

Approach and Role of Chhattisgarh Government in Tribal Education

Amit Soni

How to cite this article:

Amit Soni. Approach and Role of Chhattisgarh Government in Tribal Education. *Ind J Res Anthropol* 2024;10(1):29-37.

Abstract

The role of the government is very prominent in the formal educational sector because it decides the line of action for approach and benefit to the students of all sections of society at state and national levels. Chhattisgarh, with one-third of its population as tribals, was constituted on 1st November 2000. According to the fifth schedule of the constitution of India, 60.55% of the total geographical area of Chhattisgarh is considered as the scheduled area inhabited by various tribal groups of the state, including 5 particularly vulnerable tribal groups.

With the financial help of the central government under various schemes, the Chhattisgarh government runs various schools, hostels, *Ashramshalas*, and facilities for vocational education for tribals and other socio-economically deprived sections of the state. A field study is done by the author in Dantewada and Jashpur districts of Chhattisgarh. The establishment of schools, *Ashramshalas*, and hostels in the remote areas of tribal-dominated development blocks has played a significant role in upgrading the educational standard of the tribal students and facilitated them with opportunities for overall betterment.

Keywords: Formal School Education; Vocational Education; Hostels; Coaching; Educational Infrastructure and Facilities.

INTRODUCTION

Anthropology started during the colonial period in India by studying the little-known

tribes, and now we have a good number of full-length studies on the tribes. Article 366 (25) of the constitution of India describes Scheduled Tribe as “such tribe or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution”. Lists of scheduled areas and tribes in India are included in Schedules 5 and 6 of the Indian constitution. According to the 2011 Census report, the tribes constituted 8.6% (10,42,81,034) of the total population of India. It has a gradual increase from 1931 onwards. Madhya Pradesh was the largest state before its division into two states and had about one-fourth of the country’s total tribal population. The state’s total tribal population

Author’s Affiliation: Associate Professor, Department of Museology Faculty of Tribal Studies, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak 484887, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Corresponding Author: Amit Soni, Associate Professor, Department of Museology Faculty of Tribal Studies, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak 484887, Madhya Pradesh, India.

E-mail: ethnomuseologist@gmail.com

Received on: 27.05.2024

Accepted on: 26.06.2024

was 15,399,031 (1991 Census), which accounted for 27.09% of the state's total population of 66,135,862. In the erstwhile Madhya Pradesh, the Gond and the Bhil were the two numerically dominant tribes,¹ but after the bifurcation of the state into Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in November 2000, the majority of the Bhil population remained in Madhya Pradesh, and the majority of the Gond population remained in Chhattisgarh. Thus, the two largest tribes of India almost got encapsulated in two different states with their spread in other states also. According to census 2011, the ST population in Madhya Pradesh is raised to around 153.17 lakhs (2011 Census), constituting 21.1% of the total population of Madhya Pradesh and 14.7% of the total ST population of India. Similarly, the ST population in Chhattisgarh increased to around 78.23 lakhs (2011 Census), constituting 30.62% of the total population of Chhattisgarh and 7.5% of the total ST population of India.² 60.55% of the area of Chhattisgarh is the scheduled area under the fifth schedule of our constitution. It includes 85 tribal development blocks composed of 10971 villages. Chhattisgarh has a 62.12% tribal sub-plan area. The overall gender ratio of Chhattisgarh is 991, whereas the Schedule Tribe gender ratio in the state is 1013.² The literacy rate in Chhattisgarh is 70.28 percent, and the scheduled tribe literacy rate of the state is 59.09 percent.

Chhattisgarh State

The state of Chhattisgarh, formed on 1st November 2000, lies between latitudes 17° 85' N- 24° 10' N and longitudes 80° 20' E- 84° 25' E and has an area of approximately 1, 35,194 sq. kms. It is elongated from north to south, extending about 400 kms. and widens up to a distance of about 385 kms. from east to west. The state is surrounded by Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand in the north and north-east, Madhya Pradesh in the north-west, Maharashtra in the west, Andhra Pradesh in the south and Orissa in the east. Thus, Chhattisgarh is surrounded by six states and falls in the south-eastern part of Madhya Pradesh.

The Chhattisgarh region, once ruled over by Haihavanshi Rajputs, has 36 forts (*Chhattis Garhs*), which name the state. The Chhattisgarh region forms part of the Aryan Territory called 'Dakshin Koshal' or 'Maha Koshal', which extends over the erstwhile eastern part of Madhya Pradesh. This area was considerably forested and lay in the eastern part of the Dandakaranya forest mentioned in the Ramayana.³

Until the Maratha invasion in 1741, the Haihavanshi Kingdom of Chhattisgarh enjoyed

immunity from external attacks and there is evidence of great prosperity during the rule of the 44th King, Raja Kalyan Sahi (A.D. 1536-1573). He was the first ruler of Chhattisgarh who brought this region under Moghul influence when he received a title from Akbar. Chhattisgarh was under the Maratha rule from 1741 to 1853, excepting a brief interlude (1818-1830) when it was administered under British protection. The region completely passed over to the British rule in 1853. During the British rule, Chhattisgarh was gradually divided into several administrative districts. Raipur, Bilaspur, and Durg districts continue to be the administrative units in the region from pre-independence time. A new district, *i.e.* Raigarh has since been formed by merging the princely states of Raigarh, Sarangarh, Jashpur and Udaipur. The Sakti state was added to the Bilaspur district. Similarly, the Nandgaon, Dongargarh, Khairagarh, Chhuikhadan, Khamaria, and Kawardha States now form part of the ruling princes, were done by 1949 when the Chhattisgarh region assumed the present administrative form.

The state possesses considerable forest wealth, covering 43.62% of the total area.⁴ There are two types of forest, *viz.* tropical moist deciduous and tropical dry deciduous forest. Teak and Sal are the most important tree species of the State. Physiographically, the state is divided into 1) Chhattisgarh Plains, 2) Rimlands, and 3) Bastar-Plateau. The Chhattisgarh Plains comprises the plains of Raipur-Durg, Bilaspur, and Raigarh. This physiographic region is mainly drained by the Mahanadi River and its tributaries, *viz.*, the Seonath, Hansdo, Maud, Pairi, and Jonk. The Raipur-Durg plain forms the south-western sector of the river basin floor. The Bilaspur plain occupies the north-western sector and slopes southwards to Seonath. The Raigarh plain comprises the eastern part of the basin river.

The rim-land consists of hills and plateaus forming a kind of rim around the basin floor. This area is largely covered with forest and mainly inhabited by tribal population. The rim-lands are divided into 1) northern rim-lands comprising the Raigarh plateau and the Chhuri hills, 2) western rim-land which includes the Maikal range and the Durg uplands, and 3) southern rim-land consisting of the Rajbara hills and Raipur uplands. The Bastar plateau lies on the southern part of the new state, at an elevation ranging from 550 m. to 750 m. This region is mainly drained by the tributaries of the Godavari River, *viz.*, Indravati, which runs through the Abujmarh hills and the Bailadila range. This region is numerically dominated by

the tribal communities, specifically the Gonds and the related tribes.

Chhattisgarh state was constituted on 1st November, 2000 as the 26th state of India. Its total population is 2,55,45,198 according to the 2011 Census and the tribals form 30.62% (*i.e.* 78,22,902 persons) of the total population of the state of Chhattisgarh. There are total 42 tribal groups living in the state and out of them 5 tribes namely the Baiga, Pahadi Korwa, Birhor, Kamar and the Abujhmaria are the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) of the state.^{5,6} The state government has constituted separate development authorities (agencies) for the Pando and the Bhunjiya tribes, so their status is also like the PVTGs of the Chhattisgarh state.

Before the reorganization of the state, Chhattisgarh had only seven districts, which were further reorganized into sixteen districts, *viz.* Raipur, Dhamtari, Mahasamund, Bastar, Dantewara, Kanker, Bilaspur, Korba, Janjgir-Champa, Raigarh, Jashpur, Surguja, Korba, Durg, Rajnandgaon and Kawardha. The existing districts were further divided into thirty-three districts for better administration and development. At present, there are 5 divisions and 33 districts in Chhattisgarh, *viz.* Bastar Division (Bijapur, Sukma, Dantewada, Bastar, Kondagaon, Narayanpur, Kanker), Durg Division (Kawardha, Rajnandgaon, Balod, Durg,

Bemetara, Khairagarh-Chhuikhadan-Ganda, Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh-Chouki), Raipur Division (Dhamtari, Gariaband, Raipur, Baloda-Bazar, Mahasamund), Bilaspur Division (Bilaspur, Mungeli, Korba, Janjgir-Champa, Raigarh, Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Sakti, Sarangarh-Bilaigarh), Surguja Division (Jashpur, Korea, Surajpur, Surguja, Balrampur, Manendragarh-Chirimiri-Bharatpur). After the formation of Chhattisgarh as a new state, the present state of Madhya Pradesh has lost its tribal strength because the tribes are mainly concentrated in the Chhattisgarh region constituting 33.13% of the total population of the state, whereas in Madhya Pradesh the tribes are only 19.25% of the total population⁷, p.6 According to 2001 census, the scheduled tribes' population of the newly formed state constitutes 8.44% of the total scheduled tribes' population of India⁸, p.1 The Scheduled Tribe population in Chhattisgarh has increased from 66,16,596 (2001 census) to 78,22,902 (2011 census). Around one-third of the population of Chhattisgarh belongs to the Schedule Tribe, *i.e.*, 31.76% (2001 census) and 30.62% (2011 census), and forms around 7.5% of the scheduled tribe population of India. Surguja and Bastar divisions are core tribal divisions, and more than 50% of the population in these areas are Scheduled Tribe.⁵ The district-wise population of the scheduled tribes is as follows:

Table 1: District wise Schedule Tribe population in Chhattisgarh as per Census 2011

State / District	Schedule Tribe	Male	Female
Koria	3,04,280	1,52,659	1,51,621
Sarguja	13,00,628	6,52,799	6,47,829
Jashpur	5,30,378	2,62,731	2,67,647
Raigarh	5,05,609	2,50,473	2,55,136
Korba	4,93,559	2,46,323	2,47,236
Janjgir - Champa	1,87,196	93,186	94,010
Bilaspur	4,98,469	2,48,172	2,50,297
Kabeerdham	1,67,043	82,597	84,446
Rajnandgaon	4,05,194	1,98,032	2,07,162
Durg	3,97,416	1,96,008	2,01,408
Raipur	4,76,446	2,35,271	2,41,175
Mahasamund	2,79,896	1,37,339	1,42,557
Dhamtari	2,07,633	1,02,058	1,05,575
Uttar Bastar Kanker	4,14,770	2,03,934	2,10,836
Bastar	9,31,780	4,56,841	4,74,939
Narayanpur	1,08,161	53,518	54,643
Dakshin Bastar Dantewada	4,10,255	1,99,731	2,10,524
Bijapur	2,04,189	1,01,519	1,02,670
Chhattisgarh	78,22,902	38,73,191	39,49,711

Note: (i) ST communities returned with zero population in 2011 census are not shown.

(ii) All Scheduled Tribes include figures for Generic Tribe, *i.e.*, those who returned as *Anusuchitjan-jati, Girijan, Adivasi*, etc.

On the basis of economy, Vaishnav⁸, p.⁵ has classified the Chhattisgarh tribes into six categories:

1. Food gatherers and hunters-Birhor and Hill Korwa.
2. Primitive agriculturists, hunters, and food gatherers - Baiga, Abujh Maria, Kamar, Majhi, and Pando.
3. Agriculturists-Bijnhar, Sawara, Gond, Muria, Halba, Bhatra, Bhunjiya, Bhumia, Biar, Kavar, Majhwar, Munda, Bhaina and Nagesia.
4. Progressive agriculturists-Rajgond, Gond
5. Artisans-Kamar, Dhanwar, Saonta, Baiga, Majhi, Khairwar, Dorla, Pardhi, Birhor, Khond, Agaria and Dhurwa.
6. Performing artists-Pardhan and Ojha Gond.

Governmental Educational Infrastructure in Chhattisgarh

There are a total of 146 development blocks in the state, out of which 85 are tribal development blocks. There is the office of the Development Block Education Officers in each block. Out of 146, 85 offices are located in tribal development blocks, and the rest of the 61 offices are in community development blocks. With the help of these offices, educational activities and programs are being executed in the state.

There is a provision for primary school within a radius of one kilometer or where there are 40 students in any village or settlement. Likewise, within 3 kilometers, the availability of a middle school, within 5 kilometers, a high school, and within 7 kilometers, a higher secondary school is to be opened according to the government development plan. In notified areas of the state, a primary school may be opened where there are ten students in a settlement. According to the Annual Report of 2015-16, there are 33,997 primary schools, 16,291 middle schools, 2605 high schools, and 3726 higher secondary schools in Chhattisgarh. The number of pre-matric hostels is 1633 and post-matric is 403. There are 1226 Ashram-shalas (Residential Schools) for the primary and middle students in the state.

The government of Chhattisgarh has paid special attention to the spread of education among the

tribal children in the tribal development blocks, their healthcare, sports, and other development activities.⁹ The opening of tribal hostels and ashrams has facilitated the spread of education among the tribal students in the state. Some special schools like Eklabya Adarsh Awasiya Vidyalaya, Astha Gurukul Awasiya Vidyalaya, Prayas Awasiya Vidyalaya add to the special focus on the tribal students for providing better educational facilities and linking them with the higher institutes of learning like medical, engineering, business management, etc.

Eklabya Adarsh Awasiya Vidyalaya

According to the Constitution of India, article no. 275(1), eight (08) Eklabya Adarsh Awasiya Vidyalayas were opened in 2005-06 for the tribal students in the state of Chhattisgarh from the 6th to the 12th class, having 60 students in each class. So, the no. of students was 480, which has increased to 4452 in 2015-16. The objectives of the running of Eklabya Vidyalayas in the state are to bring the tribal students at par with the non-tribal students and also to make them equally good as their other partners for appearing in competitive examinations held for admissions into medical, engineering, and other specialized courses and training.

Astha Gurukul Awasiya Vidyalaya

Astha Gurukul Awasiya Vidyalaya was started in 2007 in the Dantewada district of the state. It was meant for the orphan students who were affected by the Naxal killings in the state. The most affected area was the erstwhile district of Bastar in the state. At present, 346 students (183 boys and 163 girls) are getting free of cost education, lodging and boarding, sports and recreational facilities. The students are reading in classes from 1st to 12th standards.

Prayas Awasiya Vidyalaya (PAV)

Prayas Awasiya Vidyalaya is an ambitious part of the Bal Bhavisya Suraksha Yojana started on 26 July, 2010 at Raipur for the intelligent boys who were affected by the Naxalites in 16 districts of Chhattisgarh. The students who achieved good ranks in class 10th were admitted to class 11th. The students who had passed the 11th class with good marks were admitted to the 12th class. They are provided necessary coaching for JEE (Main/Advance) and AIPMT. After this, other Prayas Vidyalayas were opened for boys and girls at Ambikapur, Jagdalpur, Durg, and Bilaspur. 1448 students were admitted to the Prayas Vidyalayas in the session 2016-17. In 2015, a feeder Prayas Vidyalaya was opened at Kanker.

The reservation of seats in these residential schools (PAVs) is 53% for STs, 13% for SCs, 20% for OBCs, 10% for General and 04% for PVTGs. There are nine PAVs in eight districts of Chhattisgarh, viz. two in Raipur (200+155 seats) and one each in Durg (125 seats), Bilaspur (125 seats), Bastar (125 seats), Ambikapur (125 seats), Korba (100 seats), Kanker (100 seats), Jashpur (100 seats). Overall, PAVs have the capacity to cater to 1155 brilliant students, including 650 boys and 505 girls. PAV Bilaspur provides special teaching for students in commerce and arts streams, whereas the rest of PAVs provide specialized teaching in Mathematics and Biology streams.

Kasturba Gandhi Awasiya Balika Vidyalaya (KGABV)

There are 93 KGABVs in Chhattisgarh excepting Raipur, Durg, Balod and Rajnandgaon districts. Under education to all, these schools have been run by the Central Government since 2004. There are 100 seats in each residential school. These were started to cover up the remote areas for educating the girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC, and Minority communities. Stipends are given to the SC, ST and OBC students according to the prescribed rate for 10 months in an academic year. It is utilized for their boarding and lodging. It is different for the pre-matric and post-matric students.

Lighting arrangements are made by the department. Electric and solar lights are available in the hostels/ashrams at different places as per convenience. A water facility is available in each hostel/ashram. Medical facilities and free check-ups by trained government doctors are given to them periodically. The amount that is left after expenditure in the mess is utilized for purchasing oil, soap, toothpaste, copy, books, pens, pencils, shoes, socks, uniforms, sweaters, etc. Bed, bed sheets, blankets, dishes, utensils, and lockers for keeping personal belongings are arranged by the department, along with tables, chairs, cots, and carpets. The students feel homely and friendly in the cozy atmosphere of the tribal hostels and ashrams. The time-period for the change of materials is also fixed as mentioned below:

Bed-sheet and pillow cover	1 year
Pillow and blanket	3 years
Coir mattress/cotton mattress	5 years
Dish, glass and steel cups	5 years
Iron plank or wooden Takhat (bed)	7 years
Utensils for cooking rice, pulse and vegetables: bucket, water tank, Fry-pan, Parat (big plate), and Karhai (big frying pan)	7 years

Success Story

Currently, 3278 *Ashramshala* / hostels are run by the government in Chhattisgarh with sanctioned seats ranging from 50 to 200 per institution; altogether, 192263 students got benefited through these government institutions. Hostels facilitate them with lodging and boarding free of cost. Students are given a stipend of Rs. 850/- per month for 10 months in an academic year. Out of 3273, 1400 hostels/ashrams are developed as model hostels/ashrams. Students in post-matric hostels are provided with Rs. 500/- as a stipend, which is used to supply them with food.

From 2012 to 2016, 61 students in NIT, 11 students in IIT, 440 students in engineering colleges and 18 students in medical colleges have taken admissions with the efforts of the Prayas Vidyalayas in the state of Chhattisgarh. Some of the students who have lost their parents in Naxal operations are studying in 17 private institutions in Rajnandgaon and Raipur districts and their number was 186 in 2016. In Naxalite-affected areas, 60 residential schools have been opened, which accommodate 28754 students and are meant to link them with the mainstream of national life.

Besides this, the tribal girls are also given admission to nursing, hospitality, and hotel management courses. Till now, 361 girls have been employed as nurses in hospitals, and 155 girls have received employment in the hospitality and hotel management sector.

Sports

Tribal Sports Complexes have been established at Ambikapur, Dharmjaigarh, Jashpur, Ambagarh Chauki (Rajnandgaon), Kanker, Pendra Road, Daudi (Balod), Manendragarh (Koriya), Gariyaband, Narayanpur, Balrampur, Dharampura (Jagdarpur) and Hasoud (Janjgir-Champa) for the tribal boys and girls. The selected students get lodging and boarding, track-suits, dresses and shoes along with sports materials free of cost from the government. Various training camps are organized, and the players get the required amount of expenditure to participate in the events and tournaments organized in the state and also outside of the state.

Government Schemes for St Candidates

Skill Development Programmes

A number of vocational training courses are run by the state government through the tribal development department to generate better

employment opportunities for the tribal boys and girls. These vocational courses include plumber work, mason work, house construction, electrician, solar technician, motor driving, motor mechanic, mobile repair, computer training, etc. After receiving training in prescribed skills, the candidates get employment in private and government sectors.

Adim Jati evamAnusuchit Jati Vidyarthi Utkarsh Yojana

Under this provision of the tribal development department, the brilliant students of the ST and SC groups are admitted to Public Schools of repute outside their areas. Thus, 130 tribals and 70 scheduled caste students are selected at the State level (150 students in class 6th and 50 students in 9th class) every year for admission at reputed public schools. All the expenditures of these students are borne by the tribal development department of the state.

Field Visit, Observations and Situational Analysis

The author and other researchers had an opportunity to visit the following schools and Ashram-shalas and were quite impressed by observing the performance and educational capabilities of the students in the Dantewada and Jashpur districts of Chhattisgarh. It shows the approaches, roles, and reality adopted by the government in the education sector.

Bastar Division

Astha Gurukul (Girls), Dantewada

It is a model residential hostel-cum-teaching center for the girls who receive education from Upper KG to 11th class. It has a very clean campus with boundary walls, 39 rooms and two assembly halls. Children studying here belong to the Naxal-affected families. There are 145 students enrolled in Astha Gurukul. Coaching classes are held from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. in the hostel premises, and after that, the students go to three separate schools in the town to study by the school buses. The schools attended by the hostel inmates are Kendriya Vidyalaya, Saraswati Shishu Mandir and Gayatri Vidyapith. The girls residing here follow the time-table strictly. They awake early in the morning at 5 a.m. and go to sleep at 10 p.m. On Sundays, teachers come to teach them dancing, singing and Spoken English. Girls mostly belong to the Muria, Gond, Dorla and Halba tribes.

On the day of our visit to the Astha Gurukul, the students participated in joint prayer and started the prayer after doing Onkar for three times. They sang devotional songs, including the bhajan of Guru Nanak Deoji, with melodious tuning and complete efficacy as trained singers. They also presented different dance programs. After that, one girl student in the 11th class showed her mastery over four languages by speaking fluently in Gondi, Hindi, English, and German. So, it is an excellent Kanya Shiksha Parishar run by the Tribal Development Department of the Chhattisgarh Government. The students desired to become teachers, nurses, doctors, police officers, engineers, etc.

We also visited one middle School at Hitawar and also a Balak Ashram at Burgum in Kuwakonda Block of the Dantewada district. In Hitawar village, there are three primary schools and one middle school within a radius of one kilometer. There are separate school buildings, but the number of students was quite low in each school. The total number of students in four schools in the village was a little more than a hundred. If there could be one good building with all the amenities and facilities, it could have progressed heavily with the joint venture of all the teachers. Schools are mostly suffering from the lack of science and mathematics teachers.

In Middle School Hitawar, toilets have been constructed but are not in good condition. The arrangement of water is also not there. It is especially problematic for female students and female teachers. In Balak Ashram (residential school for boys), Burgum and Hitawar, Mathematics and Sanskrit teachers are required. There is no dining hall and overhead water tank. They also need a sports teacher. During summer vacation, they visit their houses and spend time with their family. In Balak Ashram, Burgum, Hitawar, due to the paucity of classrooms, some of the classes are taken in the boy's rooms with the arrangement of tables and benches along with their beds on the back side of the room. Rooms are big in size, hence they do not face any problems. But, there was a problem narrated by Head Master, *i.e.*, untimely sanction of the Ashram's budget. It created a lot of problems for him. Things (commodities) are purchased from the shopkeepers on credit. Sometimes, they also do not get the reimbursement of the expenditure incurred on medical grounds for the students who are severely sick. The hostel superintendent narrated such a case that Rs. 35000/- was spent on a boy's treatment, and that amount was not reimbursed timely. So, sometimes, it becomes burdensome for the superintendent of the hostel.

We also visited a few hostels and started with the Post-Matric Girls' Hostel at Chita Lanka in Dantewada district. It was a good hostel, but required a hand pump for any time availability of fresh water for drinking. The number of ceiling fans was less in each room; hence, they required to be fitted four ceiling fans instead of two immediately. The girls also required steel cabinets or boxes for keeping their personal belongings and valuables.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Awasiya Vidyalaya, Dantewada is one of its own kinds. It is very illustrious and beautiful. This hostel had a very good achievement in all the events. They have received trophies and medals in many of the events held at district and state levels. Some important points of this hostel are:

1. Charts were available for better understanding in the schools.
2. Various types of board games are drawn on the floor in the inner courtyard of the building. Children play with carrom, saap-seerhi, kauri, chess, chausar, etc. in their leisure time.
3. Computer learning was available.
4. Sewing (tailoring), craft work, and training programs are organized regularly.
5. Dance and music, including classical dance classes, are taken in the hostel.

We visited Pota Cabin Kanya Awasiya Vidyalaya, Chitalur, Dantewada. It is a big residential school for the girls holding classes from 1st to 8th class. It provides a chance for children from distant places and different tribal groups to live together and learn together. The best evidence observed by us was their presentation of karate (martial-art) in different groups under the captaincy of their own leaders. This could be possible because they had received training 15 days earlier from an outside organization.

We visited Adarsh Balak Ashram, Pondum, Dantewada, having the strength of 166 students from 1st to 5th class. The actual capacity of this Ashram is 150, but to extend educational facilities to the maximum number of students, someday scholars are also admitted from nearby places, and hence, the strength has gone up to 166 students. Out of the total 166, 93% belong to tribes, 5% are scheduled caste, and the rest, 2% belong to OBC groups. While returning to Jagdalpur we also had an opportunity to visit the educational complexes at Gidam on the way to Jagdalpur. Kanya Ashram, English Medium Higher Secondary School, and other educational centers attracted the attention of

the researchers on how efficiently the Chhattisgarh Government is doing commendable work for imparting formal education to the tribal children, even in remote areas in an excellent manner.

Jashpur District

The second spell of fieldwork was carried out in the Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh. It was an opportunity for us to observe the schools and Ashram-shalas in the Jashpur district, specifically in the Bagicha and Kunkuri blocks. We visited SANKALP, a school under the IAP (Integrated Action Plan) for entrance into the medical and engineering colleges. This school is located in the city of Jashpur and running very successfully. It is a kind of residential school which has two hostels separately for the boys and the girls. The number of students is 35 in each group *i.e.* 35 boys and 35 girls. The admissions are done by holding screening tests of the students. Mostly, the tribal students belong to the Oraon, Gond, Kanwar, and Khadia tribes. Some Lohara children are also admitted to the school. The students admitted in the SANKALP are enrolled in different schools in the city, but their teachings are only held in the SANKALP Vidyalaya. Good teachers from different schools in the city have been appointed to take classes. Coaching classes are also taken for appearing in the Board and Entrance Examinations for medical and engineering colleges. They are also taught Spoken English. SANKALP is the only school of its own kind at Jashpur in the state of Chhattisgarh.

We also visited Govt. Higher Secondary School, Bagicha. There is a separate Girls' hostel on the side of the school. The school teaching staff looked to be sound and effective in the school. Students were also very attentive. Thereafter, we went to Pandrapath and observed a Govt. Pahadi Korwa Balak Ashram. It was a very good hostel, neat and clean and well organized. We went to Sanna and observed EKLABYA School (Eklabya Adarsh Awasiya Parisar Sanna-Kanya Shiksha Parisar). It is a very big school completely funded by the government with more financial benefits to the students. The girls of this school have attained good positions in studies and sports. They have played Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Volleyball, Hockey, etc., at the district level in Sports competitions. School and Hostel buildings are on the same campus and placed adjacently. The students want to become nurses, doctors, engineers, District Collectors, etc., after completion of their studies. They have knowledge of Sua, Karma, and Nagpuri dances and do the craft work also. They wake up early in the morning at 5 a.m. and go to sleep at 9 p.m. as

per the time-table. They follow the time table of the hostel strictly.

We visited and reviewed the Ramakrishna Vidya Mandir records, Adarsh Awasiya Vidyalaya, at Bagicha. It is a big residential school run by the Swamiji with total government funding. It has a large playground with a beautiful campus. School and hostel buildings are double-storied with sufficient space. It is meant for the boys only. The students leave the hostel during summer vacation. We observed Birhor Balak Ashram, Bhitghara and Govt. Middle School, Gowasi.

We also got a chance to observe a very big institution named after Sri Rameshwar Gahira Guru. It is located at Samarbar village. This place is famous for Sanskrit Schools and Sanskrit College. Here, the dress code is different from other schools. The boys wear white dhoti and kurta. The girls wear white sari. The Middle School is named Sri Rameshwar Purva Madhyamik Vidyalaya and the college is named Sri Rameshwar Gahira Guru Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya. There are five hostels for the students-Uchch Madhyamik Balak Chhatravas (60 seater), Uchch Madhyamik Balak Chhatravas (50 seater), Purva Madhyamik Balak Chhatravas (80 seater), Pre-matric Kanya Chhatravas (40 seater), and General Hostel for poor students (150 seater). This organization has got schools and hostels at Kailash Gupha, Gahira, Lailunga, and Srikot.

We visited and observed Govt. Pre-Matric Girls' Ashram, Basantala in Kunkuri Block; Govt. Primary School, Rengarghat; Janpad Primary School, Bancombo and Govt. Middle School, Bankombo. In Pre-Matric Kanya Ashram, Basantala, the girls were found to be very active. They knew Karma, Sarhul, and Damchak dance forms and had knowledge of the Sadari language. We observed Durga Krishi Higher Secondary School, Jokari; Govt. Primary School, Jokari; R.C.D. Primary School, Bhandri; Govt. Middle School Raikera; Govt. Middle School, Dondapani and Govt. Primary School, Dorhibahar. RCD Primary School lacked general facilities, and the school building was also not in good condition.

At last, we observed a big and famous school named Govt. Boys' Higher Secondary School, Kunkuri, which is the first of its kind in the area. The subjects taught in the school are biology, maths, chemistry, physics, agriculture, commerce, arts and vocational education. It was established in 1964-65 and is situated at Salihatoli, about 3kms. away from Demata Toli Gram Panchayat in Kunkuri town. The maximum number of students in this school are tribals. Girl students are found only at the higher secondary level. This school's

total number of teachers was 31 for middle school to higher secondary school. It has got a big campus.

CONCLUSION

The role of the government is very prominent in the educational sector because it decides the line of action for approach and benefit to the students of all sections of society at state and national levels. It is particularly very beneficial for the tribal students who live mostly in the hilly tracts and forested areas of the Chhattisgarh state where the blocks have been identified as the tribal development blocks. The government is also the implementing agency of education policy at the state and national level. The government sector is very big in developing the necessary infrastructure for the spread of education at the state level, and it is quite evident from the study done in the Dantewada and Jashpur districts of Chhattisgarh. The establishment of Ashram-shalas in remote areas in tribal-dominated development blocks has played a significant role in upgrading the educational standard of the tribal students and bringing them into the limelight with an ability to stand up equally with their other students belonging to non-tribal groups of people. Top of Form

However, looking at the growing tribal population in the state, the educational infrastructure, facilities, and number of teachers are less for extending quality education. New school buildings are constructed in many places, but existing buildings in the studied area also require regular maintenance and repair. Basic facilities, of toilets, clean water and electricity, need improvement. Libraries and laboratories need to be equipped with more facilities for better functioning. Public awareness and interest need to be generated to cut the dropout rate. Regular teachers and elementary education in the local language and learning English and Hindi will be more fruitful. The inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems and local examples will provide a better understanding and interest to the tribal students as per the New Education Policy 2020¹⁰ and eradicate their disinterest, unfamiliarity, and alien feelings toward formal education.

Government intervention plays a crucial role in imparting elementary formal education in tribal areas of Chhattisgarh state.¹¹ Deserving brilliant students from tribal groups are getting benefits from *Ashramsahalas* and hostels for getting education from primary level to higher secondary level. Meritorious students from the weaker section of society, scoring well in the selection examination

of Utkarsh Yojana, are getting a chance of exposure to free education in the top public schools of Chhattisgarh. Selected students are getting special coaching at Prayas Awasiya Vidhyalaya for appearing in the competitive examinations for admissions in engineering and medical courses. A good number of tribal students are inclined towards vocational education, higher education, and also doing professional courses after school education. *Krida Parisar* (sports complexes) are producing a number of sports personals by exploring the natural hidden talents of tribal students. Gradually, the infrastructure and facilities for school education in the remote tribal areas of Chhattisgarh are getting improved.

REFERENCES

1. L. N. Soni, "Tribal Students and their Self Image," *Vanyajati*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1977.
2. Census, "Census of India 2011," New Delhi, Registrar General & Census Commissioner of Census of India, 2011.
3. R. L. Singh, "Chhattisgarh Region," in *India: A Regional geography*, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh: Geographical Society of India / Silver Jubilee Publication, 1971, pp. 735-753.
4. Forest Survey of India, "State of Forest Report, 1999," Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, 15 MAY 2000. [Online]. Available: https://fsi.nic.in/documents/sfr_1999_hindi.pdf. [Accessed 21 April 2016].
5. A. Soni, "Ethnographic Studies on Tribes of Chhattisgarh: An Overview," in *Approaches of Tribal Development*, New Delhi, Adhyayan Publisher & Distributors, 2009, pp. 219-231.
6. A. Soni, *Baiga: A Visual Ethnography*, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh, India: Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, 2015.
7. H. Mandal, S. Mukherjee and A. Dutta, "India: An Illustrated Atlas of Tribal World," *Anthropological Survey of India*, Kolkata, 2002.
8. T. K. Vaishnav, "Chhattisgarh ka Janjatiya Paridrishya," *Adimjati Anusandhan Avam Prashikshan Sansthan*, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, 2007.
9. A. Soni and L. N. Soni, "Educational System and Tribals: A Rethinking," in *Indian Tribal Life*, New Delhi, Sarup & Sons, 2001, pp. 86-93.
10. Ministry of Human Resource Development, "National Education Policy 2020," Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, 2020. [Online]. Available: https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/nep//NEP_2020.pdf. [Accessed 15 November 2022].
11. A. Soni and R. Soni, "Tribal Development through Formal Education among Agarias of Chhattisgarh," *Indian Journal of Research in Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 81-86, December 2023.

