

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION.

.....

The study has revealed that the Muduga tribe is in a stage of transition from primitive to modern way of life. In this they seem to be a stage ahead of the Kurumbas who, being the inhabitants of reserved forests, have not had as much contact and confrontation with the advancing civilisation as the Mudugas who dwell in private (now vested) forests which had become the happy hunting ground of avarious settlers from the plains. Although dispossession of land and restrictions of forest regulations on fellings have administered an economic shock from which the tribe is yet to recover, they have suffered a strain of their cultural fabric also. But the Muduga seem to have hardly any option but to adopt themselves to the changed circumstances, and, in this context, it is heartening to find that there is a general awareness among them for giving education to their children and generally the number of drop outs are not so much upto IV Standard and thereafter the drop outs happen due to the fact that the schools providing upper primary education are far away and the economic advantage of residential schools are not available nearby. Education as a tool of development is making itself felt among the Mudugas and the way it is shaped and used hence matters most.

Economic conditions in the area affect the education of children.

In this context the following recommendations may be relevant:

The one reason why the tribes felt education to be necessary was that it acted as ^a means to get employment. Therefore the need to link the expansion of education system with increased job

Contd.....

opportunities within the tribal areas appears to be an essential prerequisite to prevent drop outs. Increased jobs depend on economic expansion which in turn depends on credit facilities and external investment which requires efficient marketing, which in turn is dependent on improved communications. Thus the problem of education, employment, credit investment, marketing and communications all are inter-linked in tribal areas.

Employment opportunities for educated and semi educated tribals appear extremely limited. The employment of tribal village level workers, Balwadi teachers, school masters, Basic Health Workers, has been very insignificant, which is a factor which might dampen incentive for the tribals to undertake education. The Govt.'s policy of reserved posts in Govt. jobs for scheduled tribes, while providing assistance on a State or National basis, does not solve the problem at the local level. The need for small scale agro and forest-based industries coupled with vocationally oriented education seems essential to encourage more tribals to undergo schooling.

In any tribal rehabilitation scheme the significance of literacy should not be overemphasised at the cost of economic development as both are closely inter-related.

It will be useful to have separate set of textbooks for primary school classes dealing with the origin, mythology, tradition of particular tribes. This may help them to have a healthy mooring in their own culture and also help in de-alienation referred earlier.

Contd.....

The method of teaching should be as far as possible familiar to the children. They should learn through extracurricular activities, stories and songs. If necessary the teacher chosen should be such a dedicated person as to live and move with the tribe in their hamlets and impart education when they are in a receptive mood.

There should be a separate programme to educate the tribal leaders, headmen, priests, and magicians who play a vital role in the socio economic activities of the tribals. The content of the programme should cover the important channels for redressal of grievances, the role and functioning of co-operatives and other financing agencies and a better understanding of the ~~economic~~ economic processes, the regulations about exchange economy, and manipulation of money. In other words these elements of "Citizen Education" should be given emphasis.

In order to check wastage and absenteeism during agricultural and tribal festival seasons and monsoon the timing and vacation of the schools should be suitably adjusted.

There should be sufficient encouragement to teachers to work in these areas like financial incentives, provision of quarters, free medical facilities, and annual leave travel concession to visit their native place.

In the tribal areas, possibilities of attaching balwadis to a primary school have many advantages such as logistics, supervision and economy. The proposal in the revised Integrated Tribal Development Project to appoint 'community mothers' to collect school children from tribal hamlets is a step in the right direction.

Contd.....

In the field of health the Madugas seem to have not yet taken to Govt. measures in the same degree as they have to educational measures. The hold of the prayer - chanting medicine man, and the faith in herbs and home remedies are even now quite strong. In the revised Integrated Tribal Development Project it has been observed that considering the requirement of the area there is no need of running any more hospital. It is proposed to upgrade the existing Govt. dispensary at Mukkali as a hospital with facilities for 10 beds. However, in the matter of health facilities the resistance of the tribals can be overcome only if there is considerable improvement in road communications making possible easy access from far flung hamlets to medical centres.

The mobile medical unit should have effective mobility with a van in good condition which is an important method of making medicine reach far flung hamlets.

There should be adequate and timely supply of equipment and medicines to the Govt. dispensaries and hospitals. In several cases the tribals stated that even when they did go to the dispensary at Mukkali the medicine prescribed were not available. In the absence of private medical shops at Attappady it is all the more necessary to the existing departmental medical institutions should have adequate stock.

Isolated tribal areas like Attappady have to be accorded special treatment in the matter of allotment of funds for medicines.

Efforts should be made to avoid frequent transfer of medical personnel posted to the area.

.....

Contd.....

In order to make the tribals acquainted with the advantages of modern medicine they may be given proper education on public health personal hygiene, child care etc. Mass education media may be employed for the purpose.

Trained social health workers may be posted in the area to impart social health education.

The visits by the medical personnel to the isolated hamlets should as far as possible, be at fixed regular intervals so that the tribals are able to know exactly when medical attention will be available as they will become familiar with the doctor's visit and timing. This is an important factor in inducing confidence.

The acceptance of modern medicine by the tribes is linked to education and it is heartening to observe that at least among the younger generation there seems to be a lessening of the reservations against going to the doctor and I was even told that some of them have come to put great faith in the injection syringe and insist on having an injection rather than gulp down a mere bottle of mixture.

The hope therefore is that with the expansion of education there may be greater acceptance and fuller utilisation of health facilities. Both education and health programmes again should be part and parcel of an integrated overall plan for economic betterment. Considering the characteristics of the tribal communities, the pace will be slow, and even halting. But the unmistakable signs of tribal welfare which Attappady Block exhibits today is indeed evidence enough, if such evidence were necessary, that in this matter, sympathy, understanding, and perseverance pays.

.....

17/10
200 *AP Bandyopadhyay*

Handwritten notes and stamps on the right margin of the page, including the word "ATTAPPADY" and other illegible markings.