

**TRIBAL EDUCATION IN INDIA: AN EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL
IMPOSITION AND INEQUALITY**

by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study explores the cultural dissonance promoted in Indian tribal students by participation in the mainstream Indian educational system and the changes this has brought to their lives. Previous studies have tried to analyze the problem from four theoretical perspectives: biological interpretation, the socio-economic perspective, inter-colonization theory, and the cultural reproduction perspective. This study examines the applicability of these perspectives in analyzing the participation of Indian tribal students in the Indian education system. It attempts to identify elements that are incompatible with tribal culture, examine the difference in educational achievement between the tribal elites and their downtrodden counterparts, assess the social standing of the tribal graduates, and examine teachers' conception of tribal students. The study used a non-experimental, cross-sectional research design with the main tools of data collection being observation and personal interviews. The study was conducted on the Santal, Birhor, Kharia and Lodha tribes located in Bankura, Birbhum, Puruliya, and Paschim Medinipur districts of the state of West Bengal in India. Personal interviews were conducted with tribal students, graduates, parents, teachers, and principals of tribal schools. The research revealed that the modern education system makes little attempt to address cultural specificities in designing education policies for tribal students which results in the development of a negative self-image. Moreover, although claimed to be free by the Indian government, achieving success in the education system involves subsidiary costs like private tuition which represents an obstacle for poverty stricken tribal families. The problem is further complicated due

to the unempathetic attitudes and beliefs of teachers and the ill-conceived developmental policies designed by educational planners that fail to incorporate curricular elements compatible with tribal culture.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my father Amalendu Mukherjee, who taught me to think big.

Chapter 1

Introduction

India is a home to a large variety of indigenous peoples. With a population of more than 84.4 million, India has the single largest tribal population in the world. This constitutes 8 % of the total population of the country according to the 2001 census.

In the Indian context, tribals are the earliest settlers of the land if not autochthonous. According to Majumdar (1958), a tribe can be defined as

“a community which has a name, endogamous in nature, lives in common territory, has a common traditional culture with an unwritten language, is structurally and culturally distinctive, relatively homogenous, largely self governing, with no specialization of functions, pervasively self-sufficient, and has a shared consciousness of ethnic identity and of belonging together.” (Majumdar, 1958).

These tribal people, also known as “adivasis”, are the poorest and the most exploited people in the country, depending on hunting, agriculture, and fishing for their livelihood. One of their distinguishing features is that most of them live in scattered, small habitations in remote, inaccessible settlements in hilly forested areas of the country. Most of these tribal areas lack basic facilities like roads, transportation, communications, electricity, and medical facilities. The literacy rate among the tribal peoples is low, but also varies widely among groups and regions. More importantly, a large number of tribal children remain outside the school system.

Some of the major tribal groups in India include the Gonds, Santals, Khasis, Kharia, Lodhas, Angamis, Bhils, Bhutias, Birhors, and Greater Andamanese. All these tribal peoples have their own cultures, traditions, languages, and lifestyles. There are 574 tribal groups in India with diverse socio-cultural lives and with varying

levels of social and economic development. Based on their level of development, or lack of development, some tribes are officially recognized by the Indian government as “Scheduled Tribes” and are eligible for some affirmative action measures. Special provisions have been made in the Constitution under, among others, articles 46, 275, 330, 332, 335, 338, 340 to safeguard the interests of Scheduled Tribes and protect them from social injustice. Hence, the research approach changes from “researching upon the other: the insignificant deviant”, to “researching with significant differences” to add to existing knowledge.

Nevertheless, the term “Scheduled Tribe” is an administrative one used for administering certain specific constitutional privileges, protection, and benefits for specific groups of peoples considered historically disadvantaged and socio-economically backward. Certain groups and communities listed in the government schedule of tribes are periodically revised based on the level of development of a particular tribe. Thus, groups classified as “tribes” in one province may not be listed in the schedule for tribes in the adjoining province.

According to John Ogbu (1981), in designing education policy, policy-makers should adopt a “cultural ecological approach.” By “ecological structure,” Ogbu means the social and economic context of schooling; he highlights the three underlying assumptions on which the approach is based. First, formal education is linked in important ways to other features of society, especially the corporate economy and economic opportunity structure. Second, the nature of this linkage has a history that to some extent influences current schooling. Third, models of social reality influence the behavior of participants.

Broadly speaking, culture is defined as a complex whole that includes knowledge, art, belief, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Taylor, 1871). This emphasizes the cognitive side of human life and closely related concepts of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law and custom, and excludes material objects. Another definition of culture focuses on patterns of behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols and embodied in artifacts (Peabody Museum of America, 1952), a definition concerned with not only with acquisition of knowledge, beliefs, etc, but also with behavioral patterns, all of which are embodied in artifacts. In this case, the knowledge acquired is not seen as an achievement of the individual but as a distinctive achievement of a human group.

Some sociologists suggest a combination of concepts of culture and society because all human phenomena are socio-cultural. They would define culture as ways of life by which the interaction of people is affected as when achievements, whether by an individual or a human group, are made in society through human interaction. They define society as a group of people occupying a territorial area, but concede that such people have a distinct culture and a feeling of unity (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969).

Thus, the notion that culture is not only the arts, customs, and beliefs but also social institution characteristics of a particular group, community, race, etc., showing quite clearly that society is inseparable from culture. Society has a comprehensive social system that includes all the basic social institutions such as family, economic institutions, educational institutions, political institutions, and religious institutions required to meet basic human needs. Social roles and norms

constitute social institutions and define proper and expected behaviors oriented to fulfilling particular social needs such as food, clothing, and shelter.

The word *education* is derived either from the Latin word- “educere,” which means to “to lead out” or “educare,” which means “to bring out”. Adherents of child-centered ideology maintain that this definition (to lead out) implies that the concept focuses on developing what is within rather than imposing ideas from without. More specifically, education develops abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behavior, which are valuable in the society in which the individual lives; that is, the forms of behavior installed by education should be useful to the individual and society.

Education, therefore, must be described as initiation into worthwhile activities or modes of thought and conduct. Thus, it must involve not only rational thought processes but also use worthwhile things for the balanced development of an individual and the improvement of the human lot. It places educational institutions firmly in a relationship with wider social institutions.

Yet, what defines education in one society may not define education in another. Note, for example, Murray’s study of the Bantu tribe in Africa, where education meant “discipline and self-restraint, the endurance of hardship, the pride of membership in a group, responsibility for other people, and skills in recognized crafts.” It gave Africans, especially the Bantu, a toughness that enabled them to withstand centuries of adverse conditions after Europeans settled on the continent.

Weiner (1991) quite aptly argues that low school enrollment and high drop-out rates in the Indian education system are related to the belief and value system of the country rather than its economic situation. He points out that the belief systems of

the state bureaucracy are widely shared by educators, social activists, trade unionists, academic researchers, and more broadly by members of the Indian middle class. At the core of these beliefs is the Indian view of social order; that is, the respective roles of upper and lower social strata, the role of education as a means of maintaining differentiation among social classes, and that “excessive” and “inappropriate” education for the poor disrupts existing social arrangements. This idea that the lower castes and tribes do not deserve education is so deeply rooted among members of Indian middle class that it hampered the universalization of primary education. As N.K. Singh (1979) reports in his study:

“A large number of teachers felt that scheduled caste and tribe students are poorer in intelligence.....Quite a large number of teachers consider the scheduled caste to be inherently inferior.....A large number considered atmosphere at home to be responsible for the inadequacy. Poverty was not considered to be an important factor.....”(Singh, 1979: 288)

Let’s take the example of purdah to highlight the intricacy of the relationship between culture and education. Purdah is a cultural practice prevalent among Muslims of secluding and veiling women, which serves to demarcate the world of men and women. The basis for such a system lies in the traditional, orthodox idea that an educated girl would become a widow and that only immodest girls learn to read, write, sing, and dance. Even today, the belief persists, and a female child is considered a liability to the family. Parents are unwilling to spend money on her education because educated girls marry a more educated boy, which means she would need a larger dowry. The fact remains that for most of us, including primitive humans, the groups that most influence our culture are those that involve us in intimate, face-to-face contact: our family, our childhood play group, and our religion.

Boas (1986) believed that the differences between human groups should be attributed to the environment, especially the social environment. He emphasized cultural relativism, which does not rank the people and societies of the world, but instead assumes that each society embodies a unique set of values. As a proponent of multiculturalism, he emphasized:

1. Every child (and every person) is a participant in culture and the product of a particular culture. The vision is of a one-to-one relationship between child and culture.
2. Given, then, that the child at school age is already a participant in a culture and a product of that culture, it follows that if schooling is to be humane and efficient, it should begin at that point, reaching toward the child in his or her native culture. It should not assume that because the child is unfamiliar with some aspects of the dominant culture, its psyche is a vacuum, and the child is ignorant. Rather, the curriculum should be designed to deal with the child at the point of entry into formal education.
3. The culture of school should reflect the population of the school. Rather than simply reflecting and reproducing the characteristics of mainstream civilization, of some elite within the national society, it should incorporate materials from the cultures of its pupils. This provides students with a sense of belonging and with models of achievement; it will also be fair and equitable and will avoid the sin of Western chauvinism and ethnocentrism (Boas, 1986).

The fact remains that the meaning of all facts, propositions, or encounters depend on the perspectives or frames of reference by which they are interpreted. Therefore, to understand what something “means” requires some awareness of the alternative meanings that can be attached to it. As cultural psychology puts it, there are two ways by which we organize and manage our knowledge of the world: logical scientific thinking and narrative thinking (Bruner, 1996). Schools traditionally favor the former and treat the narrative art, whether song, drama, or fiction,-as more “decoration” than necessity. In other words, the way teachers teach their students is determined to a great extent by the lay theories and implicit assumptions that they have about children.

Thus, Bruner (1996) points out that there are four dominant models of pedagogy prevalent in the modern world:

The first views the student as imitative learner and focuses on passing on skills and “know-how” through example and demonstrative action. This approach emphasizes talent, skills, and expertise, rather than knowledge and action.

The second views students as learning from didactic exposure. It is based on the idea that learners should be presented with facts, principles, and rules of action which are to be learned, remembered, and then applied.

The third sees children as thinkers and focuses on the development of intersubjective interchange. This model revolves around how the child makes sense of his or her world. It stresses the value of discussion and collaboration.

The fourth model views children as knowledgeable and stresses the management of “objective” knowledge. This perspective holds that teaching should help children

grasp the distinction between personal knowledge, on the one hand, and “what is taken to be known” by the culture, on the other (Bruner, 1996). Thus, he posits:

“Modern pedagogy is moving increasingly toward the view that a child should be aware of his or her own thought process (models three and four) and the achieving skills and accumulating knowledge (models one and two) are not enough. What is needed, Bruner stresses, is that the four perspectives be fused into some coherent unity. Older views of mind and how the mind can be cultivated need to be shorn of their narrow exclusionism, and newer views need to be modulated to recognize that while skills and facts never exist out of context, they are no less important in context.”(Bruner, 1996).

Human functioning is always situated in a context. It involves the shared symbols of a community, its traditions and tool kits, passed on one from one generation to another and constituting the larger culture. Traditional psychology has downplayed the role of culture, focusing instead on the cultural principles of human biology and evolution. The field tended to view culture as an adjunct to mind, or as somehow interfering with the mind’s elemental function. Rather than thinking of culture as being “added” to the mind, psychology would do better to think of culture as in the mind. Knowledge and action are always local, always situated in network of particulars.

Education, especially in its elementary form, is considered of utmost importance to the tribals because its crucial for total development of tribal communities and is particularly helpful to build confidence among the tribes to deal with outsiders on equal terms. Starting from the First Five Year Plan Period¹ (1951-1956) the government is steadily allocating financial resources for the purpose of tribal development. Towards, the end of the plan (1954), 43 Special Multipurpose Tribal

¹ The Economy of India is based in part on planning through its five-years plans, developed, executed, and monitored by the Planning Commission.

Development Projects (MTDPs) were created. During the Third Five Year Plan Period (1961-1966), the government of India adopted the strategy of converting areas with more than 66 % tribal concentration into Tribal Development Blocks (TBDs). By the end of Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-1974), the number of TBDs in the country rose to 504. Additionally, in 1972 the Tribal Sub-Plan Strategy (TSP) was implemented by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. TSP was based on twin objectives of socio-economic development and protection against exploitation. It was generally implemented in the areas where the Scheduled Tribe population was more than 50 % of the total population. Further, a major step towards the spread of tribal education in India was the enactment of recommendations from the National Policy on Education (1986). The recommendations had the following objectives:

1. Priorities will be accorded to the opening of primary schools in tribal areas.
2. Efforts will be made to solve the lacking in curriculum and infrastructure.
3. Promising tribal youths will be encouraged to take up teaching in tribal areas.
4. Incentive schemes will be designed keeping the peculiarity of tribal need in mind.

The uniqueness of the program lay in its effort to address the heterogeneity and diversity of tribal areas. For instance, it emphasized the importance of medium of instruction through mother tongue and encouraged the adoption of locally relevant content and curriculum for school textbooks.

While these policies may look great on paper, some would argue the government is complacent about the development of the tribals. On December 12th, 2008, Biman Bose, the chairman of the ruling party of the state of West Bengal commented:

“The way we’ve implemented central government funded projects for the betterment of tribals in West Bengal is unparalleled. You cannot even see that much of development for the backward communities in our neighboring state of Jharkhand, which is considered as a tribal-dominated region in our country. About 60 percent of the total land reforms, which were distributed among the tribal communities in India, took place in our state.” (Report in Samachar, 12th December, 2008).

The Report of Steering Committee of the Government on “Empowering the Scheduled Tribes” (2001) also boasts of similar claims. It draws our attention to the fact that there has been an overall increase in the enrollment ratios of scheduled tribe children in the primary and middle level of school between 1990-91 and 1999-2000. Further, it reported that a fewer number of tribal girls are dropping out of school at the primary level. It revealed that the female literacy rate among the scheduled tribes has increased substantially from 4.85 % in 1971 to 18.19 % in 1991. The report also highlighted that during 1984-1994, the percentage of the general and tribal populations living below the poverty line has shown a declining trend. The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) claimed to have expanded the economic opportunities for the tribes with projects in the agriculture sector (Dairy farming, Fish Farming, Goat Farming, Mixed Vegetables Farming, Mushroom Cultivation, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Pig Rearing, Poultry, Sheep Farming, Sericulture, Vermi Composting), industrial sector (Bamboo and Cane Furniture Manufacturing, Brick Manufacturing, Mustard Oil Expeller, Spices Grinding, Umbrella Manufacturing), and the service sector

(Autorickshaw, Beauty Parlour Shop, Cycle Sale and Repair Shop, Furniture Shop, Grocery Shop, Hiring of Concrete Mixers, Readymade Garments, Roadside Restaurants, Servicing and Repairing Two Wheelers, Trax Cruisers). The Steering Committee Report further noted the rising percentage of scheduled tribes in administrative posts. The report also draws attention to the fact that in the recent years there has been a growing percentage of the tribal population who have exercised their democratic rights and have been increasingly represented in political decision-making institutions like Parliament, Legislative Assemblies, and local level bodies. Lastly, the report acclaims the governmental effort for the rising number of tribal member working in the service sector jobs (Report of Steering Committee, 2001).

While these trends are well and good, some of these advances are superficial and there is still much progress to be made. For instance, in recent years there has been a rise in enrollment simply because the poverty-ridden tribal children are getting free food in school, not because of the improving quality of education. The report also claims that in the recent years there has been a rising literacy rate among the tribals. However, it should be remembered that a person is technically considered literate if he/she possesses elementary skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. This says little about the mobility of the tribals. Looking at the jobs for which the tribals are being trained under the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC), it could be argued that it represents an effort to create a rural hinterland that would provide goods and services to the urban,

mainstream society. Astonishingly, none of the jobs mentioned under the scheme is remotely connected with tribal culture.

The increasing number of tribals in administrative posts should not be taken as a valid indicator of mobility because these posts are mostly occupied by tribal elites, who are totally distanced from their cultural brethren. Also, the rise in the voting behavior among the tribals can be attributed to rigorous campaigns and distribution of free food by the political parties in the hours before the election. As will be discussed below, my interviews also revealed that tribals working in the service sector mostly occupy the lower status jobs. Therefore, such jobs are not likely to result in social mobility. In short, all the mobility and progress is concentrated among the tribal elites (who are able to take advantage of the affirmative measures by the government) while the tribal society at large remains at a disadvantage.

K. Sujatha (1994) broadly categorizes the hurdles in the path of tribal education as external, internal, and socio-economic. Elaborating on external constraints, she posits that the perspective adopted for educational development among tribal communities does not address the specific disadvantages characterizing the tribal population. Further, the problem is enhanced by the implementation of contradictory government policies. For instance, Sujatha (1994) narrates:

“In order to introduce permanent cultivation among shifting cultivators, the government initiated orange and coffee plantations under the horticulture scheme in Andhra Pradesh. For this, the households were given two acres of forest land, and orange plants were supplied free of cost. For taking care of the plants, they were paid Rs 100 (quite a large amount in India) per month in the form of rice and other things. With some persuasion the tribals accepted the scheme as it had visible monetary benefit as well as getting some more land. But accepting a new scheme in addition to their traditional cultivation, means demand for more labor, which, in turn, brings change in the structure in the family labor. Work distribution pattern among members of the household plays a crucial role in the success of the new scheme that they have

accepted. This situation comes into conflict with the children's participation in education as their help in household work or in cultivation becomes essential. In another incident, a sheep rearing project was introduced and some of the tribal households were given a unit of sheep. Usually axe fell on education of children. For the household, direct benefit from sheep rearing is more attractive to improve their economic condition than the long-term benefits of education." (Sujatha, 1994).

The internal problem refers to the lack of quality of school provisions, suitable teachers, relevant content and curriculum etc. Schools in tribal areas function with bare minimum facilities and often lack proper classrooms, teaching-learning materials, blackboards, drinking water facilities, toilet, and playground (Rathnaiah, 1977). Additionally, though the demand for changing the content and curriculum to suit the tribal context has been an old one, no serious effort has been made in this direction in any state of the country. Further, Midatala Rani (2000) observed in her study that due to the language barrier the tribal children are unable to establish communication link with the teacher and thus leading to the termination of their education in some point or the other.

In discussing socio-economic constraints, Sujatha identifies rampant poverty of the tribals to be the major constraint. Though the government incentives are prevalent, she is critical of them for several valid reasons; first, the incentive schemes do not have full coverage, and thus, have limited value at the community level. Second, many of the benefits do not reach the beneficiaries. Third, even though incentives like slates and uniforms are given, they are poor in quality and do not reach them in time, thus nullifying the entire purpose. It should be noted that the impoverished economic status of tribals makes even the smallest amount of private expenditure involved in procuring writing material, clothing, etc., a serious burden

on the family. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising if education is not given priority.

Thus, my research evaluates how effective government schools are in reaching the grass-root levels. Are they really effective in imparting education to the tribal population in general? Does the government take note of the contextual factors in designing educational policies for the tribes of India? I answer all these questions through research on the tribes in the state of West Bengal. More specifically, I have researched the Santal, Birhor, Lodha, and Kharia tribes in Bankura, Birbhum, Paschim Medinipur, and Puruliya districts of West Bengal.

My thesis is structured as follows; this introductory chapter is followed by the Literature Review, which discusses the existing literatures in the field and identifies the theoretical perspectives that address the educational problems of tribes in India. The third chapter, identifies the knowledge gaps in the sociological theories reviewed in the second chapter, describes the issues that are addressed by this research, and highlights the contribution this research makes to the knowledge base on this topic. The fourth chapter, the Methodology, focuses on the tools and techniques that I used in carrying out this research. The fifth chapter is on Findings and Data analysis highlights upon the revelations from the study and the implications of such findings on the education of the tribals at large. The last chapter on Conclusions summarizes the key findings, makes policy recommendations, and the areas for further research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

“Education.....is only the image and reflection of society. It imitates and reproduces the latter in abbreviated form; it does not create it”-E.Durkheim, Suicide, 1897.

“Education reform has historically played the role not of complement to economic reform but a substitute for it”-Bowles and Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America, 1976.

This chapter provides a review of relevant theoretical perspectives of educational inequality with special reference to the tribal students in India. Let us begin the analysis by differentiating the concepts of *difference* and *inequality*. It must be remembered that nature only presents us with differences or potential differences and, it is culturally perceived norms that convert differences into inequalities.

Differences become inequalities only with the application of “scales” which *“are not given to us by nature but are culturally constructed by particular human beings under particular historical conditions”* (Beteille, 1984).

A similar argument is provided by Benedict Anderson, who writes in *“Imagined Communities”* (1983) that the concept of *nation* is essentially imagined since even in the smallest of nations in the world people do not know most of the members, or have even heard of them. Yet in mind, there lives a communion. Thus the argument leads us to the thought provoking deduction that communities are differentiated on the basis of style--they are imagined. Anderson (1983) elaborates that despite the actual inequality and exploitation prevailing in each of the nations, they are always conceived as being comprised of deep, horizontal comradeship. He traces the origin of imagined communities to the advent of “print-capitalism” when the capitalist

entrepreneurs printed their books and encouraged vernacular media in order to maximize circulation so as to gain their own ends. Thus Anderson belongs to the same school as Ernest Gellner (1996) and Eric Hobsbawm (1980) who believe that nations and nationalism are products of modernity and are created to gain political and economic ends. Thus, in short, Anderson (1983) points out that nations are the outcome of a triple revolution--namely the development of capitalism, bureaucracy, and cultural centralization. Therefore to a large extent, the inequalities and hierarchies that men strongly believe in are superficial. And to be more precise, many of these differences that we cultivate and highlight are nothing but a reflection of the arrogance of modernity.

So, attempt has been made to interpret the educational problem of the tribal students in India from the following theoretical standpoints:

1. Critique of Biological Interpretation.
2. Socio-Economic Perspective.
3. Internal Colonization Theory.
4. Cultural Reproduction Perspective.

Critique of Biological Interpretation

Philip Vernon (1993) distinguished between three types of intelligence--A, B, and C. He considered this typology to be a good way of looking at the relationship between intelligence and cognitive skill characteristics of members of a given culture. For him, intelligences A and B correspond to the geneticist's distinction between genotype and phenotype. The intelligence A, genotype is the innate capacity children inherit from their ancestors through the genes which determine the limits

of their mental and cognitive growth. The intelligence B, phenotype is a product of nature (genetic component) and nurture (environmental impact). Because Intelligence B is culturally defined it differs from culture to culture in its attributes, even though the underlying processes may be the same. As a matter of fact, we generally don't know a lot about the way different cultures define intelligence or intelligent behavior. For example, Dasen (1973) studied cognitive development in Australian aborigines and white Australian children. He found that white Australian children develop logicomathematical concepts before they develop spatial concepts; however, among the aboriginals the order was reversed. A key reason posited for this difference was that spatial knowledge is more useful than logicomathematical concepts for nomadic hunting and gathering groups. The theory also illuminates the fact that a person's cognitive capacity may change as a result of change in the environment (for example a migration from rural to urban area).

Intelligence C refers to cognitive skills usually measured by IQ tests. These are, of course, a part of the cognitive skills that make up intelligence B. But intelligence C differs from intelligence B in that the skills sampled by IQ tests may be selected to serve a particular function-to predict scholastic performance or the ability to perform other specific tasks. Thus, IQ, or intelligence C, may not correspond to what members of a society consider either an intelligent or unintelligent way of thinking. This theoretical reasoning illuminates why the literary books in India have long portrayed the tribals in a negative light. For instance in the ancient history of India (epics & puranas), they are more often referred to as *rakshas*, *nishadas* with sub-

human characteristics. That is, the knowledge defined as valuable by tribal populations is viewed as unintelligent by members of mainstream Indian society.

Socio-Economic Perspective

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) have argued that human welfare can be defined in terms of a person's learning (human development) and choosing (human freedom) behaviors. In line with the argument of Mills (1956), they highlight the opposition between choosers and learners and point out how the relationship between the groups is reduced to a relationship of domination and subordination. In the contemporary era, individuals exercise their rights either through participation in markets, or the political process. However in both cases, the chooser is presented with a menu of alternatives of choices. Thus, the power of the chooser in this case is constrained to the extent of choices that he/she is presented.

Similarly schools of the modern world create personality types which are compatible with the relationships of dominance and subordination in the economic sphere. Utilizing their labor potential, pupils exchange the product of their labor for grades or examination certificates which are basically metaphors for wages. Thus, the students are transformed into product commodities to be sold in the market (Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

In line with Bowles and Gintis, Michael W. Apple (1989) argues that modern society presents a recurrent conflict between property rights and person rights. Property right empowers an individual to enter into social relationships on the basis and extent of his property. In contrast, a person right entrusts an individual with the power to enter into relationships on the basis of his membership in the social group.

Apple (1989) highlights that the modern day working of the state is such that the dominant groups consistently define the prerogatives of property rights while the subordinate groups represent the prerogatives of person rights. He further contends that not only are present day fiscal resources scarce but people are socialized ideologically that property rights have priority over person rights.

The concept of equality has been redefined from implying avoidance of group disadvantage and discrimination to guaranteeing individual choice under the construction of the “free market”. Apple rightly argues that with its the current emphasis on “excellence” (a term with multiple meaning and social usage) educational discourse has redefined itself in a way that underachievement is increasingly seen as the fault of the student. Thus, there has been a growth of social Darwinist thinking in education and public policy at large. As a result, most of the existing tests and test materials have been found to reflect the subculture of the privileged class in their emphasis on completion and individual achievements. Further, most of the existing tests assume that the testee is willing to provide obvious information.

Applying this perspective to education in India suggests that tribal students would be at a disadvantage. The time limit and the competitive spirit imposed by most of the tests in Indian schools suit middle and upper-middle class students, but create problems for the ethnic minorities who tend to be slow and cautious in their approach. Moreover, their subcultures place less stress on speed and more on learning correctly (Ambasht, 1970).

Internal Colonization Theory

Let us begin the discussion on Internal Colonization Theory with the work of C. Matthew Snipp, who examined Indian-White relations in the US. Snipp (1986a) highlights that the early history of Indian-White relations is a period of military action that was intentionally used to subordinate Indian tribes, forcing them to recognize the authority of the United States. During this period, American Indians nearly vanished and most tribes escaped annihilation by submitting to the demands for their land. Caught between advocates and opponents of Indian rights, a political status evolved for American Indian tribes that recognized them as legitimate authorities but with an extremely limited sense of sovereignty (aptly described by Snipp (1986) as “captive nations”).

Many American Indian tribes had access to large amounts of increasingly scarce resources in the form of energy, minerals, farm land, timber, and water. A very good example was the large petroleum reserves found in the Osage of Oklahoma. In the 1960s more than 1.5 million of the 6 million acres of land (administered for Indian heirs by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)) were leased by non-Indians, further shrinking the land base available for the Indian population. Thus, Snipp (1986a) advocates that the leasing of tribal agricultural land bears the earliest traces of colonial relations. The Indian tribes were introduced to cash cropping, which for a majority of the tribes was an alien concept. Consequently, they had little interest or expertise in agriculture as a source of livelihood.

For other tribes, the capital requirement for farming was a major hindrance and the financially pressed Indian landowners had a very few alternatives but to lease

out their land. Since 1900, and especially in the recent years, the lease agreements have been replaced by treaty negotiations, but the outcomes were similar to that of earlier times. The series of American-sponsored conferences between 1974 and 1975 in this regard emphasized the common problems that the tribals shared with Third World Countries. The tribal leaders were forced to adopt strategies that would lead to greater control over tribal resources. Thus Snipp (1986a) argues that the American Indians' status as a captive nation paved the way for internal colonization by making formerly self-sustaining Indian tribes dependent upon federal authorities. As a matter of stated policy, American Indians were made "wards" of the state with federal authorities, primarily the BIA, assuming extensive responsibilities for the management of the tribal lands.

To evaluate the applicability of this perspective to the scenario in India, I will discuss several examples. The Government of India gave cows to the Gattas of Madhya Pradesh to make money by selling milk. The tribe had no knowledge of animal husbandry nor was milk consumption a part of their culture. In addition, the livestock was of inferior breed. So the tribals sold their cows to use the money that they needed for other purposes. Rather than provide livestock, the process should have started with familiarizing the tribals with the mainstream economic structure and the steps involved in livestock production (Annamalai, 1999).

In another example, indigenous tribes on Andaman island in India numbered about 5000-7000 in the year 1856. After the first war of independence, the British government established a penal colony at Port Blair, Andaman island. In 1901, the number of tribal members had decreased to 625 members. In 1961 it had drastically

reduced to a mere 19 members. The near extinction of the tribe was caused by their contact with outsiders which exposed them to diseases like measles, influenza, syphilis, and pneumonia. The latter was promoted by the adoption of mainstream customs in clothing which got drenched while hunting during the monsoon season.

Still not satisfied with the outcomes of these experiments, the Indian Government attempted to move tribal subgroups together and settle them on Strait Island in the 1970s. This policy combined the isolation and assimilation strategies. The tribals were given free food, housing, and cloth. Further, CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) schools were opened up with English used as the medium of instruction. In 1986, the Government realized English was not appropriate to assimilate the tribal populations to the mainstream culture. Hindi was then introduced as a medium of instruction. Lastly, realizing its failure, the Central Institute of Language introduced Andamanese as the medium of instruction in 1996.

In this case, Indian development policies destroyed the potential of the tribals rather than enriching it through increased dependence on the Indian Government. As everything was provided to them for survival, the tribals didn't need to hunt for food. As a result, they have nearly lost their skills at sea fishing, boat building, and archery. If they now want to go to Port Blair they will have to wait for the ferry to come to the island because they have lost the skill of boat building. Similarly, if the power generator (provided by the government) fails, they will need to wait for a technician to come from Port Blair to fix it as no one among them is trained for its maintenance (Annamalai, 1999).

Thus, in both cases (Indian population in U.S. and tribes in India), cultural hegemony reinforces capitalist relations and capitalism reinforces cultural hegemony by means of a dominant groups' prevailing ideas and practices that control the sources of wealth and power, both domestic and foreign. Thus internal colonization represents a hybrid form of capitalism. Both in United States and in India, power elites, who govern society through the power of wealth, institutionalize the education system under internal colonial rule and manipulate culture by socio-economic control.

Indian Post-colonial writer Gayatri Chakrabarti Spivak (1987) explores the "epistemic violence"² against colonial subjects and argues that it prevented the subjects from being heard. She defines the term "subaltern" as one different from the elites, a category that is heterogeneous in its composition. In line with this argument, Edward Said (1978) discusses "Orientalism"³ as a production of the imperial perceptions of the colonized, which unveils assumptions behind this construction of the *other*, and define its impact on research. He advocates that being *silenced* or *choosing to be silent* are both causes for concern regarding research outcomes. He furthers his argument by pointing out that it is the researchers doing research on the underdeveloped that gain most of the benefits in the form of further research grants, and academic recognition. Further, they also retain control over

² Epistemic violence is defined as violence to one's thought. In Gayatri Spivak's formulation, epistemic violence results when in post (colonial) discourse, the subaltern is silenced by both the colonial and indigenous patriarchal power.

³ Orientalism is the 1978 book by Edward Said that has been influential in postcolonial studies. It refers to something (as a style or manner) associated with or characteristics of Asia or Asian. Said's contention is that orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the orient because the orient was weaker than the West. As a cultural apparatus orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgement, well-to-truth, and knowledge.

interpretation and dissemination if there is little chance to revisit the researched community by others.

This leads us to the concept of “essentialism” which refers to the psychological belief that there are essential and immutable differences between social groups in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Members of a group are believed to share the essential characteristics or traits of the social groups to which they belong. Hence members of marginalized groups bear the double burden of contesting essentialist beliefs about social identities because such beliefs often serve the ideological interests of the dominant group members. That is, “they essentialize their group identity in order to construct a positive self-identity.” (Mahalingam, 2007). Mahalingam (2007) has distinguished between two modes of essentialism--cognitive and social. Cognitive essentialism refers to our tendency to treat categories as if they have “true” essences. In other words, our cognitive bias is to essentialize social and natural types in order to make sense of the world. Social essentialism refers to the strategic deployment of essentialism to justify as well as challenge existing social hierarchies.

The Cultural Reproduction Perspective

The cultural reproduction theorist, Pierre Bourdieu (1979) compares the social world to a game. Further, entering the game implies that one consciously or unconsciously accepts the explicit and implicit rules of the game. The players must also possess a *feel* of the game (i.e. a practical mastery of the logic of the game described by Giddens (1991) as *practical consciousness*). The conception can be best described using the formula (Habitus*Capital)+Field=Practice (Harker, Mahar,

Wilkes, 1990). According to Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes (1990), a “field”⁴ can be defined as:

“A system of objective relations of power between social positions which correspond to relations between symbolic points--namely the works of art, artistic manifestations, political declarations, and so on. The structure of the field is defined at any given moment by the balance between these points and among distributed capital.” (Harker, Mahar, Wilkes, 1990: 8).

Social space refers to the social world and is comprised of multiple fields which have some relationship to each other. Coalitions are created by people who enjoy proximity in social space.

“Habitus”⁵ refers to a set of dispositions, created and reformulated through the confluence of objective structures and personal history. Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes (1990) aptly notes how Bourdieu likens the field to a game (as a site of struggle and strategy) with trump cards being the habitus (i.e. the assimilated properties of elegance, ease of manners, beauty etc) and capital (i.e. inherited assets). Habitus also includes a person’s own knowledge of the world, which makes a separate understanding of the world.

The downtrodden in a society suffers from what Bourdieu calls “symbolic violence.”⁶ This is because they do not have the cultural capital to portray their own

⁴ A field is a setting in which agents and their social positions are located. The position of each particular agent in the field is a result of interaction between the specific rules of the field, agent’s habitus and agent’s capital (social, economic, and cultural). In Bourdieu’s work, a field is a system of social positions structured internally in terms of power relationships.

⁵ Habitus is a complex concept, but in its simplest usage could be understood as a set of acquired patterns of thoughts, behavior, and taste. Bourdieu extended the scope of the concept to include person’s beliefs and dispositions. The individual agent develops these dispositions in response to the determining structures (such as class, family, and education) and external conditions (field)s they encounter.

⁶ Symbolic violence is fundamentally the imposition of categories of thought and perception upon dominated social agents who then take the social order to be just. It is the incorporation of unconscious structures that tend to perpetuate the structures of action of the dominant. The dominated then take their position to be “right.” Symbolic violence is in some senses much more

worldview. Agents in the social world thus try to reproduce and gain positions. Such *reproduction* strategies depend on the possession of capital and in the conversion of economic capital to educational capital--a strategy that enables businessman to maintain the position of their heirs. As Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes (1990) elucidate:

"Habitus is intimately linked to 'capital' in that some habitus (those of dominant social and cultural fractions) acts as multipliers of various kinds of capital, and in fact constitute a form of capital (symbolic) in and of themselves." (Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes, 1990: 12).

In his work "Distinction" (1984), Bourdieu uses the term *trajectory* to define how people arrive at a particular position and the most common route is described by Bourdieu as the *modal trajectory* which relates to the given volume of inherited capital.

Education is a field in which agents struggle for capital (credentials). Bourdieu's argument is that schools are artifacts of the dominant social and cultural fraction. Hence, different groups stand in different relationships to the schools, depending on their trajectory in relation to the dominant group. Traditionally some groups have been able to use the school system to reproduce their class position while others have not. As education becomes increasingly widespread to all groups, other means are developed by elites in order to maintain the *distinction* between social groups. The most common of these strategies is to resort to alternative private schooling (Harker, 1990).

Bourdieu further elaborates that the reaction of many schools to a rising level of unemployment (to run courses on how to apply, how to appear in an interview, and

powerful than physical violence in that it is embedded in the very modes of action and structures of cognition of individuals, and imposes the specter of legitimacy of the social order.

so on) represent nothing but an effort to transmit the peculiar *style* language and behavior of the dominant habitus. Thus, in the modern industrial state, schools become the dominant agency for the production of producers.

Bourdieu's theoretical model very aptly fits the tribal education scenario in India in that current textbooks are written with the aim that tribals should become non-tribal as soon as possible. Further, this is projected as the **only** way for tribals to achieve upward social mobility. Studies have pointed out that textbooks in India frequently reflect non-tribal middle or upper middle class values and serve primarily to prepare middle or upper middle class non-tribal children to participate in their own cultural ethos. For tribal children who do not grow up in families with the settings described in these textbooks, the textbook and school appear alien and complex, promoting in them a negative self image and a sense of inferiority towards their own culture and family. Research has found that the *ascribed* needs and the *felt* needs are at great variance (Rathnaiah, 1977). Further the opportunities for articulating felt needs are not available to tribal students as such.

In addition, existing tests and test materials have been found to reflect the subculture of the privileged class with their emphasis on completion and individual achievement. For example, in the language question paper in the High School Certificate Examinations (Orissa), students were asked to write an essay about a circus show that they have visited. In the Supplementary Examination, students were asked to address a letter to the police superintendent narrating their inconvenience while preparing for an examination on account of loud speakers being played by the neighborhood Cinema Hall (Kundu, 1994). Tribal students are

likely to lack the kind of urban experiences needed for answering such questions. Those who get such opportunities are the third parties who either take on the role of being their spokesmen / representatives, or at best, the *elite* tribal who has lost his/her moorings in their traditional society and are looked upon by their people as *drift aways*.

Another cultural reproduction theorist, Paul DiMaggio (1982), argues from a Weberian perspective that the rise of market capitalism has severely corroded the status order. While ideal-typical status groups were once well defined and strictly demarcated, status cultures in modern societies are more diffuse and loosely bounded. As the potential membership of a status group becomes less known to a single member, the importance of shared status culture increases. Hence DiMaggio (1982) illustrates the prevalence of “*status culture participation*” over “*status group membership*”, and thinks of a status group as a cultural process rather than as an attribute of individuals. A person who is accustomed to a prestigious status culture can display tastes, styles, and preferences that serve as cultural niche, and thereby making communication easier. Therefore active participation in prestigious status cultures becomes useful and rather imperative for low status students who aspire to upward mobility.

In his study DiMaggio (1982) resorts to three types of measures to evaluate the cultural exposure of students: 1. Attitude measures-where students were asked to rate their interest in specific artistic activities and occupations; 2. Activity measures-based on questions about the extent to which students have created visual arts, performed publicly, attended art events or read literature; and 3. Information

measures-based on talent administered tests of information about literature, music, and art. DiMaggio concludes that a social milieu that inculcates any interest in any single artistic discipline will also inculcate taste in other high culture forms. He adds that upwardly mobile pupils were more inclined to express cultural interests and were likely to participate in cultural activities than were upper middle class pupils who took such interests for granted. Further, the participation in prestigious status cultures has a significant positive impact on grades. This is so because teachers reward students from lower status backgrounds who exhibit interests and behavior expected from high status students (DiMaggio, 1982). Therefore what we find in society is an ongoing process of “cultural homogenization.”

A similar view is echoed by Nietzsche (1964) who highlighted that our knowledge is essentially a matter of practice which is designed according to needs and desires and not for some impartial search of truth. To meet these needs humans must essentially develop a language system in order to communicate. Nietzsche (1964) argued that the language that we speak is a part of our social style and social capital. He elaborates by pointing out that utterances are comprised mainly of three components:

1. *a meaning* in a language;
2. an *illocutionary force* i.e. what motive a speaker has in uttering a particular sentence.
3. a *perlocutionary force* or the effects of speaking.

He notes that language is a part of activity through which some people dominate others and cites the example of Christian priests to substantiate his point. Bourdieu

(1979) terms this the “oracle effect” in which a person who is a member of a group acquires special status from speaking for the group.

Similar is the line of argument of Basil Bernstein (1971), who focused on the restricted code model followed in the schools. He advocated that the extent schools reflect the knowledge and attitudes of middle class teachers determines whether a child stays on in school or drops out. Surveying both working and middle class speech forms in Britain in the 1960s he concluded that middle class children were at definite advantage in schools. Middle class students were familiar with both the formal language with extended code and the public language. In contrast, working class children had access only to the direct commands of the public language with its restricted code. The middle class child, who had control over both the codes, found little difficulty in following the middle class teacher and middle class oriented textbooks.

The notion of alienation through education underpins the deschooling movement advocated by Ivan Illich. In his work “Deschooling Society” (1973) Illich pointed out that schools have taken on profound significance by making false promises of salvation to the poor. He rightly posited that schools are based on a hidden curriculum which identifies formal education with learning. As such, it emphasizes that individual success depends on the amount of learning one consumes. His solution lies in the abolition of the formal schools and the establishment of learning webs. One facet he overlooked is the fact that in the form of libraries, telephone, and computer service, learning webs are the products of a technologically advanced society and would rarely be available to the underprivileged.

Similarly, Illich's former colleague, Paulo Freire (2000) rejects the formal system of schooling. Freire (2000) notes that where the basic problem is shortage of livelihood needs, notions of goodness and order are likely to have little impact. Therefore, it would be better to concentrate on skill and vocational learning. He links the *old* and *new* sociologies of education. The former stressed the need for educational expansion while the latter, alarmed by the failure of old sociology of education to bring about equality in educational opportunity, resorted to make up for an inadequate home environment where family values come into conflict with what is taught in school.

Freire believes that in order to materialize their self-activity as a revolutionary force, the oppressed must develop a sense of collective consciousness. For Freire, a pedagogy for critical literacy becomes the primary vehicle for the development of "critical consciousness" among the poor. He pointed out that the dreams of the poor are dreamt for them by distant others who are removed from their daily struggles for survival and who were either unable or unwilling to recognize the dreams that burdened the habitats of their hearts. It is worth quoting him at length:

"[T]rue dialogue can not exist unless the dialogues engage in critical thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits no dichotomy between them-thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity-thinking does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without the fear of the risks involved. Critical thinking contrasts with native thinking, which sees historical time as a weight, a stratification of the acquisitions and experience of the past, from which the present should emerge normalized and "well-behaved". For native thinker, the important thing is the continuing transformation of reality." (Freire, 1973: 73).

In proposing a solution, Prof. Krishna Kumar (1993) urges for more creativity in the child and denounces a top-down flow of learning process in which priority is given

only to text book learning. He points out the Indian education system is characterized by the basic features of “early selection”⁷ and “mass examination.”⁸ He proposes that by maintaining a differential schooling system, urban elites prohibit the development of a truly mass education system. The process of mass examination acts only as a symbolic corrective measure which has few implications once the early selection has been made. The schooling system that differentiates pupils according to merit (as aspired by Talcott Parsons, 1973) never emerged in India due to the early grouping of pupils in different types of institutions according to their socio-economic background. Therefore the overall merit pool of India remains highly stagnant, structured by the early differential grouping of students. It cannot be restructured unless something concrete is done with the education system (Kumar, 1993).

Empirical Research on Tribal Education in India

There exists a substantial amount of literature on the condition of tribal education in India. A brief review is worthwhile in order to highlight what has already been done in the field. N.K. Ambasht (1970) found that there exists social distance between the teacher and the pupil in the tribal areas. The non-tribal teachers were typically found to be dissatisfied with their job in the tribal dominated areas. Ambasht found that such a mainstream-designed education system tends to change the way of life and the social aspirations of the tribals, thereby leading to the

⁷ Early selection refers to the process by which students, in their childhood, are differentiated into various kinds of schools based on the class background. Likewise the children from elite background avail the best of private schooling while the lower class children go to public schools.

⁸ Mass Examination refers to any public examination (that is conducted on all-India basis) that rate students irrespective of the kind and quality of education that they have availed. Therefore, it places the lower class students at disadvantage vis-a-vis their upper class counterparts.

destruction of tribal norms. To quote in the words of C. Haimendorf (1985), who narrates the predicament of unsuccessful tribal graduates:

“ tribal students who read up to tenth standard but fail to pass the final examination have few chances of employment in government services. Yet more than ten years at school have given them the ambition to find an occupation other than ordinary farm work for which they are no better qualified than their illiterate contemporaries.” (Haimendorf, 1985: 132).

Yet, Sachchidananda (1967) found that the irregularity of attendance and drop-out rate is much lower in the case of better acculturated tribes. In a similar line of research, T.B. Naik (1969) found that the children of upper strata of Bhil society have been able to go to school and take advantage of the scholarships and hostel facilities made available to the tribals by the government more than the lower and the middle socio-economic status groups. A.B. Bose (1970) found that Indian states with higher literacy in the general population also have higher literacy in their tribal population.

E. V. Rathnaiah (1977) posited that poverty is one of the main constraining factors in the education of the tribal children. Moreover, he found the schools in the tribal areas to be sporadic in number. Hence, students had to cover great geographical distance to be at school. Moreover, the schools did not address tribal festivities and celebrations. Therefore, tribal attendance was found to be low during certain seasons. Additionally, he notes that the students were typically disinterested in co-curricular and extracurricular activities offered by the schools as they did not cater to tribal tastes.

In her extensive study on tribes in the state of Andhra Pradesh, K. Sujatha (1994) contends that the perspective adopted for educational development of tribal

communities fails to adequately address the specific disadvantages characterizing the tribal population. She found that one of the major constraints of tribal education at the planning level is the adoption of a dual system of administration. The Tribal Welfare Department deals with tribal life and culture and administers development work at the local level, including education. But the tribal welfare department lacks expertise in educational planning and administration in general and also academic supervision and monitoring. On the other hand, the Education Department is the sole authority for planning educational development at the state level. The department tends to formulate uniform policies for the entire state. Thus, Sujatha notes that under the dual system of administration, there is absence of coordination and complementarity as well as inadequate scope for reciprocal use of respective expertise and experiences between the two departments.

In her research on Yenadi tribe, Sujatha (1987) found that most of the tribal schools lack basic infrastructural facilities. In respect to pedagogy, she found that the rigid system of formal schooling, which emphasize discipline, routine norms, teacher-centered instruction, etc. made the children wary of school. This went against the culture of free interaction and absence of force as embedded in the tribal cultural ethos. She concludes that little effort has been given to understanding the cultural peculiarity and ignorance of the tribes.

Moreover Sujatha (1994) found that one major cause behind the high drop-out rate of tribal students in their inability to establish communication link with the teacher. Midatala Rani (2000) found that what is defined as the “minority” language need not be based on the number of students in the class that speak the language,

but rather the socio-economic power, social prestige, and pressure group tactics that speakers of the language possess or exert in influencing the language used in the classroom.

Criticizing the governmental policy of introducing tribal language as subject of study in some of the schools, D.P. Pattanayak (1981) argued that language as a subject of study is never equivalent to language as a medium of instruction. The issue is further complicated by the fact that language varies not only within a limited geographical area but also among the various tribes and sub-tribes (Kanungo and Mahapatra, 2004).

The Praitchi Committee Report (2002) identifies cost of schooling, lack of motivation of teachers, lack of inspection, and the increasing dependence on private tutoring to be the main hurdles in the path of education for tribal children. The report, exclusive to the state of West Bengal, contends that the increasing involvement of primary school teachers in politics makes them devote less time to teaching. This suggests that the government has a vested interest in sustaining illiteracy to gain assured votes.

According to E. Annamalai (1999), there are four prevalent models of tribal education:

1. Immersion Approach: This approach recognizes no difference between the mainstream and tribal culture. Hence, it advocates education through the mainstream medium of instruction and makes no attempt to bridge the cultural and cognitive gap between home and school.

2. Ashram School Approach: This involves tribal students attending boarding schools that are secluded from their community. Here, tribal students are discouraged to speak their native language in the school premises and are explicitly told to become non-tribal as soon as possible since it is projected as the only way to development. Therefore, their food, dress, and other cultural moorings change completely. After completion of their schooling tribal students become losers at both ends in the sense that they are no longer acceptable to their community and are also too weak to compete in the mainstream economy.

3. Transfer Approach: This approach recognizes the importance of tribal culture, not because of its own merit, but as a means of achieving success in mainstream culture. Under this system tribal children start their education in tribal language and gradually move towards the medium of the dominant language, typically before the end of primary school. The content also moves from the culturally familiar to unfamiliar. When transfer is complete, the tribal language and culture is totally dropped. Thus, the tribal language is used as a launching pad with the main emphasis being replacement, this creates an impression in the minds of the tribals that their culture is a liability rather than an asset.

4. Integrated Curriculum: This is holistic approach in the sense that the curriculum content needed for success in mainstream culture is combined with tribal curriculum without replacing it. The process continues with integrated and distinct tribal curriculum without supplanting it throughout the schooling period. This builds on the strength with which the students come to school and gives them an additional strength when they leave school. Thus, this approach produces culturally

and bilingually enriched students. Unfortunately, this approach is rarely implemented under the present educational policy.

Hence, according to Arup Maharatna (2005) the key challenge does not concern how tribes can be brought within the folds of mainstream society and culture, but how a more voluntary and mutual interaction between tribes and mainstream society can be developed.

Chapter 3

Statement of Research Question and Issues for Research

This chapter summarizes the basic tenets of the sociological theories that I have used to inform my research and their limitations. These limitations will guide the identification of specific issues that I will examine in my research.

The policies of the Indian Government for primary and secondary education tacitly suggest that indigenous tribal groups should become non-tribal as soon as possible. The “cultural conversion” of these groups is portrayed as the **only** way they may achieve upward social mobility. Educational policy mandates that schools for tribal groups must use a curriculum and textbooks that reflect and inculcate middle or upper middle class Indian culture and values. This approach serves primarily to prepare middle or upper middle class non-tribal children to participate in their own cultural ethos. Given their vast cultural differences, the culture and values promoted by this curriculum appear alien and complex to school children from tribal groups.

Research on tribal education has shown that exposure to this curriculum promotes a negative self image among tribal children and a sense of inferiority about their own culture and family (Annamalai, 2001). Most textbooks and course materials (e.g. tests) reflect the subculture of the privileged class of India in their emphasis on completion and individual achievements. For example, in the language portion of the High School Certificate Examinations, the topic for an essay was *A circus show you have visited* (Kundu, 1994). School children from indigenous tribes may not have visited a circus because of physical isolation, and thus, cannot

adequately answer the question. In sum, tribal students lack the kind of urban experiences needed for answering such questions, which are not atypical in the curriculum of Indian schools.

Anthropological studies have pointed out that in simple societies, there should be concordance between what one learns in school and what one learns from other educative agents and institutions outside schools. In educating ethnic minority students, this disparity is very great because the schools are based on the dominant culture. For members of the dominant cultural group, learning in school is a kind of enculturation promoting a process of generational continuity. For members of minority tribal groups, learning in school is a process of acculturation; that is, learning the traits of another culture. As a result of these cultural differences, the current Indian educational system does not serve the educational needs of indigenous tribal groups. Tribal students are ill-prepared for the Indian labor market. Further they learn cultural traits that alienate them from their own communities. Many drop out of school.

Critique of Biological interpretation notes that cultures around the world do not prioritize the same sorts of intelligence. Thus, weighing intelligence (nurtured differently by different cultures) on a common scale is absolutely unjustified. The theory argues for the need to address how the peculiarities of skills and intelligence develop in response to specific cultural requirements. Hence, it quite aptly downplays any relationship between racial characteristics and the academic caliber of a student. The theory is particularly relevant for understanding the educational failure of tribal students of India. Sisodia (2004) has pointed out that tribal

education, unlike mainstream education, is based on rote and memorization with very little emphasis given to competition. It should be noted that the tribal child rarely stays at home except when he or she is sleeping. Therefore the confined environment of school can be burdening for a tribal child at least during his/her initial years.

Most of the existing tests in the mainstream educational system assume that the testee is willing to provide information. This may be true for urban-educated middle class students, but not for the tribal students, who are found to be very shy before strangers in a formal environment, especially if the stranger is a non-tribal (Ambasht, 1970). The time limit imposed by most of the tests and competitive spirit required to complete such tests suit the middle and upper middle class students, but create problems for tribal students who are slow and cautious in their approach and in whose culture less stress is placed on speed and more on learning correctly (Ambasht, 1970). So, the theory aptly illuminates the fact that the meaning of “education” and “learning” varies from one culture to another.

Critics point out that while the environment plays a very important role in behavior, the fact remains that any behavior can be altered or changed. Secondly, not only does the environment exert influence on the personality, but the opposite is also true. Hundreds of people have influenced their environments, cultures, and societies. The biological theory ignores the basic fact that children of tribal elites, born and brought up within the same cultural environment, manage to follow instructions and do well within the mainstream education system. Lastly, while it

offers a valid reason for the failure of tribal students, the biological theory does not really offer a solution. Given these limitations, my research will:

1. Examine and identify elements of cultural dissonance between the culture of tribal populations and mainstream Indian society (as reflected in the academic curriculum) that affect the academic success of tribal students.
2. Explore the mechanisms by which children of tribal elites are able to achieve academic success.

The Socio-Economic perspective elucidates how the modern world creates personality types that are compatible with relationships of dominance and subordination in the economic sphere. This perspective portrays students as using their labor for grades and examination certificates, not learning for the sake of knowledge. Thus, the theory posits grades and certificates as nothing but metaphors for wages and students as product commodities to be sold in the marketplace. The socio-cultural perspective sees growth of Social Darwinist thinking in education and public policy in general, and students who do not have the means to get an education are summarily excluded. The theory is of relevance in situating the drawbacks of present education policy of Indian government.

Research conducted by E.V.Rathnaiah (1977) in the tribal region points out that the majority of the schools emphasize solely the academic aspect of education. Hence, there is a total negligence of the vocational dimension. Tribals are often found to lack the knowledge required for using high yield seeds, pest resistant seeds, manures, and tractors (Pathania, 2007). Thus, they have ample scope for improvement in agricultural practices. Tribal groups possess a vast knowledge of

medicinal herbs. Conversely, this could benefit the human race at large, if the knowledge is properly channelized. The skill of basket making, pottery making, candle making, purification of gum, honey, and raisins are some of the areas in which improvement could eventually take tribal groups in the direction of economic independence. But again, in designing such a curriculum, the priorities and peculiarities of the needs of these groups must be addressed. In short, in order to make education more appealing to tribals, the government needs to be broaden its parochial definition of “education” to include the vocational aspect. This would address the immediate survival needs of the tribal population.

However, it should be remembered that the economic factor is not the sole criterion for the absenteeism of a tribal child from school. For instance it has been found that the schools in the tribal areas do not provide enough amenities and facilities to retain the students in the system (Rathnaiah, 1977). Studies on tribal education in India also point out that while most schools in the tribal belt offer education free of cost, the major cause of high drop-out rates of tribal children lies in cultural alienation (Sujatha, 1994). Even if a tribal child, despite his/her poor economic condition, manages to attend school, he/she cannot bridge the huge cultural gulf that exists between the home environment and the environment at school. The socio-economic perspective does not address the problem of cultural immersion, nor does it address tribal problems specifically. For instance, the quality of education, the language of instruction in class, and low attendance of tribal students during specific months of a year are too important to be left unconsidered.

Illustrating the need to understand cultural specificity, the numerical systems of tribal societies differ not only from the mainstream society but also amongst themselves. For example some tribes count by fives or 'Gahi', while others count by 'Kudi' or scores. Lastly, the theory does not adequately illustrate the predicament of a tribal student who completes his/her education. In short, the approach can be criticized for its economic determinism and its consequent neglect of the role of culture. Based on the assumptions of the socioeconomic perspective and its limitations my research will:

3. Explore the perceptions of tribal members and stakeholders in their education system concerning the expected benefits of formal education and academic success for tribal students.

Internal Colonization theory describes a set of social and cultural mechanisms by which society reinforces its division of class and race to sustain the wealth and power of its dominant elites. The theory connects the process of cultural hegemony and capitalist relationships experienced within key social institutions like education. Internal colonization represents a hybrid form of colonization whereby the power elites--those who govern the society through accumulating wealth--institutionalize the education system under internal colonial rule and manipulate culture using socio-economic control. India has enjoyed 60 years of independence, but the tribes of India have made little advancement, thanks to governmental policies (Sujatha, 1994). In fact, it is my belief that the Indian government is deliberately designing educational policy in such a way as to keep the tribal population out of the job market because control over educational policy automatically gives control over

other domains of life. This is prompted by the desire of mainstream elites to perpetually exclude tribals from the job market in order to enjoy security of position and status.

In a similar line of argument, Krishna Kumar (1993) calls for more creativity in the child and denounces a top-down learning process in which priority is given only to text book learning. He points out that the Indian education system is characterized by the basic features of *early selection*⁹ and *mass examination*¹⁰. He posits that by maintaining differential schooling systems, urban elites prohibit the development of a truly mass education system. The process of mass examination acts only as a symbolic corrective measure which has little implications once the early selection of elite students has been made. The schooling system that differentiates pupils according to merit as aspired by Talcott Parsons never emerged in India due to the early grouping of pupils in different types of institutions according to their socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore the overall merit pool of India remains highly stagnant due to the differential grouping of students from the very beginning. This cannot be restructured unless something concrete is done with the education system (Kumar, 1993).

As with other theoretical perspectives, internal colonization may be too general to address the peculiarities of tribal cultures. It explains inequality at a macro level

⁹ Early selection refers to the process by which students, in their childhood, are differentiated into various kinds of schools based on the class background. Likewise the children from elite backgrounds avail the best of private schooling while the lower class children go to public schools.

¹⁰ Mass Examination refers to any public examination (that is conducted on all-India basis) that rate students irrespective of the kind and quality of education that they have availed. Therefore, it places the lower class students at disadvantage vis-a-vis their upper class counterparts.

but does not offer any illumination on the mechanisms used by societal elites at the micro level to maintain class hegemony. Given this limitation, my research will:

4. Explore and identify institutional mechanisms employed in the Indian education system in tribal communities that inhibit class mobility and economic success by tribal students.

Cultural Reproduction theory suggests that what is taught to younger generations depends on the varying degrees of social, economic, and cultural capital that they possess. Therefore, those who are not members of the dominant culture are at a disadvantage in receiving cultural information, and will remain at a disadvantage.

This is typical of capitalist societies that depend on a stratified social system where the working class gets an education suited for manual labor thereby reproducing existing inequalities and ensuring that the status of elites will be maintained.

Therefore, schools in capitalist societies require a method of stratification and often choose a way in which the dominant culture will not lose its hegemony. What goes on in the name of education is nothing but the process of “enculturation”, whereby the older generation invites, induces, and compels the younger generation to adopt traditional ways of thinking and behaving.

The theory explains the educational problem of tribal students in India with remarkable accuracy. The existing educational policy with which tribals are made to comply, tries to impose a mainstream identity on them. The study conducted by Annamalai (1999) reports that the tribals in the ashram (residential) schools are explicitly told to forget their culture, speak the mainstream language, dress in mainstream attire, and relish mainstream food. Thus, it creates an impression in the

mind of tribal child that their culture is “backward” or “confining” in every sense. Even worse, tribal students who graduate can neither adjust to their own culture nor can they find a job in mainstream society because they are academically too weak to compete for one (Ambasht, 1970). In any case, the available evidence suggests that the present educational system is inadequate in inculcating elements of the dominant culture in India required for academic and economic success in mainstream Indian society. Given this inadequacy, my research will:

5. Identify cultural elements that are needed for academic and economic success in mainstream Indian society that are not being inculcated in tribal students; and explore and identify social mechanisms that prevent these elements from being successfully inculcated in tribal students.

Contributions of the Research

Thus, the uniqueness of my research lied in its attempt to:

1. Understand the intricacies of cultural nuances of tribal populations and find out their conception of education. Additionally, the research will highlight upon how is the tribal conception of education different from the mainstream conception of it.
2. Find out why the children of the tribal elites manage to survive and do well within the same educational environment.
3. Find out the social standing of the tribal graduates, expectations they had from schooling, and their view of tribal society at large.
4. Understand teachers’ conception of tribal students, their expectations of them, and where would they like them to be in future.

Chapter 4

Research Methods

This chapter discusses the various research tools and techniques that I have used in my research. The chapter is divided into sections-it will start with a discussion on Research Design, followed by elaboration on the Definition of Study Population and Methods for Selecting Subjects, Qualitative and Quantitative Description of the Districts and Tribes selected for the study, Methods of Securing Participation, Methods of Data Collection, Methods of Data Processing and Analysis, and finally, Ethical Considerations in the Field.

Research Design

My research employed a non-experimental, cross-sectional research design using qualitative methods. The research design was non-experimental because I lacked the ability to “intervene” and control the content of the educational curriculum and the exposure of tribal students to this curriculum. My only source of control was over those observed. My research design was cross-sectional because observations were made at one point in time. My justification for using qualitative research was based on the fact that statistics do not describe the full nature of human affairs, perceptions, feelings, and the real context in which they occur. The social world may be external to the individual, but it is made of names, concepts, and labels that are social and historic creations. Therefore, subjectivists argue that every cultural and historical situation is different and requires the analysis of the particular context in which the situation is embedded. Hence, human-centred research such as this required observation from the inside. As I examined the state government policies

and programs on tribal education, it was important to understand and consider the perceptions of the people affected by them.

Definition of Study Population & Methods for Selecting Subjects

The study population in this research consisted of tribal students in the nation of India. Subjects were selected based on non-probability sampling design that broadly aligns with a four stage cluster sample. Stage I involved the selection of the state in which I proposed do the study. I selected the Indian state of West Bengal. The choice of West Bengal was primarily based on convenience because it is my home state and most of the tribes speak and understand my mother tongue, Bengali. Stage II involved the selection of districts and tribes. My study was based on the districts of Bankura, Birbhum, Paschim Medinipur, and Puruliya in West Bengal. These four districts were chosen because the tribes (Santal, Birhor, Lodha, and Kharia) that I studied are located only in these districts. Due to the limitation of time (three months), the study focused on four tribes only.

One reason these four tribes being chosen was because members speak and understand Bengali. Some of the other districts have a greater concentration of tribal population, but tribes in other districts hardly understand or speak the dominant language (Bengali). *Secondly*, the “Santal” tribe was chosen because it is the largest tribal group of West Bengal while the “Birhor”, “Lodha”, and “Kharia” tribes were selected because they primarily reside in the state of West Bengal. The third stage of my sampling was the selection of the villages within these districts in which I conducted the study. The villages of Jhilimili in Bankura, the Santal village of Santiniketan in Birbhum, Belpahari and Bethkundari villages in

Paschim Medinipur, and Bagmundi village in Puruliya were chosen for the study.

The choices were based on the fact that these districts form the tribal belt within the state and have the major concentration of the above mentioned tribes.

Stage IV involved selection of individual subjects—current students, graduates, parents of students, teachers and school administrators.

The parents of students, teachers and school administrators formed an integral part of my research subject because they gave me information that neither students nor graduates could have provided. For instance, I was able to obtain information regarding distance teachers have to travel in order to attend school, their qualifications, income, training, the number of students in each grade of the school, subjects taught, the grades which have the maximum detention and drop-out rates, and perceived expectations from the students. Similarly, interviewing parents provided information regarding their level of education, income, the proportion of their income they spend on their child's education, the expectations they have of the school, the relationship of the tribal community to the school, and the types and level of support for education within their home.

Quantitative and Qualitative Description of the Districts & Tribes

Now let us have a look at the profiles of the districts and tribes which I studied.

Table 4.1 PROFILE OF DISTRICTS SELECTED AND THE STATE OF WEST BENGAL

Districts	% Share Rural Population	% Share of SC	% Share of ST	Human Development Index	Per Capita Income (\$)	% BPL Families	% Literacy General	% Literacy SC	Pupil Teacher Ratio	Net Enrollment Ratio	Drop-out Rate
Bankura	92.63	31.24	10.36	0.52	456	42.48	63.44	42.92	33.62	97.09	10.52
Birbhum	91.43	29.51	6.74	0.47	412	44.02	61.48	45.74	39.29	97.81	14.6
Paschim Medinipur	88.1	18.05	14.87	0.62	523	32.88	70.4	63.57	41.24	98.52	17.65
Puruliya	89.93	18.29	18.27	0.45	405	43.65	55.57	45.14	39.4	90.51	29.3
West Bengal	72.03	23.02	5.5	0.4	522.39	36.38	68.64	59.04	45.2	98.03	19.92

Source: Census of India, 2001

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SC=Scheduled Caste

ST=Scheduled Tribe

BPL=Below Poverty Line

Socio-Economic Profile of the Districts and the State

The data in Table 4.1 reveals that the percentage of rural population in all the four districts is greater than the state average. In regard to the percentage of Scheduled Caste (SC) population, the Bankura and Birbhum districts have a higher percentage than the state average. But, all four districts have a greater concentration of Scheduled Tribe (ST) population than the average in the state. With exception of the district of Paschim Medinipur, the other three districts and the state as a whole have a low Human Development Index (HDI)¹¹ score (less than or equal to 0.5). With regard to the average per capita income in the state of West Bengal (\$522.39), all the districts except Paschim Medinipur rank below it. Similarly, all the districts except Paschim Medinipur have greater percentages of families Below Poverty Line (BPL)¹² than West Bengal as a state. Thus, it is quite clear that Paschim Medinipur is the most socio-economically developed district under consideration.

In terms of literacy, the percentage of general and SC population in all districts except Paschim Medinipur ranks below West Bengal's average. Considering the pupil teacher ratio, all the districts are below the state average of 45.2, which is a positive sign. In regards to the Net Enrollment Ratio, Puruliya is around 7.5% lower

¹¹ The **Human Development Index** (HDI) is an index combining normalized measures of life expectancy, literacy, educational attainment, and GDP per capita for countries worldwide. It is claimed as a standard means of measuring human development—a concept that, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), refers to the process of widening of options of persons, giving them greater opportunities for education, health care, income, employment, etc. The basic use of HDI is to rank countries by level of “human development”, which usually also implies to determine whether a country is a developed, developing, or underdeveloped country. A HDI below 0.5 is considered “low development”, while HDI above 0.8 is considered “high development”.

¹² The **poverty threshold**, or **poverty line**, is the minimum level of income deemed necessary to achieve an adequate standard of living in a given country. The common **international poverty line** has been roughly \$1.08 a day or \$ 394.2, at 1993 purchasing-power parity (PPP).

than the state average of 98.03 %. In drop-out rates, Puruliya has the highest drop-out rate (29.3%), which is around 10% higher than the state average.

Background on Selected Tribal Communities

The Santals are one of the largest tribal communities in India and are found mainly in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam and Orissa. Their total population is 6,156,260, of which the state of West Bengal accounts for 2,410,509 (Census 2001). Their primary mode of subsistence is hunting and food gathering. They have a peculiar script known as “Ol Chiki,” which does not share any of the syllabic properties of any other Indic scripts. Unlike many other tribal groups in India, Santals are known for preserving their native language despite waves of invasion from Mughals, Europeans, and others. The Santal people love music and dance. Although their culture has been widely influenced by mainstream Indian culture, traditional music and dance still prevails. The Santal community is devoid of any caste system, and hence no distinction is made on the basis of birth. Santali rituals mainly comprise sacrificial offerings and invocations to the spirits, or “Bongas” (deities). Their system of governance is known as “Manjhi-Paragana”; it may be compared to what is popularly called Local Self- Governance. This body makes decision to improve the socio-economic condition of the village (Baskey, 2002).

In West Bengal, the Birhor tribe inhabits mostly in Puruliya. “Bir” means forest and “Hor” means man; i.e. the man of the forest. In 1963, when the government built a permanent settlement for them in “Bhupati Palli” under the Bagmundi Police Station in Puruliya they began to live in homes. It is difficult to ascertain the exact

populations due to their nomadic lifestyle. In 1963, there were only 29 families with 106 members. Among them 54 were males and 52 were females. According to the 1981 census their population in West Bengal was 658; out of which, 354 were males and 304 were females. The Birhor language belongs to the Austro-Asiatic Mundari branch, implying Mundari and Santal influence is prominent in their conversation. Nowadays, after mixing with the neighboring Bengali population, they speak Bengali and Hindi in order to make a living.

The Birhors typically live in groups, and the chief of the group is referred to as “Naya.” He solves all sorts of social problems, settles feuds, and looks after the welfare of the group. For this he is given a special honor. Also, he works as the priest and his appointment is hereditary. The Birhors worship many Gods or “Bonga Burus.” Apart from the common God there are different Gods for different clans. Thus, “Bonga” of one clan may be threatening to the people of another clan. The chief God of the Birhor is the “Sing Bonga” or the Sun God.

The Birhors engage themselves in song and dance at the time of festivals. For example, in May-June the festival “Sasa Bonga Parab” is celebrated and is observed at the time of sowing the seed to reap a good harvest. In the first quarter of December-January, they observe the “Sohrai” festival. Since for the whole year they enjoy the benefit of cattle, they choose to worship their livestock during this period (Baskey, 2002).

The Lodhas typically reside in the western part of West Bengal, more precisely in the forest region of Medinipur. According to the Census of India 2001, it is one of the ten major tribes of West Bengal with a total population of 84,966. During British

rule, they were labeled as “criminal tribe” by the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. This remained in effect until the revocation of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1962. Despite such revocation, the Lodhas still suffer the stigma from having been so designated. The word “Lodha” possibly originated from the Sanskrit word “Lubdhak” meaning hunter. The name runs in line with the fact that the tribe have historically depended on hunting for their livelihood.

A Lodha society is patriarchal, and the family consists of parents and unmarried children. The father is the head of the family; he interacts with outsiders. In the social sphere, the responsibility of a male or a female is the same, and both go out in search of food or work. Nevertheless, the responsibility of the female increases in the domestic sphere. For instance, collecting forest resources and selling them in market are female jobs; males may accompany the females but do not interfere.

Every Lodha village has a panchayat or governing council of its own. This panchayat settles problems and conflicts. Among the office bearers, the “Mukhia” is the head of the council, and the “Dakua” informs villagers of the date and time of hearings. The priest of a Lodha community is called the “Dehri” or “Dihri.” He performs the marriage rituals and enjoys a superior status to that of others.

Lodhas worship many deities and have great faith in them. But, the supreme God of the Lodhas is the “Boram God”, who gives them protection from all dangers. So, whenever Lodhas go to the forest to collect fruits or food products, they pay reverence this God. Besides, “Chandi” is another powerful God of the Lodhas who protects her devotees from wild animals and poisonous snakes.

Among the Lodha dances, the “Chang” is the most popular, and only males take part in it. An instrument called a “Changu” or “Changal” is played during the dance. This instrument has a wooden frame and is round with one side covered with leather. The men play this instrument while they dance and sing many types of songs (Baskey, 2002).

As per the 1981 Census, the total population of the Kharia tribe was 114,771. Also according to the 1981 census, the Lodha and Kharia populations of West Bengal were 53,718. During British rule, like the Lodhas, the Kharias were also marked as “criminal tribes.”

The major source of livelihood for the Kharia tribe is agriculture. Besides, some of them also depend on small forest produce and labor works in order to earn a living. Moreover, they engage in fishing, hunting, and animal husbandry to supplement their incomes. According to anthropologists, based on their occupation, the Kharia society can be segregated into three broad categories: “Hill Kharia”, “Dudh”, and “Dhelki.” The Hill Kharia tribes are amongst the most ancient tribal communities. For their sustenance, they depend mainly upon forest resources such as collecting honey, edible roots, fruits, and herbs. Most of their time is spent collecting food, so they have little time for other activities. In contrast, the Dudh Kharia and Dhelki Kharias are quite advanced and, their clothing, utensils, and weapons are superior to those of the Hill Kharias.

Family is the core of the social structure in the Kharia tribal communities. Most of the families are nuclear because the general trend is for children to live separately after getting married. The society is basically patriarchal and there is also a wide

prevalence of the clan system. The whole of the Kharia tribe identifies itself by their kinship to a common sacred object known as a totem. They protect these totemic objects from being injured. Marriage is an important institution in the life of the Kharias. Although the society is largely monogamous, polygamy is also prevalent. Furthermore, the bride price is an important element of the marriage in any Kharia community. Moreover, there exists a taboo against endogamous marriages conducted within the same clan of the Kharia society.

The Dudh and Dhelki Kharias call their religious head “Pahan,” whereas Hill Kharias refer to him as “Dihuri.” This post is held on a hereditary basis. Typically, the Kharias are very respectful towards their deities. The chief among the deities is “Giring” or “Bero” God. He gives protection from all dangers. So, before leaving for the jungle to collect food, the Kharias pay their reverence to this God. Additionally, “Goram” is the village deity of the Kharias. Offerings of unboiled rice, fruits, and sweets are made to him, so that they can peacefully live in the village.

Kharias typically love to establish friendships with other tribes and they especially like to exchange gifts and make friends on a special occasion. They call it “Phool Patan” and address each other as “Phool.” They mostly make friends with the Bhumijis (another tribal community) (Baskey, 2002).

The above discussion indicates that all four tribes are different as far as their socio-cultural practices are concerned. As a result, the specifics of the educational handicap that a particular tribe faces does not hold true for other tribes. Specifically, the diverse eco-zones, multiple ethnic component, and discrete cultural and dietary

habits that characterize each of the tribes urged separate investigation and data from each of the tribes.

Methods of Securing Subject Participation

The assistance of local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) was utilized to locate the “gatekeepers” and guides to facilitate access to tribal communities. I also secured help from some of my former tribal students who reside in villages of Paschim Medinipur to gain access to the tribal leaders and persons in key positions in that village. Additionally, I took colored photographs of the tribals and distributed them to gain their trust and cooperation. Moreover, I donated a lump sum of money towards the local school and hospital as a measure of compensation and a means to encourage participation.

Methods of Data Collection

Collection of Secondary Data from Government and Media Sources on Selected Tribes

As an initial step of the study I obtained permission from the Tribal Development Office of West Bengal and the district administrative office to conduct the study.

The next step involved reading the available literature on the selected tribes and visiting the newspaper offices for reports published within the last five years about these tribes.

Field Research Involving Observation and Personal Interviews with Subjects

Field Preparation-Understanding the culture

The first stage of my research involved knowing and understanding the culture and the language of the people being studied. I drew upon the work of Irwin Duetscher (1966), who suggests that it is impossible to translate any word in any language to

any word in any other language. As a part of educational research, researchers must understand that “words are fragments of linguistic configurations; they mean nothing in isolation from the configuration.” (Duetscher, 1966). Besides, conformity or non-conformity to local standards and styles of living when engaging in field research is a relevant issue only insofar as the choice affects the research. As Shah (2004) illustrates:

“Notably, particular codes of conversation and patterns of behavior prevail regarding age, gender, social background, and knowledge status in different cultures; certain topic areas are taboo in certain cultures for male/female interaction; there are culture specific modes of relating with “cultural outsiders”; and, there are culture-related codes concerning the distribution of power in interactional contexts that may not fit the accepted concept of power differential between the initiator of conversation (interviewer) and the respondent (interviewee).”(Shah, 2004).

Besides, studies have pointed out that when a status difference exists between the interviewer and the respondent, the respondent tends to behave sycophantically. To counter such a problem with groups such as the tribes selected for this study, I made explicit my desire to know how the respondents perceive a given situation.

Furthermore, the cross-cultural context inherently has difference-based dimensions. For example, status can be linked to age (tribal societies), to knowledge (in traditional Chinese cultures), to religious knowledge (in traditional Muslim societies) and to socio-economic positioning (in feudal/capitalist cultures). Thus, it might be problematic for a male researcher to gain access to a young Muslim girl in a Muslim society for interviewing, but there may not be any serious problems if the interviewee is an old woman (Shah, 2004).

Even the dress of the researcher can create ill-will among the interviewees. For example, in conducting research on the Herero women of Botswana, Deborah Durham (1999) pointed out that their conception of dress was totally different from that of women in traditional western culture. The latter tend to look only at its differentiating function while Herero women see dress as a means of building mutuality. The author points out how Herero women's dress combines a moral aesthetic of fatness and a sartorial sense of mass. In my research for example, the Santal tribal society was found to be patriarchal, and power-centred, with collectivity rules. Hence, I made a thorough study of the culture of the tribes under consideration which made it easier for me to gain access to them.

In line with Burgess (1984), I believe that access is not just an issue concerning the gatekeeper or participant's consent, but there are also "*multiple points of entry that require continuous process of negotiation and re-negotiation*" (Burgess, 1984). During cross-cultural communications and understanding, generally the researcher is faced with six stumbling blocks: 1. assumption of similarities; 2. language difference; 3. non-verbal misrepresentations; 4. preconceptions and stereotypes; 5. tendency to evaluate; and 6. high anxiety (Shah, 2004). Nevertheless, the advantage of such research as pointed out by Merton (1972) is that often the informant will not hesitate to make certain private views known to a disinterested outside observer-- views that would not be expressed were it thought that they would get back to higher authorities. Thus, being an outsider, I had "stranger" value. This represented a positive interview attribute.

Interview as a technique

My research incorporated a combination of semi-structured, non-directive, and focused interviews. The interviews were informal and open-ended. This helped me analyze data in the background of key policy issues. The extensive interviews targeted tribal students, ex-students, their parents, teachers, principals of the schools. The following table shows the number of interviews conducted by organization, village, district, and type of subjects:

Table 4.2: NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS BY ORGANIZATION, VILLAGE, DISTRICT, AND TYPE OF SUBJECTS.

Name of the Organization	Village	District	No. of Students	No. of Graduates	No. of Teachers	No. of Parents
Jhilimili High School	Jhilimili	Bankura	21	3	10	4
Suhad Santal Nimna Buniyadi Vidyalaya	Seuri	Birbhum	15	2	4	2
Bangbuta Primary School	Belpahari	Paschim Medinipur	11	1	2	2
Simulpal Primary School	Belpahari	Paschim Medinipur	14	2	3	1
Kishore Bharati Ashram Vidyalaya	Bagmundi	Puruliya	14	0	5	0
Awodhya (Hills)GSAT High School for Boys	Bagmundi	Puruliya	12	0	3	0
Ranga Primary School	Bagmundi	Puruliya	10	6	1	3

On average each interview took 30 minutes. The first step involved getting permission from the principal of the school about participating in the study. I was lucky that I was not denied permission in any of the schools visited. In all the schools visited I produced the proof of my affiliation with Kansas State University and promised the principals that the findings from the study would strictly be used for academic purpose and policy recommendations. Thus, in all the schools, the principal was the first person to be interviewed. The principal (in every school) then guided me to the teachers' room and introduced me to other teachers at the school. After completing the interviews with the teachers, I was given the opportunity to randomly interview students belonging to various grades in the school. In the process, the students from local villages were identified. I then visited their homes to interview their parents and graduates residing in the village.

Also important to the interviewing process is that abstractly framed questions are more likely to yield general, unanalyzable responses than those framed concretely. For instance, a question like, "What are you trying to accomplish as a teacher?" will yield much less information than the question, "Thinking of your best student, what changes in their academic ability have you observed during the school year?" The second question is likely to elicit a list of specific, contrasting characteristics and behaviors, possibly anchored in points of history. Following Tammivaara and Enright (1986), my interview schedule entailed personal questions that will elicit more spontaneous, unpredictable responses than impersonal ones.

Additionally, Tammivaara and Enright (1986) have also pointed out that questions that are "cathected" or connect to the informant's emotions, can evoke

conversation rich in potential categories if a high degree of rapport has already been achieved between the interviewer and the informant. For example, a question such as, “How does that student make you feel?” elicited more useful information about teacher-student relations than an abstract question such as, “What is your view of a successful student?”. Notably, questions which are narrow in scope were used to focus on or follow up on previous responses (e.g., Respondent: “I have a different reason for failing each of my students;” Questioner: “what are they?”). A question to the teachers like, “What are the formalities the students are required to perform to be admitted in school?” illuminated the degree of complexities involved in the admission process.

Similarly, questions about other subjects that a particular subject teacher teaches revealed information about the quality of teaching and number of teachers at the school. Questions to the parents like, “What do you expect your children to be doing in the future?” provided information about the expectations the tribal society have from the school. As was seen in the chapter on “Literature Review”, the Pratichi Committee Report (2002) identified the inability of the tribal students to afford private tuition as one of the main reasons behind their failure. Thus, a question like, “Do you get help from teachers outside the class?” helped confirm such trends. Other questions to the students like, “Do you have friends in school?”, and “What do you want to do in future?” showed if they face discrimination from the mainstream boys in the school and whether the mainstream “measure of success” influence tribal aspirations. The interview schedule included questions to the graduates like, “How do you think your schooling has influenced your chance to be successful in

life?” and, “Do you believe that your schooling has changed your relationship with your community?” these questions helped elicit information on the effect of schooling on tribal children. Nevertheless, my interview schedule entailed sufficient flexibility to add or omit questions.

As a qualitative researcher, I also recognized the significance of non-verbal messages and rituals. Potter (1997) suggests an inductive discourse analysis paying attention to social practices: hesitation, pauses, silences, and overlaps. Hence apart from the interview, the other important tool for my research was observation to “fill in the gaps.” Richard Lapiere (1934) used the term “verbalization” to highlight a huge discrepancy that exists between what informants might say and what may be the actual custom of the primitive society. Records were not only made of what the interviewee said, but also of his/her behavior. Of course, such recordings were covert as it could have a deterrent influence on some interviewees’ willingness to give information. The tapes were later be transcribed for close analysis. When this was not possible, detailed “process notes” of interview conversations were taken, which were clarified or elaborated soon after the interview.

With or without the actual recordings, I also recorded the circumstances surrounding the interview to note the details of the context in which the conversation took place. Furthermore, since an interview is a “social event” which “displays cultural particulars”, and, since the number of teachers and students were pretty small in a community school--especially in a tribal area—efforts were made to interview most of them. The interview schedule is attached in the Appendix A.

Interviewing children

Children comprised a major group of my respondents. In conducting interviews with children, special precautions were taken. The first one was controlling the behavior of children within the interview situation, which could lead to anxiety among children and hamper them from responding freely. As Tammivaara and Enright (1986) point out:

“To direct a child’s behavior (to sit in a certain place, to talk a certain amount of time) or negatively sanction a child’s behavior (to stop fidgeting, to stop being naughty) quickly and assuredly establishes one as an adult vis-à-vis the child (which is rarely observed in tribal scenarios).” (Tammivaara and Enright, 1986).

There are necessary ethical limits to the policy of non-intervention. But, in general, the less the interviewer interferes in the activity of children before, during, and after the interview, the better (Tammivaara and Enright, 1986). I followed Tammivaara and Enright (1986) by not announcing to the child informants that they were “interviewed” or that a set of questions were to be answered. Rather, they were allowed to take any verbal direction they chose and I was prepared to respond quickly to opportunities for questioning and redirecting when they were naturally afforded. Another reason to let the child direct the interview was that children tend to identify any setting in which an adult asks a series of specific questions of children as a “lesson”. In an interview-based study of 10-11 year old children in Australia, Davies (1982) describes the problem with such identification:

“A strong element in the teacher-pupil communication system is indeed the capacity of the pupil to figure out what he should say and do in relation to adults. An important question for me as an adult researcher, working with children, then becomes to what extent does this teacher-pupil communication system carry over to the conversations I had with the children? What I have found is that some conversations I had with the children can be compared to the classroom “game” of finding out what teacher wants. For the purpose of gathering substantive information about the children’s social world

outside the interview these are obviously “failed” interviews, and it is important to be able to identify this kind of failure and to show how it differs from those conversations where the children are more intent on the exploration and analysis of their own perspective.” [Davies 1982:33]

Thus, the information that the children provide to questions that are identified as “exam” questions will be of little use in understanding the children’s own point of view. Another interview tactics proposed by Tammivaara and Enright (1986) which I adopted, was that of “playing dumb” by explicitly taking on the role of an ignorant, confused participant who required the assistance of child insiders often yielded explanations of how child’s world operated for the child. Playing dumb also involved trying to do things that the child informants did, but failing until they have explained their activity satisfactorily. Thus, my research incorporated procedures that portray the researcher as a person in need of guidance. Often, the relational aspects (picture books) were used in the interview process to identify artifacts from tribal settings (unknown to the researcher). Additionally, in eliciting responses from child informants, embedding interview questions in a larger activity already familiar to children was often helpful. For example, children were asked to “draw himself/herself in school” and then talking with them about what they have drawn.

Other techniques included “Let’s Pretend” (children were asked to take on the role of someone in school authority), and “Reading Book” (whereby the children were provided with story books in scripts of their mother-tongue and the medium of instruction in their school and asked the following day what they have learned). In their study, Tammivaara and Enright (1986) found that children have membership in two cultures: one of their own making and the other created by

adults. The challenge of bilingual/bicultural children is more complicated since they have to survive in four worlds: the native child culture, the native adult culture, the mainstream child culture, and the mainstream adult culture. My task was to ask questions to elicit the differences among the worlds that they occupied, and the ways in which those worlds were similar.

Examining the Effect of Policy Implementation

This study examined recent government policy implementation because previous research had demonstrated that students suffer due to faulty policy (Sujatha, 1994). For example, recently, ashram schools have been admitting many pupils from other villages, which is consistent with the practice of residential schools. However, the tribal children from local villages are prohibited from enrolling because they belong to the village in which the school is located. They are allowed to attend as day schoolers, but the number of day schoolers that can be admitted to an ashram school is restricted, and further, the school discriminates between a day schooler and hosteller (student residing in hostel) with regard to provisions such as meals, uniforms, and other items. Parents are therefore reluctant to send their children to these schools.

Evaluating Teachers

The study noted any predominance of upper caste elites in teaching positions and any disproportionate representation of certain tribal groups among teachers. Since tribes differ widely in their respective cultures, evaluation was made considering whether recruitment of teachers belonging to other tribes solved the educational problem of a particular tribe.

It is obvious that teachers without adequate competence will have difficulty in understanding the intricacies of the materials and methods. The experience of the teachers was taken into account. An associated question was how the salary of the teacher is actually determined since national law stipulates it to be based on the number of students enrolled in the school. Hence, an estimate of the salary generated observations regarding any unwillingness of teachers, in large part, to serve in tribal areas.

The mid-day meal scheme in the schools was introduced by the Union Government as a nationwide programme in 1992. Under this scheme, children are given 3 kilograms of raw rice, monthly, if they attended the school for at least 75 per cent of the working days. As pointed out earlier, the teacher's salaries depend upon the number of the students in schools. However, government reports indicate that teachers often manipulate the register to show a higher level of attendance, even if the students remain absent. Even worse, zealous enrollment drives often bring in a large number of underage children. Accordingly, this study checked the numbers of students (attending the school and those receiving a mid-day meal).

Evaluating Infrastructure

Generally speaking, the schools were evaluated according to the following characteristics: 1. Accessibility; 2. Communication; 3. Classroom; 4. Teachers 5. Toilet and Drinking water; 6. Playground; 7. Teaching-Learning Material; 8. Incentives; and 9. Attendance of both teachers and students.

In the process of data collection, I noted how effective the innovative learning materials are and, importantly, whether the vocabulary of such innovative materials

was drawn from tribal dialects. In fact, comparison of cognitive development of two successive grades of students differentiated on the basis of exposure to innovative teaching methods revealed the effectiveness of such programs, which correlates with the process of innovative learning requiring viable student strength (number of students). Each school is provided with kits, which does not create problems as long as there is a required, commensurate number of students. In community schools, where the number of students varies considerably from school to school, it creates problems. If the number is high, then not only is more space required, but also more kits; if the number is low, the group is very small, making group-work ineffective.

The study also noted whether teaching is a one way process (i.e. the students are the passive listeners) and whether it included examples from the day-to-day setting to make the learning relevant to the tribal students. Accordingly, the media of instruction in the classroom and texts were noted. Also, the daily routines of the students in ashram (residential) schools were recorded.

Methods of Data Processing and Analysis

The analysis of the data began by reading the field notes. This reading helped me identify initial connections between the data and the objectives of the research. Every attempt was made to record the actors involved, patterns of conversations, the rules associated with their activities, and the social contexts in which these elements arise. Here an important distinction needs to be made between analysis and interpretation. Analysis, follows standard procedures for observing, measuring, and communicating with others about the nature of what is “there”; that is, the

reality of everyday world as we experience it. Data subjected to analysis are examined and reported through procedures generally understood and accepted in that everyday world, among social scientist and laypersons. Interpretation, by contrast, is not derived from rigorous, agreed-upon, carefully specified procedures, but from our efforts at making sense of subjects and social situation being studied. Thus, interpretation is influenced to some degree by the subjectivity of the researcher. Analysis falls more on the scientific side of things, while interpretation falls on the, humanistic side. Thus, my research entailed some interpretation. Nevertheless, I was careful that the research does not become a monologue. To quote in the words of Harry Walcott (2001):

“The problem is further compounded by educational researchers who feel that they not only know their educator audiences but know what is best for them. Informants in such accounts do little talking, and the researchers does a lot. Each reported observation or quotation seems to prompt comment or interpretation on the part of the omniscient researcher, something like the chatty docent or guide who becomes rather than ‘leads’ the tour and has assumed that without such a monologue, we ourselves would not know what to think.....In a slight variation on this approach, researchers draw back the curtain to let us watch events unfolds, but constantly interrupt with scholarly interjections, as if duty bound to remind us of their presence and superior vision.” (Walcott, 2001: 37).

Interviews were manually transcribed using a tape log and this helped me to access context, linguistic, and para-linguistic (i.e. stuff that doesn't show up in a transcription, like volume or pitch, but still important) data. The following procedure was followed to transcribe the tapes:

1. Each tape was numbered and registered.
2. Pseudonyms were assigned for each of the respondents on the tapes.
3. Date and interview location were noted.

4. Classification of the events (e.g. interview, life history, conversation, support group meeting) were made.

After this initial procedure, a table was drawn with three columns: Log, Theme/Context, and Quotes. The first column recorded the location of the transcribed information on the tape. The second recorded the theme and context of the information. The column was used to summarize the general themes, my impressions, important notes, para-linguistic clues, contextual information. The third column contained the transcribed speech, as accurately as possible.

In doing the transcription special note was taken of the “silences”, “pauses”, and “hesitations”. Attempts were made to interpret as to- what might be indicated by silence?; why has someone hesitated before using certain word or voicing certain opinion?. Moreover, the exact time of the interviews, pauses, and interruptions were noted by reading the meter on the recorder. I was respectful toward my respondents by transcribing all the interviews using Standard English regardless of their social background.

Once transcribed, the data were categorized according to the six research issues described in the previous chapter. The data were then analyzed to identify themes and subthemes that relate to each issue. Findings are reported on this basis.

Ethical Considerations in the Field

Research in any tribal area involves numerous ethical issues. The first and foremost consideration is that many social actions (for example cutting of forest wood for fire) by tribal members may be illegal. And, even if the researcher thinks that he or

she does not have a duty to report the illegalities, the government may think otherwise. However, my approach was to protect my respondents.

Absolute confidentiality was maintained for all interviews, be they from the tribals, the dominant class teachers, or the policy makers. As part of the debriefing procedure, subjects were told that their name would never be identified or connected in any way with the information they provide in an interview; a pseudonym was assigned to each respondent. Only the pseudonym and the group with which the subject belongs (principal, teacher, parent, student, graduate) were recorded in field notes. Only the pseudonym and group membership were used in the write-up of the study findings.

Moreover, I did not intend to spoil the field by giving my individual respondents money; rather, I compensated them by giving something to the community as a whole (for example, contributed a lump sum money to the local school and hospital). Thereby, I remained impartial in my approach and did not create a divide in the village. This ensured cooperation.

Chapter 5

Findings and Data Analysis

Interviews were conducted at Jhilimili High School in Jhilimili, Suhad Santal Nimna Buniyadi Vidyalaya in Seuri, Bangbuta Primary School and Simulpal Primary School in Belpahari, Kishore Bharati Ashram Vidyalaya, Awodhya (Hills) G.S.A.T High School for Boys, Ranga Primary School in Bagmundi. More than 140 interviews with students, ex-students, parents, teachers, principals, led to some very interesting findings. In discussing these findings, I do not reveal the full name of the respondents so as to maintain confidentiality. The findings are presented in accordance to the five research questions.

1. Examine and identify elements of cultural dissonance between the culture of mainstream and tribal populations that affect the academic success of tribal students.

The research revealed that the modern education system makes the least attempt to address cultural specificities in designing education policies for tribal populations. For instance, in Bagmundi, the daily routine of an ashram (residential) school was so hectic that it did not allow students even to think and reflect on what they have learned. The routine goes like this: students get up at 6 a.m. sharp and are given an hour to take bath and do all other morning chores. From 7 to 7:30, the students have physical training, after which they are provided with breakfast until 8:30. From 8:30 to 9, students attend morning prayers and at 9 o'clock, class starts. Class is continuous from 9 to noon after which there is a break of an hour to have lunch. The last two classes are from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Then the students have a break for an hour. From 4 to 5 in the evening, the students have their play session. At 5

o'clock in the evening, they have snacks and prepare for the evening prayer at 6 p.m. Study hours are from 6.30 to 9 p.m. after which students have dinner, which ends at 10 p.m. Students must be in their hostel bed by 10:15 p.m. Naturally, the tribal students feel immensely alienated in such an inflexible system. As Laya, one of the tribal student observed:

"I hate to wake-up that early in the morning, something I never used to do when I was in my home. The schedule of the classes is so inflexible that if I miss the lunch by a minute I have to go hungry till the next meal. Further, the food provided does barely suit our tastes, I hate to have "chapattis" (a type of bread popular among the mainstream population) day in and day out.....Though the school curriculum mentions of archery (a popular tribal pastime), we have never seen a bow in the school premises which practically makes our recess hour to go waste."

It should be noted that the highly competitive, modern world which measures success by individual achievement completely diverges from the tribal system where sharing and community gets the utmost priority. Learning in the tribal context is a slow and cautious process, where less emphasis is placed on speed and more on learning correctly. Additionally, tribal life is not routinized and inflexible as is the life of modern humans.

Even worse, school vacations follow the mainstream calendar, not taking tribal celebrations and festivities into account. All the schools had two months of vacation during summer (May and June), one month during Durga Puja, a mainstream Hindu festival (October-November), and fifteen days during winter (December). Nowhere, was there any mention of holiday for any tribal festivals. Santals, for instance, celebrate two important festivals in the month of January. The "Sohrai" festival which comes in the post- harvest season is the time for relaxation and enjoyment, a time for total community involvement. The "Sakrat" festival comes about this time,

celebrated generally on the last day of January. An archery contest is held, and the priestly headman is treated with honor. Similarly, the “Sarhul” festival, celebrated in the months of February-March, is a big occasion among the Birhors, observed in appreciation of nature’s beauty. It is quite obvious that school attendance of Santal and Birhor students will be quite low during these seasons. Even worse, the teachers were reluctant to give vacations to students, much less design a vacation schedule according to the tribal calendar, simply because they believe vacations make the students forget the mainstream mannerisms and discipline taught to them in school, “after a hard toil.” As Dasgupta, the principal of a school illustrated:

“A tribal child is typically of very stubborn character. It is very hard to make them “civilized.” The mainstream language, dietary habits, mannerisms are picked up by these students after sustained efforts by our teachers. All the good that we do in school will be very easily undone if we allow them long vacations in their native place.”

Most of the tribal students, barring the elite ones interviewed, spoke their native tongue at home. But on the school premises, students are prohibited by the teachers to speak the language even amongst themselves, which creates an impression on their mind that their language is a liability rather than an asset. Apart from language, the numerical systems of the tribals are different, but again, the mainstream education system fails to take note of all such peculiarities.

It was found that teachers in the schools examined often resort to corporal punishment as a pedagogic tool. And, to my astonishment, most of the teachers justified this punishment based on the stereotyped image of tribal students as intellectually inferior. In fact, teachers cherish the terrifying image that they have built in the eyes of the students over the years. It was observed in all the schools

that students prefer to run away whenever they see the teacher approaching. As a concrete example, almost all the students irrespective of being tribal or non-tribal, avoided their teacher Dakuya. In his five years of service in the school, Dakuya had earned the reputation of “merciless hitter of students.” He was a man of tribal origin, but when asked about his “terror image” showed no repentance and justified:

“It is the best method to control students and is followed since the time we were students. Besides if you are too friendly with the students you loose respect from them.”

Without doubt, Dakuya was treated similarly when he was a student. This again, is in strong contrast to the tribal culture, where force is never used.

The sad part is that tribal students become accustomed to this system and believe it is their fate to be abused and insulted by the mainstream teacher. When I went in standard V classroom of Jhilimili High School to interview the students, there was quite a commotion among the students as they assumed me to be a new teacher.

This was the comment of Das, one of the tribal students who came to my assistance:

“Sir, why don’t you flog them? They won’t be quiet unless you hit them. They are taking liberty because you are new (teacher). They don’t have the courage to do this in a regular teacher’s class.....The first year of school was most difficult. The teachers used to hit us daily to make us suitable for the school.”

Questions to the students regarding their best friends brought out the fact that social distance still remained between the tribal and non-tribal students. For instance, in almost 80 % of the cases, the tribal students make friends amongst themselves, as do the mainstream students. And such social distance is strengthened by the stereotypes each group nurtures towards the other. For instance, most of the non-tribal teachers believed that the tribals “eat, drink, and

make merry.” Tribals, on the other hand, have been exploited and cheated by the dominant Indian class so many times that they have developed a suspicious attitude.

Almost 80 per cent of the tribal students interviewed liked history. This is a clear reflection of the fact that in tribal culture, emphasis is placed on rote and memorization as a process of learning. A similar percentage of them did not like to study English and Geography, simply because they did not understand or take interest in the subjects. English was an alien subject to them, and most of the schools did not have an atlas, maps, or charts to make geography interesting to them. In the absence of proper infrastructure English and Geography were reduced to mere subjects for memorization. As Hembrom, one of the students pointed out:

“Geography is too abstract to learn. The names of countries and continents are very difficult to memorize and recall in the examination hall.”

Astonishingly, none of the tribal children interviewed named mathematics or science as a subject of their dislike, which clearly indicates that they are not “unintelligent or dumb” as most of the teachers assume them to be.

The culture of the tribes is least taken into consideration in designing questions for them. In one school at Bagmundi, grade II children were asked to write an essay in their annual examination on “Your favourite game/sport.” In this essay, it should be noted that the tribal system of game and sports is totally different from the mainstream culture, and the mainstream teachers will not understand or appreciate a good narration of a student’s experience. Similarly, in another school at Bagmundi, the students of grade V were asked to compose a paragraph in their annual

examination on preparing mango pickle, when consuming mango pickle has never been a part of tribal culture.

It was equally unrealistic when students of grade V of Jhilimili in their annual examination were asked to write an essay on birthday parties when 80% of the children are not aware of their date of birth and don't have the money to celebrate birthdays.

Equally offensive were the objective questions set in the annual examination of standards V and IX of Awodhya (Hills) G.S.A.T. High School for Boys. Some impractical ones were:

- i. When was television first started in India?
- ii. What is your favorite television programme?
- iii. What is the fourth day of the week?
- iv. What is the national animal of India?
- v. Which is the busiest airport in India?
- vi. Which is the longest river in Europe?
- vii. What is the source of river Thames?
- viii. What is the capital of Ukraine?
- ix. Which is the highest mountain peak in Antartica?
- x. Which is the famous mountain range of Europe?
- xi. Who is the director of the film "Titanic"?
- xii. What is the purpose of ECG (Electro-Cardiogram)?

Now, let us have a detailed analysis of the questions mentioned above. It is thoroughly impractical to expect a tribal child to answer the first two questions

when he/she has never seen a television in his/her entire life. Each tribe has different names for days of the week, and so students will not be able to answer the third question. The fourth question is a clear indication of governmental effort to nationalize the tribes. However, such an effort should not mean underscoring the importance of tribal pride and heritage. To my astonishment, none of schools surveyed had any question in their question paper from tribal settings. Question five was highly objectionable as the tribal students knew the answer to it, but had no idea what an airport is. Questions six to ten can be answered from rote memorizing, but that makes education thoroughly uninteresting as most schools did not have world maps or an atlas. The eleventh question is highly unrealistic because it is impractical to expect a tribal child (who does not have a television at home, and can hardly understand or speak English) to know of the name of the director of the award winning movie, "Titanic." Lastly, the state of governmental health facilities in the tribal zone is in absolute wretched condition, so it is very unlikely that tribal students would have heard of an electrocardiogram machine, let alone see one. When questioned, the teachers argued all these questions can be answered by memorizing few facts and figures, forgetting that education can never be equated with memorizing.

On a similar level of difficulty was the test portion on unscrambling letters. The tribal students of grade II in Suhad Santal Nimna Buniyadi Vidyalaya in their examination were asked to unscramble the following English words within the time span of ten minutes: shtir (shirt), rofck (frock), rutif (fruit), white pleat (white plate), tianr (train), dorab (broad).

Further, few of the schools used verbal tests as part of the annual examination to evaluate students, although a tribal child is typically very shy before outsiders and is especially so if the outsider is a non-tribal. Even worse, the system has led to widespread corruption because teachers often use this discretion to urge the students to take private tuition from them outside the class. These findings imply it is quite obvious that a tribal child in such an education system will become disinterested and will drop out of the system sooner or later.

2. Explore the mechanisms by which children of tribal elites are able to achieve academic success.

It is natural that the disabilities that the downtrodden section of a minority society face are very acute compared to the elite section. The same is true for tribal society as well. The study revealed wealth and acculturation as two main factors behind the success of elite tribal students. In all the schools examined, the maximum drop-outs took place in standard V among the girls and standard VIII for the boys. And the reason appeared to be primarily economic. As Murmu, a tribal leader identified:

“A ten year old tribal girl is an asset to the family. She does both domestic and income generating activities. Boys on the other hand, becomes economic assets much later, at the age of fourteen when he becomes physically capable of undertaking strenuous jobs outside the domestic sphere. Moreover, in standard V, students generally transfer from primary to high school, often located at a distant village. In such a situation the tribal parents are left with two options, either to send their children to another school at a distant village or to discontinue education. Generally, the tribal parents prefer the latter as they are reluctant to send their children to distant places to join a hostel (because children are economic asset to the families). Among those who manage to attend high school, the poor quality of education that they have received in primary school, coupled with their tribal background, makes them victims of harsh treatment by the teacher and subsequently leads to further drop-outs.”

Interviews with the tribal students in Jhilimili revealed something peculiar: most of the students mentioned that they received help from the teachers outside of the

school hours, when most teachers stayed far away from the school. On further questioning, it became clear that some teachers stayed after school hours to offer paid assistance to students in the form of private tuition.

Thus, the cost of schooling is calculated on two components:

- i. Books, pencils, papers, and other subsidiary expenditures.
- ii. Private tuition.

The issue of the necessary use of the instruments indispensable to the task of reading and the work of writing raises a concern with the purchasing power of students and teachers, in light of the high cost of a basic dictionary, books and so on. The cost of private tuition per month varies between Rs 20-50 per child per month, and the maximum and minimum limit of months of private tuition per year varies between twelve and six. Hence, the minimum cost of private tuition is Rs. 120 per child in a year. One head of a poor tribal family stated, "We are too poor to provide our children with food. Where can we get the money for these subsidiary expenditures?" Some of the families were so poor that the uniform that is given free of cost for schooling purpose is worn all the time by the children, leading to its decreased longevity.

Ironically, children who have the greatest difficulty in making use of the general teaching in primary schools (because of the absence of home support) can make least use of the regrettable necessity of private tuition. Worse still, elite students were found to be careless about what was being taught in the class because they have the private tuition to fall back upon.

As Kazi, one of the elite tribal students in Bagmundi admitted openly:

“Frankly speaking, I do not recall what lesson was being taught in today’s science class. The teacher assured us not to worried about lessons taught in the class. Anyways, we are meeting tonight after the school hours. Then he will have more time to clear our doubts with greater clarity and emphasis.”

Echoing the Pritichi Committee Report (2002), I contend that the strongest argument for banning private tuition lies in the recognition that its presence makes the more influential and richer parents less concerned about the quality of normal schooling (since they can always arrange extra teaching for their own children with the help of private tutors). If private tuition becomes unavailable, the more powerful families will become more dependent on the schools for the education of their children (as the poorer and less influential families already are). In turn, this may generate sufficient pressure on school systems so that greater effort is made to ensure they function effectively.

Teachers fail to understand the economic and infrastructural handicaps of downtrodden tribal students. For instance, tribal students do not proceed well with their lessons because their home environment is not favorable. The tribals (barring the elite ones) have large families and were found to reside in single roomed huts without electricity; all familial transactions are performed there making it difficult for students to concentrate on their lessons. Hence, downtrodden tribals do badly in school because they do not have the money to “buy education” and purchase needed supplies and extra tuition. Further, their environment is not conducive to study.

In addition to the actual cost of education, the process of acculturation helps the elite tribals to succeed in the mainstream education system. Tribal customs and rites are often modified in the process of social absorption. As a matter of fact, the

elite tribals were found to use the mainstream language “Bengali” at their homes.

This helps their son or daughter to follow lessons in the class. On questioning,

Kishku, an elite tribal revealed:

“Tribal language is a dead language. It does not have any future. We (Kishku and his wife) try and speak as much Bengali as possible in our home so that our children do not have any problem in following the lectures in class. In fact, my son does not understand our native tongue (Santali) very well....We are seriously considering sending our children to some boarding school in the city once their elementary education is over. Here they won't get to learn anything.”

To my astonishment he uttered these sentences without much repentance.

It is interesting to note the difference in the answers between the mainstream and tribal population in regards to questions on best and worst boy/girl in the class.

While the mainstream and elite tribal boys based their judgements on academic excellence, the downtrodden tribal students based it on personal friendship.

Interestingly, Hansda, an elite tribal child of Jhilimili High School, hated his fellow tribal classmate Tumpa for not wearing tidy clothes. She reasoned:

“Tumpa does not wear tidy clothes. She bears the mark of native. I will loose my friends if I talk to her.”

Even the students' role models show the difference of acculturation. The children of mainstream and tribal elites named film actors or cricketers (a clear indication of acculturation from television) as their role-models, while the downtrodden tribal children named someone from their own families. The greater acculturation of elite tribals often comes in handy for succeeding in the mainstream schooling system. For instance, we observed in the previous section how the questions set in the annual

examination of the schools implicitly promoted the process of acculturation by giving an acculturated tribal child an edge over others.

Such acculturation teaches tribals to hate their own cultural heritage. As Hembrom, a tribal graduate and now a teacher in Belpahari commented:

“The tribals are shy and cowardly; they are afraid of change. I consider myself lucky that my parents sent me away from this dark environment from my childhood and thereby helping me to be refined according to the tastes and cultures of the day.”

The basic problem is such an education system provides a binary choice to the tribals between remaining a tribal or becoming mainstream, but never both at the same time.

Worse in regard to the downtrodden tribal population, the elite tribals urge the teachers to set the teaching standard to a higher level so that their children are competitive with the mainstream population. As Nandi, one of the teachers in Jhilimili boasted:

“Our school teaches the poem Daffodil by William Wordsworth to students of grade V. The school committee is thankful to the tribal parents who urged us to set higher standards in teaching. Now they are able to realize how competitive is the job market and how important it is to compete with private English schools of Calcutta.....Recently, we have changed the language of the application form for admission from Bengali to English imitating the private English medium schools.”

The last sentence spelled out the upcoming predicament for first generation learners in the area for whom English is totally an unknown subject. (See Appendix C).

The irony of such a system is that the elite strata of the tribal population takes more and more advantage of the affirmative measures of the government while the poorer strata is left behind.

3. Explore the perceptions of tribal members and stakeholders in their education system concerning the expected benefits of formal education and academic success for tribal students.

Interviews revealed an unanimous agreement among the parents and students that educational qualifications should give them better employment prospects. Most students and ex-students revealed that they wanted to be professionals like teachers, doctors, and engineers. Of these three professions, teaching was preferred by almost 70 per cent of the tribal students. On further questioning, most students appreciated the authoritarianism associated with the profession. It reads poorly for the future of India when Marandi, one of the tribal students of Seuri justified:

“I admire the “authoritarianism” associated with the profession. To be able to send any student out of class any time or to be able to hit any student any time you like is something to look upon with awe and admiration.”

The peculiar observation during the study was that even outside school, educated tribals were hesitant to speak their native tongue; refraining from doing so separates them off from their “uneducated peers.” Such tribal youths set bad examples to their own society; and, there is a growing impression among the tribal parents that there is little functional advantage of formal education in their lives.

A shortage of teachers, coupled with poor infrastructure, makes the education provided to the students in tribal areas utterly sub-standard. I found plenty of instances of the tribal youths who failed to make a mark in the mainstream job market by virtue of being educated in a sub-standard system. The vocational training provided in the school were so elementary that students could hardly

achieve anything from their training. As Tudu, an unemployed tribal graduate in Bagmundi explained the above observation with remarkable accuracy:

“When I was in school I used to toil hard for learning. The teachers used to flog us everyday, something which was never done in our homes. I endured all this and continued my education in a very dull environment. All my friends dropped out in the middle....But, alas I was not successful in any competitive examination for a job last year. Neither the school taught us any useful vocational activity so that we can start some kind of small business. I am helpless and feel some kind of inhibition in joining my friends in our traditional occupations.”

Similarly, Soren, a tribal parent of two in Belpahari complained with a sense of ridicule:

“We send our children to school with the sole ambition that they will have a better employment prospect. With the withering away of our traditional tribal occupations we have to find occupations outside of our own culture. Unfortunately this did not happen for my elder son. Despite completing college he was not able to find a white collar job. Yet fifteen years of education had given him the feeling that traditional tribal occupations are demeaning. This is because “knowledgeable” man, defined by the elitist perception of education, is a “thinker” and not a worker. He lives in the world of “ideas” and not in the sphere of productive activities. But I am brave enough to take chances with my younger son.”

Another parent, Sabar, regretted with a sense of lamentation:

“My son was lucky enough to find a service sector job (Clerk in Calcutta High Court) in Calcutta. He left the village at once and never came back. He was of no help to us. Previously, he used to write letters and now he has stopped doing so. We do not know his whereabouts now.”

Parent-teacher meetings in the schools under study were rare, and most of the tribal parents described them as a formality and a stage for the teachers to deliver big talks. None of the students or parents believed that the teachers were empathetic in dealing with them. Some of the parents who were concerned about their children’s education reported that they have stopped attending the parent-teacher meetings because the teachers were abusive or ignored them. Further, when

a suggestion for the formation of a parent-teacher-association that would include representatives from downtrodden tribal population was made, it was unanimously rejected by mainstream people and tribal elites who were in control of the villages. As Kishku, an elite tribal member in Bagmundi elaborated, "The tribals (note he no longer considers himself as tribal) are backward and illiterate and will be of no use even if we include him in the parent teacher association."

The older generation of tribals lamented the genocide of cultural heritage before their eyes. Murmu, a tribal parent and leader explained:

"Wearing of traditional dresses is now considered to be a symbol of backwardness among the younger generation. The change in outlook is making people more individualistic. To be frank with you schools are destroying the spirit of partnership which formed the backbone of the tribal society. For instance, the tribal society traditionally had the practice of sharing the game equally after the hunting expedition. Further, one portion was set apart for those households who, due to illness of adults or due to death, had been unable to send a man to participate in the hunting. Now the elite class (of the tribal population) are totally against such spirit of democracy. In fact, some of them are quite ashamed to reveal their tribal identity.....Quite obviously, some of the (downtrodden) tribal parents are against sending their children to school. They simple do so because schools provide children with free food which they otherwise could not have provided....Now there is increasing dissatisfaction among the parents with the incentives and facilities provided to the students. The reasons for dissatisfaction are many. Firstly, the incentives that students receive are never in time and are at best insufficient. Secondly, the vocational training provided to the students in the schools is of little use because it is either too elementary or does not suit the culture of the tribe. There is an increasing feeling among the parents that children could have learned more of vocational training or basics of their age-old occupation under their personalized guidance."

Astonishingly, around 80 % of the teachers felt gloomy about the future of the tribal students when they are supposed to assist and encourage the students in learning. A further instance of their conservative mentality could be made out from the fact that a majority of them was not concerned about the decreasing percentage of female students enrolled in the school over time.

As one of the teachers at Jhilimili commented with the condition of total confidentiality:

“No matter how much effort we spend in teaching, the tribals will always end up in traditional occupations. No matter how much the government tries to universalize education, these tribes simply do not have the merit to continue education. Plus they have peculiar cultural practices that promote immorality which come in the way of their education.....I feel there is a much greater need for the males of a family to get a better education because he will be the sole bread-earner of the family in the future.”

It was found that school-going children considered dancing around a fire (an old tradition among the tribes of India) as old-fashioned. School teachers, who are generally outsiders and do not know the performance, pointed out how mixed dancing in the evening or at night promotes immorality. All of these influences leave a deep impression on the minds of tribal children and, they seem on the verge of forgetting the art. Even when they know the dance, they are too shy to do it as it carries the stigma of tribalism.

As a traditional rule of “obeying the order of the teachers,” several tribal children were used as servants by teachers to clean and sweep the school. Interestingly enough, around 80 per cent of the teachers emphasized the ideal qualities of a student were to be humble and submissive rather than to have an inquisitive mind. As Nandi, one of the newly recruited teachers in tribal dominated Jhilimili quite naively justified, “The tribals have a relationship structure quite different from the mainstream society. The society is kind of horizontally structured. The first thing we teach the students in school is to have respect for elders. Curiosity and inquisitiveness in the students develops automatically at a later stage.” Even worse,

a residential school in Bagmundi encouraged the practice of tribal students to greet the teachers with folded hands as if they are “God, who is to be prayed to and served but never questioned.” This evidence suggests that expectations for success by tribal students are low and they are expected to be subordinate members of mainstream society.

4. Explore and identify institutional mechanisms employed in the Indian education system in tribal communities that inhibit class mobility and economic success by tribal students.

The institutional mechanism at work ensures that the tribal child is left with two options: to be acculturated and forget their own culture or to drop out of the system.

Teachers working in the tribal areas were typically very powerful politically and have strong lobby in the form of their associations. The political party in power assigned teachers additional duties like preparing voters’ lists and conducting elections. Thus, primary teachers with permanent posts have very little accountability.

Hansda, a tribal elder in Seuri elaborately explained:

“Why would a teacher teach? Especially if he has a permanent job, powerful political lobby at his support, and there is no accountability structure. Believe me these teachers are drawn to teaching in these tribal belts because of the plumb salary associated with the profession. They don’t have any commitment for the profession per se. After they get the job they only ensure that the political party in power is satisfied with their job. They come in and go out of the school any time they like.”

A peculiar finding in this regard was the academic qualifications of the teachers for primary schools include no specific criteria. For instance, one of the schools in my study had no teachers who were college graduates. Similarly, salaries and

promotions are based on seniority, not on the level of performance. Such an accountability-free system tends to draw in people who are not interested in teaching. Typically, in the rural areas, teachers are “Sir Oracle” or “Demi-Gods” in the eyes of the students; the teacher dictates and the students follows. What goes on in the name of education is an “I say what is good for you approach” whereby every attempt is made to curb the inquisitiveness in the minds of the students. Interviews with the children further revealed that the authority of the teachers is unquestioned and, some of them hesitate even to express their doubts. The education system is quite simple, involving listening to the teacher, copying lessons, memorizing them, and answering questions.

Timetables, though prevalent, are hardly followed. The teachers teach according to their moods; when off-mood (which happens quite a lot), they prefer to teach Bengali because it is their mother-tongue and therefore easiest to teach. For instance, in Seuri, interviews with the students revealed Bengali instead of Mathematics in their first period as per their regular schedule. When questioned, Ganguly, the teacher replied, “I had to correct 40 answer scripts yesterday. I am too tired to take mathematics class today.”

The study of the schools in Bagmundi, Belpahari, and Seuri revealed no separate teacher for English, science, and mathematics, the core of the subjects needed to succeed in mainstream society. Even worse, one school in Bagmundi has a physical education teacher who teaches the mathematics class of grades nine and ten. The situation can thus be best described as “institutionalization of sub-standard learning.”

School authorities assume that the higher a teacher's formal qualifications, the more suitable he or she is for the job. Thus, under the present system a Master of Arts would be preferred over a Bachelor degree holder with a BTC (Bachelor of Tribal Certificate Course) in a job interview. As a matter of fact, none of the teachers in my interview held even a diploma in any tribal course. When questioned, Ghosh, the principal at the school in Seuri justified, "We run schools where there are shortages of teachers. We need teachers who have higher degrees because they have to teach subjects other than their own specializations."

One peculiar development observed during the field study was the growing predominance of para teachers³ in the schools. Full time teachers in the school justified this by citing their own huge workload. The para teachers use the unwillingness of full time teachers to teach classes and work with full efficiency to create the image of effective teachers. Within months, they compel the students to take paid tuition from them outside of the school.

Nevertheless, para teachers have concrete justification for their action. As Kalindi, one para teacher, explained with agony:

"We are poorly paid at Rs. 3500 a month and without private tuition, I and my family are sure to starve. The leave system is equally stringent and formal. We are allowed one day of leave every month, which is rendered useless as most of us reside in too far away places to go and return within a single day."

Teachers cannot carry sole blame for the predicament of the tribal students. The government has its share of responsibilities too. The government boasts of opening schools in every village of the country, which is of little use when the classrooms are

³ **Para Teachers** refers to the part time, low paid teachers.

overcrowded, when there is no high-school in the same village, or when there is a predominance of single teacher schools, or when the schools are largely deprived of the basic infrastructure. Interviews in Bagmundi led me to a teacher who was waiting for a chance to speak. It was one of the longest interviews in this study and led to varied insights. Mali, a teacher at a school in Bagmundi was full of complaints and grudges:

“The Awodhya hills of Bagmundi is the last place one would like to get a job. There is a gross inadequacy of transport and communication facilities. The local vegetable market is 8 kilometers away from this hilly region. In fact, I spend almost 20-25 rupees extra on every trip to the local market. Further, we can’t hoard and store the vegetables or other edibles as the area is infested with red ants.....The school does not provide us with accommodations. I have rented a house nearly at an exorbitant amount of 1000 rupees per month. Residing in this area is like residing in a lonely planet.During the vacation season the problem multiplies. Every person working in the area is in a rush to go back home. This leads to an increased shortage of transports. What is available charges exorbitantly. I personally spend 1000-1500 rupees extra while going back home during the peak seasons. Besides, lengthy hours of electricity disruption is a regular phenomenon in the area leading to virtual inactivity once the dusk sets in. We are too afraid to come out of our house as the tribals engage in their “uncivilized behaviour” (referring to group dance). Further, the area is a malaria prone zone with the medical facilities in absolute wretched condition. I am reminded of the predicament of my wife when she suffered from malignant malaria two years ago. Besides, monetary loss I suffered from tremendous mental anxiety at that time.....The tribal students mainly lose out on two counts-language barrier and lack of parental motivation. To be precise, the area is not conducive to education. For instance, the region is often invaded by tuskers (elephants) once the dusk sets in and hence we (the teachers) are often forced to release the students earlier than school hours. Our school is running on absolute stringency-the school does not have adequate classrooms, has no toilet, playground or mid-day meal facilities.....The admission test to gain entry to the school is rather a formality to please the government because the students are too dumb to answer them . We admit students in every grade of the school. In most cases, students fail to produce birth certificates at the time of admission and, in those cases, we admit students based on their physique. Our school has four teachers (two full-time and two para teachers) specializing in Bengali, Bio-Science, History, and Geography to teach the eight grades that we have. So, we make adjustments to keep the school functional somehow. For instance, I am a Bio-Science graduate but also teach Physics, Chemistry, and Physical Training. Similarly, the Bengali teacher teaches Mathematics, the History teacher teaches English, and the Geography teacher teaches Hindi apart from their respective specializations. Coupled with this tremendous burden, every year we are entrusted with additional

responsibilities of preparing the voter's list and conducting elections. Hence, in the near future, I plan to submit an application to the teacher's association to change my responsibilities from being a science teacher to a physical education teacher.....I have sent both my sons to boarding school in the city because education in the area lacks competitive rigor. I give the same advice (leave their native place and go to city) whenever I see a bright student in my class.....In the end I feel that it is a sheer ill luck that a Calcutta educated man like me is serving in this remote forest."

The above quote gives us varied insights towards the problems of the tribals.

First and foremost, government has to realize that education is a social institution which is related to other institutions of society. Some of the claims made by Mali are absolutely justified. For example, the transport and communication facilities in the area are in an absolutely wretched state and, it is quite justified for the teachers to feel insecure and deprived in such a condition. To make matter worse, the lack of proper accommodation facilities and lengthy hours of electricity disruption makes such an area a dreaded choice for any teacher. Moreover, it is unfortunate that after more than fifty years of independence, the government still cannot implement compulsory birth registration for tribal populations. This often leads to younger children being admitted to higher grades by virtue of having a healthy physique. Last, but not the least, despite having the ill reputation of a malaria prone zone, the area is thoroughly deprived of any proper medical care facilities. This was true for other tribal areas as well. For instance, while doing my fieldwork in Belpahari block of Paschim Medinipur, it was found that there was a massive outbreak of malignant malaria in the area. Two people had died while 130 were admitted to the Belpahari Block Primary Hospital, which provided only 15 beds. For this, two patients shared a bed while the rest had to lie in the hospital verandah and under tarpaulin sheets in the hospital complex in damp weather. An anti-malaria drive, which had taken place

at the behest of the center in early 2008, was reported to be “a formality” by the villagers. There were many official irregularities, including a shortage of medicine in the hospitals, insect repellent was not being sprayed regularly, and there was a lack of proper latrine facilities. Nevertheless, the officials were not ready to admit to any administrative negligence. Dr. Hiralal Bisui, Block Medical Officer Health (BMOH), lambasted tribal sanitation habits before the newspaper reporters, “The condition of the latrine was not too bad to be used. In fact, they (tribals) are habituated to defecate in open fields. Therefore, they have not been able to get rid of their old habits.”

The government needs to consider these issues holistically. It needs to understand that education can’t be divorced from other institutions of society. It has to realize every year hundreds of students loose out academically due to chronic attacks of malignant malaria.

There was an absolute lack of basic infrastructure in the schools surveyed. There was no toilet, drinking water, or laboratory facilities in any of the schools. The school in Santiniketan had three classrooms to accommodate four grades of students, and each grade takes turns sitting outside in an open field for lessons. All the schools lacked electricity. Libraries did not exist in some of the schools; those having libraries were very poorly furnished. The photographs 3 and 4 in Appendix B represent typical examples of the poorly maintained classrooms and laboratories of schools located in tribal areas.

The hostels in the residential schools are in equally wretched condition. The residential schools in Bagmundi and Jhilimili accommodated 20 students in one

hostel room (See photograph 5 in Appendix B). The class schedule have no scientific basis. In some of the schools mathematics class was scheduled late in the afternoon when students are growing tired. In the residential schools surveyed, vocational training included the processing of agro-products, fruit processing, honey collection, gardening, manufacture of mats, candles, and soaps. The problem with such an approach is that the schools teach vocational activity to students prescribed in the syllabus by the higher authorities without caring whether such crafts would be useful to them in the near future.

One cannot ignore the peculiarity of educational scholarship prevalent in India. Coverage under the scholarship program increases as one moves up the educational ladder. Every Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students subject is eligible for a pre-matric (grade XI) scholarship. But at the secondary level, coverage is much smaller, and with even less assistance at the elementary level. This has created a situation where people who have been able to cross the initial hurdle at the primary and secondary level can move up with comparative ease, but those cannot cross even the first hurdle are doomed for life. Moreover, scholarships differ from school to school. While schools in Bagmundi received free books, uniforms, and mid-day meals, the students in Belpahari, Jhilimili, and Seuri only had the fortune to receive a free mid-day meal.

Another instance of the superficially framed governmental policy was the scheme for providing the mid-day meal. In 1995, the government of India launched the mid-day meal scheme to universalize primary education. The policy was based on the dual aims of taking children out of the labor market and offering them sufficient

nutrition to improve their levels of concentration. The salient features of the Mid Day Meal Scheme are as follows:

(i) The central government provides food grains (wheat and rice) free of cost through food corporations of India; (ii) Food grains (wheat/rice) are allocated at the rate of 100 grams per child per school day where cooked/processed hot meal is served subject to a minimum attendance of 80 per cent; (iii) The program is implemented through the panchayats (a local level body serving in administrative capacity). The scheme also seeks to reap benefits for widows and women from unprivileged sections by employing them as cooks or helpers (Si and Sharma, 2008).

Nevertheless, the scheme suffers from some basic contradictions. For instance, mid-day meals in West Bengal are provided based on enrollment of children in primary schools. The school enrollment data is said to be inflated to achieve higher targets. By showing these figures, the teachers can often demand a higher allocation of resources. Bediya, one of the tribal parent in Bagmundi complained:

“The basic reason why the school administration does not want us to interfere in the internal affairs of the schools is due to the fact that there is massive malpractices existing in it....For instance, every household in this village knows the teachers and their families take shares of the mid-day meal cooked for students. In fact I know for sure that some of the families (of teachers) do not cook their afternoon meals regularly.”

This is in contrast to the educationally developed states like Tamil Nadu where the mid-day meal is distributed based on the feeding strength of the children in primary schools. Feeding strength refers to the number of children present at the time of the meal, unlike in West Bengal, where the distribution is based on the total

enrollment of the children regardless of whether they are present for the meal or not.

The distribution of the mid-day meal is the responsibility of the principals and assistant teachers in most of the cases. It is solely the responsibility of the teacher to manage the program, from procuring foodstuff to distributing cooked meals to the students. Teachers spend a considerable amount of their time and energy to make the scheme successful. As Garia, a teacher in Jhilimili posited, “Though the responsibility for supervision and distribution of mid-day meals comes to us on a rotational basis, it is quite hectic. In a way the entire day is wasted. The preparation has to start from the very first period (class) and, when its over, we are too exhausted to take any more classes.”

In addition, the menu offered at the mid-day meal is monotonous. It does not make any attempt to address tribal culinary tastes. For instance, Laya, a tribal student in Bagmundi stated, “we don’t like the food provided in the hostel since the menu does not include rice-peg or meat. Besides we have to rush as soon as the bell rings (for lunch or dinner) because there is often no food left for latecomers.” When asked about food shortage, teachers revealed their true colors. Asi, a teacher in Jhilimili, rudely replied, “A tribal child has two stomachs, he eats a lot.” Inspection of the kitchen revealed a very unhygienic condition. Hence, it is not surprising that students often suffer from indigestion problems (See photograph 6 in Appendix B).

School inspection is usually very helpful in countering such irregularities. However, some of the schools under study had never been inspected or their inspection was a mere formality. Interviews with the teachers revealed that

inspections only involved checking the attendance register of the students and teachers but never the classroom activity. As principal Manna, who has seen only two inspections in his service career of twenty years commented, “Inspectors come from far way places. They have to do their job as a formality in order to be reach home that very day.”

No matter what the state of infrastructure in the school, the teachers emphasize strict discipline and tidiness. For instance, in one of the schools at Belpahari, students were punished for not wearing tidy uniforms. Teachers also tend to concentrate their efforts on the better students. A concrete proof of this lies in the fact that teachers in the residential schools only knew the best of their students by name and let others fend it for themselves. This indirectly favors students who already have a better learning environment at home.

One of the disturbing trends found in the textbooks used in the schools was that they discourage activity even though they pretend to be activity centered. For example, science textbooks assumed that schools will not have the necessary facilities to conduct experiments. Since the notion of “teaching” in our education system is reduced to “giving information,” the teacher is often constrained to perform accordingly. No matter how many refresher courses teachers have attended, the act of teaching is normally limited to a set of actions that include asking children to read on their own, making one child read out aloud, sometimes writing a few words on the board, or dictating “correct” answers to questions given in the book. As Singha, a teacher in Jhilmili justified, “This is how we were taught even during our childhood. If we were able to learn under such a system why can’t

they? Now, it's totally a different matter if these students (tribals) are extraordinarily dull." The implications of such an education are tremendous. Reflective of this approach to pedagogy, children in my study pronounced "circle" as "kirkel", but were absolutely right in spelling it.

The following is what a student of standard VI (in a residential school at Bagmundi) wrote when asked to write a poem. The results of "reading aloud" and "sheer memorization" without understanding are astounding:

The Rean (Rain)

The rean (rain) on the green gers (grass)

And rean (rain) on the tree

The rean (rain) on the hous-top (house-top)

Bat (But) not apon (upon) me.

This runs is consistent with the findings of J. Kurien (1983), that most Indian school students are ill equipped to go beyond the printed word. In other words, students lack the ability to move from literary comprehension to inferential comprehension. They also cannot perceive and use mathematical skills in solving practical problems.

No matter what the level of teaching in the class, teachers take the annual question paper as a field to display their academic rigor. Lists of unrealistic, insensitive questions were many. Let me cite a few of them. In one school at Bagmundi, grade II children in their annual examination were given to write an essay on "Your first day in school." The question appears to be difficult because there is almost a 90 % certainty that tribal children will not have a pleasant

experience their first day at school; and, if they try to convey this experience they are highly penalized. Similarly, the annual science question paper in another school in Belpahari asked standard VII students to describe the laboratory production of carbon dioxide gas when the school had neither a laboratory nor scientific equipment.

In their annual examination, students of grade IX in one of the schools in Bagmundi were asked to compose the following notice: "Suppose you are the Secretary of the School Magazine Committee of your school. Write a notice for the students for their contribution to it." The question is objectionable because the concept of a school magazine did not exist in that school; and the students were not familiar with the term secretary.

The letter writing section in the question paper of the same school was equally unjustifiable. It asked students to write a letter to a friend inviting him to spend a fortnight in the village, when more than half of the students did not understand the meaning of fortnight. The answer scripts revealed that some of them have written an essay on spending a night at a fort.

Further proof of the government's implicit support of the acculturation of the tribes can be seen that in West Bengal, most of the universities do not offer graduate studies in any of the tribal languages. Thus, both the central and state government is contributing to the death of the languages by providing limited scope for higher level studies and research.

Last but not the least, there was lack of empathy observed on the part of the teachers in dealing with the tribal students. For instance, it was often found that few

Birhor children in Bagmundi were out of school because of the stringency of school rules. On further investigation, it was observed that the Bihors are nomadic and often are not aware that they have to get transfer certificates for their children to be admitted to schools in another area. As a result, they often lose quite a few years in the schooling process.

5. Identify cultural elements that are needed for academic and economic success in mainstream Indian society that are not being inculcated in tribal students, and explore and identify mechanisms that prevent these elements from being successfully inculcated in tribal students.

The tribals till date have lived an isolated and secluded life. Their contact with the mainstream population has been very limited in the real sense of the term.

Therefore, the mainstream and tribals are like two sets of population living in different worlds within the same country. There is a great divergence between these two segments of the population regarding their conception of what represents a “good and prosperous life.” For instance, learning in the tribal culture is a slow and pleasurable event and is made interesting through the incorporations of riddles, myths, and proverbs. As Sabar, a tribal graduate who failed to make a mark in the mainstream labor market explained:

“Our education system is totally different from that of mainstream society. It entails more of vocational activity. For the first generation learners it is really difficult to adjust to a completely alien environment. We simply are not used to sitting in a room for long hours.....Our education system does not entail such stiff competition. It entails a slow and cautious approach where less emphasis is on speed and more on learning correctly.”

The mainstream Indian education system is typically based on a middle-class mentality whereby students are taught from the very beginning to appreciate and revere service sector jobs. This is attested by the fact that majority of students in my

interviews wanted to be doctors, engineers, or teachers. Other jobs are portrayed as demeaning and one moves down the scale of social mobility if he/she joins one of those. Obviously, the education system is highly competitive so that only a few can become eligible for such positions. Unfortunately, this falls in sharp contrast to the tribal culture where companionship and sharing predominates over competition and individualistic tendencies.

A peculiar finding in this regard was the relative importance placed on grades by the mainstream and tribal students. In the Jhilimili High School, I met Hembrom, an elite tribal student who was rather disturbed during the interview session. On further interrogation he revealed:

“Today the result of our mathematics examination will be announced. I am very tense about the result. If I do poorly, my parents will be very upset and will stop talking to me.”

Such anxiety and fear-psychosis associated with examination is typical of a mainstream middle class child but not of a tribal child. Moreover, I found that this was an anxiety peculiar to only the mainstream and elite tribal students. So, Hembrom was an example of a child who was acculturated to the mainstream values of competition and is likely to do “well” in the mainstream society. Further, the quote also revealed the involvement of the parents in the education of their children which is typical of a mainstream middle class family.

Interviews with the elite tribals revealed that majority of them had higher incomes (above 10,000 rupees), had nuclear families, used the mainstream language (Bengali) at homes, owned television and other modern gadgets. All the elite tribals interviewed had spacious houses in their villages where they mostly reside with

their nuclear family (something not usual in tribal society). In sharp contrast to the tribal society, all the elites interviewed had no more than two children. All of them were school or college graduates and were lucky enough to find a job or to run a business in the city. Their contact with the village was somehow minimal because they returned to the villages only during the weekends. With higher levels of income they were in a position to buy the “exposure” needed for success in mainstream society. Television is one such modern gadget that provides exposure to the world outside and, all the elite tribals interviewed had purchased televisions for their homes.

Further, most of them spoke Bengali at home which definitely gave their child the required edge for following the lectures in class. As Kishku, an elite tribal justified:

“The child can’t have academic success all by himself. Being a conscious parent I take the trouble to look into as to what he is studying, what are the areas in which he is facing difficulties. I make it a point to talk to his teachers at schools once every month and also have arranged for his private tuition. I regularly bring reference books (for him) from Calcutta so that there is no dearth in our efforts.....Yes, I do take my family to Calcutta whenever the kids don’t have school.”

Thus, in a nutshell one needs to have a typical “mainstream, middle class” attitude to be successful in such a competitive system. All the indices described above (parental education, nuclear family, decent income, parental involvement in education, use of mainstream language, socializing with the mainstream popular culture, spending extra money on education) inversely relate to the process of enculturation in society. Thus, less of enculturation and more of congruency between school and home environment helps students to succeed in mainstream culture.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

After an intensive, two month study, I conclude that the Indian government has grossly failed to address the peculiarities of tribal culture in designing educational policies for them. The school curriculum, typically designed with urban, mainstream students in mind, often leads to a growing sense of cultural alienation among tribal students. Neither the books, nor the food, games, examination questions, or vacations match the tribal culture. Further, tribal students are discouraged from engaging in their own cultural practices and are explicitly told to become like non-tribals as soon as possible. The tribals trained in such an educational system, distance themselves from their cultural brethren and leave for the city at the earliest opportunity. Such tribal youths present bad example to the tribal society at large.

The education provided in the tribal schools is, at best, sub-standard. My research revealed an absolute dearth of an accountability structure in the schools operating in the tribal areas. The fact that teachers are answerable to none makes them take undue advantage of the system. Almost all schools suffered from inadequate infrastructural facilities in the form of inadequate classrooms, teachers, accommodations for students and teachers, libraries, laboratories, drinking water, and toilets.

Elementary education, although claimed to be free by the government involve hidden expenses in the form of: (a) Subsidiary expenditures like books, pencils, papers; and (b) Private tuition. Teachers do not teach when in schools and compel the students to seek paid assistance from them after the school hours. When survival is a struggle for the

majority of the tribal population, such paid assistance is out of reach. The result is that downtrodden tribals drop-out of the system while the elite tribals who have the money to buy education continue their schooling. Even worse, the government suffers from complacency towards the progress of the tribals without realizing that the mobility is largely confined to the elite tribals.

Last but not the least, the study brought out that a typical mainstream, middle class mentality is essential to succeed in such a system. A higher level of parental education, living in nuclear family, a decent household income, a high level of parental involvement in the academic endeavor of the child, the use of mainstream language at home, socializing with the mainstream popular culture, and spending extra money on education are all critical factors that ensure the academic success of the tribal student.

My research findings are consistent with the theoretical perspectives reviewed in the second chapter. For instance, the Critique of Biological Interpretation perspective emphasized that cultures around the world do not prioritize the same sort of intelligence. In line with this, my research provided ample evidence where the schools were insensitive to the needs and handicaps of tribal students. For instance, when a tribal child of standard V in Awodhya (Hills) G.S.A.T. High School for Boys fails to name the director of award-winning movie "Titanic," he can never be considered dull or unintelligent. This has more to do with the absence of economic affluence or lack of cultural exposure than the child being unintelligent. People who possess knowledge of hundreds of medical herbs and produce some exquisite jewelry can never be considered unintelligent or dumb. A valid question

here is, “Why will a tribal child attend school when it does not offer need-based education?” Hence, my research is consistent with the Critique of Biological Interpretation perspective by providing little support for a relationship between racial characteristics and the academic caliber of a student.

The findings from this research are also consistent with the Socio-Economic Perspective as it was found that elite tribal students are successful primarily because they have the money to buy education. The elites have the money to buy private tuition and the cultural exposure needed for success in highly competitive academic system. Cultural exposure gives a typical “mainstream, middle class” mould to the personality types of the tribal students, which makes them feel that grades are important to them.

Internal Colonization Theory describes a set of social and cultural mechanisms by which society reinforces its division of class and race to sustain the wealth and power of its dominant elites. This research revealed that tribals educated in such a system are either unsuccessful in the mainstream job market or if they are successful, become too acculturated and fail to maintain contact with their cultural brethren. Thus, the present education system perpetuates the division between the elites (mainstream and elite tribal population) and downtrodden tribal population.

The Cultural Reproduction perspective highlights the disadvantages of the underclass of society in receiving cultural information. My research findings illustrate how the present system of education promotes the acculturation of tribes and explicitly urges them to become non-tribal as soon as possible. The textbooks, medium of instruction in school, school uniform, and the food provided at school

promote acculturation to the mainstream Indian culture. The end result is that there is no improvement in the condition of the downtrodden tribals and elite tribals that possess cultural capital are in the most advantageous position.

In regard to policy recommendations, the government should realize that providing education does not mean just constructing a building in the middle of a village.

Education cannot be isolated from other societal institutions and hence the government should stop implementing partial and lopsided developmental policies.

For instance, the Government of India in 1995 decided to construct a hydro-power generation plant at Bagmundi. The 900 MW (4*225 MW) installed capacity Puruliya Pumped Storage Project is the largest pump storage project of India, both in terms of installed capacity and magnitude of underground structure. This required the destruction of a substantial portion of the forest in order to construct the dam.

This spelled serious consequence for the poverty-stricken tribes (Santal, Munda, Bhumij, Birhors), who reside in and represent the majority in the area. It meant tribals could no longer solely rely on forest produce for sustaining their livelihood. The project hampered their traditional lac cultivation due to the deposition of dust particles from crushed stones around trees trunks. In addition, the project resulted in rising consumer prices due to an influx of outsiders; and, the area was damaged by the vast rampage of migratory elephants. Even worse, the government did not consult with tribes about the project nor did it create alternative employment opportunities for them (Bhattacharyya, 2005). These problems highlight the need for policies that address the holistic development of the tribal people. There is a

need to eliminate the tendency of the Indian government to design lopsided developmental policies for the tribes without understanding their culture.

After extensive interviews with tribal parents, leaders, and ex-students, I came to the conclusion that the primary means to improve upon the educational performance and social mobility of tribal students is to address their culture. Course materials must have references and examples from tribal culture. It is the duty of the teachers to incorporate tribal plays, folklore, stories, and riddles to make learning more interesting and appealing. Also, the vacations in tribal schools must follow the festivals and socio-economic activities of the tribals. Vocational education, be it carpentry, spinning, or weaving, should respond to the needs in that particular area (See photographs 1 and 2 in Appendix B as demonstrations of their exquisite skills in indigenous crafts). In addition, every school should have schemes for “earning while learning” so that students can supplement, even to a small extent, the earnings of their parents.

Teachers for tribal schools should be carefully recruited and their service should strictly be voluntary. Service-minded people with degrees in social work should be given first preferences. Teachers should be adequately exposed to the cultural peculiarity of the tribe in their area of service. The government should provide all the basic facilities for teachers working in the tribal areas. The infrastructural and safety facilities should be more rigorous for female teachers to encourage the female students to attend school.

Teachers should realize that the best way of encouraging school attendance is by strengthening the school-community link. The need of the hour is to design a

parent-teacher association in every school that will include representatives from the downtrodden tribal population. Thus, there would be a growing consciousness among people that the “local school is everyone’s school.” However, it should be remembered that the community requires skills to develop group dynamism, leadership qualities, and negotiating abilities for effective partnership with the school administration. Equipping the community with such skills and communication capabilities is vital in sustaining community participation. For instance, at the household level, this can be achieved by improving economic conditions through developmental programs, creating awareness, and developing interaction with the school and teachers through involving them in school development activities. (Sujatha, 2000).

A tribal child lags behind his mainstream counterpart only in self-confidence. It is a shame that none of the history textbooks even mention in passing tribal contributions to the Indian freedom struggle. Thus, it is the task of the teachers to enlighten a tribal child about the deeds of tribal heroes like Tilka Manjhi, Birsa Munda, and Sitaram Raju and thereby restore pride in their own culture. Teachers should realize it is more credible to make a better student out of a very weak student than in to train an elite student to perform brilliantly.

Another important cause of the educational problems of the tribes lies in the lack of accountability structures. The school inspection for instance, has been reduced to a mere formality and, freedom from accountability is largely misused by the teachers. The irregularities, be it the absenteeism of teachers or the widespread prevalence of private tuition, can be countered with vigorous and sudden

inspections. Such a rigorous vigilance structure will ensure uniform implementation of policies for recruiting teachers, paying their salaries, and providing mid-day meals.

With the experience gathered during the research, I personally feel that an integrated curriculum that combines mainstream curriculum with tribal content will work best for the tribals. This will build on the strengths with which the students come to school and give them additional strengths when they leave the school. This approach will produce culturally and bilingually-enriched students. Education under such a holistic approach will make the tribals aware of the choices available to them and the consequences of such choices.

Though I have strived to bring out the educational handicaps that a tribal child faces, nevertheless, varied areas for further research remain. For instance, future research might highlight whether tribes around the world face the same kinds of educational handicaps. Why are the tribal women lagging behind their male counterparts in educational qualification? It would be interesting to compare the educational hurdles of tribes in the state of West Bengal to tribes in the educationally developed state of Himachal Pradesh. What is the situation in the states (like Jharkhand, Nagaland) where tribes are a majority? What is the correlation between region (the distance from the metropolitan city) and the educability of the tribals?

Let us end with a note of caution from Nirad C. Chaudhuri (1965):

"In an industrialized India the destruction of the aboriginal's life is an inevitable as the submergence of the Egyptian temples caused by the dams of Nile.....As things are going there can be no grandeur in the primitive's end. It will not be even a simple extinction, which is not the worst of human destinies. It is to be feared that the aboriginal's last

act will be squalid, instead of being tragic. What will be seen with most regret will be, not his disappearance, but his enslavement and degradation.”-Nirad C. Chaudhuri, The Continent of Circe, 1965.

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

(A) For the Principals and Teachers

1. How far do you have to travel for work?
2. What is your age?
3. How long have you engaged in teaching?
4. What is your qualification?
 - (a) Below Primary (grades i-iv)
 - (b) Middle (grades v-ix)
 - (c) Secondary (grades x-xii)
 - (d) Graduate (BA or above)
5. What is your income?
 - (a) Between Rs 500-Rs 1000 (\$12.5-\$25)
 - (b) Between Rs 1000-Rs 2000 (\$25-\$50)
 - (c) Above Rs 2000 (above \$50)
6. How many pre-service and in-service training courses have you taken and what are they?
7. How helpful were they?
8. Is there a high-school in the village? Does it have V-VII attached? If not, what efforts have been made, if any, to start one?
9. How many students do you have in the school? Give the number for each grade.
10. What are the formalities the students are required to perform to be admitted in school?

11. What are the fees and expenses the students have to bear in order to continue to school? Please give grade-wise details.
12. What are the subjects you teach?
13. How many teachers are there in school?
14. Are independent teachers available for English, Science and Maths? What are their qualifications? What is the nature of their in-service training?
15. Is there a science-kit in the school? How are experiments/practicals performed in classes?
16. In which grade do you have the maximum detention rate and why?
17. In which grade do you have the maximum drop-out rate and why?
18. What is the gender ratio in drop-out rates and why is this so?
19. What is the main hurdle do you think students face in school?
20. Which language of instruction would you consider to be most suitable for the students?
21. How effective do think the Joyful Learning Package is terms of developing the interest of students in education?
22. What are the positive and negative aspects of it?
23. How effective do you think is the mid-day meal scheme?
24. What are the scholarships available to students?
25. What are the special facilities/incentives provided to girls, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Class, and handicapped children in school?
26. How many times in your teaching career has this school been inspected?

27. What are the strengths and weakness of this school in comparison to other schools in the area?

28. Where do you want to see your students in future?

(B) For the Parent(s)

1. What is your level of education?

(a) Below Primary (grades i-iv)

(b) Middle (grades v-ix)

(c) Secondary (grades x-xii)

(d) Graduate (BA or above)

2. How do you earn your living?

3. What is your income?

(a) Below Rs 200 (\$ 5)

(b) Between Rs 200-Rs 500 (\$5-\$12.5)

(c) Between Rs 500-Rs 1000 (\$12.5-\$25)

(d) Above Rs 1000 (above \$25)

4. How many sons and daughters do you have?

5. What are they currently doing?

6. (If any are currently enrolled in school) In which schools are they are enrolled? Why are they enrolled in that particular school?

7. Why do you send them to school?

8. What proportion of your income do you spend on education?

9. How do you feel about your childrens' progress in school?

10. What do you expect your children to be doing in future?

11. (If son/daughter has graduated) what is he/she currently doing?
12. In comparison to yourself, how do you rate him/her in social status?
13. How do you feel about the quality of the neighborhood community school? Why do you feel this way?
14. How do you feel about the attitude of the teachers in the neighborhood community school toward the community? What is your view on each of them?
15. How do you rate the neighborhood community school in comparison to the nearby ashram (residential), public, and private school?

(C) For Students

1. How far do you have to travel everyday in order to attend school?
2. What is your age?
3. Which grade you are in?
4. How many hours of school do you attend in a day?
5. When is your school closed? Does this conflict with tribal festivals in any way?
6. What is your favorite subject/class and why?
7. Which subject/class do you dislike the most and why?
8. How do you feel about your understanding of that subject?
9. What is the language of instruction in class?
10. How many teachers do you have in school?
11. Do you get help from the teachers outside the class?
12. Do you have a favorite teacher? If yes, why are they your favorite?

13. Have you ever felt treated unfairly against by a teacher? If yes, describe the incident?
14. Describe the best and the worst day you had in school.
15. In thinking about the student in your class with the best academic performance, what do you think are the reasons behind his/her success?
16. In thinking about the student in your class with the poorest academic performance, what do you think are the reasons behind his/her difficulties?
17. Do you have friends in school? If yes, what are some of the reasons behind your friendship?
18. Is there any student in your class whom you dislike? If yes, why do you dislike them?
19. Do you like the Joyful Learning Package? If yes, why?
20. How do you feel about the mid-day meal?
21. Do you have vocational training facilities in school?
22. Who is your role model and why?
23. What do you want to do in future?

(D) For Graduates

1. What is your age?
2. Which school did you graduate from and in which year?
3. What is your qualification?
 - (a) Below Primary (grades i-iv)
 - (b) Middle (grades v-ix)
 - (c) Secondary (grades x-xii)

(d) Graduate (BA or above)

4. How do you earn your living?

5. What is your income?

(a) Below Rs 200 (\$ 5)

(b) Between Rs 200-Rs 500 (\$5-\$12.5)

(c) Between Rs 500-Rs 1000 (\$12.5-\$25)

(d) Above Rs 1000 (above \$25)

6. Looking back, how was your experience in school? What are some of things you liked about your experience? What are some of the things you disliked about your experience?

7. How do you think your schooling has influenced your chance to be successful in life?

8. Do you feel that your schooling provided what you wanted to get from it? Why or why not?

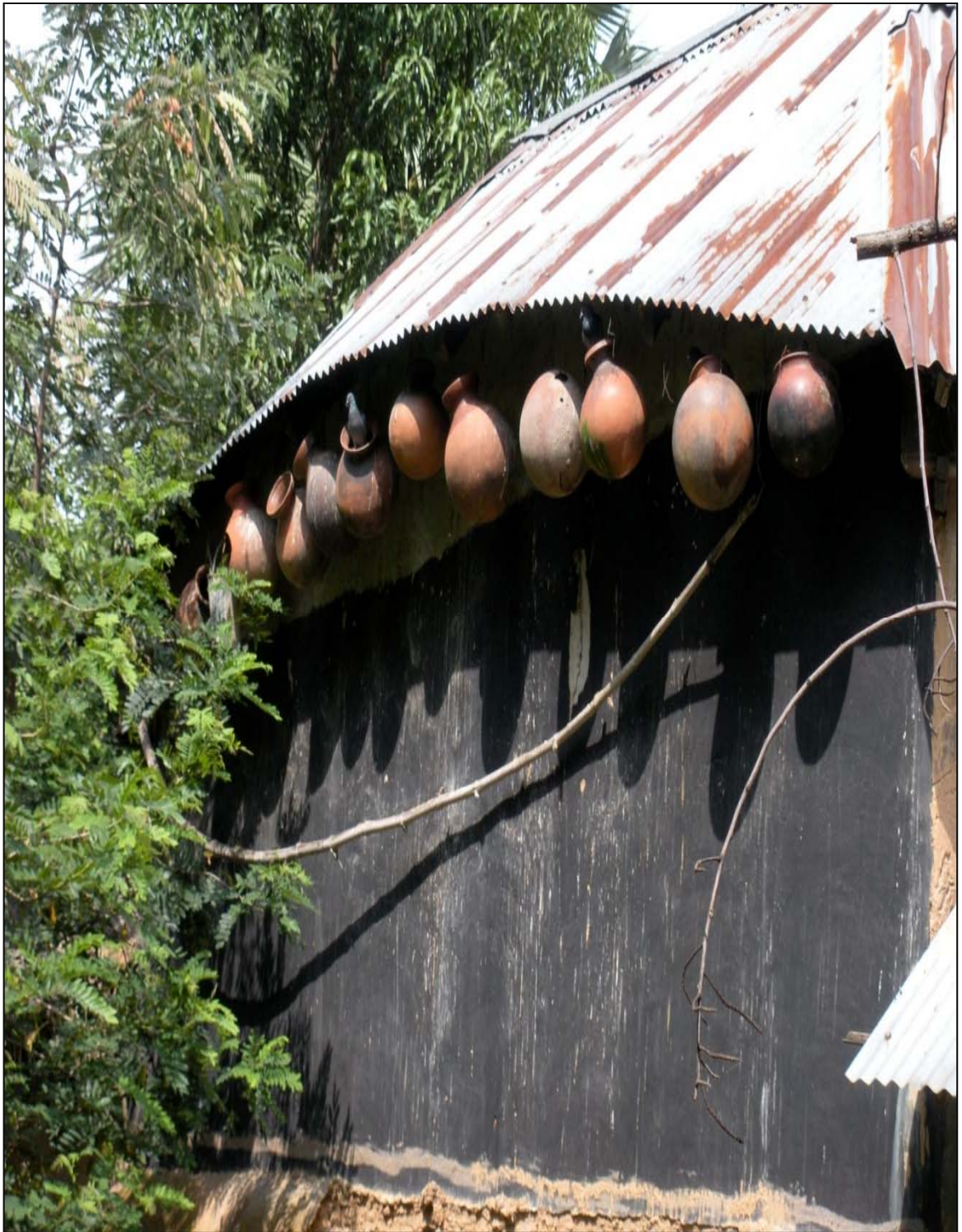
9. What do you think are the main strengths and weakness of your neighborhood school?

10. Do you believe that your schooling has changed your relationship with your community? Why or why not?

Appendix B: Photographs



Photograph 1. Exquisite paintings on the mud walls of a tribal hut in Bagmundi



Photograph 2. An innovative way of domesticating pigeons (one of their staple foods)



Photograph 3. Typical school building and classrooms of a tribal dominated school



Photograph 4. An (ill-equipped) science laboratory in a tribal school



Photograph 5. A typical hostel room in a tribal residential school



Photograph 6. Mid-Day Meal: A demonstration that hygiene and free food does not come together



JHILIMILI HIGH SCHOOL

H.S.Code No.-14039
P.O.-Jhilimili, Dist.-Bankura

SL.NO: Date:

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APPLICATION FORM FOR ADMISSION IN CLASS-XI

1. Name of the applicant in block letter: _____ Sex: M/F
2. Parents name: _____
3. Permanent address: _____
4. Caste & Sub caste: SC/ST/OBC/MINORITY/GEN
5. Annual Income of the Parents: _____
6. Date of birth:
7. Name & address of the last institution attended: _____

The school offers following combinations of subjects. The applicant has to choose a maximum of three combinations in order of preference by writing 1,2,3, in the choice box. Here, 1 denotes first preference 2 the second preference and 3 the third. However, the finalization of choice of combination will be done during admission.

Combinations	L1	L2	E1	E2	E3	Optional	Choice
A (SCIENCE)	BENG/SAN	ENG	PHYSICS	CHEMISTRY	MATHS.	BIO	
B (SCIENCE)	BENG/SAN	ENG	PHYSICS	CHEMISTRY	BIO	MATHS.	
C (ARTS)	BENG/SAN	ENG	HIST	POL.SC	GEO	SANS	
D(ARTS)	BENG/SAN	ENG	SANS	GEO	POL.SC	EDU	
E (ARTS)	BENG/SAN	ENG	HIST	EDU	SANS	GEO	

8. Do you seek admission in school hostel? ----- Yes/No.

Requirements:

- ❖ Minimum 50% marks in mathematics in case of Combinations A & B.
- ❖ Minimum 45% marks in Life Sc & Geography in case of Combinations containing these subjects.
- ❖ Attested copies of MP Admit, Marksheet and school leaving certificate to be enclosed with the Application form.

Signature of the Applicant

Date:

*N.B. Students seeking admission in school hostel need to apply in separate application form available from school office.

Received a copy of the completed application form.

Signature of the Receiving officer