

RELIGION, CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF TRIBAL ASPIRATIONS IN INDIA ♦

Nirmal Minz

Tribal problems, and how to solve them, have been widely discussed by Government and private agencies including the Christian Church in India. In this discussion education of Tribals occupies a prominent place. Huge amounts of material and human resources have already been spent at local, state and national levels on Tribal Welfare, which includes their education. Many articles and books have been published on problems relating to Tribal education in India¹. This paper takes note of them but it has attempted to adopt a different approach to tribal education in discussing the problems. The attitude that tribals are objects of welfare/development as reflected in most of the materials is resisted and rejected in the process². A small beginning is made here to explore the vision and understanding of education of Tribals as authors of their own destiny³.

♦This article was first published by *Journal of Dharma*, Vol. XII, No. 2.

¹Dr. Sita Toppo has summarized earlier works on Tribal Education in her book, *Dynamics of Educational Development in Tribal India*, (Classical Publications, New Delhi), pp. 8-13.

²Dr. Shidananda in his preface to *Education Among the Scheduled Casts and scheduled Tribes in Bihar*, Vols. I+II, A.N. Sinha Institute Patna 1974, makes the following remarks: "There are some sections of Indian population which had been doomed to backwardsness on account of isolation and untouchability. These suffer from gross economic deprivation and social humiliation (here isolation refers to the tribals). Educational facilities provided for them are a heavy burden to the Indian tax-payers. It would be therefore, of considerable interests to find out how these facilities have been made use of and what kinds of problems are faced by the children of these groups in the process of education". A paternalistic attitude is reflected in this remark which can be substantiated by other materials also.

Fr. Ivern in *Chotanagpur Survey*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi 1969, p.2 remarks, "Again among other things voluntary agencies like Christian Churches have taught people who have come under their influence, habits of discipline, thrift and hard work as necessary requirements for all true development".

³Dr. Boniface Minz, *People as Artisans of Their Own Destiny* (Vikas Maitri, Ranchi), 1980.

1. The Tribals in India

a) The tribal population is distributed all over India. The Scheduled Tribes have been listed by the Government for special education and service facilities within the Indian Union. About seven percent of the total population of India is classified under scheduled Tribes. The major concentration of their population is found in four regions. The *North-Eastern region* (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya)-is the home of Tibetan-Burman family of Tribals. The Nagas, Khasis, Garos, Mizos and Boros are chief among them. *The Western region* (Western M.P., Rajasthan, Gujrat and Northern Maharashtra) is mainly populated by the Bhils, the Kurkus and Kols. The Central region (Eastern M.P., Orissa, Chotanagpur and West Bengal) is the most densely tribal area in India. The Kharies, Mundas, Santals, Hos, Bhumij, Ashurs, Korwas (Oraon), Gonds, Konds, Savaras are the dominant tribal communities in this region. *The South Indian region* has scattered tribal populations. Best known among these are the Todas of Nilgiri, the Banjaras and the Gadavas.

Our discussion will centre round the Central Tribal belt of India. This region is best known to us and, therefore, we will make only some passing references to other regions. The situation obtaining in the Central Tribal belt with regard to tribal aspirations is more or less the same as in the other regions. By aspiration is meant the will 'to be' and a strong community will to defend one's identity, preserve and promote it in response to a historical challenge. Behind this aspiration there is an innate power. This power is the ability by an individual or a community to act or to do certain things in a given situation. It is the strength or force, which controls, guides and gives direction to an individual and community in their life. It is the capacity or authority to act. This power can be used for good and misused for bad purposes. Therefore, the context of tribal aspirations in India means the expressions and activities of tribal communities with a strong will to defend their identity and promote it in response to historical challenges⁴.

⁴Dr. N. Minz "Tribal Culture and Identity in Chotanagpur Challenge before Higher Education" unpublished paper presented at a two-day workshop, 10-11 August 1985 at XISS, Ranchi.

b) *The Tribal Vision of Life*: Tribal life is based and built upon a vision of human existence. In this vision tribal people are aware that the land, forest and the country they occupy are the gifts of God. They are not the owners but custodians only. For them 'land is life'; no land no life. Behind, beyond, and in the midst of nature tribal people recognize the spirit as power. Therefore man-nature-spirit continuum as the basic texture of existence is what makes man truly human. Balance and harmony of man-nature-spirit are essential for man to be and to remain human. Any imbalance between and among these initiates a dehumanizing process and therefore this harmony has to be protected and promoted from generation to generation.

Tribal people live by a set of cultural values which can be accepted more or less as human values universally. Their values comprise *equality among men-women, dignity of labour, community ownership of means of production (the land and forest), use of production for the common good mutual co-operation to face life situations and challenges, honesty and truthfulness, consensus as a means of decision-making, and facing life with dance and song*. These socio-economic/political and cultural principles and values were practically implemented in community life. These values provided the practical organizing principles and became sustaining powers in the face of historical challenges.⁵

Tribal traditional education served as an effective instrument to pass on the basic vision and practical ethical and moral values of human life from one generation to another. The Ghotul of Muria Gonds, the Morung among the Nagas, and Dhukuria among the tribals of Central Tribal belt in India are the traditional educational institutions among them. It is true that literacy through the employment of numerals and letters of the alphabet was not used by them. But education through stories, riddles, songs, parables continued in oral tradition in a systematic way. It was an education and learning by doing; it involved work experience in every item of sociology, economics, history, politics, and religion. Among the Oraons (Kurukha) of Chotanagpur "Dhumkuria" meant Jonkh Erpa and Pello Erpa (Boys home or Youth home and Girls home). Three grades of students lived in this traditional educational institution. The Sanni Johkhar (the Junior boys), the Majhturai Jankh (the

⁵"Religion and Culture as power in the Context of Tribal aspirations in India": unpublished paper presented at the Biennial Council of CISRS 26-28, November 1985 at New Delhi.

intermediate youth) and the Koha Jankhar (the Senior boys); the same pattern of classification was used for the girls also.⁶ Every child both male and female had to go through this educational process compulsorily. Not only till 14 years of age but till about 10 to 20 years of age tribal boys and girls had to continue in the Dhumkuria education programme. Only after one's marriage is one graduated from this school and settled down in life but learning by doing continued till death. Therefore traditional tribal education was education for life, and throughout life. Dr. Ramdayal Munda, the Director and the Head of the Department of Regional and Tribal Languages and Literature and the present Pro-Vice-Chancellor has expressed the tribal vision of life in a simple chart form. He has listed the tribal basis of identity, elements of identity, and cause of cultural crisis among the tribals of the Central tribal belt in India.⁷

Basis of Identity	Elements of Identity	Causes of Crisis
1. Geography	Harmony	Disharmony
2. Society	Equality	Stratification
3. Economics	Collectivism	Individualism
4. History	Accommodation	Exploitation
5. Politics	Democracy	Paternalism
6. Religion	Saturism	Ritualism
7. Philosophy	Ethicalism	Corruption
8. Literature, Art and Music	Folkism participation	Group Urbanism Observation

2 Tribal Aspirations as Expressed in Response to Historical Challenges

a) Historical challenges have come to the Tribals of the Central Tribal belt in waves at various stages of history of India. The Aryan invasion during ancient period pushed them to their present homeland in Chotanagapur and its adjacent areas in West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

⁶Dr. Sita Toppo, Chapters 4+5 pp. 44-83 in *Dynamics of Educational Development in Tribal India*, Classical Publications, New Delhi, 1979.

⁷Dr. Ram Dayal Munda, "Elements of Tribal Identity, Crisis and Planning for a way out"; unpublished paper presented at two-day workshop, 10-11 August 1985 at XISS, Ranchi.

They lived fairly isolated from the Aryan population in the plains. But there are evidences of contacts with the Aryans during the early period and early middle and later middle periods of Indian History. Traces of Buddhism, Rama Bhakti, Mahavira temples in the ancient land of Tharkhand are found. Archeology and history can confirm or refute the accuracy of these surmises.⁸

Before the East Indian Company and the British came to this region, the Muslim rulers discovered Jharkhand in the second half of the 17th century AD. The Mughals were interested in diamonds from Bearkho Dah in South Koel, about 20 miles West of Ranchi, and the annual payment of tributes in cash/kind by the Maharaja of Chotanagpur.⁹ The court language in Chotanagpur is the gift of the Muslim rulers and some kinds of land holdings were initiated, at least in their own documents.

Since our focus of interest in this paper is education and culture, we only note here in passing that no formal/informal education was introduced during the early and middle ages of cultural contacts with the tribals in this region either by the Aryan agents or by the Muslim rulers and their agents here. We have no substantial evidence of the existence of any educational institutions during these periods affecting tribal life and posing a challenge to their cultural identity.

The modern period in the Central Tribal belt begins with the invasion of the British and establishment of their administration in this region during the years 1773-1780¹⁰. By this time all Rajas, and the Maharaja of Chotanagpur had accepted British rule and had begun to pay a tribute to the Crown. The process of British penetration into Jharkhand had three phases. (I) Subdue the Zamindars, Rajas and Maharajas by military power. (II) Use them as the British Administrative instruments to keep the people (the tribals) under control. (III) Introduce the legal system and land rights in the area with the help of local non-tribals. Private ownership of land, money economy; law courts to decide the legal rights of people, and the police system to maintain

⁸Damodar k. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, (Popular Prakashan Private Limited, Bombay 1956), chapters 2+5.

⁹Ramdhari Sinha Dinkar, *Sanskrit Ke Char Adhyaya*, Kedarnath Singh, (Patna: 1956, Pratham ahhyaya).

9a. Dr. B.P. Keshri, *Chotangpur Ka Ithihas, Kuchh Sutra, Kuchh Sandarbh*, (William Carey Study and Research Centre, Gossner College, Ranchi 1979), pp. 35-37.

¹⁰Dr. B.P. Keshri, *Chotangpur Ka Ithihas*, pp. 48-50

law and order in this region interfered with the basic texture of tribal life and their social, economic, political and cultural values. Local zamindars (landlords) and non-tribals were recruited to carry out the local administration and to maintain law and order. On top of all these the British introduced the formal schooling and education system through Hindi and English media at primary, and secondary/higher levels.

Along with the British rule came Christian missionaries from Germany, England and Belgium to preach the Gospel and established primary and secondary schools in Chotanagpur¹¹. The first girls schools was founded in 1852 by the Gossner Mission in Ranchi, Bethseda Girls School at Ranchi. The First High School was started by the British Government – Zila School, Ranchi in 1894. The Gossner Mission established the Gossner High School in 1896 (1896). The First Collage, St. Columba's Collage, Hazzaribagh was established in late 1920.

The foreign missionaries had to abide by the policies of the British Government in all walks of life. They were bound to follow the British system of education-curriculum and examination systems. The mission schools tried to introduce and keep up manual labour and training in carpentry etc. in the schools as part of educational requirement for students. But by and large primary, secondary and higher educations remained theoretical. One could pass examinations by reading books and memorizing factors and reproducing them in the annual examinations. Such an education system produced clerks, teachers and preachers in the Church and society. The school net-works touched even the remote village in tribal society. Among many serious drawbacks of the British system of education, and consequently, the Christians mission schools was a complete disregard for the traditional mode of education obtaining in tribal communities as described above, and they never made any attempt to incorporate the seven cultural values prevalent in tribal society. For the missionaries those values and the traditional system of education were not worth considering. In some respects the Dhumkuria was considered a den of evils by both the British and the foreign missionaries. Therefore the colonial rulers and the Christian missionaries were directly responsible for creating a cultural crisis among the tribal communities in this

¹¹Dr. S. Mahto, *Hundred years of Mission in Chotanagpur*, (G.E.L. church Press, Ranchi 1974).

region. But we should mention at the same time two important contributions made by the Christian missionaries to tribal life: (I) It was the Christian missionaries who gave all major tribal language their written forms. Some British officials also took interest in tribal languages.¹² (II) It was primarily the German and Belgian missionaries who fought for the preservation of land rights by the tribals. Without such direct help and guidance by the Christian missionaries the tribals could not have retained land rights to the extent it became possible for them.¹³

Science, technology, mining and industries came with the British Government and the British system of education. Chotanagpur being rich in forests and other natural resources, devastating effects on land, forests, social, economic, political life of the tribals were initiated by modern influence. The Education system made the tribals too dependent on the Government and the missions, through a kind of self-consciousness was also built up among the educated elite in this process.¹⁴ But this self-consciousness had no socio-cultural frame of reference of a tribal vision of life and the tribal cultural values. Reactions, resistance, rebellions and organized movements against the above cultural attacks in this modern period began from the first half of the 19th century.

Tribals had great hopes in the National Government after Independence in 1947. But to their utter disappointment and dismay they soon discovered that in some respects the British rule had been better for them than the national Government today. There is no fundamental change in the social, economic, political and cultural approach of the Government today to tribal problems. The same basic prejudice against socio-cultural values, their language, land and forests is evident in the Government machinery today. The

¹²Dr. A. Nottrott, Translated the whole Bible in Mundari Fr. J.B. Hottman and others prepared and got the Encyclopedia Mundarica published. Fr. Ferdinand Hann, parts of the bible in Kurukh (Oraon). He published the Kurukh Folklore also. Grignard was responsible for the Linguistic survey of India. He included all the major tribal languages also in his survey with detailed notes.

¹³Fidelis de sa, *Crisis in Chotanagpur*. A Redemptorist Publication, Bangalore 1975. Father Constant Lievens fought for tribal land rights. Fr. J.B. Hotman helped prepare the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908.

¹⁴Dr. Sachidananda, *The Changing Mundas* (Concept publishing Company, New Delhi 1979), pp. 312-323.

traditional education of the tribals is not even discussed let alone considered sympathetically by the educationists of free India. The Adimjati Seva Mandal, a semi-Government agency, the Banbasi Kalyan Ashrams, a voluntary agency engaged in the education of tribals have done equal, if not more, damage to the tribal vision of life and cultural values and traditional education than the foreign Christian missionaries. Neither the tribal language nor the tribal social and cultural values are accepted as of any worth by these agencies of education among the tribals in free India. In fact they are indirect instruments of the Hindu Mahasabha which is concerned more about opposing the Christian mission than supporting the tribals in their socio-economic, political and cultural struggles in the defence of their identity and its preservation against the onslaught of modernism which is engaged in grabbing wealth, propagating unhealthy moral values through mass media and corruption in all walks of life including the education department in our country and in the tribal areas.

(b) Tribal aspirations have found expression in various forms. Tribal 'insurrections' 'rebellions' and protest and resistance movements took place in the socio-economic, political and religious history of Jharkhand. These phenomena appeared towards the close of the 18th century and from the beginning of the 19th century. The following are the main events in the expression of tribal aspirations¹⁵: (a) Rebellion against Tribal Rajas, Mankis and Mundas- 1795-1810. Mundas, Mankis and Rajas were political leaders of a village, cluster of villages, and regions respectively. These leaders assumed political power on their own and rebelled against the British rule in their country, but they did not enjoy the co-operation of their people. Naturally this rebellion was put down immediately. (b) Kol Bidroh Rebellion 1931-32: the people of Singhbhum, Manbhum and Ranchi Districts rebelled against the injustice, atrocities, and inhuman treatment of the British in collaboration with the Zamindars (landlords). After many years of struggle the movement subsided. The result was 'Wilkinson's Law' for the Kolhan area in

¹⁵Dr. S.K. Singh, *Occasional papers on Tribal Development-22 Colonial Transformation of the Tribal Society in Middle India*, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi. *Birsa Munda aur Unka Andolan* (Classical Publications, New Delhi 1979).

S.P. Sinha, *Life and Times of Birsa Bhagwan*, (Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Ranchi, 1964). Fidelis de sa, *Crisis in Chotanagpur*.

Singhbhum. (c) The Santal Rebellion 1855-57: Sidhu and Kanhu, two brothers were inspired and guided by 'Marangburu' (the great spirit) to save the Santal people from the inhuman treatment by the Landlords, petty kings and businessmen under the British Government in Santolpargana in Bihar. The movement was mercilessly put down at gun-point. (d) Sardar Larai (Sardar's struggle) 1860-1890: The Tribal leaders-Christians and Sarna led a socio-economic liberation movement against the white rulers and their allies, the missionaries, Zamindars and money-leaders. These enemies of the tribals had begun to grab tribal lands, by alienating them by unfair and foul means of fake indebtedness. Since the missionaries did not support the Sardars against the British, the latter rose against the former. The Sardars were cheated by lawyers in the High Court of Calcutta and finally the Sardars were liquidated due to the foul game of the British against the tribals. (e) Birsa Andolan 1890-1900: Birsa led a religio-political and economic liberation movement against the white rulers and their agents in the remote areas. Land, forests and cultural values were being grabbed and destroyed in the Munda country. The British Government suppressed and destroyed the Birsa Andolan using strong military power. Birsa died in 1900 and the movement came to an end. (f) Tana Bhagat Movement 1920-22: One Mr. Jatra Oraon led a socio-religious and economic-political liberation movement. Tana Bhagat launched a non-cooperation movement against the British by means of non-payment of rents for their own God-given land. After coming in contact with Mahatma Gandhi after Ramgarh Congress Tana Bhagats joined the India Independence Movement. The British did not tolerate the Tana Bhagats and stopped the movement using military and legal power. (g) The Unnati Samaj (development society) Adivasi Mahasabha, and Tharkhand Andolan - 1920s, 1939 and 1952: The educated tribals, mostly Christians, got together and decided to work for the development of their own people. The Adivasi Mahasabha was an organized social movement for the defence of the tribal community identity against the cultural onslaught by people from the plains. Later this movement was known as Jharkhand political party. This party enjoyed people's full support. But due to greed for power and money, leaders of the Jharkhand party betrayed and sold the interests of their own people.

A large amount of written materials, both published and in manuscript form, are available on all the tribal events reflecting reactions, resistance, rebellion, and movements for liberation from the evil mechanism of a foreign power exploiting and oppressing the tribal people. The majority of reports and comments of the colonial Government before Independence, and those of

National Governments in free India on tribal movements have been quite unhelpful. Consequently all these liberation movements have either been crushed by military power, or by the leaders being bought over with money and political allurements in the past. Piece-meal temporary relief measures have been employed to slow down the tempos of those movements.¹⁶ There have been some sympathetic men and women who have tried to understand tribal aspirations from within. They have pleaded for a sympathetic attitude and dealings with the tribals by Governments in power in contemporary times. But these individual opinions have had their limitations because political policies and Government planning and action are quite often motivated and guided by some adhoc and narrow-minded considerations. Any party in power derives that power from the people but uses it against the interests of the people and in favour of the vested interests of the few. Such attitudes and motives have guided the colonial and national Governments with regard to the tribals of the Central Tribal belt in India. To please the sympathetic and outstanding scholars on tribal affairs, and to appease the tribal people socio-economic and political processes are being promoted, and programmes implemented to subdue and destroy tribal aspirations in this part of our country.¹⁷ The British system of education, which is "education for Domestication" and not for "Liberation", has been used effectively all through the modern period till today.¹⁸ The National Government in free India is adding fuel to the fire by offering educational and service facilities to the most competent tribal men and women and by winning them over to the other side of the fence. Such educated tribal Government officials, and those employed in other concerns, are the people most alienated from the tribal texture of their existence, and devoid of the tribal cultural values mentioned above. In a

¹⁶Reports on tribal movements mentioned in the paper contain an anti-tribal bias. Colonial and National Governments at the local and state levels never tried to understand tribal aspirations on their own terms. Hence there is an inherent inability to grasp the tribal vision of life and cultural values in defence of which resistance and rebellions have taken place.

¹⁷There are some individual scholars who have taken a sympathetic view of tribal movements for the defence and promotion of their identity. But their opinion are usually heard but not implemented; Raj Bahadur S.C. Roy, Verrier Elwin, S.C. Dube, B.D. Sharma, Dr. Saçhidananda, Dr. Suresh Kumar Singh and a few others.

¹⁸Paulo Frierers, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

sense such persons are completely lost as far as the tribal identity and struggle for its defence is concerned.

From a close look at the nature and function of tribal movements for defending tribal identity and attempts to preserve and promote the following points emerge. There are two distinct groups among these movements. (1) Those which have a purely socio-economic and political basis and goal. The tribal Rajas, Mankis and Mundas rebellion, the Kol Bidroh, and the Unnati Samaj and Jharkhand movement come under this group. Land and forests have to be preserved and injustices and exploitations have to be stopped by means of a political solution of a separate homeland for the tribals of the Central Tribal belt within the Indian Union. But without a deep vision of tribal life and appreciation for the cultural values of the tribal people the achievement of a short-sighted goal will not deliver the goods - that is one cannot defend the tribal identity without a firm determination to incorporate the tribal vision of life and basic tribal cultural values in building up a human society congenial for the tribal people.

(2) Those movements which took the vision of tribal life and cultural values seriously and tried to defend the tribal identity against the onslaughts by the modern economic, political, scientific and technological culture of the west represented by the British colonial power and corrupt Indian cultures of the plains through their representatives then and now. The Santal Hul (Rebellion), Sardars Larai (struggle), Birsa Andolan, and Tana Bhagat movements represent this stream. The tribal texture of human life was deeply grasped by leaders of these movements, but the cultural values as framework for building up socio-economic, and political life were not properly worked out and emphasized in the short periods of existence of these movements. If the military and the money power had not crushed them, then the leaders of these movements could have paid attention to cultural framework aspect for the economic and political rebuilding of tribal society. It is true that the present leaders draw more inspiration and strength to struggle in defence of tribal identity and to preserve and promote it in accordance with the ideals of this group of tribal movements.

3. An Attempt to Relate Education with Tribal Vision and Cultural Values

Political and economic struggles must continue, but they must be underlined by tribal vision and their cultural values. Here education has to

play a crucial and key-role to enable the tribal individual, and the tribal communities to overcome their mental and moral tension in the present cultural crisis. On the principle, education must be education for life and not for earning livelihood alone by right or wrong means and methods. That is to say, the cultural values of the tribals, which are also universal human values must be transmitted from one generation to another. Learning by doing or learning by work experience should replace the purely theoretical and intellectual information gathering exercises. The body, mind and spirit must get involved in the process of education from junior through intermediate and senior stages of education.

Educational institutions must become a part of social life in the village community and should not remain just an appendage to life it must become practical source and centre of individual and community life. The formal, non-formal dichotomy in education process should be broken down with respect to tribal education in India. The present allurements of white collar job without any cultural value for life and full of injustice and corruption has to be exposed and eradicated. '*Uttam Kheti, Madhayam Beopar, and Nikrist Nawkri*' (Best is farming, second best business, and worst to be employed by some one else) has to be brought home to the tribal and Indian youth.

The Government and the people in the plains have to forget about the dream of assimilation of tribals into the main stream of Indian culture. The dehumanizing processes predominant in the so-called main stream including the present unsatisfactory state of affairs in education institutions and departments, have to be completely discarded and disowned by the tribals. They have their tribal vision of life and live by their cultural values and defend their identity and promote it even in the midst of the onslaughts of modern culture. This is the valuable contribution that the tribal people of India want to offer at the feet of mother India to build up a mosaic of cultural panorama in this land. The following steps have already been taken to achieve the above aim.

(a) Using and developing the language, literature and culture of all major tribal communities in schools, colleges, and universities. The tribal and regional language and literature department at Ranchi University is one of the steps towards this goal. An attempt is being made to weave into the courses of studies the basic vision of tribal life and cultural values. It is a hard and difficult task. Through a domesticating method how can one get a liberating experience in the process of education in this department? Song, music and

dance have become a means of communicating old and new ideas in the tribal and regional languages.

The Government pays lip-service with regard to promoting the above educational programmes. The community is taking time to study and understand the intention behind such efforts as the people have been cheated by our own people in the past.

The Christian Churches are equally doubtful about the value of such undertakings in view of the 21st century which is going to be the Electronic Age. But Church institutions pick up better the human values in traditional tribal education and use and implement them in their own schools and colleges.

(b) A humble beginning was made in Dhumkuria School Kanks by the most gifted and discerning philosophy Honours graduate, late Shri Julius Tiga. He used his sharp imagination and grasped the tribal vision of life and accepted the cultural values for himself and for the tribal community in future. He used the play method in teaching. He organized courses in Mathematics, Geography, History and other subjects in the form of traditional tunes and taught them through song and dance. He tried to introduce learning by doing and education for life. He was the first really educated tribal who had genuine knowledge of song and dance. He led the first team of the Oraon tribe in the Republic Day cultural competition and won the national shield for music and dance.

The Christian Church misunderstood him. He was very nearly excommunicated from the organized ritualistic life of the Church. The tribal community could not understand him, placed as they were in the midst of glimmers of modern domesticating education and alluring positions in Government services. Sri Julius Tiga was a unique person with extraordinary intellectual and artistic gifts. He never got himself a job anywhere though he had a brilliant academic carrier. He began as a social worker and lived and died as a social worker.

Gossner College, Ranchi founded in 1971, started off with the aim of promoting the unique cultural and social identities of the tribal people in this region. The teaching of tribal language and literature was taken as a symbol of prestige and honour to the tribal people. It pioneered in this area the education of the tribals for liberation. Debates and discussions on life issues were held through tribal languages. Talking in tribal languages in the college campus

became a symbol of self-respect for the teachers and students. Tribal song and dance occupied special place in the life and work of the college.

Other colleges, St. Xavier's Ranchi College in Ranchi proper and colleges in the country side, also have taken up the task of teaching tribal language and literature as one of the subjects for the tribal students. Unless the tribal vision of life and cultural values prevail in the college life and provide the context these attempts will mean just the same thing as teaching any other subject in a college to pass the Intermediate or Bachelor degree examination. The whole environment - the Principal, the teaching staff, the non-teaching staff, the Governing Council must be inspired and surcharged with the elements of tribal identity as spelled out above.

This means that educational institutions must become an integrated part of the society around it. Only with such a physical, social and cultural setting school and college will become instruments of struggle for the defence of tribal identity and help promote it in response to historical challenge today.

Primary, secondary and higher educational institutions have to be established and run by the communities with the above ideas and programmes in mind.

(c) Literary and cultural associations among the tribals in this region. All the major tribal communities- the Kharia, Munda, Santal, Ho, and Oraon (kurukh)- in this region have taken steps to organize literacy and cultural associations to promote the languages, literature and culture by publishing the literature and organizing cultural and literary festivals. Some of them have begun honouring the tribal and non-tribal scholars who have made outstanding contributions to promote a specific tribal language and literature.¹⁹ Other communities, including the Nagpuri and Kurmalis, are going ahead with the production, promotion and development of their languages, literature and cultures. Nagpuri is spoken by Sadans and tribals, and Kurmali by Kurmis of this region. These communities and Jolha, the

¹⁹Literary associations have been formed by Kharia, Munda, Santal, Ho and Kurukh (Oraon) tribes in Ranchi.

On 27th January, Dr. Suresh Kumar Singh, and Dr. Ram Dayal Munda were given 'The Bhagwan Birsa Award', and 'Guru Gomky Pdt. Raghunath Murma Award', respectively by Birsa Memorial Society of Jamshedpur.

converted Muslims of this region, are the closest neighbours of the tribal people.

(d) Tribal education must include business and commerce as an integral part of their education. Besides vocational education, cultural orientation towards business among the tribals is a must in saving the identity in the face of the economic onslaughts of the modern world.

Mining and industry cannot be neglected by the tribal community as their land, and forests are full of natural resources. But education for mining and industry also must be underscored by the cultural values of the tribal people.

Many potential physical, mental, and social gifts with which the tribal people are endowed must be scientifically explored and given scope for development. Education must be made relevant to those gifts and natural talents and not vice versa. Physical fitness of tribal youth, care of children the and sick by women teachers and nurses belonging to tribal communities must be brought up to national and international standards. These and other cultural heritages must be incorporated and used in planning for tribal education now and in the future. The immediate and distant cultural neighbours have to take up the challenge to co-operate and participate in this great and glorious venture of defending and promoting tribal identity through relevant meaningful education in India.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ambast, N.K. *Tribal Education*, S. Chand and Company, 1970.
- Das Gupta, N.K. *Problems of Tribal Education and the Santals*, Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Delhi, 1964.
- Elwin, Verrier (ed.) *A New Deal for Tribal India; Ministry of Home Affairs*, New Delhi, 1962.
- A Philosophy for NEFA*, North Eastern Frontier, Agency (Second Edition), 1959.
- Mukherjee, P.K., *The Aim of Tribal Education*, Vanyayati, Delhi 1061, Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Vol. IX No. 1.
- Ponette P (ed) *The Munda World*, Catholic Press, Ranchi 1978.
- Weiner, M., *Sons of the Soil*, Princenton University Press, Princenton 1978.
- Gandhi Marg, *Special Issue Peace Education*, Vol. VI, No. 4+5 July-August 1984.
- New Frontiers in Education*, Vol. XIV, No.2, April-June 1984.