



## State of Primary Education among Tribals: Issues and Challenges

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### Abstract

Scheduled Tribes have always been a geographically and socially isolated group in Indian society, besides being a culturally-economically marginalized society. Their areas were by and large sparsely populated and had evolved over centuries their own system of maintaining law and order. The British also allowed them to live according to their own way of life. The national leaders, however, were aware of their backwardness and were eager to take measures for their betterment. As a result a few provisions were adopted in the Government of India Act 1935. During the post-Independence period, the policy makers have made sincere and concerted efforts for overall development of these groups both economically as well as educationally. Despite these efforts the performance of the tribal groups is much lower when compared to other marginalized groups like Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Castes. The available literature on tribal primary education suggests, most of the time the policymakers' approach was only to develop a national curriculum instead of giving importance to their skill-oriented, practical capabilities which has impacted their life in a more serious manner.

**Keywords:** Tribal, Panchel approach, Primary education, Dhebar commission, Omission, Five year plans

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*Unless the capabilities among the human beings are adequately addressed- deprivation faced by these groups are overcome- development cannot take place-*

*Amartya Sen*

India has been bestowed with unique gifts like land, flora and fauna as well as humans, by a benign nature. The ancient civilization of India and her distinctive culture has always enriched the men in India, though a substantial part of Indian population could not benefit from it. The people who could not get benefited or people inhabiting in secluded and far-flung areas were mainly identified by anthropologists as ethnological groups or a tribe (Verma: 1996). In general, the terms were applied to people who are considered to be primitive and lived in backward areas. A tribe is a self-contained unit. It constitutes a society in itself.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1911, defines a tribe as a "collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so" (Nithya:2014 ) According to D.N. Majumdar "a tribe as a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions, ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise united in language and dialect, recognizing social distance with other tribes or caste without any social obloquy attached 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 of homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration (Verma: 1996).

Considering the above definition, the Indian tribes (ethnic groups) are characterized as more distinctive in social and cultural terms; reside in areas like hills, forest, sea coasts and islands; and whose style of life is quite different from civilized man (Preet :1994). Their societies are not static, rather dynamic. The rate of change in tribal society is very slow. As they are economically poor and unreachable, whatever the attempts made by the national leaders with the help of constitutional provisions were not materialized to the desired extent (Chandra Guru et.al: 2015).

Based on the above observation, the paper will discuss the following objectives: They are:

1. To study the historical background of the schedule tribe and their educational status.
2. To examine the educational policies and their impact on tribes
3. To identify the gaps and make suitable suggestion for their betterment.

The paper has been developed with secondary data. The secondary data consists of books, articles and government reports and also census reports.

### **Review of literature**

Gosh (2007) explored tribal education in Jharkhand and West Bengal. The bulletin claims that a few tribal communities are in great need of special attention to enhance their literacy and educational levels. The focus in the bulletin was on the tribal communities Ho and the Mahali in Jharkhand and the Lodha in West Bengal and their low literacy rate, especially female literacy. It was found that the female enrolment ratio is lower among these tribes than that of their males. Due to low enrolment ratio among these tribes, there is a sharp decline in the enrolment immediately after primary education and this trend continued among males and females. During the agricultural season the drop-out rate is more because children are required to assist their family members in sowing, weeding, plantation and harvesting operations. Economic hardship is also a major factor influencing drop out of the tribal children. The paper also highlights a number of initiatives taken by the government like providing low-cost primary schooling in the form of single-teacher or two-teacher schools in sparsely populated tribal habitations. To achieve gender equity in education, a number of suggestions were given by the author like focusing on measures to improve the motivational level of parents to send their daughters to school, curriculum suited to the needs of tribal girls, separate toilets for girls and other child care centers.

Rana et.al (2003) have discussed on the primary education situation in West Bengal. According to them, primary education across India is facing problems like infrastructure, shortage of schools, shortage of teachers, and the financial handicap of the parents. Their finding suggested that just attending the problems or improving infrastructure like student-teacher ratio, did not provide a guarantee of improvement in either the quality or the spread of primary education. To improve the literacy levels a number of issues were suggested like parents' participation in monitoring and governance is the key to improving the delivery of primary education. The government of West Bengal's 'Sishu Siksha Karmasuchi' (SSK) experiment in providing cost-effective primary education, particularly to the most underprivileged sections of society must be recognized. Finally, the evil of private tuition must be uncompromisingly eradicated are some of the issues that the paper has dealt.

Chowdhury et.al (2013) deal with the historical background of Tripura as linked with literacy rate of the state. The paper focuses the pre-Independence state of Tripura where illiteracy was so rampant. This led the tribal communities to suffer under feudal exploitation. Dasarath Deb, (who later on became the first tribal chief minister of the state in the year 1993) formed an organisation for mass education called the Jana Siksha Samiti in 1945. The samiti has opened more than 450 primary schools across Tripura. It was because of this organization, education became a tool for political mobilization. Due to this Tripura became the most literate state in the country, they have lived up to the legacy of their visionary forefathers.

K. Sujatha's (1989) study was on the education status among Yenadi children in the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh. The study covered a sample of 640 Yenadi children between the age of 6 and 11 years. The research found that enrollment of the Yenadi children in primary school is better in roadside villages, tribal colonies, and in coastal taluk as when compared to interior villages. The study also suggests that more enrollment and retention was found from higher income group families, literate parents and joint families. Another finding was that the exposure to outside world has adverse effect on enrollment due to employment of children in

households situated near the mica mines or due to the distracting town atmosphere. It was also noticed that the curriculum of formal education is not related to the life and needs of the Yenadi community. So, the community finds schooling meaningless, suffocating and unrealistic. Lastly, the research also found that absenteeism, stagnation, wastage and drop-out rates are much higher among the Yenadi girls than among the Yenadi boys.

All the above studies are state specific or community oriented and the observations are confined to the respective groups only. In view of this, the present paper tries to present the overall picture of tribal primary education scenario in Independent India.

The tribal population of India is known to be the autochthonous people of the land. Very often they are referred to as *Adivasi*, *Vanyajati*, *Vanvasi*, *Pahari*, *Adimjati* and *Anusuchit Jan Jati*, the latter being the constitutional name. The concept of tribe emerged in India with the advent of British. Gradually, the nomenclature of schedule tribe and concept of reservation emerged after independence. (*Basu: 2000*).

As soon as British entered into the Indian sub-continent, majority of the tribal regions were thrown open for development and revenue administration (*Sen:1992*). This marked the beginning of unrest and rebellion in all the tribal areas of the country. These resistance movements compelled the British administrators to negotiate a workable peace with tribal people and led the British to exclude tribal people from administration. Hence, they followed a policy of isolation and allowed them to pursue their own cultural life. (*ChandraGuru, et.al:2015*). However, because of other contradictory colonial policies of trade, industry and agriculture pursued by the British Government, the exclusion and protection functioned only in the breach, the most prominent example being the activities of the missionaries and the contract farmers trading in tea, opium, indigo and other cash crops. Consequently, the exploitation of the tribes continued along with land alienation and pauperization. (*Bhowmik: 1988; Sen: 1992*).

The national leaders, however, were aware of their backwardness and were eager to take measure for their welfare. With the help of the Government of India Act 1935, Congress Ministries were

formed in 1937 in the provinces of Bihar, Orissa, Bombay, and Madras and they formed committees to enquire into the conditions of the tribes in their respective jurisdiction. But this did not progress at a satisfactory level on account of the Second World War and subsequent resignation of the Ministries (Sahay: 1998).

During the same period other efforts were also made by individuals, social workers and some voluntary organizations to bring them into the mainstream. People like V. Elwin (first a missionary and later an anthropologist) and some other anthropologists made their own contribution to different aspects of tribal life. Elwin worked among various tribes, especially in Madhya Pradesh from 1931 to 1955. His work combined research and welfare among the tribal communities. He established colonies at Karanjia, Sanhrwachhpur, and Pantangarh (all in Madhya Pradesh) and promoted welfare activities, like the treatment of incurable diseases, literacy, agriculture, and poultry-keeping. On the basis of his prolonged experience of working in tribal areas and his better understanding of the tribal life and culture, he developed a firm conviction that tribes could only be developed 'along the lines of their own genius. Elwin's policy was criticized by a section of politicians and social workers including G. S Ghurye, a noted social scientist, who advocated a complete assimilation of the tribes in to the mainstream of Indian society (Sahay :1998). He says that tribes are backward Hindus and any attempt to isolate them would be meaningless (Vidyarthi: 1976). While advocating this policy, they did not apprehend the negative consequences of the irregular and unplanned culture contact. They also ignored the fact that a tribal culture has many positive and useful facets and that must be preserved. Elwin and other anthropologists were thus labeled as 'isolationists', 'revivalists', 'no changers' and 'person conspiring to keep the tribes as museum species for academic purpose.

Subsequently, After Independence the first Prime Minister of India took a stand on Elwin's wisdom, sincerity and outlined that the government should follow more on revivalists and no changers approach for the development of tribes. The logic behind this is to assimilate the min a limited way. "We cannot allow matters to drift in the tribal areas or just not take interest in them. In the World of today that is not possible or desirable. At the same time we should

avoid over-administering these areas and sending too many outsiders into their areas". He then supplemented this statement with his five famous principles which constitute the basic tenets for tribal policy in India: (i) People should develop along the lines of their own genius; (ii) Tribal land rights and forest should be respected; (iii) We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. (iv) We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions. (v) We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by quality of human character that has evolved (Singh: 1982; Sen: 1992; Sonawane: 2014).

As a result of 'Panchsheel' several welfare and development programmes were taken up by the government and non-governmental organizations.

### **Present Scenario**

India has been portrayed as a country having the second largest tribal (Adivasis) population in the world. The irony is that the tribes, the poorest people of India, are living in areas having richest natural resources. According to the 2011 census, tribes constitute 8.2% of the total population of the country. In India, 461 ethnic groups were recognized as Scheduled Tribes, and they are considered to be India's most indigenous people. According to the Anthropological Survey of India there are 4,635 tribal communities living today. Out of this, 732 are most indigenous communities. The size of each sub-group has ranged from 300-odd Jarawa of Andaman and Nicobar Islands to more than 7 million Bhils of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. More number of tribal sub groups were there in the State of Orissa (62) and the lowest in Sikkim (2). Seventy four primitive tribal communities have been identified in India (Basu: 2000).

### **Educational status of Tribal people in India**

India is moving towards inclusive growth but lack of education, skills development and transparent governance are a few hurdles in progressing towards it at a faster pace (Sahu: 2014). To attain progress, the Constitution of India has given certain special

considerations to the tribal and ethnic minority groups, traditionally referred to as tribes of the country. The special provisions were adopted through amendment to the constitution in 1951 and add a special clause to article 15(4). This clause empowers the state to make special provisions for the educational development of SCs and STs in educational institutions (*Sahoo: 2009*).

Most of the tribes have their own languages which is mostly different from the majority language spoken in the state where they reside. Nearly 22 per cent of the tribal habitations have a population less than 100 and more than 40 per cent have 100 to less than 300 people, while other areas have less than 500 people (*Panda:2011*). Because of these peculiar conditions the special provisions have also failed to bring an impressive performance in their literacy level.

In 1961, their overall literacy level was 8.5. Recognizing their count, deprivation, and marginalization in Indian society, the government of India has started an innovative scheme for the promotion of education among scheduled tribes, the establishment of residential schools in the tribal areas known as Ashram schools. The Ashram schools concept was started in Third Five Year Plan throughout scheduled areas in the country. It aims to provide educational facilities to tribal students. At the same time construction of hostels for both boarding and lodging facility to the tribal students was launched by the state governments in the schedule areas. All these special measures were accorded highest priority to improve elementary education among the tribal population. Such steps have also failed to make it beyond 11.39 percent because of absenteeism, stagnation and drop-outs among the tribal population which is far greater than other social groups.

In the meantime, the Dhebar Commission has identified certain causes for low level of literacy among tribes such as cultural gulf between teachers and students, lack of teacher's involvement in the educational process and not using the vernacular language as the medium of instruction. It also touched upon the other problems like poverty-related issues and children engaging in household work. This paved the way for making a broad policy frame work for tribal education. The Commission, thus, stressed the need for mid-



day meals, clothing, free books, reading and writing materials to all tribal children in educationally backward areas. The Commission further considered the children's difficulties on account of topographical factors and had recommended opening schools in a locality where there were at least 30 school-going children, though the general norm should be a school within one mile. The Commission then suggested adjustment of timing, vacations and holidays of schools to suit tribal social and cultural life. It even proposed creation of an ambience of tribal culture in the schools (Govt. of India Report: 2014).

The Indian Education Commission endorsed the suggestions and recommendations of the Dhebar Commission, adding a note of urgency that 'intensive efforts' should be made to provide five years of early education to all tribal children by 1975-76. In order to achieve this, the Commission wanted the support of simultaneous intensive parental education. Despite all the pro-active initiatives towards tribal education by the education Commissions expected level of results have not been achieved. Literacy rate increased from 11.3 per cent in 1971, rising marginally to 16.35 per cent in 1981. Within this, tribal female literacy rate was much lower, at 4.85 per cent in 1971 and 8.04 in 1981.

Three decades of experience of tribal education (1951-81) indicates a clear trend at the primary level, that is, educational status grew at a slow pace; there was a wide gap between the literacy rate of the tribes and the general population (Table 6.1); and third, there was a high dropout rate, especially at the primary level; the drop-out was chronic in nature as the country-wide data reveals (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1: Scheduled Tribe Literacy Rate and Gap, 1961-1981

Year	ST	SC	GEN	Gap between ST and SC	Gap between ST and GEN
1961	8.54	10.27	27.86	1.73	19.32
1971	11.29	14.67	33.80	3.37	22.5
1981	16.35	21.38	41.30	5.03	24.95

Source: Census of India, authors' calculation from census of India, various years

Table 2: Scheduled Tribe Drop-out Rate in Comparison, 1980-81

Year	ST			SC			Gen		
	I-V	I-VIII	I-X	I-V	I-VIII	I-X	I-V	I-VIII	I-X
1980-81	75.66	86.71	91.18	60.16	76.85	86.91	58.70	72.70	82.46

Source: MHRD, GOI, *Educational Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe, Status and Programs, August-2005*

The Fourth All India Educational Survey (1978) has revealed stark facts on poor educational status of the tribes, 83 per cent of the tribal people were covered by a school within a radius of one kilometer. At the same time, more than 25,000 tribal habitations had no school at all. As far as secondary schooling was concerned, 82.18 per cent of the tribal population was within eight kilometers reach of secondary school, while only 18.8 per cent of them had access to higher secondary school. In the case of the tribal habitats, often circled by forests and hills, the distance of one or eight kilometers did not present the real picture of access to schools (*Govt. of India Report: 2014*).

During the First plan period, 4,000 schools were established for the educational needs of the tribal people. The Second Plan carried forward the work of first plan. Despite the promises of high importance to primary education, elementary education was neglected, as can be seen in the details of the first two Five Year Plans (Table. 3).

Table 3: Field-wise Distribution of Plan Outlay in the First and Second Plans

Fields of Education	First Plan (Rs. in crores)	Second Plan (Rs. in crores)
Elementary Education	93	89
Secondary Education	22	51
University Education	15	57
Technical and Vocational Education	23	48
Social Education	5	5
Administration and Miscellaneous	11	57
Total	169	307

Source: *Planning Commission, 2nd Five Year plan (1956-61), p.1*  
([www.planningcommission.nic.in/plans](http://www.planningcommission.nic.in/plans))

The above table suggests that elementary education was slowly receding to normal both in general areas as well as in tribal areas and this in turn had an adverse effect on tribal education.

By the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan, it was estimated that 56 per cent of the tribal children in the country were out of school (49 per cent boys and 70 per cent girls). Looking at this challenge, a National Policy on Education was framed in 1986 with the aim to reduce the low participation of disadvantaged sections at higher levels. The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) set out to give 'overriding priority' to universalization of elementary education for the children of age-group 6-14 years by 1990. The education of the tribal masses had received a special attention from the government side. It recommended a suitable designing of curriculum at all stages of education. The policy resolves to give 'highest priority' in solving the problem of drop-outs and promised to adopt 'an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro-planning.'

Table: 4 Literacy Rate of All Social Groups, SC and ST Population (1991-2011) (Figures in percentage)

Year	All Social Groups			SC			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1991	64.13	39.29	52.21	49.91	23.76	37.41	40.65	18.19	29.60
2001	75.26	53.67	64.84	66.64	41.9	54.69	59.17	34.76	47.10
2011	80.89	64.64	72.99	75.17	56.46	66.07	68.53	49.35	58.96

Source: Registrar General of India

The above table suggests that literacy rate of STs had improved in the period 1991 to 2011, for a period of 20 years, and the gap has been slightly narrowed down between all the groups and STs. Though it could bring a change, the same change is not noticed significantly between ST men and ST women. This signifies that the ST woman have to go a long way to get fully literate. Hence the government must plan more tailor made programmes to suit the needs of the ST women.

Table-5: Dropout Rate, 2004-05 &amp; 2010-11 Scheduled Tribe (Provisional)

Year	Sex	Classes I - V			Classes I - VII			Classes I - X		
		All	ST	Gap	All	ST	Gap	All	ST	Gap
2004-05	Boys	31.8	42.6	(-) 10.7	50.4	65.0	(-) 14.6	60.4	77.8	(-) 17.4
	Girls	25.4	42.0	(-) 16.6	51.3	67.1	(-) 15.8	63.9	80.7	(-) 16.8
	Total	29.0	42.3	(-) 13.3	50.8	65.9	(-) 15.1	61.9	79	(-) 17.1
2010-11	Boys	28.7	37.2	(-) 8.5	40.3	54.7	(-) 14.4	50.4	70.6	(-)20.2
	Girls	25.1	33.9	(-) 8.8	41.0	54.4	(-) 13.4	47.9	71.3	(-)23.4
	Total	27	35.3	(-) 8.3	60.8	54.5	(+) 6.3	49.1	71.0	(-)21.9

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-2005, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and Statistics of School Education 2010-2011

The above table is on schedule tribe children dropout rates at two intervals i.e., 2004-05 and 2010-11. In both the periods in all the class i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> the dropout rates are more in all the groups. In 2004-05, except in 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> and the remaining classes the ST girls' dropout rate is more than the ST boys. In 2010-11, the dropout rate in 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> class has reduced in both the groups and also in ST children, but the same phenomenon is not noticed in higher classes i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> classes. The increase of dropout rate in higher classes may be the impact of external factors like non-availability of schools in their location, safety of the girl, and non-availability of toilets.

Table 6.6: Distance between Household and Nearest Primary School, 1993-94 to 2007-08 (per cent)

Groups	Percentage of Households									
	1km		2km		3km		4km		5km	
Percentage of Households	1993-94	2007-08	1993-94	2007-08	1993-94	2007-08	1993-94	2007-08	1993-94	2007-08
Total										
ST	77.12	88.46	13.39	8.25	6.27	2.35	3.21	0.36	-	0.58
SC	84.31	92.29	12.47	6.57	2.87	0.92	0.35	0.19	-	0.03
Gen	85.07	92.15	11.46	6.58	2.97	1.03	0.50	0.19	-	0.05
Total	83.94	91.67	11.87	6.81	3.37	1.19	0.82	0.21	-	0.12
Rural										
ST	73.86	88.00	14.85	8.32	7.45	2.52	3.84	0.43	-	0.72
SC	81.09	92.36	14.83	6.38	3.66	0.99	0.42	0.24	-	0.03
GEN	80.43	91.86	14.17	6.67	4.70	1.17	0.70	0.24	-	0.06
Total	79.43	91.31	14.41	6.89	4.98	1.36	1.19	0.27	-	0.17
Urban										
ST	92.57	90.26	6.48	7.95	0.72	1.67	0.23	0.08	-	0.03
SC	91.35	92.11	7.3	7.05	1.14	0.75	0.20	0.05	-	0.04
GEN	91.01	92.59	7.99	6.44	0.76	0.82	0.24	0.11	-	0.04
Total	91.15	92.33	7.81	6.64	0.81	0.88	0.23	0.10	-	0.04

Source: NSS 52nd and 64th Round

The table above provides data on the percentage of household covered by primary schools and its distance in two different periods. In 1993-94 as many as 77.12 ST households were covered by a primary school with a distance of 1 Kilometer and in 2007-08 the percentage has increased to 88.16. This shows that the govt. is making efforts to bring down the number of ST children who are out of school. On the other hand, as many as 2.35 households had to travel 3 Kilometers to get registered in primary school in 2007-08. This gives an impression that still primary education is a distant dream for some of the ST children.

## **Conclusions and Suggestions**

Since ancient time the tribal communities are living in forests and unreachable areas. Most of their life and livelihood is linked with the forests. Even during the medieval period no specific policy was formulated either to develop these communities or to bring them into mainstream. Due to this their relations with outside world was either forged or severed based on their convenience. At the time of British rule, their regions were thrown open for development and revenue administration and agrarian policy led the tribal lands to pass into the hands of non-tribal landlords and moneylenders. This gave rise to widespread discontent among the tribal people who revolted against Britishers a number of times and this has endangered the British rule in the country. The Britishers realized such a danger and to continue ruling here pursued a policy called indirect policy or a policy of appeasement. The sole aim was to let the tribes live their own way of life as long as they did not cause trouble, and thus to allow them to maintain their status quo. However, this policy did not reap dividends and has only led to the distancing of the tribes from the rest of the population.

In the post-independence period, the Government of India also followed a policy of limited assimilation through Nehru's Panchsheel approach which again restricted the planners to act on a limited way taking in to account their cultural and traditional life. The policy makers, however, have made policies without understanding the nitty-gritty of their cultural and traditional life. This resulted in a situation where, as Roy Burman has pointed out, the new laws seeking to protect the tribes actually lead to greater exploitation of tribes. Any development is possible only with the involvement of the local people. Based on this observation, the orientation of planning must be changed i.e., the planners must study the problems of tribes and plan accordingly.

Education is an important avenue for upgrading the economic and social status of a person in the society. In the case of Scheduled Tribes, it is very important. By perusing the above tables, it is evident that the government has to do a lot to improve the educational status of tribes in India. Even after implementation of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, only 88.46 percent of ST households were

covered by primary schools in a radius of 1 KM. Though there is a decline in the percentage of out-of-school children and drop-out children among tribal communities, if it were to progressively continue, the curriculum should be prepared in their mother tongue. Also, wherever possible the government should appoint the community members as teachers. This will certainly bring confidence and motivation among the tribal students to get enrolled in the school. They government should also take necessary steps to open Ashram schools in tribal areas by relaxing the government rules so that more children can register their names in the schools. In view of such a condition, sector wise plans must be prepared and implemented on a priority-basis for the betterment of the tribal children.

### **Suitable suggestions**

The dearth of teachers in fulfilling the eligibility criteria set out under the Right to Education (RTE) Act is an impediment to achieving the right to education in tribal areas. To address the current crisis of lack of teachers in tribal areas, special efforts must be made to produce more qualified teachers who are also willing to work with commitment in such remote areas.

Most of the educational 'missions' do not reach the tribal areas and where they do reach, it is too rare to have any significant impact. The State educational machinery is largely responsible for this situation. There should be proper accountability of the State administration to end the longstanding stagnation of education in tribal areas.

Inclusion of local culture, folklore and history in the curriculum can help in building confidence among tribal children and such an approach may help in increasing their enrollment and retention in school. Since music and dance are a central part of their life, storytelling, theatre, painting, music and dance performances should be promoted. Similarly, sports like archery, football and other popular local sports, which are extremely beneficial and therapeutic for children, should be promoted.

Recognizing that the tribal people have certain cultural 'genius', different aspects of 'indigenous knowledge' should be

documented, researched and promoted. For developing better understanding of the tribal cultures and their promotion, there should be appropriate number of tribal cultural research and academic centers in all the regions. An important step in this direction is to teach tribal history and culture in schools for both tribal and non-tribal children which would also indirectly help in addressing the paucity of teachers in tribal areas. Institutions like ITDAs/ITDPs and micro-projects' support to the tribal schools should be strengthened for prevention of dropouts.

Residential schools should be set up specifically for Nomadic Tribes. The basic principles are: (a) The residential schools should be in places where the weather is least harsh, (b) there should be special security for the children, including girl children for whom there should be women wardens, (c) the parents of students should be brought to these institutions so that they are informed about the education, and quality of life, of their children, (d) there should be proactive efforts by Tribal Affairs officials of the State to approach every family to help them to make an informed choice to send their children to the schools, (e) the holidays for these schools should be fixed in such a way that the children can meet their family, when the family returns to the place where they celebrate festivals, weddings, etc.

There is a marked absence of quality secondary and higher secondary schools in tribal areas. The Government needs to establish well-run residential schools such as Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas closer to their habitations (within a radius of ten kilometers) up to Class XII. These schools must provide comprehensive facilities for marginalized children including quality education, health care and academic support classes.

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