

Strategies for Tribal Education
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Strategies for Tribal Education

The two-day workshop on National Strategies for Tribal Education under DPEP was meant to provide a platform to DPEP States as well as to resource persons to share the State tribal strategies that had been adopted and implemented in the DPEP districts, reviewing and identifying the gaps and priorities for strategies on tribal education both at State and district level and finally evolving national strategies to support and supplement the State strategies in the gap areas for providing quality primary education to tribal children. The main objective of the national sharing workshop was to:

- highlight the problems of the tribal education in the DPEP States/districts which could not be effectively identified and attended to by the State/district strategies.
- developing national strategies to support and supplement the State/district strategies in the identified gap and priority areas in tribal education.

Dr. K. Sujatha's background paper on "National Component for Tribal Education : Interventions under DPEP" provided the desired theme under which the discussions revolved.

The first day of the workshop was devoted to reviewing the problems identified and strategies adopted in DPEP-I States/districts with regard to tribal education as well as the experiences of planning and implementation in districts or States by the State nodal persons. Almost all the presentations by the State nodal persons were concluded by a short presentation on their respective expectation from the national component for necessary interventions.

Key Areas

In the morning session of the second day of the workshop, the participants were divided into three groups to discuss each of the key areas like:

- Access to education by the tribal school age children
- Retention and achievement and

- Capacity building

The outcomes of these groups were discussed and debated in an open forum. This part of the discussion appeared at the beginning to have a risk of compromising the diversities, but subsequently addressed the multiplicities of problems and helped in reconceptualising as well as refocussing the national component of tribal education under DPEP, providing adequate space for diversities too.

The session that followed had its own importance: it benefited from resource persons like Dr. K. Sujatha, Prof. Sachchidananda, Prof. K.L. Sharma, Dr. Francis Ekka, Mr. Subir Shukla, Dr. Neeti Mohanty, Dr. Kumar and Dr. R. Indira who provided valuable research findings on different aspects of tribal education. The paper presented by Dr. K. Sujatha on "National Component for Tribal Education under DPEP" provided well defined outlines or framework within which the discussions took shape and created the right environment for suggesting plan policy for the national component. The culminating session, using a participatory method, focused on identifying some of the major issues/areas in tribal education where national strategies can be formulated to support and supplement the State component of tribal education.

The welcome address by the Joint Secretary, Mr. R.S. Pandey, his comprehensive speech on aims and objectives of the workshop, short presentation by Dr. A.K. Singh on the guidelines, the chairpersonship of Dr. K. Sujatha, and Prof. Sachchidananda and the concluding remarks by the Deputy Secretary, Mr. Ravi Capoor helped in circumscribing the discussions on such a diversified issue around a few key areas, such as access to education, problems of retention, contextualising the pedagogy and capacity building.

States Presentation

Except Maharashtra, the nodal persons from all other five DPEP-I States having tribal population made their presentation. The State nodal persons from some DPEP-II State like Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh also participated in the discussions. However these teams did not make any presentation. The presentation by the State teams focused mainly on the State component of tribal studies, the problems faced by the State nodal persons in implementing these strategies, the issues raised which are neither addressed at all or are inadequately addressed by the state/district strategies and the expectation of the States from National Component of Tribal Education. The State-wise presentations are given below.

Madhya Pradesh

- The State strategies for tribal education under DPEP in Madhya Pradesh include identification of factors responsible for low educational status of tribal children, improving management, access, quality of education, developing BLI, assessing training needs of teachers, contextualising as well as enriching the content of reading material, strengthening SCERT, DIET, monitoring, evaluation and research and last but not the least, mobilising community participation.

The factors responsible for low educational status of tribal children in Madhya Pradesh are small and scattered habitations, geographical isolation, poor economic conditions, illiteracy of parents, lack of proper educational monitoring, education not related to needs of life, drab and uninteresting classroom experiences, engagement of children in collection of forest produce, unsuitable school hours, linguistic and cultural barriers, etc.

The State strategies attempted at avoiding various managerial bottlenecks by creating adequate coordination between Tribal and School Education Departments, forming a Tribal Core Group at SPO level which would include representatives of TWD, SED, SCERT, DPI and TRI and by re-orienting the district officials about the tribal cultural specific problems, etc. Opening Alternative Schools, SSKs, NFE centres and Ashram schools giving priority to tribal habitations under DPEP would increase the accessibility of education to tribal children.

Even though the State/district strategies claimed to have been assessing the learning needs of the tribal community, developing tribal sensitive pedagogic units by involving experts from TRI and SCERT and developing Bridge Language Inventory (BLI), subsequent discussion revealed that a little has been achieved in this regard and the pace of development is slow. In the first case the national component can contribute enormously by reviewing the existing State infrastructure to support these activities and providing the expertise wherever it is needed.

Development of R.O.T.C as Resource Centre for Tribal Education for taking up local specific studies, research and evaluation work will in the long run support these diverse interventions in the area of tribal education. However the national component which supports the research work on tribal education can also share its information with R.O.T.C. Besides, with the help of information from R.O.T.C, researches supported by the national component can become need based.

Assessments of training needs of teachers, VECs, MTAs and

empowering these bodies, mobilising community participation by using local tribal cultural strategies such as folk stories and dance were other attempts taken up by the State strategies.

Dr. Sujatha, the chairperson of the session added that in Madhya Pradesh, the tribal education component is separate from the general District and State components of DPEP since its inception. In other words, the State component for tribal education evolved separately and independently having its own unique policy, structure and management system. A cell in SCERT on tribal education has been set up to look after training aspects and research. However, linking Tribal Welfare and Education Departments is and should be one of the major intervention strategies in Madhya Pradesh.

Strategies Suggested for National Intervention by Madhya Pradesh Team

- Regarding development of BLI, the Madhya Pradesh team suggested that national intervention is required in finalising and standardising BLI, and also in imparting training to concerned teachers in the effective use of BLI.
- National component need to take the responsibility of training the State resource persons for developing separate modules for training as well as orienting the teachers in tribal areas, and also provide manpower to supervise these training programmes in the beginning.
- National component should assist the State strategies in developing modules for orienting the tribal education officers.
- National component should give directives in regard to moulding education as a community programme, as well as making the education more participative. The teaching-learning process among the tribes can provide some guidelines as to how to make education participative.
- National intervention is required in monitoring attainment levels of the tribal children. It was suggested that MLI milestone may be done by graded monitoring. Moreover, the national component should re-examine the validity of MLL measures for tribal children and should initiate efforts to contextualise the MLL measures.
- The responsibility of developing orientation programme or of module to educate and empower VECs/MTAs/ PTAs should also partly rest with the national component.

Kerala

The State nodal persons presented the list of problems and recommendations of the study sharing workshops conducted at Malapuram, Wayanad and Kasaragod which led to planning intervention and budgeting the same. The survey report revealed many pertinent problems and issues related to the primary education of tribal children in the State. The problem areas identified are inaccessibility of schools in geographically difficult areas, absence of NFE centres and ashram schools, lack of awareness among parents, absence of tribal language linker, lack of adequate teaching-learning materials, unaddressed problems of tribal girl child, inadequate incentives, absence of VECs/ PTAs etc. However, according to Kerala team, the State/district strategies have begun intervening in these problem areas.

Besides opening new primary as well as pre-primary schools, providing more buildings, rooms and other facilities like textbooks, dresses, and shoes have been the major interventions. A few other sensitive areas were identified to support and sustain the educational activities going on in tribal areas.

One of the areas of intervention programme under State/ district strategies is mobilization/ awareness. House to house campaign and special campaign to promote girls education are viewed as helpful to tribal education. The State strategies to improve management and capacity development include setting up of BECs. However no mention was made with regard to educating and re-orienting VEC members to make this body effective. Re-orienting parents and strengthening PTAs re considered as major strategies for reducing drop-outs.

The State strategies for learning improvements include preparation of handbook for tribal language, targeted interventions for girls and tribal students, free distribution of textbooks, opening of new pre-primary schools providing in-service training to Anganwadi/ Balwadi teachers, etc. The programme to improve access includes opening of new schools and NFE centres in tribal remote areas.

Strategies Suggested for National Intervention by

Kerala Team

- National help is needed in preparation of textbooks for tribal children - specially with regard to which and in what form the tribal folklore and tribal history could be included in textbooks.
- Details regarding how to standardize the curriculum developed in tribal dialect may be remarked at national level.

- National directives to be given on smooth convergence of government functionaries (TWD, Education Department, Panchayat etc.) to avoid administrative bottlenecks and spread UPE among tribes.
- Preparation of modules at national level to provide adequate information and special orientation to State/ district level officers in handling tribal education programme.
- Direct access to the information as well as guidance from the national component by the research organisations at the State level with regard to tribal education.

Karnataka

Poverty, lack of awareness, child labour, ill health, migration problem, unsuitable school calendar, irrelevant curriculum, unattractive and inadequate educational facilities, lack of interest among parents and teachers, language problem and gender discrimination were found to be major hurdles in enhancing educability of tribal children in Karnataka.

The State/district strategies aim at intervening in these problem areas. However, the salient features of tribal strategy at State/district level include preservation of culture, language and development of the community of different tribes. Thus, separate educational plan is envisaged and designed for different tribes like Beds, Jenu Kurubs and Limbaris. Formulation of separate school calendar and time table suiting the life cycle and, daily activities of the tribal students and communities are being attempted. Moreover, the Karnataka State nodal persons were found to have actually moved tribal group wise in recommending the medium of instruction and the instructional materials. The textbooks re proposed to be taught in regional language in the classes/ schools having heterogenous tribal groups; whereas tribal dialect could be used in the schools where homogenous groups of tribals study. However, phasing of instruction should be done in such a way that the tribal dialect is used as the mother tongue in the first two years of schooling and in higher classes a mix of tribal dialect and regional language is used for instruction until the latter replaces the former completely by standard V. As a result the child is gradually mainstreamed into instruction in the regional language. The teacher factors such as including provision of residential facilities to the teachers in tribal areas, project allowance and incentives for primary school teachers in tribal areas, are well comprehended by the State component. Monitoring and evaluation could take place on a mid-term and annual basis.

Strategies Suggested for National Intervention by Karnataka Team

- At the State level no office or department is created exclusively to handle tribal education. The National Component can take notice of this and suggest a review of the State policy in the light of this.
- Providing expertise and developing capacity at State/ district levels to develop modules for training and orienting teachers in tribal culture and tribal dialect.
- National intervention is sought for development of TLM.
- The National component can provide expert help from NCERT or other language institutes for developing books and curriculum at State level with an objective of providing "joyful learning" to the tribal children.

Tamil Nadu

Slow growth of education among tribals in Tamil Nadu was due to small and scattered habitations over vast hilly terrain, inadequate cooperation among different departments like TWD, Forest Department, Panchayat, etc., involvement of tribal children in agriculture and household work, lack of parental motivation in enrolling children in schools, etc.

The State/district strategies aimed at increasing intervention in the area of improving access, environment building, capacity building and empowering VLC/MTC, etc. Alternative model of schooling has been adopted in all the tribal blocks under DPEP in order to improve access to schools. Construction of school buildings with toilet facilities for girls are suggested by State/ district strategy to increase tribal girls enrolment. Motivating tribal parents through social awareness camping with the help of tribal NCC students of schools and colleges are also planned to reach out to the more difficult school age tribal children.

Conducting a survey on migratory pattern of parents and starting of residential schools to retain the children whose parents seasonally migrate/or issuing certificates which are valid for continuing classes in new schools are suggested to help in bringing these otherwise difficult to reach school age tribal children back in to the mainstream of education.

It has increasingly been realised by the State/district strategies that empowering the teacher to buy teaching-learning materials worth Rs. 500/-. orienting teachers to motivate tribal children towards formal

education, monitoring effectively the existing welfare schemes and strengthening community participation will help in improving retention and learning achievements among tribal children. Intervention programmes have begun in this direction.

Capacity building in the form of educating and empowering the MTC/VLC and ECC workers, establishment of one BRC in each of the three districts are also emphasised in State component.

With regard to the problem of medium of instruction the Tamil Nadu team maintained that preparing tribal language linker is not necessary for the reason that almost all the tribals can speak and understand the regional language i.e. Tamil. However, the resource persons were not in agreement. Besides, the State team was also silent about changes in the curriculum in the direction mentioned by other State teams.

Mr. Ravi Capoor, however, added a few more points such as providing escort services with the help of MTCs as an innovation of DPEP, appointment and provision of special coaching for the tribal teachers recruited from the local areas, etc. Developing textbooks with crucial emphasis on socio-cultural milieu of the tribals and providing tribal culture specific in-service training to teachers and orientation programme to administrators etc. are the other interventions planned in the State. Dr. Sujatha, Dr. Francis, Dr. Haredia and Prof. Indira Deva pointed out various lacunas in the presentation of State nodal persons of Tamil Nadu and expressed concern that the inter-tribal and intra-tribal disparities are not sufficiently reflected in the State component of tribal education.

Strategies Suggested for National Intervention by Tamil Nadu Team

- National policies should assist the State component in re-orienting the community participation modules to make it more effective.
- The Gender component of tribal education is not adequately addressed. National strategy should address this issue immediately.
- The State requires help from the national strategies for formulating training cells to motivate and improve the calibre of tribal teachers. National component also needs to provide expert services in developing training/ orientation module for the members of VLC/MTC and ECC.
- The national component needs to remind the State component regarding the objective of utmost decentralising of the planning

processes and addressing the inter and intra-tribal and gender disparities at all stages of plan processes.

Assam

The presentation by Assam team was more articulate and comprehensive. Tribal scenario in Assam seemed to have some unique features which need to be adequately addressed by the State as well as the national component of tribal education while planning for primary education. Negative parental attitude to education, lack of interest and motivation among teachers to problems of tribal children, lack of community participation, and language incomprehensibility are the major hurdles in spreading education among tribal children.

The strategies for tribal education under DPEP include interventions in areas like increasing access to education, retaining tribal children in the school upto class V and in capacity building.

Conducting Kalajatra to increase the awareness by using Bodo, Sodri and Tiwa songs, skits, slogans, films and printed material developed mainly in Bodo, using existing structures like tribal bazaars and fairs for conducting intensive outreach campaigns to motivate tribals towards education, involving education in tribal pockets, adopting soft strategies to enter the tribal dominated tea estates and giving priorities to tribal areas have already been undertaken for increasing accessibility of education to tribal children.

The textbooks developed in Bodo language are in the final stages. The State strategies also plan to prepare teacher-training material in Bodo language on priority basis.

State strategy places equal emphasis on capacity building. Inclusion of tribes in VECs, preparing VEC handbook in Bodo language, conducting surveys on problems of tribal students in primary schools and providing feedback to the teachers as well as the administrators of tribal areas are various measures that are undertaken by the State strategy.

Strategies Suggested for National Intervention by Assam Team

- National component should address the language issue more carefully. Expert help and monitoring is needed with regard to deciding about the teaching medium, developing teaching materials as well as training modulus.
- National component should assist the State/ district resource persons in developing modules for training teachers in multi-grade teaching often required in bi-lingual schools.

Discussion of Strategies

During the morning session of the second day of the workshop, the participants were divided into 3 groups to discuss strategies under the following:

- Access
- Retention and Achievement and
- Capacity Building.

Under access, alternatives to formal schooling like NFE and Ashram schools were suggested. A good amount of hope was placed on the outcomes of interventions like effective awareness campaigns, and community outreach programmes. Under retention and achievement, the workshop suggested a review of relevance of national curriculum, MLL measure used in tribal schools, development of textbooks in tribal dialect incorporating tribal history and culture, setting up of residential schools for migratory tribes. Under capacity building, the need was expressed for a national level group that would oversee coordination and convergence of services at all levels, Besides forming VECs/PTAs in tribal villages, reorienting and empowering these bodies, construction of more ashram schools were also suggested as a vital part of capacity building.

The outcome of each group was presented and discussed by all the participants in an open forum. On the findings of this exercise brief observations and comments were made by different resource persons. The issues raised by these resource persons were also debated. The importance of socio-cultural aspects of tribal education was emphasised by Prof. K.L. Sharma. According to him, the educational calendar must take into account the working cycle of tribal children and their festivals. Generally it was observed that the schools are open during the season when they are busy and are closed when they are free. Development of a curriculum which is not isolated from the life of the tribals and which is relevant to their environment and life was pleaded for by Mr. Subir Shukla. This step might play a crucial role in retaining the tribal children in schools as well as improving their learning achievements.

Reviewing the vital role that the incentives play in retaining the tribal children in school, Prof. Yathiraj Kumar and Prof. Schchidananda suggested that DPEP should also have intervention programme with regard to incentives. They also emphasised the role of incentives in motivating the teachers in tribal schools. Prof. Schchidananda felt that only those teachers who have positive attitude towards tribals and who volunteer to work in tribal areas should be selected. Besides, a special orientation training should also be given to the beginning of

their service. He also suggested that the national component should formulate some guidelines with regard to their selection process and prepare training modules for teachers in tribal areas.

Dr. Francis Ekka threw light on the "Linguistic Aspects of Tribal Education". According to him the child can be taught in his mother tongue in critical stages with provision for gradual transfer in the regional school languages. The science subject can be taught in their mother tongue while subjects like humanities can be taught in regional languages. Prof. V.N.V.K. Shastri focused on the economic aspects of the tribal education and pleaded for providing compensation to tribal parents who have to lose the labour if their children go to school.

He also spoke on the absence of relevance of present school education for tribal children which makes them aliens in their own community. Thus there is an urgent need to contextualise the primary education. The increasing role of NGOs in creating a demand for education among tribals so that it becomes need based and is not thrust upon tribals was emphasised by Dr. Neeti Mahanti. According to her the national strategy under DPEP can use NGOs as an entry-point to help make inroads into the more difficult tribal groups so that their children come for education. Besides, the NGOs can assist in providing local based training, environment building, help in giving feed-back about teaching-learning that can be developing material using local knowledge and local language.

Empowering the community by entrusting the key role of sustaining and monitoring to bodies like VECs was found essential by Dr. Rudolt C. Haredia, However, he maintained that monitoring of the project including accountability and transparency must be systematized.

According to Mr. V.C. Veerabadrudu, National Component should provide full expert support in developing material in different languages, provide help in finalizing bridge languages dictionaries and also conduct impact studies. The research findings as well as the success and failure stories must be documented and disseminated under material strategies for circulation.

According to Dr. Sujatha, during pre-appraisal of district and State proposals under DPEP, it was realized that there are common broad issues and inadequate capacities at district and State level for effective intervention to tackle those issues. This necessitated national support and intervention for tribal education.

Evolving National Component for Tribal Education

The national component for tribal education was discussed in two parts. The first part comprised the broad issues and constraints of tribal education and identified the gap areas which require national

support to improve the education of tribals. The second part covered the action plan for the identified areas along with work plan for coming years.

The issues which were raised by the State teams as well as the Resource Persons are basically in the area of access, pedagogy, capacity building and policy framing and planning. Access can also be a planning process. Establishment of schools within 1.5 kms radius to tribal habitations is not the only option. Moreover, this is also not a viable option for the geographically difficult terrain. Other alternatives to formal schooling like NFE and outreach schools should be tried. In order to make education sustainable, involvement of the community (VEC/VLCs/PTAs etc.), government and NGO sectors is also needed. Relaxing the norms of school mapping, managing incentives, revising the curriculum and re-writing them in tribal language etc. are other major issues which need to be tackled by both State and national components in order to make education accessible and contextual to the tribal children. Besides, a large number of issues related to capacity building at State/district/ block/ cluster level had been raised by the State teams as well as the Resource Persons where there is a need for the national component to develop its own strategies to guide and counsel the State strategies.

The gap area as identified in the workshop by the State nodal persons and the Resource Persons which are to be addressed keeping in mind the emerging role of national component are listed as follows:

Caps Identified

Planning and Management

The district education officers are found to be lacking training in disaggregated areas and group specific micro-level planning, which is the back-bone of DPEP strategy for tribal education. These administrators also lack orientation as well as knowledge about tribal specific culture. The disparities between the literacy rates of tribal males and tribal females is alarmingly high, much higher than the disparity level between generally category males and females. However, the State strategies for tribal education under DPEP lack gender dimension.

Even though most of the existing incentives and special measures are developed to tackle the economic problems of tribals and a significant amount of money has been diverted to meet these programme needs, the planning and management mechanism of these incentives remained weak at all levels leading to delay in supply, poor quality and doubtful relevance. Even though the number of beneficiaries increased over the years, no corresponding change was

found in resource allocation in planning and management.

Improving Access

Even though it was increasingly realised that in tribal pockets, more number of NFE and outreach schools need to be tried, the states/districts are facing problems in school mapping in the tribal areas, basically because there is almost no expertise available in the State in school mapping especially in relation to tribal areas. Programmes like community mobilisation, strengthening VECs/PTAs/MTAs and involving NGOs to reach out of school tribal children would need to be re-visualised in a more tribal specific context. Keeping in mind the poor socio-economic background of tribal children, a re-assessment is required on how free the primary education is for the tribal child and what further measures are required to be taken to make their education totally free.

Capacity Building at All Levels

As was expressed by the State teams, there is a need for training and orientation to administrators, resource persons, teacher-trainers on different aspects of tribal education. However it would be wrong to say that there is a dearth of experts at State/district level. Rather, what is required at present is that the State resource persons should be identified and trained by the national core group in developing separate training modules for administrators, teacher-trainers and teachers. It was recognised that the teachers working in tribal areas required special pedagogical training to tackle the special needs and problems of tribal children, especially as the present pre-service and the in-service training modules are found to be devoid of any special component of tribal education.

Even though it was realised that a more powerful and demanding VECs/PTAs/MTs would exercise indirect control over school functioning (e.g. regulating effectively the incentive schemes etc.), the State nodal persons were lacking any directives regarding how to make these bodies more powerful. All the State strategies have included community awareness campaign. But the community awareness modules developed by the State or district components were not found effective. A fundamental error was pointed out in conceptualising the awareness campaign. It was assumed that the tribal parents are not aware of the free primary education being provided by the Government. But as revealed by the State nodal persons, the tribal parents are aware of it but they are not convinced of the relevance of this education for their children. Thus, emphasis should be placed on convincing these parents about the relevance of primary education for their children. However, pedagogical revolution, backed by

adequate compensation of the tribal parents for their labour loss, and a suitable academic calendar would convince the parents of the utility of primary education for their children. Although it was long back decided to have adequate representation of tribal parents in VECs as well as PTAs, not much has been achieved in this regard. Besides, many of the tribal villages do not have either VECs or PTAs.

Relevance of Pedagogy

The tribal cultural and tribal life styles are not considered while either setting the academic calendar or in deciding the relevance of education. The tribal children are lovers of free nature and independence. The rigid and discipline oriented schooling process is found to create conflict and resistance among the children leading to lack of interest, high dropout and poor performance. The group oriented tribal child finds the present education system more individualistic in nature and thus irrelevant.

Not much has been achieved with regard to incorporating the relevant curriculum containing the tribal experiences and introducing the tribal dialects and bi-lingual primers in the first two grades. However, all the DPEP States teams revealed that they cannot proceed much in this context without getting any expert help from National Componentry

Karnataka and Assam teams seemed to have proceeded a step or two ahead of other States in having included tribal groups specific plans in developing relevant pedagogy. The capabilities at State and district levels are not developed for responding effectively to flexible group specific pedagogic needs.

Suggested Action Plan under National Component

An action plan of national intervention for supporting the State strategies for tribal education in the gap areas identified in this seminar is suggested.

The action plan can broadly be divided into:

- Guidance in Policy Framing and Planning.
- Capacity Building.
- Pedagogic Intervention.
- Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Networking and Research.
- Advisory and
- Clearing-house role.

Guidance in Policy Framing and Planning

Since there is a need for flexible, desegregated area and group specific micro-level planning for tribal education any attempt at imposing uniform pattern of planning by State strategies should be discouraged by the national component. A gender component is missing from the State as well as national component for tribal education.

Keeping in mind the wide gap between the literacy levels of tribal males and tribal females, the plan strategies for tribal education have to be further decentralized on the lines of gender both at State as well as district level. The national component along with evolving its own strategies should also guide the State strategies in this regard.

Capacity Building

What the workshop made evident is that enormous help is needed to be extended to the State/district components of tribal education in capacity building. The national component should create orientation of capacity building at every level and impart training to the concerned persons to develop capacity at State / district / block level.

The capacity building is the first step that should precede intervention programme so that the efforts are sustained and monitored in the right direction. The feasible approaches that could be part of national component for developing capacity at National/ State/District/Block/Culture level are listed below.

Identification and Training of Resource Group/Persons

Identification of resource group/persons and organising regular workshops with them at national and regional levels, in a constant effort to develop an understanding of the commonalities as well as the diversities of the problems of tribal education and chalking out more effective programmes to further the process would be the first activity that the national component should take up to build up capacity at State/district/block levels.

The national component should have a national level core group exclusively for tribal education which will not only guide the State component in constituting the State core group for tribal education, but will also provide expert services to the State core group on different aspects of tribal education.

Similar groups can be formed at district and block levels and the State component can provide training and guidance to district and block level core groups.

The target group for training with central assistance is identified as consisting of:

- i) Members of State/District/Block/Cluster level Core Group for Tribal Education.

- ii) State and district level administrators from Education as well as Welfare Department.
- iii) Teacher Trainers i.e. persons from State and district level training and resource centres.
- iv) VEC/MTA/PTA members.

The national component would assist the State in designing the training content (tribal culture specific information, items also on re-orientation), as well as developing modules for importing training to various target groups.

The modules for teacher trainer, teacher and administrative officers should be different depending on the areas where these respective groups need to be trained or oriented.

Designing Teacher Training Modulus

The national core group should assist the State core group in developing the training modules for teacher trainers as well as the teachers. The training modules should lay emphasis on the MLLs, activity based and child-centered teaching methods, and creation and use of tribal context specific teaching-learning materials. Besides, section of the training module for teacher trainers/teachers should also contain information on the following:

- i) Tribal specific culture.
- ii) Items on re-orienting the teachers towards tribals as a social group - placing emphasis on understanding tribal psychology.
- iii) Providing facts on grossly incorrect popular beliefs about tribal children such as misconceptions about their low IQ.
- iv) Tribal ways of learning - i.e. use of more participatory and oral method in classroom teaching.

Module on Multi-Grade Teaching

Either a separate module can be developed with central assistance or a section on this can be included in the general module for training of teachers.

However, it was realised that an overloaded training programme with an array of information might be detrimental to its objectives and thus there is a need to break the envisaged curriculum into parts and conduct separate training programmes over a year or two. However the training programme should begin with special orientation programmes in tribal areas.

The details of teacher training programme have already been chalked out from a National Sharing Workshop on "Teacher-Training" held in

November, 1995 in New Delhi under the national strategies. The findings of this workshop can be re-designed taking into consideration the special needs of tribal children as well as tribal teachers.

Community Awareness Modules

National component should help the State component in developing community participation modules for VEC/PT/MTA members. These modules should not only contain information on need and relevance of tribal and girl education but also on aspects like planning, administrative, and evaluation processes and the accountability of the school education even to bodies like VEC/PTAs.

Once these bodies are empowered, they will be more demanding which will have an indirect supervisory control on the effective functioning of schools. As a result a real kind of participatory management process will emerge at the grass root level which will help in sustaining these educational efforts.

Role of NGOs

The role of NGOs and allied groups such as traditional tribal systems like Gokulas in Madhya Pradesh, local tribal youth training groups, VECs etc. can be multiple; they can help create a demand for education so that it becomes need based and is not thrust upon the tribals.

These non-government and local bodies/groups can be used as an entry point to make inroads into the more difficult tribal groups so that their children come for education. They can assist in local based training, environment building, help in giving feedback about the teaching-learning material so that it becomes local knowledge based and local language based. Good projects sometimes fail because of lack of community acceptance. These groups can also help in identifying the actual issues with regards to educability of tribal children.

In the area of retention, the NGO can help monitor attendance by putting one youth responsible for 10 children and checking drop-outs by checking quarterly and half-yearly charts. They can encourage the girl child by providing a room for younger siblings who are in their care and can help in developing quality performance infrastructure for teachers and students.

Hence the national component can emphasise the role of NGOs and give the management of DPEP in cluster, to specific NGOs on an experimental basis - may be to one or two NGOs per State. The NGOs should be asked to create alternatives.

The national component can also have a national level NGO forum for preparing tribal areas specific training modules.

Pedagogic Intervention

] The tribal children were found to have difficulty in following the classroom teaching in the regional language in the initial school years. The problem was found to be more acute among the tribes who live in the geographically difficult areas and as a result have little or no exposure to regional language and the dominant culture outside their tribe.

Therefore, there is a need to prepare primers in tribal dialect on a priority basis to help such children at the initial stages of primary education. The national component was expected to help the States to develop mechanism to identify such tribal groups and to develop bilingual primers, supplementary reading material in tribal dialect, teacher's guide, etc.

The national component should formulate a pedagogy unit specially for rendering expert service or training to the State / district level resource persons in developing these bi-lingual primers and supplementary reading material in tribal dialect.

Besides, the non-contextuality of the course curriculum has long been debated by educationists. The national component should provide the training to the district resource persons in identifying the course content which are incomprehensible and irrelevant for the tribal children and bring in changes by picking up examples from tribal cultures so that the desired concepts can be attained by the tribal children.

The national component should also include training of teacher trainers and other resource persons in tribal dialect and languages. The national component can create an expert committee of linguists to help meet the specific needs of State / district strategies.

Moreover, there is a need to evolve a clearer understanding of the specific needs of tribal children as well of concepts like activity-based child centered teaching-learning materials, textbooks having scope for local specificity, thereby promoting joyful learning among tribal children at all levels.

The desirable approaches that could be part of the national strategy are listed below:

Identification and Training of Resource Persons

Identification of resource persons which might include linguists, teachers, tribal experts, etc. as well as institutions such as TRIs, RIEs and SCERT for capacity building and organizing regular workshops with them at national and regional levels to identify the issues in developing textbooks for tribal children (such as inclusion of tribal specific content, making the textbooks child-centred and activity-based, promoting joyful learning, etc) and the need for adopting multiple

methods in different combination (as per the requirements) for furthering the process.

An assessment has to be made with regard to the training requirement of the resource persons or institutions at State levels who would be responsible for training and guiding the actual persons involved in developing the textbooks and supplementary teaching-learning material in tribal dialect.

Broad basing Resource Network

The national component can facilitate networking between DPEP efforts, and the efforts made by institutions (such as TRIs, RIEs, University Departments), NGOs and individuals to further the efforts made in development of relevant pedagogy for tribal children.

National seminars can offer a platform to share and integrate the disjointed efforts made by different resource groups/institutions and individuals on issues like:-

- Development of bias-free local languages specific books.
- Inclusion of tribal specific content.
- Making these books competency-based.
- Involving psycho-linguists, teachers, artists, NGOs, tribal experts etc. in textbook development.
- Intensive orientation and sensitization of textbook writing teams, etc. and trailling and finalizing the textbooks.

Technical Workshops and Regional Expositions

The national resource group for tribal education would organize technical workshops on issues such as productions, specialists editing of textbooks, criterion for assessment of textbook contents, trialling of textbooks developed for tribal children, etc. Local melas can be organized to extract the tribal culture specific content that could be included in the textbooks.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The national component on monitoring and supervision of the implementation of DPEP should treat tribal education as a special component. The experts associated with monitoring should be oriented to special aspects related to tribal education.

Besides general monitoring, regular feedback from the State should be sought by the national component for monitoring the progress of special programmes of tribal education. The tools and strategies for evaluation of these special programmes would be developed taking into account the common and diverse education problems of tribal children.

The national component should seek periodical reports and review meetings from the State with regard to tribal education. Besides, the national component should train the concerned State/district/block level officials in monitoring and evaluating tribal education.

Networking and Research

It might be possible for the national component to facilitate networking through inventories of institutions, NGOs and individuals who can help. An effort to link DPEP efforts with universities and research institutions might also be undertaken. Networking national/state/district/block level efforts is necessary as tribal education needs different types of researches as a feed-back to plan programmes and policies to suit local needs and help in mid-term corrections of programmes.

The research findings would be exchanged and shared among different States in order to gain from each other experiences. This requires coordination at the national level so that dissemination of information among the different States can take place; for example, different activities that are taking place in Assam can be disseminated to Kerala.

There is a need to evolve a clearer understanding of the specific needs of tribal children as well of concepts like activity-based child centered teaching-learning materials, textbooks having scope for local specificity, thereby promoting joyful learning among tribal children at all levels.

Advisor Role

Another supporting strategy under national component on tribal education would be advisory role of providing guidance and assistance for planning, implementation, monitoring and training related to tribal education programmes.

The State can look up to national core group for advice on any aspect of tribal education either in planning and implementation or curriculum development or on any such related work.

Clearing House

The role of clearing house at national level will be documentation, collection and dissemination of research findings, innovations and information on other aspects of tribal education from different district/State, national and international agencies. The national component should provide a platform for cross-fertilization of ideas through organization of seminars and workshop. Workshops can be organized

on themes which need to be immediately addressed by both national and state component in order to speed up the spread of UPE among tribals in DPEP States.

Conclusion

The National Strategies for tribal education under DPEP are an outcome of various exercises. The workshop held on 19-20 March 1996 is one among them. The significance of the present exercise lies in the fact that the national strategy was evolved from the respective States expectations on the problems they faced in tribal education while implementing the programme. Besides, these kinds of exercises might help the national component to address more systematically the emerging needs of new DPEP districts/States. Moreover, this workshop has hopefully benefited the State/district strategies by making the national component more transparent and clearly spelled out.