



OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT—II

PLANNING FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TRIBAL AREAS

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Introduction

Education has generally been regarded as a social service. Its role as a direct investment for economic development is being appreciated only of late, particularly after the Second World War. The spectacular recovery of the war-torn economy of Europe and Japan emphasised the contribution of human element in the economic development. The fast reconstruction was based largely on the skill-capital in these nations which is indestructable over a short period. The attention of the thinkers was also gradually drawn to the process of change in the developing countries with greater emphasis being laid on extension methods. In the process of change, communication of ideas assumes a vital role. Not only the potential of communication through the written symbol can be exploited with the spread of education but it also came to be appreciated that even for effective oral communication the symbols have to be understood, equally and in the same spirit, on both the sides. Extension education through different media, therefore, becomes an important element in the strategy of economic development.

2. While a number of devices can be adopted for solving the problems of transition, sound foundation in a developing economy for sustained growth can be laid only through a system of universal education upto a particular level. Our Constitution makes it incumbent on the States to provide education to every child upto the age of 14. The educational development in the country took long strides in the post-independence period and the level of enrolment moved up in the primary stages from an insignificant figure on the eve of independence to about 70% in the early 1970s. The rate of growth in the secondary school stage and higher education has been even much faster. India stands high in the university education even amongst the advanced countries. However, the educational system as a whole has not been able to adapt itself sufficiently to the changing needs of the economy; the educational explosion in higher education has put almost a question mark on its utility as a tool of economic development. This situation in the higher education sector tends to be much too generalised and sometimes even

the relevance of elementary education is questioned at least implicitly, if not explicitly.

3. A general review of the education scene in the country brings out that the tribal areas stand at a much lower level in terms of literacy and enrolment of school-going children compared to the other areas. The level of economic development of these regions is also considerably lower. Thus, whereas the tasks in relation to economic development in these areas are much heavier, the basic tools available are quite weak. Therefore, education becomes a crucial element for achieving a faster pace of development of these areas. We will consider the various aspects of planning educational development of the tribal areas in the present paper.

A review of some aspects of the National Educational Scene

4. With a view to have a clearer perspective of the situation in tribal areas it will be useful if we review the general educational scene in the country. The first paradox which we come across is the widespread disenchantment about our educational effort yet the keenest competition for availing the existing facilities and creation of new ones. The faster expansion of higher education, even though the growth at the base has become more or less static, also needs explanation. Education, particularly the higher education, has become the exclusive channel for a comfortable position in the economic hierarchy in the nation, where the urban sector generally dominates. The softer and the more attractive life in the middle and upper strata of the urban society has become the centre of attraction for the entire nation. Even those experiments, like that of Rural Universities, where the educational system in the rural areas was sought to be adapted to the rural economy, could not strike roots. The most important reason for this situation is that no region can accept denial of equal opportunity to compete for the higher positions in the national economy notwithstanding the fact that there may be only insignificant chance of success for an individual. Therefore, the urban middle-class oriented educational system has got superimposed on the entire nation both in terms of its structure and content.

5. Let us examine, in the first instance, the structure of our educational system. The primary education formally starts at the age of 6. This 'late' start is on the presumption that a pre-primary stage is available for children in the age-group 3-6. This structure is universalised although there is hardly any

coverage of children in the age-group 3-6 in the rural areas and the coverage is very small even in the urban areas. This, the national educational structure has been adapted with reference to the facilities available to a small elite in the urban sector. The result is that (i) for the vast majority of children schooling starts at a late stage, and (ii) even before all the children have been extended the facility of primary education, a second set of institutions for pre-primary age-group are being planned from the other and, thus, making scarce resources even more scarce for the more backward areas.

6. The content of education also continues to be urban-oriented. The efforts to improve curriculum in the absence of stronger institutional support at the field level results in a tendency for adopting a model pattern itself recommended from above, which means uniformity through out the country. Thus, whereas there is an urgent need to build up reading material for the early stages which may be of relevance to known surroundings of the child, standardisation leads to greater alienation. More backward an area, greater is this dichotomy.

7. Let us first consider the elementary education. The basic question is of relevance of the universal education to the common man. Some changes have been made at the elementary level like introduction of general science and social sciences. However, the present day educational philosophy is overwhelmed by the needs of a small modern sector. Educational system, no doubt, should adapt itself to the needs of the modernising sector of the economy. However, the difference in the dimensions of the two sectors has to be appreciated; the fact is that the modern sector is an extremely small part of the total national economy. Elementary education should have been made universal after independence without any loss of time. When it is envisaged that all children upto the age of 14 should attend elementary schools, it is quite obvious that this entire population cannot be 'trained' with reference to the needs of the small modern sector. This attempt at matching the incongruous is responsible for the widening gulf between expectations and reality.

8. The disequilibrium in the educational-economic structure has become acute even when there is hardly fifty percent effective enrolment at the elementary levels. The programmes aimed at professionalising the post-matric curriculum ignore this basic factor. It is accepted that a fine balance cannot be maintained at every point of time between the professional needs of the

economy and the professionally trained man-power. A moderately higher output of trained man-power is likely to help in building up healthy pressure and create demand for itself which, in its turn, will stimulate the economy. But a larger imbalance may become dysfunctional and consequently not desirable. Mere training in different professions cannot directly create a counter-part effective demand in the economy. Requirement of different skills is a function of the level of economic development. Therefore, while professionalization of educational curriculum at an appropriate stage is a step in the right direction, it will be native to treat it as the penicillin for the educational system. While planning for universal education at the elementary levels, it has to be appreciated that the end-product of this universal education for a long time may have to join the army of landless labourers; most of them will continue to subsist as marginal farmers. What is more important, the modern sector will continue to be dominated by the people trained in the institutions located in the urban and more advanced areas. Suitable correctives may be needed urgently but these will be the unpalatable facts of life for some time to come at least. This realism is necessary for realistic planning and optimal utilisation of scarce resources.

9. The objective of universal education at the elementary level in this context will need to be clearly defined. An average citizen, who may have attended the school, should be able to appreciate social, economic and political processes somewhat better; it should make communication easier so as to enable him to take advantage of new knowledge in various fields. As already noted, over-standardisation stands in the way of these objectives. There is little effort for particularisation and making the educational content relevant to the local situation. Such basic changes in the approach to elementary and higher education can be initiated at the national level. The related aspects have to be specially attended to urgently for the more backward tribal areas. If it is accepted that at the elementary level educational system must respond to the local situation, a beginning can be made in selected areas. It should, however, be ensured at the same time that the new system does not become inferior to the normal system either in fact or implicitly by being treated so. Otherwise, such experiments will suffer from the same handicaps as the earlier efforts of developing special rural education programmes. The best products of this system should be *at par* with the best in any other system. If each of the numerous sub-systems in the national educational scene are co-equals, they can be interwoven in a pattern which would be richer by virtue of its vast variety.

10. If we review the national general socio-economic scenes, some amount of economic dichotomy is clearly emerging between the rural areas and the urban areas, particularly the metropolitan regions and the highly industrialised centres. However, on the social scale, the general rural urban scene can be taken as a continuum. In the case of the tribal areas the discontinuity in the economic scene is much more pronounced; the social spectrum between the urban and the tribal rural setting is also discontinuous. The problems of relevance of the educational structure and its content, therefore, emerge here in a much greater relief. These weaknesses have to be carefully noted. But it may not be possible to work outside the general national frame in relation to comparatively smaller tribal regions. Even within the national frame there are some special problems of the tribal areas which should be understood and necessary changes and adaptations may be made. Some of these changes may be of significance to non-tribal areas as well and could be considered for general applicability. However, their validity can be much better appreciated in a contrasting socio-economic situation of the tribal areas.

Tribal Sub-System

11. Let us now look at the tribal sub-system more closely. In many of these areas the level of literacy is negligible. Therefore, these societies represent an educational scene which prevailed in the other rural areas about half-a-century back. The economic distance between the advanced and the tribal areas is considerable. Their social systems are also different. The tribal communities can be said to be leading a self-contained life regulating their own affairs. The tribal economic system is comparatively undifferentiated with a general low skill endowment. But 'low' skill endowment is contextual and relative. In fact, it is a value-loaded description. These communities may not have the modern skills of reading and writing, manipulating the more sophisticated tools or dealing with more organised systems; yet an average individual is much more adapt with his environment and has an intimate knowledge of his surroundings. Thus, a tribal can build his own dwelling with the material which he can bring from the forest, he can make his own traditional tools, he can hunt, he can identify the plants, he knows their utility and can eke out his living from the forest. He is familiar with the habits of the wild life, can compete with it and protect his fields; in some cases, he can also make his own clothes and he is also his own medicine man. These skills are lost to an average man with the advancement of cultures where individuals acquire higher specialised skills in narrow fields. The educated young

man, in fact, loses all these skills and is dependent on the skills of reading and writing only.

Role of Education

12. The first task, in the context of the special situation of the tribal sub-system, will be to define the role of education. Education essentially is a sharing of experience by the young initiates with the larger world and it brings to them the distilled wisdom in assimilable form. In devising the educational system, the modal background of the group should be taken as the base on which further super-structure is to be built. The elitist institutions, like the convents or public schools, are in fact a device to enable a select group to have a better start in life. The initial advantage is sought to be capitalised and kept up for cornering better educational opportunities at the higher stages as well. On the other extreme, even an average educational institution is not able to take into account the deficiencies of the socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Their children may find it difficult to maintain even average pace because the educational system presumes a standard which is higher than what these children have. This is particularly so in relation to the more backward tribal areas. This problem is amenable to solution because it is concentrated geographically and the system can be adapted to the special needs of these areas.

'Education'—its Ambit

13. In the first instance, it will be necessary that the concept of 'education' itself should have considerably wider frame than what is accepted in the context of advanced areas. The most important special feature of the tribal scene is the growing contact of the tribal sub-system with the advanced communities. In economic relationships, this creates a situation of trial of strength between two unequal groups. The advanced communities can depend upon their better organizational capability and greater adaptability to the modern institutional frame. The new world is unfamiliar to the tribal groups. In the normal course, it may take a few decades for the tribal to be familiar with these intricacies; in the process he may lose his position irretrievably. The most important function of elementary education in these areas, therefore, should be to telescope the processes of information diffusion. A tribal youth graduating from an elementary institution should be in a position, as far as possible, to deal on terms of equality with the outside world and should be able to appreciate the intricacies of the new systems.

14. Here, we have to contend with another phenomenon. Some of the tribal communities are almost at zero level of literacy. If we look at the problem in terms of individual families the situation, in each case, would be comparable to that of any illiterate family in the more advanced areas which has to send its first child to a school. Therefore, it should pose no special problem. However, in the more backward tribal areas, another dimension is added because the entire community is in the same position. The group does not have the advantage of the presence of a select group which may have already been introduced to education. Therefore, there is no leadership for educational advancement. There is another notable difference. In the more advanced areas, the general level of understanding even amongst the uneducated and inarticulate is higher through process of aculturation and diffusion of information by numerous media, formal and informal. While the small tribal traditions have their own rich heritage, their experience is limited to a smaller segment, much of which is losing relevance in the modern context. How this wide gulf is to be bridged is a separate question which will be discussed later. At this stage, the important question is that the entire community, in terms of its appreciation of the modern processes, is in a stage comparable to that of a child. Therefore, it will be unrealistic to depend exclusively on the traditional forms of education for the limited and specified age-groups. A simultaneous programme for involving the adolescence, the youth and the matured leadership is necessary. Educational planning in the tribal areas will be more an exercise in community learning. This may be termed as 'citizen education'.

Citizen Education

15. It would be useful if the main features of 'citizen education' programme are spelt out. Broadly speaking, this should comprise elements like—

- (i) a basic understanding about the heritage of our country;
- (ii) the institutional infra-structure, particularly those institutions which come in contact with the individual;
- (iii) the rights and duties of a citizen;
- (iv) the important channels for redressal of grievances;

- (v) the expected code of conduct of a citizen in different situations contrasting it with the traditional spontaneous responses of individual or a community;
- (vi) a better understanding of the economic processes, the regulations about exchange economy and manipulation of money;
- (vii) the basic difference between the traditional economic frame and the modern frame, particularly the value of the written traditions in contrast to the oral tradition;
- (viii) the role and functioning of cooperative and other financing agencies;
- (ix) an understanding of the agricultural extension services emphasising the approach rather than the content; and
- (x) a greater awareness about the achievements of science and technology with special reference to his own surroundings. This programme should give the individual an idea about his relationship with the successive concentric circle from the village to the national life.

16. The input in the citizen education programme will have to be decided taking into account the existing base of each community. A primitive and more backward community should not be taken out of its small world all of a sudden. It has to be appreciated that each small group has been living with its own beliefs and traditions for centuries. If it gets disillusioned and skeptic about whatever it can call as its own, the psychological impact may be disastrous. The programme, therefore, will need to be built around the local tradition and should emerge as an organic whole drawing upon the tribals' own world-view and should imperceptibly graduate into a better understanding. The areas of deeper faith could be left untouched in the beginning and may be left to be influenced by the process of aculturation and gradual assimilation. The greatest emphasis should be laid on the areas which are of day-to-day concern to him, like the points of contact with authority and methods of getting relief. Other inputs could be built around this basic theme so that the community can find something of immediate utility in the programme content and its horizon gradually widens.

17. Any attempt to standardise the reading material or even the methodology may not be very fruitful. These programmes

can be developed only with a really good understanding of the local social, religious and economic traditions and systems. The task is a difficult one but it has to be initiated if the process of change is to be harmonised and pressed in the service of the weaker groups. It is one of the most challenging areas for educational planners.

The Role of Teacher

18. The role of a teacher in the tribal areas assumes a special significance. The teacher in the tribal areas is not merely an ordinary school teacher who attends the school, teaches those children who choose to attend the school, and finishes his work for the day with the closing of the school and then has nothing to do with the community. If the scope of 'education' itself has to be enlarged in the tribal areas, the rôle of the teacher will also become many-sided. A teacher in the tribal areas, in a way, is an important, sometimes the only, link between the modern world and the traditional tribal society. In many areas, he is the only permanent 'representative' of the new world. He inter-acts with the community through his personal life, style and behaviour. He is a man with command over knowledge about the intricacies of the modern world. With the opening up of the backward areas, a number of influences gradually start working; the radiations of the modern systems begin to reach these areas in numerous ways. As all other elements represent a vested interest like the contractor, the trader, the money lender, they are expected to work for maximization of their respective individual profits. In the simple tribal situation, unless an individual gets motivated from higher considerations notwithstanding the fact that he represents an interest group, the worst in human nature may come into play. In some areas, there may be some departmental representatives like village level worker or samiti-sewak. These functionaries, at their best, are concerned only with the minute part of his life. The sectoral programmes are formulated in isolation. Therefore, each one of them is not concerned even with the total economic implications of the new inter-action.

19. It may be admitted that the possibility of healthy inter-action through the developmental functionaries is somewhat more than in the case of those individuals who represent vested interests. But the position of the teacher is unique. Conceptually, the teacher in these areas should be an embodiment of the best in the culture of the advanced areas. He comes to give something to the community. In a way, it can be expected that the best of the advanced communities should be personified

in him. Therefore, he is best suited to interpret the modern world to the traditional groups. If the teacher in the tribal areas were also to assume the limited role expected of him in the more advanced areas, it is quite clear that the conceptual frame for the inter-action between the modern forces and the traditional communities would be far from complete and will be highly deficient in many ways. Even in an ideal situation, the other forces are quite strong and the influence of the teacher can be severely limited. If a comprehensive view about the teacher's role itself is missing, the contact points of the tribal communities with the new world will be limited to representatives of interest groups and neutral sectoral representatives. The adverse forces may be more powerful and balanced growth may not be possible. The teacher, in the tribal areas, therefore, needs to be a symbol of whatever is best in the new world and should serve as a bridge between the two worlds.

Educational Topography—Regional

20. The above analysis of the educational system in the tribal areas presents a generalised picture. A detailed plan for individual regions will need further particularisation of the problem. It will be necessary to have a distinctive approach for each of the specific areas; the dimensions and the qualitative aspects of the task, in each case, will depend on the level of educational development already achieved. The first exercise, therefore, will be to spell out clearly the educational topography in the tribal areas. The differences in the level of development between one region and another are quite striking. There are some tribal areas where the literacy levels are above the national average. On the other extreme, there are areas where the literacy level is near zero. The micro level of planning for education ultimately will have to be the family. We have to bring *every child from every family* into the general educational stream. Therefore, the statistical averages of literacy and enrolment for the districts and the tehsils as a whole are of limited value only. It is necessary to go to much smaller areas, even as the first order of approximation, if we aim at attending to the individual family.

21. The first problem, therefore, is a clear definition of geographical area for educational planning and its delineation. Perhaps, a block will itself be much too big an unit for educational planning at the elementary levels. A smaller area, depending on the distribution of villages and population-density, should be accepted as a planning unit. For example, hamlets can be graded according to the literacy levels. Regions of different levels of

literacy can be delineated with reference to the population hamlet distribution pattern. Similarly, levels of literacy of a region can be suitably defined. One approach could be to arrange all the hamlets in order of their literacy levels, the level of literacy in the central hamlet could be presumed to be level of literacy for that region. These levels could be worked out with reference to the geographical contours in the area of planning. Such an exercise will help in bringing into relief the 'lows' and 'highs' of each area. The lows will naturally deserve the highest consideration in the educational planning. It will be found that the lows are generally also the areas of low density of population and low density of elementary educational institutions. In their case a special strategy, particularly if the areas are very sparsely populated, will need to be adopted.

Educational Topography—Community-wise

22. The geographical approach suggested above will help in removing the regional imbalances. Yet, it is a well-known phenomenon that even in the educationally advanced regions some communities persist at extremely low literacy levels. The case of scheduled castes would illustrate the point. Even amongst scheduled castes certain groups, like scavengers, may be found at extremely low literacy levels. Similarly, in the tribal areas the weaker groups or the more backward ones do not take advantage of the existing educational facilities. The first step, therefore, would be to recognise this problem in specific terms, identify the magnitude of the problem and then formulate a suitable strategy for tackling it. Those communities which are at extremely low literacy levels should be clearly identified. In the decade 1961-71 it is noted that the smaller groups have remained stagnant and, in some cases, even regressed on the literacy scale. Since this feature is so pronounced and persistently occurs in different parts of the country, it cannot be ascribed to any statistical fallacy. A special programme for these groups, therefore, will need to be drawn up. In identifying these groups, the state or district averages will not be of much help. Since our target is ultimately the family, the planning universe cannot be a very large one. Therefore, smallest possible geographical unit should be adopted for operational purposes. If statistical data below a point is not available, the higher-level averages may be used which may be suitably reinforced by the personal knowledge of administrators and social workers in these areas. This will enable us to have a first order of approximation of the base-line situation for programme formulation as a starting point. Further refinements could be built into the census data in the year 1981, which will help in tackling the remnants of illiteracy pockets in these areas.

Educational Structure—Organizational

23. Before we plan education for tribal areas in physical terms, it will be necessary to identify the weaknesses in its educational structure. Although the entire educational programme is over-seen, by and large, by education departments yet a comprehensive picture is rarely available. There are a number of other organizations which may be responsible for certain specific aspects of education or activities closely linked to education. For example, in any given area, general primary institutions may be run by the Education Department, residential schools by Tribal Welfare Department, pre-primary schools by voluntary organizations or Social Welfare Department. Similarly, youth activities may be the responsibility of some other organization and the mid-day meals may be provided under an independent scheme. The ancillary services like the provision of stipends, scholarships, free books, hostels, etc., again may be formulated on a sectoral model at the state level with the result that a comprehensive picture of the entire package of educational services may not be available for a geographical unit. Some inter-linkages between different schemes may be attempted in gross terms at the programme formulation level. But after the schemes have been approved they are left to be operated almost independently. The result may be duplication in some areas; benefits may accrue to non-priority areas while even basic essentials may not be satisfied in certain other areas.

24. The various constituent elements of a package of educational facilities may get balanced even under the schematic approach in a situation where the basic minimum acceptable levels in relation to core elements have been reached. In the context of limited resources, lower priority items obviously can be taken up only at a few selected points. The selection of these points depends on a number of factors. Ubiquitous distribution of second priority elements does not distort the basic educational structure. But in those cases, where the basic educational structure itself is lacking, initiating lower priority programme really means non-optimal utilization of scarce resources. It is also a well known phenomenon that the benefit of any new programme first reaches the more accessible and the more developed regions. It only gradually percolates to the more backward areas and communities. If more than one programme are taken up without a conscious policy frame, it is likely that, in the context of general constraint of resources, all of them will reach only limited points and the last points will not be touched by any of them. A few cases will illustrate the point. Take the case of residential schools. They are established primarily to cater to the needs

of sparsely populated areas. They aim at providing residential facility to the children who may not have the benefit of ordinary schools within walking distance. If the programme of residential schools and the ordinary primary schools is not set within a reasonable planning frame, both institutions may be established in the same places, while the more backward regions, may be denied the facility of either. Similarly, a pre-primary institution is likely to be established in the more advanced areas where there is adequate appreciation of the distinctive requirements of children in different age-groups. Pre-primary institutions are anomalous in the context of non-establishment of even primary schools in certain areas. The same resources can be better utilised if the primary and pre-primary institutions were merged. The two combined units could serve two villages instead of two distinct units serving only one.

25. Another weakness, which is quite apparent, is the absence of a rational frame for establishment of the institutions at different levels. There are certain principles enunciated at the national level. But they are not supported by operational strategy. The result is that the number of middle schools compared to primary schools and high schools compared to middle schools is meager in the more backward areas and over generous in the advanced areas. One trend is interesting to note. There is continuing pressure for expansion of primary schools as a result of national drive for higher enrolment in the age-group 6-11. The expansion of elementary institutions, therefore, is faster. On the other hand, there is considerable pressure from articulate vocal opinion for higher institutions like higher secondary schools. Therefore, in some areas their number may be disproportionately high. The figures reveal that imbalances are most prominent at the level of middle sections. The geographical spread of primary schools has reached a saturation point in the more advanced areas. Therefore, they are generally out of competition when the question of opening primary schools arises and resources are allowed to flow to the more backward regions in this sector. The lack of interest of advanced areas in expansion of elementary institutions results, however, in considerably reduced outlays for this sector as a whole in face of more pressing demands from other sections leaving in this sector only little to share. The affluent and elitist group is also disinterested in the primary schools because it can make its own arrangements for this stage. Higher the level, greater the cost, greater reliance of elitist group on the state, greater its interest and greater are the available allocations. Thus, as the demand at the middle school level continues to be high in the advanced areas, these areas successfully corner a lion's share leaving smaller resources to be shared by the more backward

areas. The distribution of higher, secondary schools is quite erratic, and clearly brings out non-academic sources of pressure for their establishment. This fact is also responsible for heavy drop-outs after Class V. While economic reasons cannot be ignored for these drop-outs, the absence of physical facilities has to be considered as one of the most important reasons.

26. There are no well established principles for providing hostel facilities. Since provision of hostel facilities, sometimes, becomes almost a status symbol in the local power game, the distribution of hostels tends to be ubiquitous. The concept, that hostel facilities are primarily provided in lieu of institutions of various levels in the immediate neighbourhood, is not quite appreciated. Sometimes a hostel is looked up as a facility for children away from their poor family surroundings or admission in a hostel may mean a bigger stipend. So far as the problem of better surroundings is concerned, it is common to all the poorer sections of the community with only a difference in degree. It is true, given the same economic level, the atmosphere in the homes of socially disadvantaged groups with no tradition of learning may be worse compared to that in the advance communities. But it has to be appreciated that this aspect of hostel facility can be considered only as a second priority item. The highest priority must be accorded to those areas where absence of hostel facility may mean denial of the opportunity of education itself.

Educational Buildings

27. Provision of buildings is another aspect which needs special consideration. The patterns for construction and design of educational institutions are evolved in more advanced areas. As the specifications are common for all areas, the acceptance of a standard pattern for the more backward areas coupled with higher transport costs, means costlier buildings. As a backlog in these areas is huge, the normal programmes cannot meet even a fraction of the total need. In the context of higher specifications adopted for the more advanced areas and in the absence of a clear policy for the tribal areas, it becomes difficult in individual cases to justify buildings of lower standards. The result is that nominal financial provisions may be made which may satisfy the vocal demands and give an impression of accomplishment, but which fail to tackle the basic problem.

28. There is yet another aspect of the same issue. In the more advanced areas the State has an alternative choice to hire buildings. Thus, a smaller recurring outlay becomes a substitute for initial high capital cost. The total burden of rent on the ex-

chequer may be heavier but since the burden gets built up gradually and imperceptibly, it is not felt in all its intensity at any one point of time. In the meantime, pressures get generated. Building for an existing old institution has to be given priority, on any rational consideration, over buildings for non-existent institutions. Thus, the needs of the advanced areas get an unassigned implicit priority. When one single institution is not provided necessary resources for its building it is an isolated case; but its cumulative effect results ultimately in an overall low effective priority for these areas. It also results in slower growth of institutions requiring higher initial capital costs like science sections in higher secondary schools. This has an adverse effect on the quality of instruction. In the absence of a clear policy about the provision of buildings in the context of special situation of tribal areas, the problem remains unsolved and continues to get aggravated.

Assistance to Students

29. The provision of scholarships, stipends and other facilities also suffers generally from a similar lack of perspective. These schemes are operated at the state level and, therefore, distribution is sought to be made on *pro-rata* considerations between different groups and different areas. There is a need for special assistance for almost every section in the tribal community except those who may have crossed the psychological barrier and are above a minimum economic level. But a distinction can be made between those groups, who can somehow manage without such an assistance though with some difficulty, and those groups for whom denial of such assistance will mean denial of education. It is the former section, which is comparatively better off, that is getting conscious about the benefits of education. This consciousness can induce them even to undergo some privation to get education. But it is this section, which not only welcomes this assistance, but also tries to corner it. The weaker groups are not conscious about the benefits of education and would be happy if they are not bothered. In the context of limited resources and the urgency to reach these more backward groups there are two alternatives. Either the assistance programmes should be universalised for which the total financial commitments will be very high. Alternatively, a rational criteria should be evolved for the distribution of these benefits giving a distinct priority to the more backward.

30. If we look at the total picture of state assistance for education at different levels one is struck by the imbalance at the lower levels. Broadly speaking the different levels can be visualised as the successive hurdles which a student belonging to the weaker groups will have to cross before reaching the highest

levels in education. These hurdles are at the end of primary school, the middle school, the high school and different stages in the university. If we examine the structure of scholarships and stipends we find that there is universal coverage of students at the university level through post-matric scholarships. Thus, in this scheme anybody who has been able to cross the first three hurdles is assured of some assistance at the highest stage in education. But most of the students fall aside at the earlier stages. There is no comprehensive programme at the earlier stages except in a few states. Even a conceptual frame for a satisfactory solution of problem of the weaker groups is lacking. In some states, the assistance at the lower levels is almost negligible. In the context of larger overall demand at these levels and meager allocations, the weaker groups are effectively ruled out. In this way, the package of educational benefits which may become available in any region can be anything and the community is left to adjust itself to whatever has been allocated to it. The uneven spread of literacy amongst different tribal communities and in different regions obviously is, to a considerable extent, a result of unplanned educational incentives for the more backward areas.

Tribal Dialects and Education

31. Another important weakness in the educational structure is the medium of instruction. Article . . . of the Constitution provides that every child will be given the facility of instructions through his mother-tongue. However, satisfactory arrangements have not been made so far. There are some genuine practical problems in fully implementing this Constitutional direction. Firstly, there are a large number of dialects spoken in the tribal areas. Preparing teaching material in all the dialects may itself be a heavy task and time-consuming. No overall assessment of this problem appears to have been made. The efforts so far have been sporadic. The Central Institute of Indian Languages has done some work in this field but it pertains largely to the North Eastern region which accounts for less than one-fifth of the total tribal population. The Central Indian tribal dialects have not so far claimed the attention they deserve.

32. While it is admitted that a systematic effort has not been made in this area, the situation has not remained static. Other processes have been working in these regions. With the opening up of the tribal areas, the regional languages are increasingly better understood. The establishment of educational institutions themselves is initiating a process whereby children are

getting initiated in the regional languages. There is another socio-psychological phenomenon which needs better appreciation. It is the areas which are slowly getting opened up that are providing the new leadership. Demand for more educational institutions is arising in these comparatively advanced regions. But it is in these areas that the need of tribal dialects, as medium of instruction, is diminishing. Therefore, there is little effective demand for local dialects in many areas. In some cases, there is even resistance to this idea from the articulate tribal leadership. The reasons are similar to those as are advanced in the metropolitan centres against a change from English to the regional languages as the medium of instruction. The tribal elite has a vague feeling that his child may start with a handicap if the early education is in the local dialect. The argument is— if finally the child will have to switch over to the regional language, earlier the better. The situation becomes complicated when the use of dialect is supported on political considerations rather than educational. A distinct dialect and a distinct script are seen as identity symbols. This creates apprehension amongst the non-tribals who may take an extreme stance and oppose any introduction of tribal dialects at any stage which, in their opinion, may at a later stage prove to be the beginning of a separatist move or political demand.

33. The urgent need of the use of mother tongue even for smaller groups as the medium of instruction remains to be forcefully put forward by the educationists. The very concept of the use of dialect is somewhat vague. It can mean anything from a full instructional course in the mother tongue to a working knowledge of the local dialect by the teacher where he may be able to just converse with the students. As there are no standards for assessing the proficiency of teachers in the local dialect, proficiency itself may mean anything from a smattering of a few words of the local dialects to full mastery. The concepts, therefore, have remained vague and policies verge on generalised assertions of certain wishes with the result that the basic issues have remained unresolved.

34. The role of the mother tongue will need to be appreciated both in terms of what is expected from the teacher and what an educational process should mean to the child. We have already discussed the unique position of the teacher in the tribal areas. If the teacher has to play his crucial role, he must become an integral part of the social system. This is impossible unless the inter-action rises above the formal boundaries and becomes a reality at the emotional level. If the teacher were

expected to convey only bits of information, perhaps even limited knowledge of the local dialect could suffice. A condensed course in the dialect on the same lines as conducted for executive officers, preparation of guide books for conversation, etc., could also help him. But this would be an extremely narrow perspective about the teacher's role. He is to communicate the deeper meanings of the culture he represents and give a better understanding of the whole socio-economic process of which he is the fore-runner. He is to understand not only the words but also the idiom of the society in which he works. The teacher who may be proficient in his subject or who may have a profound knowledge of our great tradition, but is not fully conversant with the local dialect will be like a great lake without water channel. If this aspect is fully appreciated, the educational system would be duty-bound to give highest importance to the proficiency in local dialects, particularly for teachers working in the more backward areas.

35. The role of the mother tongue in child's own assimilation of concepts and developing the capacity for independent observation, systematization of knowledge, etc., has also not been fully appreciated. The position would be clear if we take the case of a dialect which is farthest away from the regional language. It is well-known that the level of literacy in those communities whose dialect has nothing in common with the regional language is very low. In these areas, education to an average child means learning by heart, without any understanding of even words, what is contained in the books which he is supposed to 'read'. The very first step in the educational process, therefore, is a wrong one. Let us analyse the normal stages of learning. When a child is first taught the alphabet, he is shown the picture of a familiar object and then asked to pronounce loudly the word for that object which he has already learnt at his home. He slowly learns to associate the alphabet with the first part of the word spoken by him. Gradually he is able to delink the object and the word for the object and a direct association between the written alphabet and its sound gets established. In case the alphabet chart is in a language other than the mother-tongue, which the child does not understand, he will not get the meaning of the word which he is supposed to utter for the object which he sees. In fact, the child is never able to associate the object with the word. He gradually associates the letter mechanically with a particular sound. Thus, the first exercise of learning the alphabet itself becomes a big burden and psychologically an impossible task for the child.

36. The same process is repeated all through. In a normal educational curriculum, the child is expected to slowly graduate through the various stages of conceptualization drawing from his personal experience, from the nature around him, from the classroom and from the books which he reads. The word is really an abstract representation of the physical objects. In the process of teaching, each spoken word has to be associated with its counter-part of written symbol. Here again, a word in a language which a child does not understand, yet is expected to utter, has no significance to him in his own world of experience and, therefore, has no meaning. Thus, association develops mechanically between a written symbol and a spoken word which he does not know. Therefore, whereas the educational process expects the image formation in relation to the real things of the physical world with the written symbols through a spoken word, in the case of a tribal child the first step in this process is missing. He has to struggle with a mechanical exercise of association between certain words and their written symbols.

37. As a child proceeds further, education gradually brings to him a rich treasure of more word-symbols with which he may not be familiar in his own surroundings. The spoken symbol and the written symbol gradually become almost one with the passage of time. Therefore, the educational process helps him to continually enlarge his world of 'known' things. But to a tribal child, the introduction of a new word is merely like a mathematical game where a new word just means a group of other words to which he was introduced earlier without, however, understanding their content or relationship with the world of experience. Thus, the knowledge of child grows like compilation in a discretionary without any linkage with the real world. The process of concept formation, therefore, simply does not start. In the case of a vast majority of tribal children, the gruelling experience of education also comes to an end at this stage itself.

38. The above picture represents an extreme situation. It helps in understanding the real content of the educational process in the absence of adequate communication between the child and the teacher. The actual situation may be anywhere between this extreme position of non-communication to a complete understanding between the two. The child, in the more favourable circumstances, begins to learn the hard way. Slowly he begins to pick up the knowledge of things from his own surroundings by experience. His early difficulties with the word and its meaning get solved to some extent. Some of the more

intelligent boys pick up fast and may be able to make good the ground lost in the earlier stages. The most adverse effect of this early loss becomes clear in the general failure of tribal childrens to pick up in the field of physical sciences and mathematics. The various disciplines of study be divided broadly in two groups —natural sciences and social sciences. There is a basic difference between these two groups. In social sciences, it is not necessary that the students must learn everything only in the class room; he also assimilates from his own surroundings and experience. The concepts which are being introduced in the text books are those which may be familiar to him in everyday life. Therefore, the early handicap which he may experience in concept formation is gradually overcome by supplementation of knowledge from his environment. The imprint of the early handicap may, however, remain permanently with an average student. In science courses, however, the process of higher concept formation continues only in the classroom with the help of the teacher and text books. There is no way to supplement this process in everyday life experience. In science, the concepts are more in the nature of a growing pyramid. There is no possibility of jumping stages. Therefore, once the process of concept assimilation is disrupted in the beginning, there is no way open to the child to catch up at a subsequent stage. This handicap may be a real one even in those areas where the communication gap may not be as severe as postulated in the extreme situation described above. In science studies, even a slight handicap can be decisive. The small crack, once created may never be bridged and it assumes the form of a yawning gulf because of the cumulative effect. This explains to a large extent, the general observation that tribal students do not do well in physical sciences and mathematics.

Adaptation of School System in Tribal Setting

39. The school, particularly the elementary schools, should become a part of the community's social and economic life. It has to be appreciated that the advanced areas have reached a stage of functional specialization where earning, profession, amusement, education, leisure, all fall in well defined slots. The system adjusts itself to the requirement of each specialisation. In the highly undifferentiated tribal economy, the concepts developed for advanced communities will not apply *ipso facto*. The educational institution, therefore, in the first instance, will need to seek a suitable place in the tribal socio-economic system; they may slowly influence the approach and attitudes of the people. The tribal through successive stages of mutual adjustment may ultimately accept the educational institution as an

entity requiring attention in its own right. The working of the educational institutions will need to be adjusted both in terms of its daily routine and the annual calendar. Some effort has been made in some parts of the country in this direction. But these efforts have been sporadic in nature. It is difficult to keep up an exclusive frame in an atmosphere which is uniformity-prone; such experiments are, therefore, generally short lived. It will be necessary to have a well-defined policy frame which can allow and promote innovation in the educational scheme. For example, the educational institutions may work either in the morning or in the evening according to the season and the work schedule of an average tribal child. In many cases, evenings would be a better choice because they are generally free. Vacation may synchronise with those seasons where the child is busy in the agricultural operations throughout the day.

Choice of Teachers

40. The method of recruitment and minimum qualifications for recruitment as the teachers are other important points. The qualification requirements for all position all over the country have been influenced by considerations of general supply and demand. With the increasing availability of highly qualified personnel, persons, with qualifications much higher than the minimum required, are being attracted to these jobs. This factor has two consequences. On the one hand, the highly qualified teacher feels unadjusted to his job. This is particularly true of the more, backward areas where he finds persons with much lesser qualifications occupying equivalent or even higher positions in his own line or in other fields. Not only he is dissatisfied, he is not interested in the job and is always keen to find an opening elsewhere. On the other hand, since the local tribal communities are late to join the educational race, they are not able to come up to the general standards and, thus, are effectively kept out by highly qualified people in the competition.

41. A review of the progress of the educational scene in the country would show that in the corresponding stages of educational development in the now more advanced areas, the qualifications of teachers in primary schools were not very high. Even primary or middle school pass candidates were given suitable training and appointed as teachers. There is no reason why there should not be a reasonable sprinkling of teachers belonging to the local communities even though they may have lower qualifications. In the case of local tribal candidates, minimum qualifications could be kept lower. For example, in a completely non literate tribal society, a boy who has been able to pass his

primary and is intelligent enough, would perhaps act as the most important link between the community and the school. He could grow even academically as a member of the teaching community if suitable encouragement is provided. Such an informal approach would help in creating a more congenial and receptive atmosphere in these areas. The minimum qualifications for teachers could be gradually raised depending on the educational level of each specific group. These are essentially problems of transition and no formulation can be rigid and unchanging. The socio-economic conditions are bound to change fast in the tribal areas. Therefore, the various aspects discussed above will need to be under constant review. A flexible education policy frame is one of the important educational inputs for these areas.

Girls' Education

42. While some of the tribal areas have yet to make a start in the educational fields, some others have gone far ahead even surpassing the general Indian level. Between these two extreme situations, tribal communities are located at different points. There is broadly an intermediate group, which is quite large, where boys' education has caught on but girls' education is still far behind. It will be necessary in the first instance to identify these areas. Special steps should be taken in these areas for encouraging girls' education. A word of caution at this stage may be necessary. In the orthodox Indian society, particularly in the North, girls' education lags behind because of social inhibitions against girls mixing with boys, early marriage and social custom. None of these factors are responsible for the lower enrolment of girls in the tribal areas. Therefore, the solutions, which are generally favoured in the advanced areas for encouraging girls' education, may not be applicable to the tribal areas. For example, there is a spontaneous demand for the girls' primary schools in the advanced areas to cater to the needs of the more orthodox families. There is no such need in the tribal areas except in the urban pockets where the problem is not that of tribal education but that of girls' education amongst the advanced communities. Some of the important reasons for neglect of girls education in tribal areas are (i) their greater involvement in the economic activity of the family from early age, (ii) their responsibilities at their homes to keep the younger children, and (iii) no obvious benefit or clear aim in the eyes of the parents for which a girl needs to be educated. A boy may conceivably get employment outside or may be able to shoulder the responsibility of a dialogue in numerous contexts with the outsiders for which he may be better equipped if he is educated.

None of these reasons appear to be valid in the case of a girl. Therefore, this is essentially socio-psychological problem and may be amenable to a satisfactory solution if voluntary efforts are mobilised in these areas. Similarly, although a separate girls' institution may not be necessary, yet the very presence of a lady teacher in the school may help in creating a suitable psychological atmosphere for the girls to attend the institution. The lady teacher may also be in a better position to communicate with the women in the society and induce them to send their daughters to the school. Better incentives to girl students may also be of some help in attracting them.

School Administration

43. Administration of education in the tribal areas also poses a special problem. We have already referred to the multiple channel of control for different types of institutions. In the context of the more difficult terrain and greater inaccessibility, supervision and control is rather weak. Multiple organisational control further accentuates the problem. Absenteeism amongst teachers is high, particularly in the more backward areas. It is in a way abetted by the peoples' own non-interest in the institution. Sometimes, the village panchayats are given a supervisory role but even these arrangements have not been effective. The lack of housing facilities and the near compulsion of maintaining double establishment by the teacher, because of almost non-existent social services, further add to the problem. The induction of a larger complement of local personnel with help to sort out some of the problems. It may, however, add some problems because local persons may take teaching as a side job and may be more interested in private affairs and agriculture. The local teachers will come from the first batch of local educated youngmen; they may soon appreciate the greater opportunities which they can get elsewhere. It is, therefore, possible that they may not be interested in teaching but may concern themselves more with other activities. Therefore, a judicious combination of incentives, local recruitment, postings at a reasonable distance, etc., will be necessary.

44. Sometimes, the difficulty in the supervision of personnel in widely scattered institutions in inaccessible areas leads to an argument in favour of residential institutions, where a larger number of teachers can be posted and supervision may be easier. Such an argument is fallacious. In effect, it would mean *substitution of capital investment for organizational failures*. Organizational failure is a symptom of a deeper ill and has to be tackled at its root. While it may be easier to maintain discipline and

supervision in a few selected institutions but it has also to be clearly noted that these institutions cannot provide the answer to the problem of universal enrolment. Methods, therefore, have to be found to ensure that the teacher stays at his post and performs the assigned tasks.

Residential Schools—A Conceptual Frame

45. The concept of a residential school will need to be clearly spelt out. A residential school is obviously a costly institution. The cost of instruction compared to the overall cost of maintenance of a child in a residential institution is small. Therefore, when a model for residential institution is prepared, a comparatively better instructional input can be built into it. As the number of these institutions is small, they can be started only at a few selected places. As the institution is treated as an extra facility, there is no compulsion about the pace of their establishment. Therefore, an overall view can be taken of resource availability, etc., before starting a residential institution. Adequate provision for buildings and other facilities becomes an integral part of the scheme. Therefore, a residential institution automatically becomes a model institution at least in terms of the physical inputs. Since these institutions are small in number they are better supervised and they tend to become show pieces.

46. On the other hand, no such meticulous planning is attempted for ordinary schools; there is an element of compulsion so far as the pace of establishment of ordinary schools is concerned. For reaching the target coverage, it is necessary to have a certain number of schools, howsoever ill-equipped they may be. Even when some projections are made for equipping them, the dimensions become so large that it is left as an impossible exercise. The general educational institutions, therefore, are left to local improvisations and general play of forces in all its matters. The result can be any thing—there may be a notional school with no teacher and no building; if there is a teacher he may never be attending the institution; if a teacher is enthusiastic he may be faced with the problem of no accommodation, etc. All possible combinations are available in the educational world of tribal areas. In some cases, there may be teacher without students and, in others, there may be students without teacher and so on. Consequently, the academic performance is unsatisfactory; drop-out ratios are very high. In the context of such a general educational scene, residential schools appear to emerge as the only solution. Therefore, there is a pressing demand for such institutions by the people, the administrators in tribal areas and the political leaders. The demand is also sought to be rationalised by comparing the end results of the two systems even on per child cost considerations.

47. Such an argument in favour of residential institutions can be sustained only if the overall perspective of the educational requirements is not clear and the pace of its development is not charted out taking into account a realistic view of the overall available resources, even though on a liberal scale. Ordinary elementary schools in the comparatively advanced tribal areas are attracting tribal children and these children perform as well as those from other communities. This fact shows that a residential school is not necessary for the entire tribal population. If it is accepted that residential institutions are not necessary for all tribal children, the question of rational choice for such institutions becomes relevant. If the overall targets are fixed and objectives clearly spelt out, the perspective will become clearer. The constraint of resource itself will rule out the possibility of having a uniform pattern of residential institutions in the entire tribal region if the national target of enrolment is to be achieved within a reasonable period. Given the resources, the choice can be made between a lower enrolment target, accepted as a deliberate policy measure with a network of residential institutions, on the one hand, and a concerted effort to reach the national targets of enrolment with appropriate institutional network designed with reference to the local situation and the overall resources. It is clear that if not only a fraction of the total number of children in the entire tribal area can be provided with residential facilities within a reasonable time-frame, residential institutions cannot be the exclusive solution to the educational problem of the tribal areas. They can be viewed only as an aid to the general strategy for educational development of the tribal regions in which they should be assigned a specific role.

48. Between the two extreme situations portrayed in the earlier paragraph, *viz.*, a model residential school and an ordinary school, in which one or more of the essential educational inputs (building, teacher, equipment, books, scholarships, etc.) may or may not be available, a number of models with varying cost per child can be worked out. In the first instance, the haphazard package of educational inputs, which is known as a 'primary school', itself could be given a reasonable form with some more planning. In the tribal areas, because of the special circumstances, it could be agreed that an educational institution should have a certain minimum package of different elements. Once a decision for establishing an institution is taken, the entire package should automatically be made available to the area. This package should not be changed otherwise than by a clear policy decision at the highest level for its modification with reference to the special needs of a given area. Thus, it is not a residential institution which should be pressed as a model for adoption, but the model should be an

elementary school with clearly defined minimum facilities. Caution will be necessary even in defining these facilities. The norms and standards of advanced areas may not be practical because as models they are too costly and cannot be extended to the entire tribal areas within a reasonable time. While a minimum model unit could be worked out, to begin with, in the context of overall resources, it will be useful if, side by side, a gradual process of upgrading this minimum model, as conditions become favourable, is made an integral part of planning exercise. Between this minimum model and the ideal of a residential school, varying levels of additional facilities could be envisaged on a graded basis in response to the specific socio-economic conditions of a particular area. Thus, in some cases mid-day meals or even two meals, without any accommodation facilities, could be provided. A residential school itself could be mixed affair. Students in the neighbourhood should be day scholars while others are provided full residential facilities. The day scholars themselves could be provided varying facilities like that of mid-day meals depending on the economic level of the community which a school may be serving.

49. Coming to the concept of full residential school itself, it can be envisaged to serve two purposes. Firstly, it can be treated as an institution which has to be established in the more sparsely populated areas simply because even a single teacher school cannot be provided in the numerous hamlets on account of their size. Here again, the establishment of a residential school may not be taken as the solution of the problem. The residential school should be treated as a nucleus for the educational activity in a selected region. It could be supported by a network of satellite institutions of permanent, semi-permanent or perpetatic nature. These aspects will be discussed in detail in a latter section. Thus, the residential school, in the more sparsely populated areas, becomes an essential element of the educational strategy which aims at reaching every child in the age-group 6-14 as part of the national programme.

50. If we look at the educational problem in qualitative terms, the residential school can also be viewed as an institution for providing a better quality of instruction. There are two choices available even with reference to this concept. This school may be treated as an isolated institution or it may be deemed to be a pace-setter for a particular region. In the former case, it is obvious that its location can be random. Random choice, in other words, would mean that location will be decided depending on comparative pressures from different groups. On the other hand, if the residential school is a pace-setter, its location will need to be rationally decided. In the former case, there will be

no linkages between the residential school and other institutions in the area, in the latter case, a living contact between the two will have to be consciously cultivated. This relationship could also be institutionalised through various formal and informal arrangements.

51. In either case, an institution designed for better instruction on a selective basis will have to define its admission policy clearly. A special institution should cater to selected students who can be expected to proceed with their studies upto a much higher level. It can be expected that in these institutions some of the obvious shortcomings in the educational scene in the tribal areas will be made good. An isolated institution can develop independent model unconcerned with other institutions. But if the institution is also to be a pace-setter, its scheme cannot be much different from the one prevalent in the average educational institutions in the area. If this is not ensured, it will be difficult to persuade the teaching community to adopt similar practices within the limited resources which they may have. In fact, too wide a difference between their standards may have an adverse effect. The teaching community in ordinary institutions may try to rationalise their poor performance and find an *alibi* in the lack of resources even for adopting those methods in teaching which can reasonably be expected to be introduced with marginal changes.

52. It is, thus, clear that the network of residential institutions will need to be carefully planned. Its linkages with the other educational institutions, their geographical distribution, the policy of the intake of children, etc., will need to be decided keeping in view the objectives which are set in the case of these institutions. The two concepts of establishment of residential institutions will need to be clearly distinguished. In one case, it will be an institution where no non-residential institution is feasible on physical considerations and, in the others, it will be a pace-setter for the educational effort in a region and will incidentally cater to the needs of the more promising students in an area.

53. It is quite obvious that in the more sparsely populated areas even a residential school will not be able to cover the entire school-going child-population. Cost element would be one factor but there are other important socio-psychological considerations as well. If an institution is not in the village itself, it would be impractical to expect that the entire community in a far off hamlet will agree to send all their children in the age-group 6-14 to a residential institution away from their homes. If the more advanced areas, with greater consciousness about education, a stage may be reached where every elementary school may be required to provide facilities for children up to the age of 14. In many areas, the ratio between primary and middle

schools has already reached a figure of 1 : 2. This may further improve with the passage of time. In the tribal areas, however, alternative arrangements may have to be made for achieving the same end. In some states, lower primary or sub-school institutions have been established in the context of the demographic structure of the tribal areas which cater to class I to III only. These institutions, so far, have been treated as independent institutions. If the total perspective is clearly spelt out, they could be considered as a part of the central residential school complex in these areas. It is not necessary that these institutions should be on the same model as a regular school; numerous innovations can be tried keeping in view the local situation. For example, it may be possible that if the number of students in these sub-schools is extremely low a teacher may visit them only twice or thrice in a week. On the remaining days, they could be looked after by a local person who may be specially interested in children. In many areas, even this responsibility could be assigned to the traditional youth organizations who can perform such functions effectively. In their case, the curriculum, the method of teaching, the work assignment, etc., will need to be planned separately so that they are in fullest consonance with the local rhythm of life.

Traditional Institutions

54. This brings us to an important question of using traditional local institutions for general education, citizen education and dissemination of knowledge otherwise. Adequate attention to this aspect has not been given so far. If we review the cases of the spectacular breakthrough in education in some areas, we find that the active association of the local community has been one of the most important contributing factors. Involving the community and placing adequate responsibility on them may not be left only to the initiative and resources of the teacher, but an attempt could be made to give it a suitable policy frame. There should be a clear linkage between the traditional tribal organisation and the educational institution. The youth organisations should be specifically used for 'citizen education' programme. It has to be appreciated that the traditional youth organisations are essentially institutions for training the citizen. In their case, however, the frame for their training has been the familiar custom, tradition and requirements of the local community. These organizations have been responsible for instilling a sense of participation by each individual member in the community life. Each member is prepared to appreciate the individual role and assume the heavier responsibilities.

55. A delicate handling of the change-situation will be necessary, if these elements which are an essential part of citizen equipment in the emerging context are purposely introduced in these

organizations. It should not happen that in our over-enthusiasm, the traditional institutions are burdened with some responsibilities which they may not be able to assimilate. One is struck by the spontaneous and pragmatic reaction of the tribal youth to new situations posed to him. Such of the new things, which impress a group most, become a part of their oral tradition and the group gradually enriches its fund of knowledge. However, the real significance of the new elements may not be fully appreciated by this group because the community itself is not as yet aware of it. It will be an extremely useful, though a delicate task, to define the new elements, present them in an assimilable form and help the group in appreciating the real import of those elements. Once this is done successfully, the process can become self-generating requiring no further artificial support.

56. The market, the traditional out-door activity of the community, their tradition of exchange visits, etc., will also need to be harmonised with the educational system. As earlier stated, the educational institution must adapt itself to the local situation, harmonise with the ethos of the community and carry the whole group together to a higher level of understanding and, hopefully, an enriched cultural life. This, in fact, is the essence of the philosophy of basic education which, however, got routinised. It is still possible to make use of the normal activity of the child in designing the work schedule for him and, thus, providing a new meaning to the old activity within a new frame. This should be the central part of planning of relevance to the people.

Physical Culture

57. The potential of the tribal areas in relation to outdoor games and physical activities has not been explored so far. It is wellknown that the tribal youth has tremendous stamina for long walks and races. In many areas, he is adept in shooting. These natural endowments can be channelled into appropriate physical culture activity to enable him to compete at the regional, national and international levels. Almost in all field events, except in the organised games, where a different type of training may be required, the tribal group may provide the most promising raw material. Organization of physical cultural activity on a much wider scale, than in normal educational institutions, can be a big attraction to the child to come to the school. It is not necessary that at the primary school level the child must spend five hours in the classroom. Even when a programme of physical education is organised in the tribal schools, the model of urban institutions is generally adopted. In the urban setting, perhaps even one period per week may be considered adequate for games. But in the tribal setting, the position should be reversed. The child in these areas

is more at home in the open and outdoor activities. Therefore, in the early stages, a major part of the curricular activity should be organised around physical education and classroom instruction may be secondary. This may help a much larger number of children joining the educational stream. This early period could be used for introducing certain basic elements which can be built upon gradually in the following years. We have already noted the dissonance between the educational system and the requirement of the economy in the tribal areas in particular. An imaginative use of the natural inclination of the tribal child to the physical culture activity may prove to be one of the most important factors in faster coverage of the child population by the educational programme. This will require suitable adaptation of the curriculum in some of these areas. The physical culture activity will need to be suitably linked to successively higher levels from the village, to the region, to the state and finally to the nation. This linkage will help in providing the necessary direction and involvement of persons at various levels in a meaningful fashion.

Pre-primary and Primary Schools

58. Another innovation, which may be necessary in the tribal areas, is combining the concepts of pre-primary and lower primary institutions. As earlier stated, this distinction is not real in these areas and is hardly appreciated by the community. There are, however, two aspects which will need special consideration. The child, upto the age of 6, is in such a different atmosphere from that of the school that it must be a real psychological problem for him to adjust all of a sudden. In the urban areas, the child goes from the indoor setting of his home to another indoor setting of his school. In the tribal areas, he comes from an open setting and is expected to be confined within the four walls of the school for a good part of the day. This is a difficult psychological problem. We have already suggested adaptation in the school system itself which will go a long way to remove this hurdle. But there is another aspect as well. It may be useful if the child is brought within the fold of educational activity at an earlier stage. The acculturation will be easier. It is, however, not necessary to have a full-fledged pre-primary institution on the same model as in the urban areas. Suitable adaptation may be tried. Another aspect of the tribal areas is that elder girls have to look after younger children in the family. Therefore, the girls cannot attend the school. A combined pre-primary-primary institution will enable these girls also to attend the school because the younger children can simultaneously be taken care of within the same institution. A longer exposure to the regional language in the school setting at a lower age will also help the child overcoming the difficulty arising from the difference between the dialect and the medium of instruction.

59. In the more sparsely populated areas, the student-teacher ratio is quite favourable. The addition of an earlier stage of 3-6 age group, therefore, may not require substantial strengthening of staff. Other innovations, like shortening the duration of school and introducing double shifts, will further enable the existing structure to take a bigger load. This will help in optimal utilisation of the spare capacity reported from most of the tribal areas.

60. The policy of manning the educational institutions, particularly when this pre-primary age-group is also drawn into the educational stream, will also need a review. At present, lady teachers are generally preferred for pre-primary institutions. It is difficult to get lady teachers for the more backward areas. On the other hand, teachers in ordinary primary schools are reluctant to stay in these areas because there are no incentives and, in many cases, they have to maintain double establishments. The teachers generally live alone in these areas. Therefore, their contact with the local community is peripheral, sporadic and lacks intimacy. If the pre-primary and primary institutions were to be combined and personnel policy suitably adapted, much of the difficulty would be solved. The new institution, or even the existing ordinary primary school, may have one qualified teacher as the basic unit. This teacher could be assisted by his wife in managing the institution. If this arrangement is made, a number of problems will tend to be sorted out. The lady should take care of the children in the pre-primary age-group 3-6. Her very presence and formal association with the institution may help in creating an appropriate atmosphere for the girls to attend the institution. Since in this concept, two members in a family get employment, an element of incentive is automatically built in. The employment of the couple will also ensure that they stay in the village. The teacher will have a better opportunity, as also inclination, for interacting with the local community on a personal plane. Such a relationship will be better conducive for his assuming the larger role outlined in the earlier section.

61. If the above basic premises are accepted, the only problem will be to adapt the existing system in such a way that the wife of a qualified teacher becomes employable as a member of the new team. In the first instance, it will be necessary to make the qualifications flexible and devise a special compensation scale which may be linked to the qualification of the lady. A graded scale will provide an incentive to the lady to improve her qualifications. Suitable short-term special training programmes could be planned with reference to different levels of educational attainment of these lady teachers.

Alienation of educated youth

62. One of the important problems, which is arising in some areas after initial enthusiastic response to the programme of education, is the psychological resistance amongst the tribals. For some time, the educated youth was able to get absorbed in the new opportunities in the surrounding region. In those areas, where the level of education has risen, this is now becoming increasingly difficult. What is more important, the unequal levels of educational development of different tribal areas is itself acting against the comparatively less advanced areas. The less advanced areas start with an initial handicap. They find themselves blocked by the more advanced tribal groups, who are more articulate and educationally better off. Such small variations may not appear significant at the national level but become crucial in a limited local setting. Since education primarily aims at providing new job opportunities, the expectation amongst the educated youth is high from the very beginning. He, psychologically, detaches himself from his local surroundings. But when he fails to get a foot-hold in the modern sector, he is disappointed. This frustrated young man is not able to adjust himself in his own group.

63. The gulf between the life in an average tribal home and the life in a residential hostel, particularly in an urban area, is an important contributing factor for non-adjustment. The period, during which the youth should have acclimatised to the struggle with nature and inhospitable surrounding, is spent in an artificial and protected surrounding. Therefore, he misses an important phase in the normal development of the adult tribal life. The longer he continues in the educational stream, more difficult it becomes for him to return and get readjusted. It is important to note here that the tribal community is equilateral and the individual will have to accept the common level if he returns. In the advanced areas, the sons of the upper and middle class families did not find as difficult to readjust in case they did not migrate to the town. Education helped them in some cases to consolidate their existing higher position in the rural areas. In the tribal areas, this is an important difference which makes the process rather painful. Another important fact is that the tribal has no social linkages with the urban areas. Therefore, his capacity to subsist even temporarily and struggle for getting a suitable place in a new career is rather limited. He tries hard for some time to escape the compulsion of his rural setting but ultimately has to settle there finding no avenue outside. An unadjusted tribal youth sets a rather bad example for acceptance of education by others. Even those who join new profession in the urban areas are, more or less, lost to the family and the community. This

phenomenon has a parallel in the general rural-urban complex in the country but it is much more acutely felt in the tribal areas. To the average tribal, who has no links outside and whose world view is extremely limited, a child migrating to the urban areas is a complete loss. The well-known phenomenon of educated youth serving connections with their villages and disclaiming any association with their less fortunate kith and kin is now appearing in these areas with much greater intensity. This further strengthens psychological resistance amongst the elders in the community. It appears that in some cases tribal children acquire a sense of inferiority in the beginning of the educational career itself and normal reaction, in such a situation, is to disown the origin and claim a higher position in the new society without any handicaps.

64. While these socio-psychological problem can be considered inevitable concomitants of the process of change, yet they cannot be ignored in a planned effort of faster development of a community. These will need to be accepted as the possible socio-psychological impediments which would arise in the process of change and which should be taken care of as a part of the educational programme itself. It has important policy implications both in terms of the design of the institution and the content and method of teaching. Firstly, the institutional setting should not be a complete contrast with the tribal situation. The tendency to ape and adopt the urban patterns should be checked, both as a matter of policy for greater harmony and also in view of the constrain of resources. Secondly, there has to be a conscious effort, as a part of the regular instruction and by the teacher himself through his personal contact and behaviour, to ensure that the child does not start with a handicap. The attractions of the urban life and the achievements of the modern civilisation have to be presented to the tribal student in right perspective so that he is not taken by its outer glamour. Similarly, the strong points of the local community, viz., their capacity to subsist in hostile surroundings, their equitarian social structure, self-sufficient economy, community life, absence of cut-throat competition, etc., should be emphasised. A strong orientation programme for the teachers themselves will be necessary since it is their attitude and approach which has the first influence on the child. A comprehensive programme for re-orientation training of teachers should be an integral part of the educational planning for the tribal areas.

Wastage and Stagnation

65. Wastage and stagnation is another problem which has been engaging the attention of educationists. This problem has

also been the subject of maximum study. We have already referred to the impact of the uneven distribution of educational institutions in the tribal areas which results in heavy wastage at the terminal stages. The other factors for this phenomenon are disinterestedness of the community, uncongenial surroundings, unsympathetic approach of the teacher, lack of elementary facilities both for instruction and for residence of teachers, inability of the teacher to communicate because of language problem, general economic backwardness of the people, unsuitable school timings and lack of adequate financial support. Most of the reasons are human or organisational. The financial aspects are important but cannot be considered to be the exclusive reason for the heavy stagnation. Proper planning and optimum utilisation of the available resources should go a long way to remedy the situation. The administrative and planning inputs, the opportunity to innovate and adapt the programme to the local situation and the motivation of the teacher to convey something new to the tribal society would be the most important elements in solving this problem. A suitable programme of scholarships, stipends and physical facilities will further help in correcting the situation. It has to be emphasised here that establishment of educational institutions by itself has not proved adequate to attract the children. Therefore, if the programme of institutional expansion is not accompanied by the other elements, it may result only in a wasteful expenditure.

Special Coaching

66. The children from the tribal areas generally face the problem of adjustment when they meet the general stream of students at the higher secondary and, particularly, the university stages. The problem, in the early stages of development, may be in an extremely acute form. The situation will gradually normalise as the general educational development picks up. In the admission policy to the various institutions of higher learning, the specially disadvantaged condition of the scheduled tribe is taken into account. Reservations help the groups to join the higher institutions. But there is no conscious policy as yet to help these students in the earlier stages of their new educational venture. Sometimes special coaching is arranged at the time of next examination. But this arrangement merely begs the question. It will be useful if the level of educational attainment of the tribal youth in different disciplines, which he proposes to follow at the higher level, is assessed at the time of his admission and supplemental coaching is made a part of his normal curriculum. The content of this instruction should not be left to chance but should be well planned. In extreme cases, it may be necessary even to reschedule the higher

course specially for certain groups by adding, for example, a semester or two in technical institutions.

Need for Comprehensive Planning

67. Educational planning for the tribal areas, thus, emerges as a multi-dimensional exercise in which numerous elements have to be very finely balanced. The entire educational system in these areas will have to be internally consistent. It should also be in consonance with the external, socio-economic situation. The internal consistency of the system will need to be more carefully worked out because the correctives, which can be generally expected to operate in the more advanced areas, are lacking in the tribal areas. The total effect of a small missing item for the system as a whole may be completely disproportionate to its size. The entire system may fall into pieces, if even one crucial element is missing. Therefore, a comprehensive view of the total educational process is essential.

68. For preparing a comprehensive educational plan, firstly, it will be necessary that the physical targets are carefully worked out for each specific area. These targets will necessarily have to be with reference to the given constraint of resources. The non-financial constraints will also need to be clearly noted, because in the earlier phase they may prove to be the real bottlenecks. Since the concept of education in the tribal areas has to be considerably wider than the limited school education or even conventional non-formal education, the physical targets should clearly spell out all these elements. The overall literacy levels ('literacy' will have a wider connotation here) should be fixed for each area and the contribution of the conventional and the non-conventional sectors in raising the literacy level should be specified. The entire effort should present a consistent picture.

69. While fixing the overall targets, care will have to be taken to ensure that statistics does not camouflage the extremely weak spots. Therefore, overall minimum targets will have to be prescribed with reference to each micro area. Instead of a fixed target of 'x' per cent, it would be preferable to define a range. Once such a range is prescribed, the intensity of effort can be suitably worked out for each area and it may be possible to ensure a more equitable distribution of the benefits from limited resources. The variation, as between different communities, should also be carefully noted and definite targets fixed. For example no tribal community or areas, at the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan, should be below, say, a 10% literacy level. Similarly, the time-lag between the most backward and the most advanced tribal areas,

in terms of literacy, should not be more than 5 years. Such parameters will act as guiding principles to be rigidly followed. If it is necessary to change them in any specific case, it must be a conscious decision at the highest level in the context of specific local conditions.

70. The next step in planning will be to match these targets with a suitable institutional net-work. Since the targets are to be fixed with reference to each specific area, a suitable institutional net-work for each of the micro-areas should be worked out for enrolment of adequate number of children and bringing adequate number of non-student members within the educational fold. Thus, a hierarchy of ashram schools, lower primary schools, primary schools, middle schools and high schools will have to be planned geographically providing necessary linkages amongst them and adequate man-power components. The second element will be the residential facilities. Thus, the educational institution net-work will need to be suitably matched by adequate hostel facilities at every level. Ashram schools should be set up at the primary level in the extremely sparsely populated area. At the middle school and high school levels, the residential requirements will need to be defined with reference to the population distribution in the area. The third important component is the counter-part assistance programme. Once the areas have been identified with reference to their educational, social and economic development, the extent of financial assistance necessary at each level in each of these micro areas should be worked out on the basis of the overall targets. In some cases, it may be necessary to provide 100% assistance to children, while, in some others, it may be necessary only to give some marginal subventions. Thus, the educational net-work, residential facilities and the incentive programmes should form a package of services for the local community.

71. Another package of inputs will have to be with reference to teachers. In the first instance, the teacher components at different levels will have to be worked out. In the more sparsely populated areas, the student-teacher ratios will have to be lower whereas in the more advanced areas these ratios can be higher. A different norm will need to be devised for husband-wife teams since in their case the coverage of age-groups will have to be more than 6-11. In fact, this aspect will have to be taken care of while defining the target-groups themselves. It will be necessary that a beginning for systematic coverage of 3-11 age-group is made in the more backward areas. It is only in this way that the process of frictional absorption of benefits by more advanced areas can be checked and the first beneficiaries can be ensured to belong

to the more backward regions.

72. The teacher will also require a package of physical facilities for working. The first element is that of buildings. The building infra-structure would include a school building, residential hostel building and teacher quarters. We have discussed earlier that if standard patterns were adopted for these cases, the total cost will be so heavy that it will be impossible to provide them within a short enough period. Therefore, this infra-structure will need to be gradually built up. In the first instance, the building specifications may be kept very low. What is important at this stage, is to ensure that some accommodation is provided. It should be cheap and within the possibility of a reasonable educational plan.

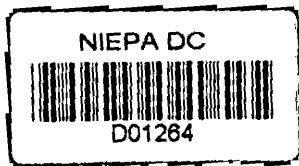
73. A suitable incentive scheme will also be an essential part of the educational planning for these areas. The teachers are, perhaps, the biggest single group who, by the nature of their profession, will have to work in the most remote areas. The basic social service facilities cannot be extended to these areas in the foreseeable future. The first social service facility in all these areas will have to be an elementary or a lower primary institution. An important question, therefore, arise as to whether this individual, who is sent to these areas to provide the first basic service to the people, in his own turn, can expect a reasonable compensation from the system. The teacher posted to the more remote areas should have adequate remuneration.

74. All these inputs will need to be suitably integrated and made operational by an appropriate administrative organization. In the case of the more sparsely populated areas, the concept of a hierarchy of educational institutions, where each higher level takes the leadership role in academic matters as also shares the administrative burden of the system, may be evolved. It is through the building up of such a hierarchy of institutions that the single teacher school can be made more effective. It is quite clear that a single teacher school, or even a part-time teacher school, will have to be a permanent feature of the more sparsely populated tribal areas. Therefore, the administrative systems, which presumes a larger teacher component, will not be suitable for these areas. In the more sparsely populated areas, a residential ashram school could be the nucleus of a group of lower primary or primary institutions. In other areas, which are not so sparsely populated, yet where a large number of primary schools have to be manned by single teachers, a central primary school or a middle school could be the nucleus around which they function. This central institution should have the administrative responsi-

lity for the periphery schools and should ensure that a substitute reaches the institution if the single teacher is absent for more than a stipulated time. The central school, in its turn, could be responsible to a higher level central institution, may be, a middle school or a high school, depending on the level of educational development in the area.

75. This hierarchy of educational institutions, broadly responsible for an integrated administrative approach, should not be taken to mean that they will become responsible for normal administrative functions as well. The general administrative machinery of the area should be specially designed to cater to its specific problems. Inspections should be more frequent and education should not be considered to be the responsibility of only the Educational Department. The entire administration should feel concerned about the educational development of the region. Each functionary of different departments operating in these areas should take a keen interest in the educational problems. It will help in creating a better atmosphere for educational development as also make the teacher more responsive to the needs of the area. The relationship between different departments and the teacher should not be visualised as between a superior and a subordinate. In educational planning, hierarchies have to be scrupulously avoided. An atmosphere of mutual give and take should be created. The spread of primary education is the surest way of providing an easy channel for dissemination of all knowledge and information in relation to agricultural extension, health, family planning and other essential modern developmental elements. Once this aspect is properly appreciated, the interest in education will become many-fold.

76. The physical and administrative planning has to be simultaneously accompanied by academic planning for the area. The preparation of text books in local dialects, wherever necessary, and the preparation of 'citizen education' curriculum and reading material will be an important higher level exercise. In the first instance, those areas will have to be identified where this effort has to be taken on a more intensive basis. The pockets with extremely low levels of literacy should be obvious choice. Once this is done, the reading material, the curriculum should be carefully devised with reference to the specific situation of these areas. If all these components are put together in a meaningful fashion, all round fast educational development of the tribal areas can be assured.



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