

Falling stars in tribal area

Dimensions of drop out in primary education and motivation among tribal children from displaced area .

By Joke Timeerman

Belgian Volunteer

Who visited SPREAD and stayed for 4 months and she has presented her observation as a paper.

Dear reader,

Here some little words before ... the big bang.

Now almost 5 months ago I arrived together with my husband in India. Being fresh post graduated in Pedagogic I (we) choose to go abroad and do volunteer work for an Indian NGO, which is funded by a Belgian NGO Broederlijk Delen (means "brotherly sharing"). After 5 years studying it felt like opening the window, fly in the world driven by a desire to do good works (and learn what good works are), give myself voluntary for people who need it and meeting people from a totally different culture than my own. It felt (and feels) as God's will.

The NGO, SPREAD, is working with displaced tribal people in the state Orissa, Koraput district. My knowledge about Indian tribals was minimal but I was eager to meet this people, live with them, listen and know their problems; and contribute in making their situation better. Because 'my field' is education we decided with SPREAD that I would work on the school 'drop-out' issue of tribals.

As a Belgian girl of 25 being in India, maybe it is interesting to explain a little bit of my way of looking to life and this world. Surely this explains a lot for the reader about the things that I see concerning education, tribals and... falling stars.

First of all, being touched by the way some people live in misery, I have strong faith that this situation can be changed, and is already growing

towards better. It feels as a responsibility to join this process and make a contribution. I believe that education and raising children can be one of the essentials on our path to a better world if it's done with engagement (in this path), sincere involvement (in concrete steps) and, most important... love.

During my studies I took a closer look at education in *communities and ecovillages*¹ that I visited in Europe. It surprised me to see these people's inspiring will to live in peace and together looking for ways to make life of themselves, children, animals and nature better. Education was important because of the role of *continuing* the community, so they experimented with new forms: (raising children in a separate space without parents, etc.). In seeing that lifestyle, education and raising can be totally *different* than the way I experienced, more questions rose; for example about the curriculum and the necessity of education (why everyone in the world should have education to better their living). Is education a solution for people who live in misery mostly because others (for the most part educated) are wiping out their way of living because of their own wellbeing?² What is education then: a means to defend? And does it serve 'the good' if some educated are not doing it? Another issue: can our environment handle all people using kg's of paper to write, read, research; using a computer etc. as we do in Western literate countries? Off course we cannot generalize this speaking and also educated people do their very best to help others (even using paper...)!

Another experience was that we could talk, write about and see education in other ways than e.g. the academic way. This is one of the reasons I put some personal touches in this bundle of paper sheets (*star-theme ☺*).

Furthermore I realize very well that, as a member of so called developed countries, (not that I am more developed!), I have some *possibilities* to *choose* from that people here do not have, like coming to India to do volunteer work - without Indians asking me this. This feels sometimes strange. On the other hand I think e.g. tribals have possibilities to learn things we do not have (young girls are very experienced in chopping wood, taking care of babies, etc.). Also I believe that nowadays globalizing development can be benefited by exchanges like these (globalization must not always be of market concern).

¹ Western people living close together in groups on a common spiritual, social and/or ecological basis.
www.gen.org

² One can make this question absurd by asking if we need to make trees literate so they can defend themselves from overcutting?!

With even more questions and thoughts I came to India, a country that is (in Western eyes) seen as having a high underdeveloped population. I wondered what development really was. During my stay these questions were filled with answers. And other questions arose. I am not able to give a complete justifiable scientific research. This is not the aim of my being here and I think it is almost impossible in five months to have a true feeling and clear knowledge of how things work in a totally other country than my own. Only this document can give an idea of my experiences in Koraput with tribals and education. Looking from another point of view to this issues, as an *outsider* from another country and culture, can perhaps enlighten some things that one would not see because of his attachment to the own culture.

Hopefully these sheets can inspire readers to be involved with tribals and education, to get ideas for new directions and to arouse enthusiasm in our together walking the way to a loving living together with everyone.

Here is also the right place to thank the whole SPREAD team for their care, interesting talks, help with our interviews and translation, wonderful cooking, truthful involvement in their work and beautiful smiles. Special thanks to Dr. Pradhan for the explanation of Orissa's education system and issues and last but not least to the always happy Sadanand with whom we shared many joyful time.

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1 Opening .. (The Big Bang)

India has the largest tribal population in the world, constituting 8 per cent of the total population of the country. These indigenous people are called 'adivasis' what means 'the first settlers or original inhabitants' of India. There are 627 individual tribal groups and most of them have been

identified as 'Scheduled Tribes' (ST) as per the constitution of India³. In the Koraput district, which forms the southern part of the state Orissa, the scheduled tribal population is 49.62% of the total population. Because of this large number the entire district is declared as a scheduled area. As elsewhere in India the majority of tribals live in scattered and small habitations located in remote and inaccessible settlements in hilly and forest areas. As a result, most of the tribal-concentrated areas maintained their cultural uniqueness (e.g. they have their own various animistic religions); but also lack basic facilities such as roads, transport, communications, electricity, medical facilities and education. These are reasons why the literacy rate among the tribals is very low and a considerable portion of their children continue to be outside the school system. Child labour is a common practice and considerably more girls are involved in this. Since education, as we know it now in our modern (mainstream) society, was never a part of tribal culture; it also took a longer period for this group to realize its importance. Being part of 'under-developed', poor and deprived sections of society, the people were naturally more concerned about the schemes having immediate and touchable benefits.

Becoming aware of the need of education did not only have economic reasons. More and more tribals became the victims of exploitation, forced displacement due to developmental projects, indebtedness, bonded labour system, etc. In the Koraput district displacement and being affected by developmental projects are two major problems. In the name of 'development' this area, with its rich resources, became the ground for constructing huge dams (Kolab Dam, Macchkund Dam⁴), mining projects, railway lines, etc. Therefore the land of the tribals has been taken away in exchange of a nominal amount of cash compensation. The acquisition of land without resettlement and economic rehabilitation programs has uprooted

³ The constitution of India (1950) has recognized two segments of the population as weaker sections of society, based on their socio-economic backwardness and the age-old social discrimination and physical isolation that they have been subjected to. These weaker groups are SC or 'Scheduled Castes' (who are the lowest rung of Caste Hindus and who are seen as 'untouchable' due to their lowly occupations) and ST or 'Scheduled Tribes' (who suffered especially physical isolation from 'civilization'). Special provisions have been made to safeguard their interests and to protect them from social injustice and exploitation. One of governments focus is providing SC an ST with special programs for the universalization of primary education.

⁴ For example the Macchkund dam is a multipurpose project; it is used for the production of hydroelectricity, irrigation, municipal, domestic and industrial water supplies, fish and wildlife conservation and recreation. For this project 2938 families were displaced; most of them are tribal families. This was the case in Nandapur Block where we did our research.

them from their natural habitat and means of livelihood. And still they are hardly advantaged by the developmental projects. They keep on being discriminated from mainstream modern society (e.g. there are only few tribal villages that have electricity). Moreover the consequences of the displacements put them rather in a more difficult situation: absence of land and forests for food supply and medical herbs and plants, problems of ownership of land, ignorance of complex laws and policies, misuse by officials, psychological and cultural trauma, conflicts about scarce land in the community, communication problems (that prevents teachers to reach the villages), etc.

It is believed that education can be a part of the developmental solutions to these problems. Education is not only a right of children; it also became a necessity for the survival of tribals in today's literate and knowledge based world. One could say it would be immoral to not involve tribals in education and let them stay like museum specimens. We can not know that, in their own development, tribals would stay illiterate or not. Nevertheless, they are being exploited, confronted with modern luxury and popular media, and moreover some are curious about the outside world. That is why it is immoral not to educate them. They demand it⁵.

Still, education alone can not be the solution to the problems of discrimination and poverty. Education should be a part of other developmental efforts and especially the development of us literates and so called 'developed'. Is being literate, educated means that one is more developed?

We believe that, if 'development' wants to be truthful, it must come from two sides, we must develop together. That is why we can state that it is also immoral not to educate the educated mainstream people towards a more human, respecting and loving way of living together for everyone. We can question who decides that every one should learn how to read and write? What goals and whose goals do these practices serve? Some theories⁶ even speak about the confirmation of the neoliberal (that has impoverishing and exploiting treats) system through education and making people literate and participants of it. They state that our knowledge based society needs

⁵ We can not generalize this for more primitive tribes do not seem to be interested much in modern mainstream society (like Bondha).

⁶ Masschelein, Belgian pedagogue.

critical, participating and literate subjects to keep the system running. Still we see that the system continues discriminating, creating poverty and putting the one above the other.

So, how can we see education in real human development? What is the heart of development?

Can we say that education, as every aspect in life, in the first place should be driven by love? Then how can education serve love, thus serve the involved loving human beings, with his/her particular thoughts, feelings, needs, desires, etc.

Article 48 of the Constitution of India (1947) says that every child has the right to free and compulsory education until the age of 14. In 1992 India has also ratified the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989' which speaks of the right of the child to education (art.28 and art.29). To guarantee these rights the government is undertaking various educational programs and projects to increase the literacy level in the hope to make the situation of children better. Still in spite of all good will, constitutional protection, legislations, conventions and diverse schemes, children are neglected in education. In particular scheduled tribes and scheduled caste, children are still in the shadow and in this group (as in general India) the girls are being most discriminated in child rights. The Koraput district is an illustration of these problems. According to 2002 figure there were 149.057 children in the age group of 5-10 years. Among them 31.815 are out of school and out of this 10.876 are school drop-outs⁷, mostly due to poverty and teacher absenteeism. A school drop-out is someone who starts education but after one or some years not longer goes. Being school drop-out does not implicate per definition something negative, though the term seems to have a connotation of having a lack. In this work we name such a child as 'a falling star' for a child is still a star shining light, bright and through falling even brings joy and luck for others.

⁷ 'Drop-outs' are children who are not going to school but

- a) in the past went to school
- b) have the possibility to go to school
- c) (in some cases) are enrolled but not attaining school regular.

1.1 This study

This study will go deeper into the phenomenon of falling stars or of the 'drop-out of children in education' in areas where tribals have been affected or displaced by developmental projects in the Koraput district. The NGO SPREAD works in three such affected blocks areas namely (1) Koraput (GP: Suku), (2) Nandapur (GP's: Bilaput, Atanda and Parajabadapada) and (3) Boipariguda (GP: Ramgiri). In co-operation with SPREAD we will take 20 villages for this research from Nandapur block: in GP's Bilaput, Atanda and Parajabadapada.

1.2 Relevance

First of all we hope this whole research can be fruitful for the tribal people we met. We listened to them, shared, lived together, got insight in what they understand what education is, what development is, etc. This research can be seen as a part of an awareness process, for both sides. Not only about education but also we got to know the richness of their culture and they got to know outsiders, our way of living, our questions. They spoke out their opinions, their dreams, told their stories and we are thankful for this sharing and hope to spread it in the outside world.

Second, we want to help and inspire the people of SPREAD: not only for documentation on this issue - that can be useful in lobbying- , but also we hope this study can help their work on tribal education. This document is open for everyone and we hope SPREAD will.. spread it. It can be valuable for tribal teachers, trainings, researchers and interested people. Maybe the reader gets ideas for new directions or enthusiasm in our walking towards a better world.

Third. For Broederlijk Delen in Belgium this study can clarify the issue of tribal education and drop-out in India. We will be able to explain people in Belgium about tribals (and the issues going on here) and share in our deeper experiences through living with these wonderful people.

Last but not least I believe that this experience has enriched me for my whole further life. My ideas about education, development and life have got new colors... tribal colors. Sure this rainbow will shine among my family, friends and further profession.

1.3 What we want to do in this study

Or two main questions:

- a) What are the dimensions of (factors, involved elements, reasons of, opinions about) drop-out in the visited area?
- b) What can motivate falling stars, parents and teachers to be sincerely involved in education?

Complementary questions:

- c) What is the effect of developmental projects (and displacement) on education and children
- d) Is (the way of) educating tribal children fulfilling their needs and dreams;
- e) Could parents be involved in education through the telling of stories? Could the disari teach the children his knowledge in school?

In this document we also want to give an overview of relevant literature data on this issue. Our intention is to motivate tribals through our talks by showing well-meant concern and empathy. Somewhere we hope to appeal and inspire them with our questions and ideas just as they appealed and inspired us.

1.4 Methodology

By doing semi-structured interviews with teachers, children (school going and drop-outs), parents (including VEC members) and disari's, we got insight concerning the above questions. These talks were supported by translators (SPREAD coordinators of the villages). Small case-studies of falling stars have been done. The questionnaires can be found in the attached 'stardust' section at the end of this document⁸. Worth mentioning is that through our interviews we are aware that we ask questions typical for 'modern minded literate people' (e.g. what are your dreams; what is the difference between children and adults, etc.). Tribals have also other ways to express than talking. That is why we lived with them to get a glimpse of how they stand in life (in total we spend almost two months in tribal villages, in one village 3

⁸ Interested people in the full-out written interviews can email me. Per question the different answers are written down.

weeks and got to know the people deeper). In following text we will combine both data from literature⁹ as research findings from interviews. The data found in *our specific research* will be indicated in *italic*.

We did not have the intention to work quantitative but rather qualitative. In the 20 villages we talked with 53 different people: 18 children, 16 parents, 7 groups of parents, 9 teachers and 3 disari's (and we had lots of informal talks, also with people from SPREAD). The data is not complete as some questions did not get an answer of some respondents, or it was not possible or appropriate to ask the question, or sometimes another answer filled in another question. With some we had a short contact and talk. From academic view there can be doubts about the validity and confidentiality. No worries, I give my word that the people were interviewed in an honest respectful and open way, so we should have confidence that they understood and told what they felt they had to tell and hopefully learn and change every day in the right direction. Also my own standards and intuition about what they say will be explicated as best as possible.

2 The galaxy of tribal education: context

2.1 Tikkétikké history, a glimpse on history of Indian education

Dynamics involved within the social processes of tribals need to be understood not only from present context but also from the past. Let us take a glimpse into the history of Indian education. Remarkable is the religious and philosophical basis. According to the ancient educational system, the purpose of study was the training of the mind - as an instrument of knowledge - to fill it with extraneous matter. The real knowledge helped one to distinguish the self from the nonself appearing in various forms. The individual self was related to Brahma (Universe) and this is the only source of one's identity. The need to experience this identity, this quest for the unity of the individual remained a significant motivation of life. Education being governed by a Hindu ideal, the curriculum was also based on Hindu philosophy and studies were organized according to the caste. Mainly the three upper castes got educated and this way they ensured domination over others like non-Aryan peoples, to which tribals belong. This has been until

⁹ Literature references are not always given because I mostly *explored* what was interesting in literature and did not always write the specific sources (but there is a list of the read literature).

almost 1500 a.c. When Muslims began their vigorous invasions of India, the rulers had not established a state educational system. Both Hindu and Muslim rulers considered the support of education as a religious obligation. Later, when the British came, the educational system followed the curriculum of the British schools and became more secular. But again education was mainly an issue of higher classes and not the mass. Christian missionaries engaged themselves to educate the poor, mostly in remote areas. They did a great deal in motivating the tribals for education. Until now Christian education has a good name in India because of its quality. But they could never have an effect on the overall development of tribals in the whole country. It is only since independence that education became compulsory to all the children. Still, demographic problems and traditional hierarchical society, with power closely associated with caste, have made vertical cooperation and the universalization of education difficult. Also the large variety of ethnic groups brought more difficulties.

2.2 Koraput, the big bear of the state Orissa

Orissa, one of the 16 states of India, has a relatively large component of tribal people: 22.23% of the total population. Although the state is rich in natural resources and beautiful nature, hills and reservoirs, it can be placed among the poorest of India for 47.15% of the population is situated below the poverty line¹⁰. There is also exposure to disastrous natural calamities like floods and cyclones year after year. Orissa has one of the highest levels in child malnutrition (under 3 years: 54%), 72% of the children under 3 years are anemic and the immunization coverage is very low. There are 62 different Scheduled tribes in the state and out of this 13 have been identified as primitive¹¹. Orissa is also one of the low literacy states of India. As an example: ST female literacy is only 10.21%, in total India this is 18.19% for ST women. To compare, 54.16% of India's entire population is literate¹².



Orissa has 30 districts¹³. Let us take a look at one of the largest districts of Orissa: Koraput¹⁴. In this 'scheduled district' ST are forming 49.62% of the

¹⁰ How this poverty line is calculated was not described in literature.

¹¹ What 'primitive' means, was not described in literature.

¹² Data from: Pradhan, N. (2005). Primary Education in Orissa: situations and perspectives. A monograph. Post Graduate Department of Education. DAV College, Koraput.

¹³ The structure of the country is as follows: nation-state-district-block-panchayat-village-hamlet.

total population. Their entire socio-economic and cultural life seems to revolve around food. Most of the tribals practice agriculture in a primitive way (no proper irrigation, basic agricultural implements, poor cropping pattern and ignorance of new techniques). Because of the problem of land alienation, the cultivation is even decreasing.

Also the forests are important sources for tribals providing fruits, roots, housing materials, medicinal herbs and grazing facilities for the cattle. However, increased reserved forest regulations have put restrictions on the use of forests. Also the decrease of land (e.g. due to displacement) makes them burn woods to have agricultural land. These are reasons why tribals have to count on the mainstream health care, because their medicinal plants in forests become scarce. But again they are limited because of communication difficulties.

Another problem is that of indebtedness to moneylenders due to subsistence type of agriculture, expenditures to customs and tradition, etc. Lack of effective marketing strategies force tribals to sell their products to moneylenders for a 'throw away price'. Also the debts lead to bonded labour, where tribals sell all their assets and become landless and sometimes homeless. So again they have to lend money and sell labour in return.

As noted in the introduction we can further indicate 'displacement' or being affected by projects as major problems in Koraput. Due to the construction of developmental projects like dams and mines, land have been taken away in exchange of a nominal amount of cash compensation. The acquisition of land without resettlement and economic rehabilitation programs has uprooted tribals from their natural habitat and means of livelihood. Tribals are hardly advantaged by the developmental projects. The consequences of the displacements put them rather in a more difficult situation: absence of forests for food supply, conflicts about scarce land in the community, more communication problems and transportation problems (which has a negative effect on their marketing facilities, but also on their access to health care, education, etc).

Concerning education it is important to note that nowadays Orissa is reducing its social sector budgets and encouraging privatization, due to the pressure of huge debts from the World Bank. Yet, this privatization evolution can be seen almost anywhere.

Satellite SPREAD

¹⁴ Source: Situation analysis of Orissa, Anuradha and Bydiut

In Koraput the NGO SPREAD (Society for Promoting Rural Education and Development) is working with tribal people and focusing on the issue of displacement.

SPREAD believes that the state must create an enabling policy environment that leads to the fulfillment of the basic needs (food, health, employment, education, housing and human security) of tribals. The NGO demands equity and positive discrimination in favour of those among the marginalized people who are in vulnerable situations, namely women and children. When required SPREAD makes efforts to provide the immediate poverty needs of the most poor and marginalized people. Provisioning these needs is considered as an integral part of the rights agenda and essential to help sustain the social groups suffering deprivation as a result of the denial of rights and entitlements. SPREAD is convinced that until the marginalized people are able to put a collective resistance and make a joint effort against discrimination, deprivation, exclusion, injustice and inequity, significant changes would not happen in their life. The ultimate goal of the rights actions is to facilitate marginalized people to come together and form alliances at local, state, national and international levels to take forward their respective struggles and articulate their rights. Therefore, SPREAD works towards creating an enabling environment: by empowering community organizations and leadership (through SHG's, micro financing, etc.), strengthening their capacity to analyze their situation, providing them with the platforms essential to bring groups with differing identities together. SPREAD works specifically with displaced tribals and land rights. In January 2006 they made a significant contribution to the reforms of land laws in Orissa.

2.3 The milky way of education

Let us take a look at the organization of education in Orissa. We will discuss some specific educational institutions and give an impression of the various programs initiated by government.

Typology (this is meant especially for Belgian readers, will be put out partly for Indian readers)

The constitution of 1950 guarantees free and compulsory education until VIII grade (age 14). In India, so also in Orissa, the *structure* of education is as follows:

- Primary education: Class I-V -> age 5-11
- Upper primary education: Class VI-VIII -> age 12-14
- Secondary education: IX-X -> age 15-16
- Higher Secondary education (+2): XI-XII -> age 17-18
- Bachelor Degree education (+3): XIII-XVI (BaSc, BaE, BaArts,...): age 19-21
- Master Postgraduate: 2 years -> age 23
 - Followed by Research Degree 1 year (predoctorate) and PHD 2-7 years (doctorate)

In Orissa there is a slight difference: upper primary education is Class VI-VII (12-13), so secondary is Class VIII-X (14-16).

There are different types of schools that are important in the context of tribal education and that we will describe shortly:

- Government public schools (primary)
- (Residential) Sevashrams (primary)
- (Residential) Ashrams (elementary)
- Single teacher schools
- Community schools
- EGS schools (Education Guarantee Scheme) and AIE schools (Child labour schools, evening schools)
- Private schools (by missionaries, NGO's, etc.)
- ...

(Sev)ashram schools¹⁵

Mainly during the early seventies these schools were established. An Ashram school is a residential school for ST children prior and when vacant placed for SC children with free boarding, also providing incentives such as free textbooks, uniforms and writing materials. The schools were established with an objective to provide a pleasant and suitable atmosphere for teaching-learning activities. Teachers and children living together in the same premises were expected to have the benefit of close interaction and learning opportunities. The Ashram schools normally cover a cluster of villages. A 'sevashram' is the concept for primary and 'ashram' for

¹⁵ Source: UN document on community schools

upperprimary education. There is no secondary education in ashram-style. In some areas the few primary schools are combined in an ashram school. However, in view of their cost, these schools are not only small in number due to inadequate infrastructural facilities; but the allowed number of pupils is also **limited (40)**. The establishment of Ashram schools helps to provide educational opportunity to tribals who would otherwise have no such access. But literature reveals that those who really benefit from these schools are mostly already (relatively) developed or live near the location. Some authors state that the cultural traditions limit girls to participate in Ashrams, as they have to stay away from the family and are mostly needed in house work. Moreover, for the youngest children the home environment and emotional support is difficult to provide, what results in low enrolment or high drop-out.

But from personal visits we experienced that the children found it very pleasant to stay in the ashram. Some said they could play and learn together and did not have to work. It can be a positive environment for learning and also there is more chance of having a regular teacher (because of the facilities to stay at the location).

Single-teacher schools¹⁶

To solve the problems of Ashrams (distance, emotional insecurity, etc) the norms were relaxed. **Around 1980 (??)** single-teacher schools were established, that appointed local tribal educated youth as teachers in interior and inaccessible villages having 20 and above school-age children. Most of the teachers were the first-generation beneficiaries of education (especially of Ashrams) and the minimum requirement was ten years of education. In this way the community became more involved with the education, because of the cultural and language affinity, but also because of the increased confidence in their educated youth (they got jobs). This tribal teachers were mostly a big help for the tribes e.g. in applications for the revenue department. However, because of the poor salary (only 1/6 of the normal teacher salary) a lot of teachers were not motivated and therefore absent. Also the scarcity of educated youth resulted in very few schools. The quality of teaching was another issue. So the drop-out rate among these schools remained very high. With Operation Blackboard (since 1986, see further) programs started to provide schools with more teachers, but until now there are still a lot of single teacher schools that barely function.

¹⁶ idem

Community schools¹⁷

Trough community involvement and control, decentralization of decision-making and administration, the 'community school' was born. There is no clear **data** in how far this type of schools is spread over the whole country. Only a study of community schools in the district of Vishakhapatnam was found. It refers to any school owned and run by the community. However, in the present context, this refers to a system of education where the community and government are equal partners and the community plays a dominant and decisive role in the management of the school. The community establishes the school structure, selects and pays the teacher, while the government administration is responsible for academic support such as the supply of reading materials, uniforms, blackboard and limited financial assistance. In comparison with single-teacher schools, this type of school has the benefit of having involvement and control of the community. Because of that the band with the teacher becomes closer, (s)he is more accountable and also the parents become more concerned about their children attending the school. The disadvantage is that community schools only have Grade I and II, so they have poor impact and they act as a feeder school for the Ashram residential schools.

Programs from government concerning tribals¹⁸

The Vision 2020 Report (Govt, of Orissa, 2003) visualizes Orissa as one of the most prosperous and developed States in India by the year 2020. In order to achieve this, attempts to provide a world-class education system (driven by personal, community and universal values) in the state have to be made. Government has taken special initiatives to improve the education among discriminated people. Here an overview.

Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE)

The EGS has been introduced in Orissa during 2001-2002 to replace the earlier scheme of non-formal education (NFE). Core is to ensure primary school facility to the children in the habituation, where there is no such

¹⁷ idem

¹⁸ Pradhan, N. (2005). Primary Education in Orissa: situations and perspectives. A monograph. Post Graduate Department of Education. DAV College, Koraput.

facility within 1 km, in a period of 100 days from the demand of the community, for minimum 10 children. EGS is operating under DPEP and SSA. AIE is a strategy for mainstreaming of out-of-school children of difficult categories such as children of migrant labour, urban street children,...

Operation Blackboard

In 1987-88 and 1993-94 this scheme aimed to provide additional teachers in single teacher primary schools, create additional (2 or 3) classrooms and provide more equipment and teaching materials.

Parateachers¹⁹

The use of parateachers started on a large scale in the late seventies with the Non-Formal Education (NFE) scheme, now followed up by EGS and AIE. Parateachers can be broadly classified into two categories:

- Part-time teachers belonging to the local community and working with out-of-school children;
- Full-time teachers who are para-professionals paid lower than government teachers and working in regular schools run by the government or local community.

The minimum required qualification varies from program to program- from class VII to higher secondary. A parateacher is a local, with good linkage to the community and should be motivated by the spirit of voluntarism. The positive aspects of the concept of parateachers include cost-effectiveness, better linkage and accountability to the community and greater reach in remote areas and marginalized children. Yet, there biggest problem is the low payment for doing mostly the same job as a normal teacher.

District Primary Education Program (DPEP)

This major internationally assisted program is launched in 1996-97 in 5 districts and in 1998-99 in another 8, including the Koraput district. The overall objective is the enrolment of all children in the age group 6-11, but also opening new primary schools, pedagogical improvement of teachers, supply of free textbooks, etc. DPEP is not an effort to develop uniform plans but considers that what is to be done at the district level need to be decided by those at the district level itself. It is a centrally sponsored scheme with flexible parameters, which are meant to ensure that the plan is within the framework of national concerns and priorities.

¹⁹ Source: <http://www.un.org.in/janshala/Oct-Dec2000/parateac.htm>

Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan (SSA)

Since 2001 SSA is being implemented in 14 non-DPEP districts of Orissa (not Koraput). SSA aims at bridging the social, regional and gender disparities at primary education by 2007 and elementary education (class VIII) by 2010 with the active participation of the community in the management of schools.

Lokshala Project

This project is being implemented in 7 blocks of the State (not in blocks of Koraput). It is a collaborative effort of 5 UN agencies and wants to make primary education more accessible and effective, especially for girls and disadvantaged children.

District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET)

Training of teachers, capacity building, extension and research activities are the main activities of DIET's. They were established (recommended by the National Policy on Education in 1986) to serve the universalization of primary education.

School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE)

National government has launched SSHE to ensure that all the schools, especially rural schools have basic sanitation and drinking water facilities but also good hygiene practices are taught to the children.

Middaymeal Scheme (MDM)²⁰

This scheme organizes lunches to all the students enrolled in class I to V²¹. The national government provides free rice, while the state government provides funds for dal, salt, oil, vegetables, etc. The honoraria paid to cooks and helpers are borne by the Gram Panchayats. Monitoring is at district level (by the Collector) and block level (Block Development Officers). At school and village level, the VEC's supervises implementation.

In our research it was found that de MDM was a problem:

- a) *when the teacher was not coming: in one village the cook did not want to prepare food if the teacher was not there -and sometimes he only came 7 times a month. (School Dangbir)*

²⁰ <http://www.geocities.com/bororissa/mdm.html>

²¹ Except in urban schools where 3 kg rice is given per student per month having 80% of attendance of that student in previous month.

b) *Some state there is a problem of malnutrition in residential schools. The children are only supplied by what government is providing of food (rice, dal, vegetables,...). But mostly the vegetables are neglected in the meal (money in own pockets) and the children lack other nutritious food like mandya and fruits (jack fruit, mangoes, banana's, papaya, tamarind,...) that they normally have in the own village.*

Village Education Committee (VEC) and Mothers Teachers Association (MTA)

The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments have laid out that panchayats have to play a major role in the organisation, provision and supervision of primary and secondary education. In Orissa, the government made guidelines in 1989 to establish VEC's in all villages having schools. The VEC is the core structure at the grassroots level. It represents all stakeholders and is empowered to function effectively in management of local primary schools through training and exposure visits. VEC's are involved in micro-planning, school mapping, and community-level monitoring of school programmes. *The PTA and MTA are instruments to bring parents and teachers together and involve them in the education process. The well functioning depends mostly on the initiative of the teacher.*

3 The telescope on the falling stars in project affected or displaced tribals from Nandapur Block

In following we will explain the issue of drop-outs in tribal education by giving an overview of the themes, factors and elements involved in drop-out. We will relate research findings with literature data. Our research data will be indicated in *italic*. We try to give a holistic impression of all the dimensions that play a role in falling stars issues. The structuring is not meant as absolute (everything is woven and can not seen separate from another), but tries to order the complexity.

3.1 Falling stars?

Although in the Koraput District 90% of the habitats is provided with public government schools, EGS-AIE-schools or ashram schools, there is a drop-out rate of 57% in 1999 and 44.2% in 2003. From this latter percentage 42.3%

are boys and 47% are girls²². In general literature drop-outs are being measured by looking at a cycle of 5 years. For example: in the year 2000 there were 100 children enrolled and attaining first grade in a particular school. In the year 2004 there were 40 children enrolled and attaining fifth grade of that school. Then the drop-out is 60%.

Figures of the drop-outs in the area are gathered by one member of SPREAD²³. In the age group from 6 to 14 we see in the panchayat Atanda 36%, in Parajabadapada 34% and in Bilaput 25% of drop-out²⁴. In Atanda more boys drop-out but in the other panchayats we see an equal division of boys and girls drop-out. It must be said that a lot of schools are still young (*in the visited villages: average 4 years old, except some residential schools*).

In our own definition we can describe 'drop-outs' as:

"Children who are not going to school

- a) but in the past went to school
- b) or are enrolled but attaining school very irregular.

Drop-outs can be discerned from "out-of-school" children: these are the total of children within the age of 6-14 years minus the children enrolled at primary and elementary levels plus the drop-out students of those levels.

3.2 Why they fall?

In all our interviews we can find 61 statements of parents, children and teachers why there is drop-out or irregularity. Of these 61 there are:

- 26 statements that conclude an element of (as reason) 'work and /or care for younger',
- 12 'irregularity of the teacher',
- 7 'children uninterested or want to play',
- 7 'unawareness of parents',
- 4 said it was too difficult in rainy season or lack of government facilities
- 4 'disability or sicknesses'
- 1 because of shame of going to school with smaller children.

²² Pradhan, N. (2005). Primary Education in Orissa: situations and perspectives. A monograph. Post Graduate Department of Education. DAV College, Koraput.

²³ It is not clear how a 'drop-out' has been defined in the collection of these figures.

²⁴ In the panchayat Atanda there are 252 children in total in the age 6-14. Of this 92 children are noted as drop-out, and 31 of these are girls.. In Parajabadapada there are 347 children, whereof 119 drop-outs and of these 61 girls. Bilaput has a total of 387 children, with 99 drop-outs and of these 53 girls.

We cannot generalize these statements or make percentages of it, (as this is not researched in a scientific way). Still we can see the weight of the reason of 'working' and 'caring', followed by irregularity of the teacher. Are these the true reasons, what is behind these reasons? Are they so poor that the child is needed or is it also a matter of not being interested?

As you can see there can be a lot of reasons and more questions accompanying these reasons. In following we will talk about the different dimensions of the drop-out problem.

3.3 Dimensions

A division was made between an (1) economic; (2) social, gender and ability; (3) awareness and attitudinal and (4) school dimension. In these we indicate different themes as experienced in our living and talking with tribals. Also literature findings complement the data.

3.3.1. Economic dimension

- The problem of being affected by projects and displacement²⁵ and poverty

Let us start with an witnessing example from Khillaput. *The people told that the construction of the dam was during rainy season. Because the gate was closed the water flooded all their land in the night. Since they were compensated with a small amount of money, they were obliged to leave the place. They were very afraid; police pushed them out and put their houses on fire. They ran away carrying their children to Malkangiri²⁶ (the government gave them a place to live there) but this land was inappropriate, dense forest, no communication, etc. The children were carried upon the shoulders or in baskets on a yoke. Some people stayed in Malkangiri but again a dam was build that overflowed this area. They came back to Khillaput and started again with what they had.*

²⁵ "Affected" means loss of agricultural land or loss of homestead land. "Displacement" concerns the loss of both.

²⁶ This district is 150 km from Koraput city.

The displacement of tribals or their being affected by developmental projects like *dams as in our researched area* has caused problems of 'landlessness'. Now they struggle to get entitled for own land²⁷. This is not also necessary to be official registered (and thus being able to inscribe children in the school)²⁸. Less or no land results in fewer returns in cultivation: therefore they are confronted with poverty and shortness in food. This in turn can be a reason to do more wage labour or becoming dependant of money lenders.

Here we come to the issue of drop-out. Because parents are poor or leave the village for wage labour, their children have to help in the house work. Mostly girls take care of younger brothers/sisters and do house chores (collecting firewood, getting water, cleaning, washing clothes, etc.); generally boys help with the cattle, go fishing, help in cultivation, etc. When they get older some also do wage labour. If parents are dependant of money lenders, they have to sell their labour at a very low price and in some cases the children also have to work to repay the debts. If the debts are not fully paid when the parents die, they are transferred to the children.

Poverty related elements in drop-out is that shortness of food (sometimes malnutrition and unsafe drinking water) and limited health care are not enabling children to concentrate and do well in study. This can play a role in drop-out²⁹. Poverty can also put limits in continuing studies. Secondary education takes place in the city of a block, so they need means for communication (cycle, money for bus, material, boarding,...). *Think of the difficulties they face when, in displaced area, they have to cross a lake by boat to go to school.* Government has scholarships programs (e.g. for boarding) to help youngsters attain secondary education, but these are still small and, for tribals are mostly forced to think short term (because of the urgency of fulfilling basic needs) they are not experienced in dealing with an amount that is meant for a whole study year, so some spend it all at once. *In the researched tribal villages there were only very few children going to secondary education.*

²⁷ With the help of SPREAD they organise, become aware of their rights, form SHG's and develop micro financing to tackle these problems.

²⁸ This system is operating since British ruled and is limiting communal property of land, what would be very interesting in the case of tribal communities.

²⁹ Although government is supplying food (MDM) for school going children, some state that this is not adequate for a balanced diet (no variation especially not in ashram schools).

Concerning landlessness parents found education important because now they do not have land (or some less) and only through education their children would be able to have a (secure) job in the future. In the past children continued in cultivating the land of their parents. They said they could not give anything to their children to continue their survival. In their culture they have no insurance systems but children take care of parents when they grow old (5 out of 13 parents mentioned this as the secret (or reason) why they have children), so parents believe that education could give them more chances for the better future.

Here again the vicious circle of poverty and drop-out does her work: poor parents need the children for helping in the work, the children drop out of school, have less chances to have a good earning job, so their own children will be needed to earn money, etc. Drop-out can thus have a significant impact on the future life of tribals.

New displacements are a constant threat for the people of the Koraput district. Because the area is rich in natural resources³⁰, government is attracting outside multinationals to develop the economy. This can have a negative effect on education. Because of the lack of good rehabilitation programs, people suffer more from these projects than they did before. In the **rehabilitation programs (Orissa R&R of PAPs policy of 1994) it is noted that government is responsible for the organization of a new school and education after displacement.** But this is not the practice. As administration procedure sometimes takes years and livelihood problems of the tribals increase through the new circumstances, children are more likely to drop-out of school. Other threats are natural disasters like flooding and cyclones that often occur in Orissa. This can destroy school buildings and create more poverty, so influence drop-out.

When we asked elder people who experienced the displacement about how it affected the children, most told us that because of their vulnerability, children suffered more in this difficult period. *For example in Saboen a similar story as in Khillaput was told. An old man said they could not take animals or food because they had to carry their children. In Dangbir one old woman spoke about the changes after the displacement. Before the displacement there was good agriculture and communication to go to Jalaput (city) for education. She tells that villagers were very scared of outsiders.*

³⁰ The area is rich in bauxite used for aluminium, helicopters, etc.

Because of the change (now their panchayat is an island) there is not sufficient food, no good communication to bring sick people to the hospital, and also the cooperation of the villagers has become less. In the past the people had enough food (so she thinks that there would be more time for development programs), proper land and everyone helped with the work of each other. Now the people only work for themselves because it is difficult to have enough. Others say that families were torn apart, because there was not sufficient land to stay together. Because of the problems the good functioning social network (help each other) does not work alike anymore. One man told the people did not know how to deal with the monetary compensation because they were uneducated.

- No advantage of developmental projects

Although projects, like the construction of a mega dam (*like the Macckhund dam*), are meant to serve the economic development, tribal people are barely advantaged by it. *In none of the researched villages (all affected) there is electricity and no one worked for the dam project.* Mostly the involved cooperations bring own people to work or tribals lack a technical training or other relevant education to do the job.

- Misuse by government and caste discrimination carries on

In Orissa education is priority on government's agenda. Still officials do not seem to fulfill the educational needs properly. *As in Dangbir, the teacher should get his payment only after the sarpanch of the village gives his signature (or fingerprint) to the Block Official. Even after complaints by villagers, because the teacher is most of the time absent, there is still a problem of falsifying the signature. So the teacher gets his payment anyway. Parallel with this one man explained us that even if they are educated they still have fewer chances to get a government job, for it is the habit to bribe officials when applying. They are unable to do this because they are poor or they do not know how. This practice can discourage parents and children for being involved in education. So even if there are job reservations and quota for tribals it takes honesty from the implementers to follow these guidelines.*

Maybe there are special reserved places for ST for example also in ashram school. Only when there are vacant places (what barely happens) they can be

filled up for SC. But what about general castes? *They sometimes live in the same area, have the same conditions to live in, but have fewer chances to go to school after Vth grade. Like in the village Bilaput (majority is general caste) it is too difficult and expensive to get in Nandapur.*

- Education and the market

Seen from macro level another aspect of education is the market driven budget. As noted before, privatization of education is threatening the idea of common, equal and qualitative education for all children. This can endanger all good attempts and programs and enlarge the discrimination of tribal children. Also programs that are market driven can block each other (budget stop, different programs in same area, etc.)³¹.

With nowadays globalization, education can get a heavy weight: to be up to date in the fast changing knowledge, ICT evolutions, etc. a lot of involvement, know-how about administration and sometimes competition is asked from youngsters. This can demotivate them to go to school as they have to undergo maybe more than others because of their 'tribal-being'.

Globalization and a differentiation between developed and underdeveloped countries attract educated people from the latter to go abroad. In big cities of India this is common, so valuable 'human resources' leave the places where they are most needed, e.g. for helping tribal drop-out problems.

3.3.2. Social, gender and ability dimension

- Poor social organization and involvement

In the part about displacement (above) some interviewed tribals told their thoughts about how the social network in the village functioned better before displacement. *They told that the urge in fulfilling proper survival needs after displacement prevented them to build a good functioning social network that can carry communal aspects like education.* Literature speaks about poor social control, what can put limits to the motivating of drop-out cases. As we will note (further in this document) that in most villages the influence of the VEC in the village is still minimal.

³¹ For example in 1999, due to the expansion of DPEP to eight new districts, the original 10 blocks (Orissa) of the Janshala program had to be dropped. The entire process of selection had to be redone. [SOURCE](#)

Some voices talk about the creating of a 'dependency culture': because there is hardly involvement and participation in the planning and implementation of developmental programs, they are not sustainable or internalized. Tribals become dependant of others, who 'know what they need' (like government, NGO's, missionaries, etc.)³². As in schools government gives books, clothing, materials, food, etc. we can question if they asked for all this and if they have a chance to realize the value of it³³.

- Older children: more drop-out

Common in tribal villages is that older girls take care of the younger when the mother is working. Older boys help with agricultural work (stronger than young). So we can say that the older children of the family are more vulnerable to drop out of school than younger children.

- Girls less educational chances

Girls are in many ways still more excluded from education than boys. As said, mostly girls have to 'babysit' and do household work. This work is continuous in contrary to agricultural work that is season dependant. So, boys have more chance (time) to study.

Girls face more communication difficulties in reaching school, for secondary school is mostly far away from the village. In their culture it is not a habit for a girl to ride a cycle, to go out in dark alone and it is not easy to cross reservoirs by boat. Fear and dangers from outside world can also be a reason for not going without adults or boys to school outside the village.

Because in Indian traditional culture boys are entitled for heritage and in marriage the girl becomes a part of the boy's family, daughters (even though respected in their qualities) are seen as having less (economical) worth than sons. These trends can also be seen in tribal culture. Why invest in a girl's education if she will go to another family to live and probably won't be able to apply her education? Investment in boys can give bigger return since they are able to go outside the village more easily and will take care of the

³² In Tribal series 1 we read: "Why do we do the things that the tribal can perfectly do himself? The tribals seem to become accustomed to governmental assistance, with the result that he cannot readjust himself easily when particular schemes come to the end. There are cases that tribals start themselves schools and maintain hostels for the students, in a Christian or Buddhists way, but not supported by the government".

³³ Equal thoughts in Tribal series 1.

parents when they are old. A son with a good job and status is therefore more interesting.

In some visited schools (not all!!), one could see girls sitting in the back of the classroom together in group and boys were frequently in the front, giving the most answers to our questions.

One interviewed parent noted that girls, when married, have to stop school but boys don't (but others say also boys stop when married). Girls get married around 13-15 years and boys around 15-17, so girls are mostly excluded from further studies. Her oldest daughter stopped school when she got married, but before this she did not go regular to school as she had to take care of the younger brother and sister (both parents do wage labour).

One headmaster of a residential school told us that he was encouraging the children to marry someone who is educated, for then their own children will be more motivated to go to school when they have the example of both literate parents.

- Drop-out caused by health problems, disability or death in family

Samarikuda, a 12 year old tribal girl from Similiput, dropped out of the village primary school (class III) to take care of her older blind sister. Besides this, she is now doing wage labour to support the family because they face more financial difficulties as the blind girl is not able to work and only has a small government pension (Rs. 100 per month). The blind Soekri did never go to school and is not really being stimulated to learn skills that can help her to become more self-reliant. The mother of the girls did never go in a school building yet (but through the village SHG she did have contact with the teacher) and she felt sad by the idea of not being able to send her youngest daughter to school because of the lack of 'work power'. Still Samarikuda is happy in the situation she is now and has no wish to go to school again. She does her work with pleasure and loves to go to the market on Sunday. For Soekri the parents had a chance to send her to a blind school in Koraput, but they thought it was too far and believed they were the ones to take care of her. Still the mother feels very insecure about the future of Soekri. She is afraid that people would hurt or misuse her, so she is very protective.

Maduzizu is 9, lives in Horugunda and dropped out of school last year. The boy did not finish his Vth class because his mother died. As a single child he has to help his father in the agricultural work. Still, he would like to go to school again as he dreams of a government job.

The father of a disabled (deaf and dumb) boy does not believe that his 12 year old son could succeed in education so he dropped out. Both are afraid of a special school, because he will not be able to express himself. Also because his mother died the boy is needed in the work (he can do a lot). In the village he has many friends with who he can communicate through signs, they understand each other well.

In Mariput, Nilikant Pani is a 14 year old boy who recently got cancer in his leg, dropped out of school because he could not walk towards it and the pain gave him concentration problems. His leg will be amputated. So in future he will not be able to do agricultural work. His parents do not encourage him for education now, because they are scared his situation would get worse. Still, he dreams of studying till standard X and become a teacher. He knows about a special school for disabled in Koraput and would like to go but there is a lack of money. Nevertheless, when his leg will be amputated he will normally get a pension. Let us please pray for these boys.

Ramo is twenty and never went to school. But sure he looks like the most shining falling star of the village. Though he has the syndrome of Down, he is helping his mother in the work by taking care of the goats. He runs around in his village Dangbir, dances as the best and makes people happy.

3.3.3. Awareness and attitudinal dimension

- Awareness of the value of education

Because education (as we know it now in mainstream society) was never a part of tribal culture, it took a longer period for this group to realize its importance³⁴ and "the school" must still be something rather strange for tribals. Because only few parents enjoyed education, we can question if they know what education actually is. They only have an idea of its importance

³⁴ Being part of poor and deprived sections of society, the people were naturally more concerned about the schemes with immediate and touchable benefits.

through the (awareness) programs of government and NGO's and through seeing educated people having more chances than them. So in a tribal village, children do not have much literate examples, *you can rarely see a near adult with a book, reading a newspaper, doing administration, etc.*³⁵ *Still of 10 asked parents there were only 3 parents that never went in the school. One of these parents told he did not feel welcome. Other parents go now and then to see if their children are present.*

- Child image

In our research we searched for the 'child image' tribals have. We asked "what do you think is the biggest difference between children and adults and what is the same". *Of 20 statements 8 contained an element of 'working': they cannot work as hard as adults. On the contrary, one parents group said children work more sincere and active than adults. 7 mentioned elements of 'education': children get the possibility for education, are more aware. 2 told us parents have to take care of children now and later children will take care of the parents. One parent saw no difference; another parent said he was an example for his child. Only few said that children play and enjoy childhood.*

From this we can point at the importance working and education has in the visited villages.³⁶ Therefore we think that also in education the working aspect this should be taken in account³⁷.

- Importance and expected changes through education

Let us listen to what teachers and parents find important in education and expect to change through it in their (community) life. Also this is relevant when we think of tribal education. *Mentioned answers of teachers are: use better techniques and seeds in agriculture, know the different government facilities plus rules and policies, be less exploited by non-tribals, better*

³⁵ If we see this from psychological view (theory of social learning and the significance of examples) we can expect that children without examples are probably less motivated for studying than children with literate examples. Off course we may not generalize this, for illiterate parents can motivate their children sometimes more than literate.

³⁶ To compare I can image that in our countries more parents would mention the playing unproblematic childhood and school going aspect. There would be less talking about 'working'.

³⁷ Researchers from COATS (Council of Analytic tribal Studies Koraput) recognize this and believe that in residential schools there should be classes of handicraft, agriculture in practice, etc. In the past this was done in residential schools but now it is almost totally fade out.

hygiene, good behavior, less alcoholism, able to make journeys outside the district, less superstition, better management of the environment, understand the news, less selfishness in the community, less poverty.

Parents answered: get knowledge, learn read and write, more chances for job/business, earn more, go outside the district, better agriculture, wisdom, less discrimination of women, more respect, better care when parents are old, doing more things for community but also for humanity, less blind belief, self-reliant, understand news, knowing how to present their problems to government, know rights, better life and community life. In two cases education was very important for parents as both their children are disabled (polio and physical) and because they were physically too weak to farm, they should develop mentally to become self-reliant, have a job and take care of the parents when they are old.

In one case a woman told us about the problem of 'quacks', or unqualified practitioners of medicine, that take advantage of the blind belief and ignorance of tribal people about health facilities. When her daughter's legs suddenly became paralyzed she listened to the educated persons in the village who encouraged her to go directly to the hospital and not to the quacks. So, educated people make others aware of suspicious practices. Sometimes tribal people do not even know about alternatives to quacks, misusing moneylenders, etc.

The teacher of Bonur spoke about the discrimination of scheduled caste people by tribals. Also this moral issue can get a place in education if it wants to be more than reading and writing.

- Why education is important for tribals: literature findings

In addition with the above part, in literature we found different reasons why education can be fruitful for tribals.

- Some state it is the mayor key to future happiness and economic security. Poverty can be transformed: e.g because forests (habitations of tribals) are being cut to breed monocultures like teakwood, the natural diversity (which is necessary for the tribals for food, medicine plants) has become very poor. So when tribals have diseases they are have to count on mainstream healthcare. But lacking money, they have to lend. This is causing bondage or more poverty. Or there is no good communication to get health care. Education is also

- necessary to know how to deal with modern medicines: one has to be able to read the literature, correct amounts know and understand side effects, etc.
- Knowledge of rights (basic health facilities, information, gender equality, etc.) can be spread through education.
 - Some authors state tribals point that there is a need of being literate. Most of the tribes want to have the possibilities of mainstream societies for (1) health, (2) infrastructure (good housing, roads for transport), (3) luxury products (hair oil, bangles, etc.).
 - Literacy is seen as an essential feature of human dignity and self-image, a window to the world of knowledge and prelude to modernization³⁸.
 - Some tribals have customs that can be seen as negative: alcoholism, unhygienic habits, humiliating perceptions about pollutions and rituals to purify, fear for unscientific events (spirits, sorcery), marriage by capture, social discrimination (clan or caste superiority and inferiority), intra- or inter-tribe struggle, exploitation by non-tribals (money-lenders, traders, thieves) abusing their ignorance (knows no mathematics) and honesty, and manipulating their myths to own advantage cheating government. Sensitizing their awareness by teaching could enable them to discern true from false, good from bad, the just from exploiter. And such knowledge could trigger motivation to change or *develop* own or group behavior, trickle deeper as sense of value coming up for their rights, and take precautions against a bad environment.
 - In the context of today's world ecology and the care for our environment has become an important issue. We see that also tribals are confronted with new lifestyles that are inherent bad for nature (plastics, paper, chemicals). These people should know about the harm these products can cause to environment, humans and animals.
 - Education is necessary for the sustainability of other development efforts

For government and countries sake there are also some advantages:

- Education is good to overcome social disparity among different sections of the society and strengthen integrated national

³⁸ Tribal and indigenous people of India. Problems in tribal education with special references to Orissa.

- development (distinctions on account of caste and class are sharp and persistent)³⁹.
- There are huge costs of 'failing children'. Governments are fully aware from research findings that what happens to children in the early years, within the family and within other forms of care and education, significantly determines their positive or negative growth or development. This in turn determines the cost or contribution to society spread over the rest of their lives.⁴⁰ So care and education is necessary for the benefit of the whole structure or, put in another light, for the confirmation of the discriminating system⁴¹.
 - Education is the key to socio-economic development (4F) and is necessary for the sustainability of other development efforts⁴² (don't give the fish but learn them how to fish).
 - Attitude towards education

Maybe parents know why education can be helpful in life; still there are voices that parents would neglect the encouragement of their children for education. *During our research some teachers and NGO members said people do not send their children to school, do not think about their future but are used to think short term because of the urgency of basic needs.* It is possible that this finds its reason in the ignorance about education from parent's side and their not being involved in school. Or maybe some don't believe in education if they see others are not really being benefited (no jobs).

(4F) In literature we found that tribals sometimes have apathy towards education because they think that the present system of education alienates one from honest labour. It infuses false vanity into the mind of an educated, and as a result, (s)he avoids manual work⁴³.

³⁹ Tribal series 6

⁴⁰ Pradhan, N. (2005). Primary Education in Orissa: situations and perspectives.Koraput. (report from UN 1998).

⁴¹ MASSCHELEIN

⁴² Pradhan, N. (2005). Primary Education in Orissa: situations and perspectives.Koraput. (report from UN 1998).

⁴³ Critical opinions say: 'school deprives the child of real life experience and community life. It often bound children to a stationary situation. As a result they lost the appreciation for work. Thus the dignity of labour in our country was lost. Education often becomes a dehumanizing process'. (Education for all in tribal areas. A report', 1993, Agragamee).

Or is the neglecting because they don't believe their children would do well in school? Or maybe it just does not interest them. Or maybe the children do not want to go...Or... Only God knows.

In our interviews all 5 statements of school going children confirmed their parents motivated them to go to school (some said they threatened if they don't go). But if there was work to do or the teacher was not there, they did not go. Only in Khillaput one boy said that even if the teacher is not there they eat their MDM and play in the school. Parents said that when the teacher comes they always send their child and stimulated to do home study.

Another attitude towards education can be in the sense of creating 'status'. As mentioned before 'having education' can increase someone's standing, especially that of sons. Knowing your way in the literate world is knowing something more than the others: e.g. being able to go to a big city outside the state (for a literate can read the signs to reach it). *In some villages people referred to a sort of competition in the sense: my children are educated and go to the big city to study, my child has a place in the residential school⁴⁴. From talks with others we could make up that there were feelings of inferiority within the group of illiterates. So education and drop-out can create differentiation in a village.*

In literature we found that tribal youth, after contact with formal mainstream education and/or culture, sometimes jettison their own culture, imitate non-tribals and look down on their own people⁴⁵. They are attracted to live in the cities, so the strengthening of the community through education misses its purpose. *Of the interviewed school going stars 5 of 8 wanted (in the future) to live in the city (2 said because of good education). All 4 falling stars preferred the village (one both). Four interviewed teachers were born and brought up in the village (or area) where they now teach. And they were very motivated to involve themselves for these children. So let us not make generalizations.⁴⁶*

⁴⁴ There is a limited number of places in ashram schools (mostly 40 places)

⁴⁵ Mahipal, B. (1985), Tribal education in India, Cultural Survival Quarterly, issue 9.3

⁴⁶ Also interaction with mainstream society can create chances to become aware of the worth, strengths and difficulties of ones own culture (as I can witness as a Belgian girl being in India). So we should not deprive tribals from contact with modern mainstream society in order to not jettison or loose their own culture. Education can offer an alternative view on the mainstream world for tribals and make the children see and

In some talks parents thought of teaching as something that they were not able to be involved in. Teaching is to be done by a teacher and by no one else since school is equal to reading and writing and they can not do this. Still most parents tell their children stories and (mostly after explaining the value of it) were open to the idea of telling stories in the classroom...

- Shame

Shame is a face of different cases concerning education. *In our research a 10 year old girl revealed that she did not want to go to school because then they would sit in the same class of the small children of 6 years. This was the case in villages where the school was built recently and the children did not have the opportunity to go to school before (Kondragodiput). While staying in the villages we could also observe that girls around that age are proud to be initiated in the work all grown up women do in the village (collecting firewood and water, cleaning, etc.). It is also the age to get ready to be married and (in our interpretation of tribal culture) maybe a good wife is supposed to know the household work. Related to shame of not going to school with younger, data shows that within tribal groups repetition has a high percentage and can be a motive to drop out.*

Another face of shame: Sabitri (Dangbir), who dropped out of a residential school because it was too far from her home, was ashamed of not going to school. All her friends started going to the new school in the village. After one year she also enrolled in this new school.

Sometimes shame also seemed to arise during our interviews. One parent said he could not understand the questions because he wasn't educated. The question 'what do you think is the biggest difference between children and adults' also raised many eyebrows.

- (Dis)interest

Our first question for children was "what are you doing most on a regular day". Of 8 school going children we had 16 statements. 9 were about working. 5 statements were about school and 2 about playing. So in the life world of the interviewed children working is a relevant aspect. It was clear that some

understand the things they wouldn't without qualitative education (history, religion, awareness about media influence, etc.).

children wanted to work. Like Somra from Saboen who said to drown himself if he would be forced to go to school: he wanted to work in agriculture and was not interested in school. Still other drop-outs wanted to go again to school like Maduziza from Horugunda who had to help (as only son) in the work because his mother died. Silent he dreams of a government job in the future.

3.3.4 School dimension

- The teacher

Concerning drop-out the first issue in this dimension is teacher absenteeism. This is one of the biggest problems of tribal education. Like in Dangbir the teachers only comes few days in a month. This can have different reasons. However, of the interviewed teachers 6 out of 9 said to come every day. But then when we asked parents in 9 villages only in 3 villages the teacher was regular and came almost every day. In 6 villages the teacher was not regular (only in two cases we could verify this by asking the teacher of the village and they told about their irregularity). In our researched area the mentioned reasons were:

- (1) Inaccessibility: one teacher had to come by boat, bike (what is very expensive) and cycle (difficult in rainy season). One teacher (Homonjur) had to swim a river in rainy season (and this was a reason why he did not come on serious rainy days).
- (2) There are few facilities (boarding, food and health facilities) in the village to stay.
- (3) Low pay: EGS teachers and para-teachers earn only Rs.1500 per month. This is a very low budget to live, so most have to do other jobs to maintain their family. Also irregularity of payment is a big problem in Orissa. Sometimes it takes more than a half year for a teacher to get his salary.
- (4) Poor quality: some state that teachers do not get a proper training. So even if a building, books, materials are present in the education, they must have knowledge about the qualitatively implementation of it. One EGS teacher of Homonjur told us he does not have knowledge on how to teach children in higher classes (IVth, Vth). The coworker from the BRC is barely coming and only to supervise. Happily he gets tips from a nearby headmaster.

- (5) No motivation: laziness, not knowing why to teach, not taking good care of the children.
- (6) Workload, no time: due to training programs, surveys, changes, administration, inspection, etc. Two teachers of a residential school in Jogabat said they had to help in other governmental development work and election work. They also needed to accompany sick children to the hospital, or take them to Nandapur to pass examinations.
- (7) Personal problems: in a hamlet of Similiput (Bilaput) the teacher has a drinking problem; he beats the children and is since 8 months absent (sick due to alcohol overload). In another village children were afraid of the beating teacher as well.
- (8) High teacher-pupil ratio: single teacher schools are still common in tribal area. For the teacher this creates a heavy workload because the group is big and consisting of different levels, what can demotivate. In Honomonjur the EGS teacher is responsible for 40 children. During two years the headmaster of the residential school in Jogabat was the only teacher for 134 children.

Critics⁴⁷ say that often only the teacher gets blamed, but villagers do not complain about other governmental persons (e.g. agricultural loan givers) if they do not come regular. With the latter they see more immediate results, what is not the case in education. Another critic question is that, besides complaining, villagers should do more efforts to help the teacher.

Off course there are also good practices and examples. Like in Similiput the teacher sends out children to get the absent children. The teacher of Ontabir is another optimistic example. Almost 17 years ago he came from Cuttack to live with his family in the village (as the BDO⁴⁸ requests every tribal primary school teacher). The children come regular, except sometimes when harvest or when needed in house work. He is satisfied with the quality of books and the curriculum, though he mentioned that government initiatives are not always well implemented. With success he stimulates the children to go for further education and he wants to make the children aware about what happens in India and the world. He has a good contact with the parents through the VEC, PTA and MTA. He feels part of the community, participates in everything, helps and is being helped, he loves the people!

⁴⁷ Meeting CYSD

⁴⁸ Block Development Officer

After our interviews we can witness the good will of teachers and their motivation: most say they want to teach tribal children to make them aware, to give them good education facilities (for they don't have the advantage of the city) or wanting to contribute to the development of their own panchayat.

Of the interviewed children we have 14 statements about how they felt about the teacher (also drop-out were asked about their school past): 4 told us they were not afraid of the teacher and likes him, 2 were afraid (because of beating), 3 could tell everything, 2 did not tell personal things, 3 children said the teacher does not teach well and cheats the villagers.

- Language

(4F) Tribal children only know their respective mother tongues (monolinguals)⁴⁹. When they are admitted into primary schools they might get dumbfounded initially as they fail to communicate with teachers, who too lack knowledge of the language of their pupils. Students of one tribal community are also sometimes unable to communicate with their peers belonging to other tribal communities.

In literature most belief that teachers (from outside) should first learn the language or speak it as mother tongue. There are different opinions about:

- (1) Learning in the mother tongue during the lower primary stage and gradually evolve to the official languages with the fading of the mother tongue. Here tribal language serves as a bridge to learn the official speech since the latter is generally the medium of instruction and examination at the Secondary, Higher Secondary and University level of education. So adoption of tribal script should not be encouraged, that is likely to create more confusion and make the language problem unwieldy.
- (2) Simultaneous learning of both tribal and official language and protect the mother tongue in the complete education is another conviction⁵⁰. Language implicates a way of looking to the world and possesses specific cultural features. Moreover, being stimulated to speak the

⁴⁹ There are more than 270 different tribal languages in India.

⁵⁰ The Constitution of India, under Article 350A, affirms that every state must provide adequate facilities for instruction of pupils in their mother tongues. Still state governments are ignoring this prescription for tribal people. (Mahipal, B. (1985), Tribal education in India, Cultural Survival Quarterly, issue 9.3)

own language can create self confidence and a valued place in the society⁵¹.

- Curriculum

Due to the immense variation in tribes⁵², it has always been an enigma to educationists to find out appropriate forms of language, physical and pedagogic infrastructure, modes of instruction, contents and syllabi for tribal education. Literature shows the general opinion that the curriculum is irrelevant for tribals and textbooks are unsuitable to their culture because mostly they are being written by non-tribal authors who lack comprehensive knowledge about tribal societies. The books contain subject matters that are beyond the pale of imagination and comprehension of tribal children. And let us not forget the 'hidden curriculum', or the customs in the classroom, the attitudes of teachers towards tribals, girls and boys, the sphere between non-tribals and tribals (e.g. in secondary education): that is not always visible⁵³.

Anyhow, many efforts have been made to develop an appropriate curriculum. Accents are on:

- (1) Prevention of alienation from traditional tribal culture and ethnicity: the home environment of tribal children is natural, picturesque, serene and flexible, whereas the school atmosphere is sometimes very formal, serious and time-bound. The content of books is mostly filled with examples applicable for Orissa's coastal children but not for tribals. They should have own examples (about forests, pictures of their culture, etc.). The curriculum should be made relevant for these children.
- (2) Include tribal activities: tribal dancing⁵⁴, singing, stories are taught by the teacher to motivate the children. Education should tickle intrinsic motivating.

⁵¹ Researchers from COATS think there are some languages similar to each other so there could be made books in at least 3 tribal languages in the Koraput District.

⁵² India has about 600 tribes with own languages, dialects and specific cultural heritage.

⁵³ According to a tribal author teachers mostly do not understand tribal students. To the teachers they appear untidy, reinforcing their biases against tribals. Tribal youths felt that teachers did not teach them in the schools because they believed that if they did, they tribal students would no longer be dependant on them. (Mahipal, B. (1985), Tribal education in India, Cultural Survival Quarterly, issue 9.3).

⁵⁴ In Tribal Series 7 we read dance has a big importance in their societies: especially social participation and auto-intoxication. It is suggested to adopt it in schools (preservation and propagation). Though a tribe (like the Parajas) lags behind in the sphere of education they are far advanced in respect of dance and music, according to the authors Tribal Series 8.

- (3) Adjust the school calendar to tribal festivals, harvest time: since children will be absent anyway, it is better to put the holidays during this periods⁵⁵. The problem is that mainstream teachers have their own different calendar and festivals and are resisting this idea.

Interesting in this theme can be our question what the interviewed children like the most in school: *study, play, stories, singing, reading and writing, dancing. Also interviewed falling stars liked school for these things (reading, writing, English, playing). Other things they speak about to the teacher or makes them happy: fish, hunt birds, play, dance, sing, stories, work, study in the town, market, walking around and look at others, eat good food when guests come, football, rope skipping, ploughing. One falling star boy was most happy in the season that there was not much work and he has fewer duties. Then he enjoyed the festival and playing. The parents group told their children talk especially about the food, dancing and singing in the school when they are at home.*

Some did not like: *maths, irregular teacher, beating teacher, fighting and a disabled boy did not like dancing. Five interviewed stars told us they are few playing materials and playground and they would like to have this in school.*

In future they wanted to become: *teacher (most), government official or do service jobs (second most), farmer, doctor, engineer, preschool service, doing small works.*

Their parents dream for their children's future: *have service jobs, study well (one educated mother was very concrete: wanted her child to go to an English medium school in Jalaput, then do Ba+3), become doctor, engineer, teacher, do job in dam project, become good people, earn more, live in city because of facilities and two parents say it is there own choice (but parents have the duty to provide good education). Two other parents saw educated youngsters from the village or people from SPREAD as examples for their children. Surprising is that few parents want their children to become farmer like they are. Do they think farming is of less worth or do they simple fear good chances in agriculture as they have less and less land? One parents group said the children have to try first to be educated and to get a job and secondary do traditional work.*

⁵⁵ Mahipal, B. (1985), Tribal education in India, Cultural Survival Quarterly, issue 9.3

When we think of a curriculum for tribals these aspirations should be kept in mind.

- Infrastructure

As noted in literature, the provision of infrastructural facilities often fails. Sometimes it takes a very long period for a school to be constructed (*for Dangbir it took 3 years*) and the quality is poor (only one room, no tables or chairs, hardly materials, etc.). *Of all the visited schools (4 EGS, 2 primary, 3 ashrams) there were none with chairs and tables for the children, few had two rooms (but mostly only one was used for schooling), only in primary schools and ashrams there was an office room for the teacher and most schools had a tin roof (what makes the space very warm). In Honomonjur there is no building for the EGS school. They use the community building (stocked with food).*

Another aspect is the look of schools, which not blend well into the tribal environment. According to a tribal author⁵⁶ the buildings are alien, often ugly and neglected. Water and toilet facilities are still poor. The school should be made attractive with drawings, flowers and trees, cultivation and other tribal elements.

- The VEC

It is worth mentioning that in none of the interviews people talked about the VEC, except one teacher, when we did not ask about it. Still in our questions this could have been an expected element in answering. So we can doubt the weight and influence of the VEC in the villages. When (in later interviews) we asked about the VEC, most respondents told us the VEC, MTA and PTA functions well (but these answers mostly came from teachers we did not have much possibility to ask parents, only in Bilaput parents said the VEC does not function). Teachers also said some parents come to the school to see if their children are there and to look what he is teaching.

If we asked parents about the contact they have with the teacher³ of 11 villagers told they do not have a good contact: in Dokanput the parents group told they never went to the school, did not know what the teacher taught and what happened with the MDM money. In two other villages villagers complained about the teacher's irregularity but nothing changed. In the 8

⁵⁶ Mahipal, B. (1985), Tribal education in India, Cultural Survival Quarterly, issue 9.3

other cases the parents said they talked now and then with the teacher and sometimes go in the school. One VEC president said that through the VEC he has good contact and one parent had contact through the SHG.

3.3.5 Conclusion

In this part we tried to clarify the mystery of falling stars through the discerning of different dimensions. Maybe some scratch their head as the issue is very complex. Anyhow, it is difficult to make generalizations of what is the reason of drop-out. Some statements even speak against each other and all cases are unique in their sort.

Still we can sense some tendencies:

- Many of the reasons of drop-out concern 'working'. This can be related to poverty, landlessness, cultural tradition and/or disinterest in school.
- Another reason large in frequency is 'teacher absenteeism'. This in turn is related to accessibility, payment problems, poor facilities and infrastructure, gap between different cultures and languages, involvement, missing of good training, etc.

These two points can be linked to the government and to the tribal villagers, which we discuss further.

We cannot say there is one solution to the drop-out problem, as all dimensions are related, so when searching solutions one should keep these different aspects in mind.

In the following parts we to take a look at the 'right perspective' and continue with what can motivate tribals and teachers to be really involved in education.

4 The right balance

From our interviews we can say that most concerned tribals are interested in education. We saw many reasons why education is opportune for them, for countries sake and in name of development. Still we do not state education or being educated is per definition good⁵⁷. It depends how one perceives it and that is always subjective.

Also here we want to give our own subjective perception and hope to make a contribution in the development of education.

⁵⁷ Also in literate countries there are many problems, also evolved because of literacy and education.

As mentioned before, article 48 of the Constitution of India (1947) guarantees every child the right to free and compulsory education until the age of 14. In 1992 India ratified the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989' which speaks of the right to education (art.28 and art.29). Thus if anyone wants, needs or demands education, government promises to help with the provision. One has *the choice* for it - as a right is per definition not equal to a plight (but related to it). This point is critical: is education a right or is it compulsory (and not a matter of choice)?

We must see 'rights' in right perspective. A right is not a gift. It is about balanced responsibilities: efforts from side of government (programs, schemes) and from side of the people (involvement of parents, VEC, PTA, MTA, etc.). So here is the relation with 'plights' or duties. And as the sociologist Bronfenbrenner once said "it takes a whole community to raise a child", the balance should be carried by the whole community (civil society). And isn't education a lifetime involvement? Then also here we can point at duties in fulfilling this responsibility.

The right to education can be described as a 'survival right' (job possibilities), 'developmental right' (develop talents, identity, etc.) and 'protective right' (protection from child labour, etc.). If we question where the interest of tribals in education comes from, we experienced (in the research) that parents mainly think of education as something to safeguard their survival in the future. Is it because their being exploited, poverty and decreasing forests and lands they need education? Then the need seems one sided. Do they have a real choice or are they becoming dependant on education to survive? Does education then serves true development? Is this motivating for tribals to be really involved in education?

In following parts we search for answers on these questions.

5 What can motivate us for true development?

5.1 Falling stars bring luck

First of all we believe that it is not motivating when we see a person or a child only in terms of schooling. In our nowadays society education seems very important. As Belgians in India we experienced this also here: how many

people asked us what qualification we had (mostly one of the first questions). Also in our countries education has become a life long process (or a life long burden for some). Education is institutionalized and more and more a tradable market good. Knowledge is power, some state.

Let us be conscious about this evolution. Education alone, knowledge alone is not enough to have a better world. Does education change something or does it keep operating in the same (sometimes discriminating) societal framework. Is knowledge *truthful power, can it really empower one?* And does a qualification say something about the heart of a human being? About his/her creativity, humor, tears, etc. Is only love truthful, eternal power, empowering all, goal and means?

Let us take a look at the qualities of children who drop out of school. Are they so pity, or do they have possibilities that school going children do not have? As an educated belonging to another culture I can not compare myself to an uneducated tribal child. Still I can imagine that drop-outs can develop working skills maybe better than children who are in school almost the whole day. Physically they can become strong and learn endurance. Drop-out girls can learn good caring capacities. Because of her contribution to the constant watching over the child, the child is safe, held in warm arms walking around in the village, has human contact and creates a bond with the relative.⁵⁸ Can we also say that making a sort of sacrifice by caring for younger in stead of going to school can be seen as a high moral value? Then congratulations and thanks to the falling stars!

Some voices speak about the developmental limitations children face in nowadays (imperfect) education, through attaining school most of the day, listening to what only one teacher says and have to be quiet, asking permission to speak, etc. Off course a good pedagogy can solve a lot but we can imagine that living without school can preserve a sort of spontaneous character, a uniquely flourished member of the tribe.

Again we do not want to make generalizations but rather shine a positive light on the existence of drop-outs and appreciate also these children for who they are.

⁵⁸ Vygotsky, a prominent psychologist, talks about 'the zone of the nearby development' or being around and learning from children who are a little bit older and further developed is a stimulant for the own development.

5.2 Catching falling stars

Second point: we can imagine that it is not motivating for (or in general so called 'underdeveloped' people) if only the to develop towards a fixed, abstract and subjective conc 'development'. Who decides what development is? Are the 'not underdeveloped' then more developed? ⁵⁹



There are efforts to involve tribals in development through participation methods (PRA). Still we have to be conscious about the dependency locals still have of the experts, who have to learn them and monitor the methods (and the language of rights, etc.) ⁶⁰. Then can we talk of real local knowledge? Does it stay framed within the expert framework? Does real change gets space?

In our perception developing is something people do together (who can develop alone?) in particular contexts. Developing together means dialogue and communication (for we are human beings), and true dialogue means being together, respect, listening to each other, patience, forgiveness, actions where both are involved in.

Because dialogue (e.g. about development) of unique human beings in a specific context is *not predictable* we can not give a definition of what development should be for particular tribals in their area. Anyhow with nowadays globalization we are given the change to communicate, develop and love our neighbors together over the whole world! Hallelujah! - That is why we are here in India-.

Our contribution (from personal dialogue and experiences) can shine a light on the way of developing education here in Koraput and give particular suggestions. Core of our suggestions is (1) bringing people together for dialogue and honest contact and (2) giving space for the strengthening of tribal identity, for we believe that in dialogue one must have roots, know for what one stands, etc. So a ray of light is put on what people outside the

⁵⁹ Parallel with this we can ask questions with the concept "backwardness" (or underdevelopment). In Tribal Series 1 we read: "Who is backward – the simple honest tribesman or the merchant who exploits him? The creative artist at her tribal loom, the gentle mother with her child among the hills, or the inventor of the atom bomb which may destroy her and the world? Self-reliant cooperative tribes or our individualistic industrial society?"

⁶⁰ Masschelein, J.

villages can undertake around education in order to develop together with the tribals from remote villages. One suggestion that was researched in our study, namely storytelling by villagers in the classroom, is worked out in detail and another suggestion is mentioned in an explorative way (disari's in the classroom).

5.3 Suggestions

In the big sky of solutions of drop-out we want to make a small selection (from literature, interviews and own opinion) that can be valuable in taking actions in today's context:

- *In our interviews some teachers said that more residential schools would mean a great deal in solving the drop-out problem. Also giving uniforms, materials and buildings for EGS schools should be provided by government. One teacher said only parental motivation is the solution. Two parents said there should be help in the work and the teacher should be punished if he is not regular.*
- promote institutions like the VEC and MTA to function stronger; making use and strengthening of the existing tribal programs and initiatives in stead of inventing the fire over and over;
- Special attention to the teacher: welcome him/her to be a part of the community⁶¹, let the villagers appoint him through the VEC (as in some tribes it was a custom to bring outsiders to the village to tell them about the outside world/tribes⁶²) and provide qualitative training and monitoring;

⁶¹ According to experienced researchers from the tribal museum the traditional systems (before independence) had good institutions (trusts) in tribal villages: everyone helped each other and was involved voluntary (e.g. in building a school) because they felt the need. They demanded the education so all were closely involved. The teacher was like a god: he constructed human beings, good persons; the quality of education was reflected in the child, so parents saw it and respected him. He was part of the community, people gave him food, he had position... Now people have less respect for the teacher, he is brought in through government, who organizes everything and gives salary: (s)he is an employee of government. So there is less respect and involvement of the community.

⁶² A form of education in the past is that some tribes had the custom of bringing an outsider to impart education. The practice was probably linked to the community's desire to prepare itself with some background knowledge of the outside community with whom it had to interact or simply to know about the other community. But this practice was discontinued due to the takeover of education by formal agencies. This fact is important in taking notice of the importance of the self-management of tribes to organize education. (Tribal Issues in India, ed. D.C Sah, Yatindra Singh Sisodia, Rawat Publications, 2004.) According to the author of Tribal Series 1: "the most characteristic systems of natural tribal education are destroyed by our education programs which, in fact, would succeed better if they would regard the old institutions as allies and not as rivals and would work through them. Even the humble medicine man can be enlisted as an ally to assist the progress of modern medicine".

- Context specific interventions without overseeing the evolutions in the state;
- Crèches to give girls the possibility to release from care responsibilities (e.g. older people can take care or jobs can be created in the panchayat for tribals);
- Involve tribals in the designing of textbooks and school materials; in the solving of the drop out problem, etc.⁶³
- Another idea is bringing the classroom outside the school. In 1981-1982 there was a survey of 200 primary schools in the tribal belts of Ganjam and Koraput districts of Orissa. They found 193 schools not operating at all. Only 7 schools run by tribal teachers under the shade of trees in the villages situated at the top of a hill were functioning.
- Involve tribals in jobs, programs, monitoring, etc. In tribal series 1 we read: "it is possible that education brought within a tribe can give the effect that they feel as there is kept an eye on them. Some call it an anxiety complex. They may feel backward if they are confronted with 'educated outsiders' who live a different and 'developed' life."⁶⁴ The author suggest there should be tribal officials in stead of outsider non-tribals who intrude the tribes. This also gives a sense of pride and confidence to their fellows and encourages them to hope that there may be similar opportunities for their children.
- Include working activities in the curriculum: agriculture, cleaning the school, etc.

5.4 Developing the other side

Let us not forget what people from outside the villages can undertake to develop together in education concern. Here some ideas:

- In the state general curriculum there could be learning elements about tribal culture, dances, music, skills, etc. in a respectful, open and experiencing way. Discovering another (alternative) way of living than your own, can give insights, can move someone to change or to take actions to make something better.⁶⁵ Also special efforts can be

⁶³ As Elwin, a well-known name in the field of anthropological research in India says: we must look, if we can, at the problems through tribal eyes and from the tribal point of view.

⁶⁴ Like Nehru stated: "it was far better to send a totally uneducated man who has passes no examination, so long as he goes to these people with friendship and affection and lives as one of them."

⁶⁵ Dive in an alternative way of living is taking distance of your own, what make one see own customs, thinking and acting more clearly. 'The proper' and 'the strange' start communicating. One will question

- made to make children aware of the discrimination of tribals and a respectful attitude towards them.
- Why not involve students of Koraput city in tribal literacy: programs can be set up to go to villages⁶⁶ in small groups, where (e.g. 12 year old) pupils can read stories to the tribal children, help them with reading and writing, telling them about their life, etc. Tribal children can teach them fishing, making food plates of leaves, tell stories, dancing, show the forests and learn together about it, etc. And the other way around (tribals coming to the city) is also possible.
 - Put vulnerable first...: according to Prof. Annamalai⁶⁷ we ought to look first for good education for these disadvantaged people in our 'mainstream' society. So the right education for tribals is closer to the right education in India as a whole, as the majorities are the disadvantaged.

5.5 Storytelling

In our research we explored the idea of parents telling stories in the classroom.

Why this idea? There are three reasons:

(1) Because tribes have remained stable and well functioning over centuries, they must have had their own form of imparting essential knowledge to their children and youth. Since many of the tribes have only a dialect and no written language, most of the education was conducted through non-literacy or non-reading methods. The information needed is to be disseminated orally and memorized by the younger. This was probably the only way of continuing the tribe life and can be seen as a form of education and training. Partly orally education can therefore be interesting in their line of development.

(2) We believe that education is more than literacy and knowing administrative and marketing knowledge. It has a humanizing component. Not only children and teachers must be involved but also parents and other villagers, as it takes a whole village to raise a child. And since adult villagers

about his own and can be deliberated from own rigid habits (Meijer, W. and Vancrombrugge, H.- Dutch and Belgian pedagogues).

⁶⁶ Communication and facilities is not easy but possible! We Western people reached and survived more than well!

⁶⁷ Article tribal education

mostly do not know (from own experience) what education actually is, why shouldn't we involve them (off course if they want this) in the classroom e.g. by telling stories, for this is a specific cultural trait of them. This can be the first step of more involvement, more contact with the teacher, of letting voices be heard and throwing ideas how education should be like in their understanding. Children would maybe be more motivated to go to the school and do their best as the parents are also involved⁶⁸. Also it is possible that the respect for the parents and their own culture would grow.

(3) Related to this humanizing aspect of education, we found that the stories, told by tribals, contain a moral message, practical life knowledge and/or historical facts. This can be valuable in education if we choose it to be more than reading and writing.

For example⁶⁹:

- *One old man told a story about a crow who wants to drink water from a pot but can not reach the it. He puts stones in this pot so the water comes higher and he can drink.*
- *A young man told a story of a young simple farmer who was not smart and who had no good skills (even not to plough) but because he believed in himself and just went on in his adventures, in the end he became the new king.*
- *A young girl told about a ratking who married four beautiful birds and when he pretended to be dead he found the woman who loved him the most because she was the only one who thought of him and not of own wealth and heritage.*
- *Then one story was about a king who offered his son for a god but this son got new life because of the love of his wife. Three women sung beautiful songs in between the telling.*
- *One young literate woman tells children about having no land because of the displacement.*

In our interviews we asked parents and tribal groups if they tell stories plus the content, what they thought of the classroom idea and if they were prepared to do it. We also asked the opinion of children and teachers. *It could be observed that, when the question was asked, mostly smiles came up*

⁶⁸ We don't think children would be ashamed of their parents, because we experienced mostly a good atmosphere and respect between children and parents.

⁶⁹ Three stories have been noted down. Interested people can email me for this.

(in the sometimes serious interviews). It was as if they were surprised and appealed of the idea, or maybe some had a little bit shame. Maybe some felt respected in the question (we did not hide our positive attitude towards their storytelling). Unfortunately, because of time constraint, we were not able to put this idea in practice (conditions did not allow it because of teacher's absence).

Of 8 children 6 told their parents tell stories. In 13 of the 16 interviews parents said they tell stories to the children: when they cry, before bedtime, if they ask, around the fire. Some told us they learned it from their own (grand)parents. In three cases parents did not tell stories. One case is a Christian village that left most traditional stories and festivals when they became Christian⁷⁰. Two other cases were parents who did not have time to tell stories.

In 11 cases we asked parents if they were prepared to tell stories in the classroom. 8 of 11 were prepared. The other three had no time (wage labour), were shy or told that teaching is to be done by the teacher alone. Still most parents were at least interested.

6/7 teachers were open to the idea but two of that six did not think it was necessary (enough involvement because the VEC works well and because parents do not have time). One teacher thought parents are not intelligent enough to teach in a classroom.

5.6 Disari's in the classroom

Another idea was bringing the disari in the classroom for this is an important cultural traditional treat of tribals. The disari is the 'doctor' or medicine (wo)man of the village who use local herbal medicines and mostly practice spiritual rituals. Although in their tradition the disari-ship is brought over on a relative (mostly son), nowadays there are changes. In literature some state that the younger generation has lost credibility in the practice or feel ashamed⁷¹. Also because of forests decrease, medicinal

⁷⁰ There are voices that Christians would destroy tribal culture, but we can doubt the depth and influence of Christianity: e.g. in this village there were a lot of problems because of severe alcoholism and unwillingness to work.

⁷¹ This may be because of nowadays domination of modern scientific allopathic medicine, which is possibly brought in tribal area through mainstream education or developmental projects. Related to this we read that because of popular media young tribals are ashamed of singing their traditional songs, entertainment and cultural expressions. ('Education for all in tribal areas. A report'. 1993. Agramee. Rayagada)

plants and roots become scarce. So valuable knowledge can be lost. Education can be help in this. Also tribals can be given more responsibility in the preserving of forests. But therefore it takes more than saying 'no' to multinationals who take their land and forests. Here as well education can play an important role.

We interviewed three disari's. Two of the three disari's were interested in giving their knowledge in the school. The uninterested disari that told it depends of Gods grace who will be able to understand and receive these knowledge and skills. It is not for everyone, so it is not a good idea to put in the school curriculum. One disari was very happy with the idea because he feared all his knowledge would be lost after his death as none of his children were interested. But he says that it is better to learn children in small groups (of 5) in stead of big groups. Also he thinks not every one is interested, but few children are enough.

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