dominant viewpoint. They think that the culture of the tribals is inferior; the tribal languages are under developed; and tribes are quite satisfied with what they have and do not want to improve their lot. This misunderstanding grows more when they donot have proper training in tribal life and culture. Kundu in her study observes that 'the majority of teachers are against the use of tribal languages in education and are found to discourage their language within the school campuses. The majority of teachers fail to take into account the tribal learner's culture specific styles of learning and fail to realize some of their problems in comprehending the ideas and concepts foreign to their culture used in the textbooks based on nontribal and urban cultures' (1990:7).

In another study based on tribes of Orissa and done by Panda (1989), findings came out that more than 86 % of teachers from the total school opine that Oriya language does not create any hindrance in the teaching process. In teacher's opinion, Oriya is the

suitable language to be the medium of instruction in the schools, not the local tribal language. Not only this while teaching even the 9.5 percent teachers belonging to tribal communities do not use any tribal language (P, 116).

E.V. Rathnaiah (1977) in his study of tribes of Andhra Pradesh found that 73 per cent of teachers favoured the education of the tribal children through Telgu (P, 150).

The study of Saora tribes by Srivastava, Lal and Lal (1971) found that 77.05 percent teacher were of the opinion that the medium of instruction in class I should be Saora, 81.96 percent teachers felt that the saora students should be taught through both Saora and Oriya in class II and in class III more than half of the teachers (52.46%) favoured mother tongue along with Oriya and 47.54 through Oriya only. (p. 73).

These opinions of the teachers may be due to their lack of understanding of tribal culture as most of the teachers are untrained and from non tribal background. This is evident when 71 percent teachers felt that it is difficult to convince tribals to send their children regularly to school or to adapt to new ideals. (Sujatha 1996: 99). One fourth of the teachers feel that tribals are lazy and do not plan for future. Such perceptions have resulted from their lack of knowledge of tribal culture and are bound to effect their

entire perceptions towards tribe. In her study (1994). Sujatha found that 72 percent of non tribal teachers feel a need for a special kind of training for teaching tribal children (P. 151). This clearly indicates non tribal teachers' inability to realize or understand the tribal way of life.

Parents

Panda (1998) in his study found that majority of parents are not against the Oriya language as the medium of instruction. This information was received from teachers. When they were asked about opinion of the parents regarding medium of instruction, 93.9 per cent teachers said that parents like Oriya language as the medium of instruction.

Rathnaiah (1977) observed that when Andhra Pradesh Government made Telgu the medium of instruction, the tribal parents welcomed this change in the medium of instruction. When the tribal parents were asked what should be the medium of instruction in the schools, 95 percent of them opted for Telgu, that being the regional and official language of the state. This also happened previously when Urdu was the official language, the Gond of the region where Gondi was the medium of instruction seemed to have asked for it. As Haimendorf says, 'The Gonds themselves clamoured for

instruction in Urdu, which as the official language of the state in no doubt of great practical value." (Quoted in Rathnaih 1977:149).

Srivastava, Lal and Lal (1971) in their study found that 58.10 % parents wanted that their children should learn Oriya to get some jobs and thereby earn money (p. 70). As regards the medium 53.23 per cent parents wanted that their children should be taught through the media of both Saora and Oriya for the first three years.

The opinion of the parents does not mean that tribes do not like their language. In fact their opinion is based on pragmatic considerations. In the political, economic and administrative atmosphere dominated by non tribes, the tribal parents become unmindful of the difficulties experienced by the children in learning. Their life stricken with poverty, they would naturally like to send their children with the objective of earning livelihood and getting a job. As the socio-politico atmosphere is in the favour of non tribe, the regional language gets official status. By virtue of being state language, the opportunity of job in the regional language has many in education, media, administration. The tribal languages without having any recognition has no takers. Such situation compels tribes to opt for education through regional language.

Students

Panda (1998) found that many other tribals accept Oriya as their mother tongue. All the tribals use Oriya language and they also say that it is necessary for them. Eighty eight per cent like to read the textbooks written in Oriya language. Only 34 percent student feel happy about when their teachers use tribal language while teaching.

In their study of Saora tribe Srivastava, Lal and Lal observed that 68.23 percent students wanted to read through both Saora and Oriya.

Even though tribal children feel difficulty in learning through non tribal languages they prefer for regional language. When asked whether the tribal children feel any difficulty in following Telgu, 70 per cent of the teacher reported that they really feel much difficulty (Rathnaiah 77: 150). Despite difficulty, most of the tribal children are willing to have education in regional language as education in regional language can help them getting a job.

Thus, the tribals are put in a condition where they are naturally opt for the regional language. This condition has arisen out of compulsion. Tribes finding their language without having any official recognition and status, desire to have education in the dominant language. In schools, tribal children find double

disadvantage. Firstly, they are getting education through unfamiliar language. Secondly, the contents of the curriculum are the contents of dominant culture. Most of the teachers are non tribals. So, the whole school atmosphere is alien to their background. They feel uncomfortable and unhomey at school. This results in earlier withdrawal of tribal children from school.

It may be observed that various liberal provisions of mother tongue education for tribes are contrary to the language policy of the VIIIth Schedule. The majority of the tribes live with the states dominated by non tribals. A state may have more than one language. When a state declares a language 'state language' for official purposes, the language has advantages, of being the medium of instruction in education, as a medium of mass media, medium of official works. The tribal people will have education other than their own mother tongues. But government is using the term regional language, as if it is coterminous with mother tongues. Even if there is promotion for mother tongue education for the tribes, the socio-political atmosphere is not in favour of tribal education- There is not any incentives of carrying out education in mother tongue. From the practical consideration also, they will not like to have their children education in tribal languages as job market will be limited to them.

Chapter-V

CONCLUSION

The study has attempted to examine the relationship between language and education with reference to tribal communities. The tribes are the educationally most backward section of India. They are lagging far behind other community in terms of educational development. There is also a huge diversity and different levels of educational achievement among tribes. Undoubtedly, there are several social, economics, political reasons to be advanced to explanation of their educational situation. The focus of this study has been to understand the importance of language as medium of instruction for education of tribal children.

Traditionally, our understanding of language was prescriptive in nature. The concept of 'language deficit' was dominant in education. A certain variety of language was considered standard and worthy of possession. The possession of such language was necessary for educational achievement. The educational failure and success were explained in terms of language. Language was attributed to be reason of

educational failure of lower class children. Such confusion grew more with the study of class differentiated speech by Bernstein where he characterised the middle class speech as more abstract, formal, universalistic and generalized whereas lower class speech as particularistic, and informal. Since formal schooling values such virtues as abstraction, generalization and operates in more formal manner, the possessor of middle class speech variety has relative advantages. Though the study of Bernstein was sociological in nature, it was misunderstood and misinterpreted by deficit theorists to justify to account for the educational failure of the working class children. The study of William Labov on 'Black English Vernacular' challenged the idea of deficit theorist. Labov confronting with deficit theorists made a point that no variety of language is inferior or superior. All languages ^{have} equally the property of logicity and proposition. His idea was strengthened by Noam Chomsky's theory of 'transformational generativity' where he claimed that all the children irrespective of their background are innately equipped with acquiring the language of one's immediate environment and all the language have equally the property of generativity.

Again, there is no any linguistic ground to group any language as superior or inferior. In fact, it is the power which determines the status of a languages. Language in itself has no power. Various studies (Dittmar, Corsan, Moreau, Nicholas) on power and language have noted that the language of dominant group in the society have higher status and recognition. In the Indian context, mention can be made of languages in the Eighth Schedule. When the Indian states were carved on the basis of language (1956), the powerful lobby in Constituent Assembly Debate managed to get their language listed. No tribal language was included (except Manipuri in 1992). The language listed in Eighth Schedule began to be considered as major Indian languages while rest of the language are deemed as 'minor', 'dialect'.

Language is not just a means of expression. Our identity is revealed through language. It is marker of our socio-cultural background. A community stores its centuries old historical experience through language. Right from childhood to death we perceive the world and think about it through language. Pedagogically,

it is easier to learn through one's own language. Things can be understood better. New ideas and concepts can only be developed through our mother tongue.

Tribes are the most marginalised community in India. They live in abject poverty. They live in forest and hilly areas. As a group they have their distinct historical background, and socio-polotico and economic characteristics. They are geographically, racially, linguistically, and culturally heterogeneous. But there is certain common principle of co-operativeness, egáitarianism, close knit society, communal bond, self - dependency, non competitive and non profit oriented economy among all the tribes. They have great love for forests and land. Land as a property was a strange phenomena to them. The introduction of land revenue system and feudalization of society brought them in contact with non tribals. The contact with non tribals proved disasterous for them. They were rendered as labourers in their own land . The economic marginalisation led to marginalisation in other fields. They started accepting Hindu way of life. It is evident from the language retention ratio (see table 2.3) that language retention ratio

is found very high in tribes of North East but it is decreasing in the states where tribes live with non tribes.

Tribal children are the first generation ^{learner} without having any educational background. They have the learning style different from others. They learn through interaction and practice in a very free and informal way. A school has to understand this fact.

Though there are provisions for teaching the tribes through mother tongue but data shows that only a few states have tribal language as medium of instruction.

From the data given in the chapter three it is revealed that tribal educational situation is not uniform. There is an uneven educational development among tribes of various states in terms of literacy, drop out, retention and enrollment. There is also a wide educational gap between tribes and others.

The states in the North East (Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya), Assam, Sikkim and Andaman Nicobar Islands have high literacy rate

whereas tribal literacy rate is found very low in Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and West Bengal.

The data also reveals ^{that} the retention rate of tribal children falls at higher stages. The retention ratio of tribes at primary stage is 9.08 per cent *and it reduced to 5.85%* at middle stage. But the retention ratio of tribal children at middle stage is higher in the states of Nagaland, Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Andaman and Nicobar Islands whereas the tribal retention ratio is lower in states of Orissa, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

It is observed that drop out rate is lower in Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands but the drop out rate is found very high in states of Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura, Bihar Andhra Pradesh and Manipur in North East.

The states where tribal languages are being practiced as media of instruction are Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The study has shown that the states where education is given through *tribal language* they are relatively educationally advanced. The states where tribal education is given through non tribal languages, they have low educational development.

It is found in various studies that contents of the curriculum are very much non tribal they are written in a standard language. The tribal children face constraints because of alien contents and unfamiliar language. Most of the teachers are non tribal; they are not well trained to teach the tribal children. In fact, many teachers feel the need of training. When the tribal children come to school dominated by non tribal, it is a new kind of experience to them. The freedom loving nature and interactive and indulging learning habit of tribes go contrary to school dominated by mannerism and mental learning. Their problem compounded with unfamiliar language, alien content and non tribal teachers. The tribal children feel unhomey and uncomfortable at school. The school cannot sustain them for a longer time.

There are mixed opinion of parents, teachers and students on tribal language. But majority of the teachers, parents and students favour education through regional language for pragmatic reasons.

Briefly put, there is a perceptible relationship between language and education. It is widely accepted from the various studies and researches that education through mother tongue in the early years of schooling has a number of advantages. On all grounds, the pedagogic social, psychological the claim of mother tongue as a medium of instruction is justifiable. But there are certain external constraints like lack of trained teachers, availability of teaching materials in tribal language due to which the programme of mother tongue education has not been successful. This can be achieved with the political empowerment of the tribes. The political empowerment will lead to encouragement to their culture, language, identity and ultimately educational development.

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APPENDIX**Appendix I**

Population of Scheduled Tribes 1991

State/UT	% of ST Population to General Population in the State	% of ST Population to Total ST Population in India
States with 25% and more tribal population		
Meghalaya	85.53	2.24
Nagaland	87.70	1.57
Tripura	30.95	1.26
Mizoram	94.75	0.96
Manipur	34.41	0.93
Arunachal Pradesh	63.66	0.81
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	78.99	0.16
Lakshadweep	93.15	0.07
States with 5.25% tribal population		
Madhya Pradesh	23.77	22.73
Maharashtra	9.27	10.80
Orissa	22.21	10.38
Bihar	7.66	9.77
Gujarat	14.92	9.09
Rajasthan	12.44	8.08
Andhra Pradesh	6.31	6.20
West Bengal	5.59	5.62
Assam	24.66	4.24
Sikkim	22.36	0.13
Andaman & Nicobar	9.54	0.04

Islands		
Daman & Diu	11.54	0.02
States with less than 5% tribal population		
Karnataka	4.26	2.83
Tamilnadu	1.03	0.85
Kerala	1.10	0.47
Uttar Pradesh	0.21	0.42
Himachal Pradesh	4.22	0.32
Goa	0.03	0.00

Based on Census of India, 1991.

Appendix II

Tribal Languages and their scripts

Languages/Varieties	Regions	Writing systems
Indo-Aryan Family:		
Bhili	MP, Rajasthan	Devanagari
	Maharashtra, Gujarat, Dadra Nagar haveli	Gujarati
Vernaculars sadan/sadari, Hindi- Bihari	Bihar, W. Bengal	Devanagari
North Group		
Kurukh/Oraon	Bihar, MP, West Bengal	Devanagari, (Roman)
Gondi	MP, Maharashtra	Devanagari
Mon-Khmer Group:		
Khasi	Meghalaya	Roman, (earlier Assameses, Bangali)
Nicobarese	A & N Islands	Devanagari (Roman)
Munda Group:		
Santali	Bihar, W. Bengal	Devanagari, Roman
	Orissa	Bengali, Oriya, olcemet (olchiki)
HO	Bihar, Orissa	Roman, (Devanagari)
Mundari	Bihar, orissa	Devanagari, Roman, Oriya.
Kharia	Bihar, Orissa	Devanagari, Roman.
Tibeto -Burman Family:		
Bodo Group		
Bodo	Assam, W. Bengal	Devanagari, (Roman)
Tripuri	Tripura	Roman, Bengali
Garó	Meghalaya	Roman, (Bengali)
Mikir	Assam, Meghalaya	Assamase (Roman)
Dimasa	Assem,	Bengali

	Meghalaya	
Mech	Meghalaya	Roman
Naga Group		
AO	Nagaland	Roman
Sema	Nagaland	Roman
Konyak	Nagaland	Roman
Tangkul	Manipur	Roman
Angami	Nagaland	Roman
Lotha	Nagaland	Roman
Kabui	Manipur	Roman, (Bengali)
Nocte	Arunachal Pradesh	Roman
Phom	Nagaland	Roman
Rengma	Nagaland	Roman
Kuki-Chin Group		
Lushai/Mizo	Mizoram	Roman
Thado	Manipur	Roman
Hmar	Manipur	Roman
NEFA Group	Assam, Arunachal Pradesh	Roman, (Assamese)
Bhotia Group		
Monpa	Arunachal Pradesh	Tibetan
Bhotia	Sikkim	Tibetan
Himalayan Group		
Lepcha	Sikkim, w. Bengal	Lepcha

Source: Quoted in Khubchandani 1992; 128-136.