

**TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN
INDIA - A CASE STUDY OF BASTAR, MADYA PRADESH**

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled '**TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN INDIA - A CASE STUDY OF BASTAR, MADHYA PRADESH**', submitted by **ANURADHA SINGH** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of this University has not been previously submitted for any Degree of this or any other University and is her own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Over the last few decades, there has been an increasing body of literature on Developmentalist Policies. The critical tenor of these studies has obtained from a two-fold questioning of the modernising agenda - firstly, how far such programmes be assumed to be enjoying the consent of the populace they are aimed at, and secondly, what has been the actual effect of such policies on the 'marginal' population, that has lacked the representational status of either protesting against or redirecting these programmes.

The present dissertation is an attempt to understand and contribute to this larger debate through a specific case study of Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh. I owe the credit of drawing my attention to this problematic to my guide Prof. C P Bhambri, who I am grateful to for being an extremely patient and sensitive supervisor throughout my entire research.

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INTRODUCTION

The current debates on Development and the alternatives like Sustainable Development, Grassroots Development and other emerging notions have to be addressed, keeping in mind the historical and socio-economic perspective of post-independent India.

Before questioning the dominant scheme of Developmentalist policies and its effects on the population, one must have a general understanding of the context that prompted and witnessed the emergence of such policies. The context that we are referring to, is a product of the curious historical trajectory of our sub-continent, which was not a natural evolving one, but fraught with the tensions and torsions that colonialism entailed.

A brief discussion of the socio-political perspectives of pre-colonial India can help us in understanding the genesis of the categories related with Modernity and Development. That the notions of private property, homogenised 'population', and most importantly, the concept of a territorially integrated 'nation', alongwith a nationalist modernist elite were crucial factors, responsible behind the construction of the discourse of modernist 'Development,' have come to be accepted. What remains, however, is to take a brief look at how these categories have come to be, how far were they contextual, and what problematics have they given rise to.

Before her colonial experience, India was largely a feudal economy, administered through the feudal administrative structures that the Mughal rulers had established. The economy was primarily a land based agrarian one, operating

through the land revenue system. There was no notion of private property. The economy was essentially feudal, with some commercial trading centres. Culturally, the country was feudal as well. The caste system was a very significant part of the traditional society. It had great internal complexity, in that, the actual functioning of the 'jati' system on the ground, did not correspond to the ideological presentation of the 'varna' system. The population was heterogeneous, and contradictory to nationalist mythology (depicting a common Indian past) which celebrated the great readiness of the Hindus to absorb the elements of the external groups (the Muslims), there was no composite Indian culture, created through a fusion of the elements of both. The Muslims did not exist in "any open dialogic communication with the rest of society, but ... in a kind of back-to-back adjacency with the rest-by way of a very peculiar combination of absorption and rejection."¹

There was no concrete category of an integrated Indian sub-continent. Sudipto kaviraj uses the notion of a fuzzy community to describe a traditional, pre-modern community as distinct from an enumerated, modern community. According to him the traditional sense of the community was fuzzy, in that, "the construction of individual or collective identity depended very heavily on a sense of context.... Given different situations, a premodern person could have said that his community was either his religious, or caste, or occupational group, or his village or his region. He might find it difficult to render these varying communities, to all of which he belonged, into some unimpeachable hierarchy.... Basically, the fuzziness of their sense of community meant that it occurred to none of them to

1 - KAVIRAJ, SUDIPTO - 'On State, Society and Discourse in India' in J MANOR (ed) - 'Rethinking Third World Politics.' Pg 77. Longman, London, 1991.

ask how many of them there were in the world, and what, if they agreed to bend their energies into a common action, they would be able to wreak upon the world to their common benefit.”¹

The British, who inhabited a different discourse of social science, looked at the historical and social reality differently. For them, there was an externally given object - India, the target of their conquest. But the Indians did not reason through similar concepts, so that one princely ruler could look at the conquest of his immediate neighbour by the British colonialists, with equanimity.² This makes it quite clear that there was no monolithic entity as India, which existed and was colonised by the British.

The British colonisers were markedly different from the earlier invaders. Firstly, they were much more systematic in articulating an entire regime of exploitation, through their objective of political conquest, for sheer economic motive. Secondly, as inheritors and representatives of enlightenment rationalism, they remained rooted to a different social, cultural, historic as well as economic order (that belonging to the realm of the Industrial Revolution and French bourgeois democratic revolution), which came to be recognised as superior and progressive to the existing order in India. Consequently, instead of moving towards any accommodation of culture or system (as the earlier experiences indicate) they sought to establish the system and values that they represented and belonged to. These

1 - KAVIRAJ, SUDIPTO - 'On State, Society and Discourse in India' in J MANOR (ed) - 'Rethinking Third World Politics.' Pg 77. Longman, London, 1991.

In using this notion of a fuzzy community to describe the traditional society, Kaviraj does not imply a lack of precision in thinking about the social world, but a different kind of precision from that involved in thinking about a modern enumerated / counted community.

2 - Ibid, Pg 76.

initiatives to introduce the logic of modernity in India, logically, depended on an undermining of the traditional structures and practices.

Since colonial rule could not be legitimised in the 'common sense' of the traditional Indian society, they tried to reconstitute this 'common sense.' This is why the question of education, through which the 'common sense' of a society is created, was of such central concern to the British.

The primary objective of the colonisers, that of primitive accumulation of capital, necessitated a well defined territoriality which would operate as the market. This gave rise to the notion of India as a territorially integrated administrative unit, which was consolidated by measures taken in land settlement, in economic organisation, and in the legal order. The insulation of distances through railways and other communication networks like Telegraphs, went hand-in-hand with the homogenisation of existing differences. The impact of the British on such homogenisation, however, though powerful and enduring, was not deep because it was alien, it had an external character, and most important, it took place at the level of the elites in Indian society, who had taken on to the discourse of modernity.

Colonialism destroyed any attempt at self-sufficiency - The newly established legal order and the land enumeration system incorporated therein, introduced and consolidated the notion of private property in land. The individual ownership of the basic means of production engendered a destruction of a communitarian control over land - rights of cultivation derived no longer from the traditional community structure and operated under commercial contractual rela-

tionship. This system, alongwith absentee landlordism, money lenders and other ruinous practices became the new operative mode in the agrarian sector.

Capitalism came to India through colonialism, but what happened here was the creation of a version of capitalism, with its emphasis on extractive and transport sectors. Only selective and careful industrialisation was introduced, for example, in jute, cotton etc. India, as a colony, was linked to the world capitalist system in a subordinate position and involved in unequal exchange. This feature took the form of a structure of production, whereby India produced and exported raw materials and food stuffs, and imported manufactured goods and machines. Consequentially, the traditional cottage and household industries declined and became impoverished. ¹

The homogenised market operating in the colonial logic was replete with new differences : core-periphery, urban-rural, a marked accentuation of class differences (particularly, the hiatus between the modern elite which had accepted the enlightenment discourse, and the masses who still thought within the traditional idiom). While some of these differences were incidental (following from the capitalist logic), the regime consciously invested some cultural differences with power discourse. The logic of 'Divide and Rule', thus, succeeded in creating a forever rift - the suicidal momentum of which manifested itself in a genocide of riots and the partitioned anatomy of India, that is today.

1 - For details see CHANDRA, BIPIN - 'The colonial Legacy' in BIMAL JALAN (ed)- 'The Indian Economy - Problems and Prospects.' Penguin, New Delhi, 1993.

The agenda of modernity once introduced, and its rationalist programme so well accepted by the modern ruling elite of India, could not, at the time of independence, be abandoned at the cost of revisionist revivalism. Macaulay's aim of creating a class of 'Brown Englishmen' served its purpose well (too well, in fact, for it was this class schooled in the modernist discourse, which turned against colonial authority itself.) Since these rationalist principles had emerged in Europe (in being a product of European enlightenment) and were embodied in the western civilization, the new elite looked at this part of European history to accomplish a re-enactment of it here, to achieve what had already been accomplished there.

The reality in India, however, proliferated contradictions - a largely ruined, desperate, semi-feudal, over populated agrarian India (with an already rooted concept of private property), co-existing with a semicapitalist modernist, urban-centric industrialising India. It was with the legacy of this context, that the newly independent India had to debate and decide its own agenda of growth.

Therefore, with the sole exception of Gandhi, none of the entire leadership of the Indian nationalists, thought in terms of envisaging India, as a nation out of the modernity construct. As a result, when these leaders assumed the role of political leadership of the country, the debate was almost pre-emptively decided in favour of the Nehruvian model.

However, the positions of the leadership and the decision in favour of the Nehruvian model were anything but arbitrary. Being an erstwhile colony and an inheritor of the context, that we discussed earlier, India was already situated within the hierarchy of the world capitalist system. Stepping out of this frame would have been more of an atemporal consideration, than an act of political wisdom, as

some recent critiques claim to suggest. Moreover, as Sudipto Kaviraj says, "The point should be made with some care. Nothing is simpler than a sort of anachronistic criticism of nationalist leaders, accusing them of not seeing things that were only revealed by later history. What they made appears to be not a political but a cognitive mistake, along with their generation of social scientists. They acted on an uncomplex and over-rationalistic theory of social change."

Rather, the only option that the modern ruling elite saw as being open to them was a strategy of reworking the country's socio-economic status from a subordinate position to a more credible status within the hierarchy (of the world capitalist system) which could offer them any real bargaining power with the world market forces. The solidarity of de-colonised third world countries, the tightrope walk of non-alignment (in spite of an understandable tilt towards the Soviet Union) are all fruition of that strategy.

Hence, the stress on heavy industrialisation (instead of attending to the ruined agraria), was meant to augment the gaping holes within the domestic market economy and to attain self-sufficiency in the first few Five Year Plans. The economic growth of society was predicated on the building of the industrial sector. Since these could not be built by private capital, because of long gestation periods, this led to the growth of a large public sector. The neglect of agriculture, however, not surprisingly, soon created political and economic difficulties, with the food shortage of the 1960's.

Development, and the challenge of conceiving any policy for the future, had to address another serious problem - how to encompass, accommodate, and rehabilitate the dimension of tolerance and inter-dependence amidst the differences

that were leading to either secession or genocide. The differences - ethnic, linguistic, religious as well as geo-political, had evolved through a long history of co-existence (interspersed with wars and conquests - a legitimised and accepted way of mediation of conflicts - and the subsequent creation of spaces for each demographic group). Capitalism, invested these differences with a politically intolerant, aggressive tenor. The matrix of dependence was nullified through the perverse culture of market existence - currency instead of barter, propertisation as the apogee and necessity of survival. For a colony to realise nationhood, primacy had to be given to the addressal of this question - riots and partition providing its pathological manifestation. The treatment available (Once again provided by the western capitalist model) was the creation of a homogeneous model to help emerge the 'modern citizen' of India.

The modernist nationalists were faced with the task of establishing, that there was an 'India' - a unified collective entity, rather than a congeries of religions, castes and princely states. The attempts at constructing a new matrix of commonality were based on creating a referential model - the glorious 'Mother India'/'Bharat Mata' there was, and how to revive it anew. Their answer, thus, to what constitutes the unity of India, was culture - A supra-cultural notion of India, became the theme and rhetoric for constructing the new India. The unity of India was to be embodied in a nation-state, where all the people, irrespective of their particular ascriptive identities, would have equal rights. "The Indian nation would represent the 'Indian people' without regard to their numerous particularities. This was the message Nehru took to the Indian masses, particularly to the peasant who, with his 'limited outlook' had to be taught the meaning of 'India'....the nation was the people who constituted it, and whom it represented. But this 'people' was itself, of course, a construct - to characterise Hindus, Muslims and

so on as the 'people' was to abstract from their particularities a common essence, and thereby construct them as homogeneousas a 'people'... India was thus the Indian people 'stripped' off their particularities; the citizen was the foundation of the nation." ¹

However, the often referred to supra-cultural model of India (reviving the glory), and the nationalist elites' message for reconstruction, had very limited real links with the socio-cultural context of India, as it were. Rather it was the single rationality - homogenising form of the enlightenment that formed the syntax of reconstruction. "The constitutive elements of this nationalism were rooted in a history and a culture other than that of India.....This 'sensitivity' made its first appearance, and was elaborated, in the course of the enlightenment, and it was this enlightenment sensitivity which was at the heart of Nehru's very notion of India." ² The problem lay, in that, this sensitivity had only percolated to the level of the modern elites and not further down to the level of the masses. This created difficulties, very visible now in some of the consequences of the strategy of development adopted in independent India.

In this process of webbing the differences, however, the real differences were pushed back. All the cultural, communal ethnic differences were translated into a monochrome of developed and underdeveloped, modernised and primitive, and so on in the nationalist lexicon. Perhaps, the core-periphery metaphor was the closest representation of the differences that continued to exist. The addressal

1 - SETH, SANJAY - 'Marxist Theory and Nationalist Practice - The Case of Colonial India.' Pgs 202 - 203, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1995.

2 - Ibid, pg 203 - 204

became largely an administrative, planned, and to a certain extent modernist attempt at 'developing' the regions of 'underdevelopment.'

This is the perspective from which the Developmentalist policies draw their understanding of the issue. Developmentalist policies, with reference to the tribal question (which is the focus of this dissertation), being a derivative of the broader understanding of our times, need a brief reference to the debate of Modernity vis-a-vis the primitive tribal society.

The tribals have provided modern civilization with a fascinating representation of the 'frozen past.'¹ In being so, they became the object of observation and continual analysis for modern science, especially for the anthropologists. The discourse of such analysis constituted a driving desire to modernise the tribals. Such a direction, understandably, was provided by colonial anthropology (of which, positivism and a certain form of 'thick' rationalism formed the central ideological architecture). The thematic assumption of such a discourse was that the tribals, because of their unique historical trajectory and cultural context, did not progress and unlike our (non-tribal modern) civilization, remained backward. Thus, once the existential reality (as registered by the observers) of the tribals could be bracketed as a civilizational - cultural lag, it provided a straightforward explicatory model of universal human history. In other words, the differences could be put

1 - AKKARA, ANTO - 'The Tribals are not Museum Pieces.' Times of India, January 26, 1994.

That they do so, is well understood by the tribals themselves, as summed up in the resolution adopted by the Indian confederation of Indigeneous and Tribal peoples in 1993 in New Delhi, during the celebration of the International year of the indigenous people, "we do not want to be museum pieces for the enjoyment of tourists. Efforts are made to integrate us, who have lived in an egalitarian and classless society, into the mainstream as a low caste. Our culture is looked down upon and the dominant culture....is imposed upon us...."

down and conceptualised as higher and lower rungs in the climb of modernity and progress. Such a conceptualisation had, a distinctive political ramification to it. Once the task of serving progress to the backward became accepted as historically noble, it functioned as a justification for colonial expansion, providing the interfering coloniser with a missionary front. That the political economy of capitalism, functioned through a deliberate policy of expansion and exploitation was obfuscated by the nefarious logic of overseeing the progress of the 'primitive.'

However, the rude proud commentaries of colonial anthropology did not continue for long. The reaction came as serious seminal works on tribal communities by structural anthropologist like Claude Levi-Strauss. In spite of the fact that such works did not directly contribute a comprehensive critique of colonial anthropology (like Wittgenstein's critique of colonial anthropology), they did represent a new and different attitude towards the subject. The works of Levi-Strauss like 'The Savage Mind'¹ (dealing with the study of totemic system of primary classification), and 'The Raw and the Cooked' (dealing with the study of Myths), reflect a much more sensitive and serious approach to the issue. Significantly, what these works succeeded in underlining was, that the tribals had a parallel ontology and societal existence of unique sophistication and complexities. To a large extent, this implied a restoration of respect and the initiation of a dialogical relationship.

Meanwhile, direct critiques of ethno-centric anthropology were being constituted by scholars who were questioning their own civilisation and its

1 - The difference between Claude Levi-Strauss and the colonial anthropologists, is all the more underlined by the French title of the book 'La Pensee Sauvage,' which is significantly different from its English translation. 'The Savage Mind.' The word 'Pensee' in French refers to thought/thinking, rather than 'Mind.'

rational, technological, violent topography.¹ Wittgenstein provides an explicit and direct articulation of his position in his "Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough."² He repeatedly dismisses Frazer's rationalistic assumptions and explanations of the tribal rituals and rites (Magic vs Science) in a tenor so strong as to qualify them (Frazer's explanations) as 'crude' and 'meaningless.'

The trend of criticising modernity and western civilization articulated in a different form within the popular discourse. There was a surge of romantic, nostalgic celebration of primitiveness as a protest against the market hysteria of capitalist life. But this celebration had little serious radicalism to consider. To begin with, there was actually no real migration to primitiveness or primitive society. Nor did the discourses have any such intent, beyond registering a critique of the establishment. In fact, the romantic celebration reiterated the pedagogy of colonial anthropology by situating the tribals as 'primitive' and within a 'remote past' context evoking nostalgia.

The questioning and critiquing of modernity took a much more striking and serious shape in the works of a new genre of writers, for example, the ex-anthro

1 - VON WRIGHT, G H (ed) (1980) - 'Culture and Value - Wittgenstein', Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Let us take an aphorism by Wittgenstein -

"From *Simplicissimus*: Riddles of Technology (A picture of two professors in front of a bridge under construction), Voice from above: 'Fotch it dahn - coom on fotch it dahn A tell tha - We'll turn it t'other rooad sooin.' - "It really is quite incomprehensible, my dear colleague, how anyone can carry out such complicated and precise work in such language."

The quotation with which the aphorism opens, is actually the crude attempt of non-Europeans to speak English. This reminds one of (as it actually intends to), the European lampooning of non-European/tribal speech and society. The second line succinctly sums up the positivist, rationalist complacent attitude of the West.

2 - WITTGENSTEIN - 'Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough' in C.G. LUCKHARDT (ed) - 'Wittgenstein - Sources and Perspectives'. The Harvester Press, Sussex, 1979.

pologists like Carlos Castaneda¹. Here was not only the proclamation of the tribal way of life as an ethically superior, but an accompanying reality of the author renouncing modern civilisation and living the primitive way of life himself. Different from a romantic, nostalgic celebration of primitivism, this was science effacing itself in front of its object, whose sanctity it sought to resurrect and re-instate now - In 1971, the Philippino government decided to return the few dozen Tassaday (tribals) discovered deep in the jungle to their primitive state out of reach of colonists, tourists and ethnologists, at the initiative of the anthropologists themselves.²

This brief discussion on the genesis of Modernity's approach to the tribals raises some fundamental questions, which strikingly are the same that haunt any attempt academic or otherwise (governmental, non-governmental organisations, that of political parties), to deal with the question of tribals.

Firstly, are we to modernise their society through 'empowerment' and other welfare measures, or is it an agenda contrary to ethics and humanism?

Secondly, even if we decide to do so (for in most instances, the decision does not lie, strictly speaking with us), can it be done without bearing the guilt of destroying their social fabric and existence?

Thirdly, if we decide to leave them alone (as the Philippino government did in the case of the Tassaday) is it a real restoration, in view of the osmotic nature of our civilisation, or simply a simulation for exorcising our guilt ?

1 - CASTANEDA, CARLOS - 'A Seperate Reality.'
Arkana Penguin, London, 1971

2 - BAUDRILLARD, JEAN - 'Simulations.'
Semiotexte (e), New York, 1983.

On one hand, we have the ongoing governmental policies (and their champions within the system) that are trying to modernise the tribals through positive affirmation in terms of reservations, welfare measures, specific developmental policies like Tribal sub-plans etc. The criticisms directed towards these efforts (like that of B D Sharma) accuse these attempts of destroying the self-sustaining social system of the tribals leading to their eventual destruction (like the controversy of constructing large dams).

On the other hand, we witness the different non-governmental organisations that are operating among them. In spite of the fact that they are honestly attempting to identify with the tribals, representing them as well as, arguing for the tribal way of life, one cannot help but raise a doubt whether these attempts that begin from without, do not themselves modernise and destabilise the tribal way of life. Of course, this is not to question the validity and legitimation of such movements/organisations that seek to rehabilitate the tribals, and give the much required political expression to their rights. But at the same time the legitimation of such efforts spells an acceptance of the logic of inclusion, and change and disruption of the tribal society within the large modernist framework - something that these movements place themselves strategically against.

Perhaps, the problem lies in the colonising nature of the entire system that we represent - the universalist aggression of our culture that denies any respectful co-existence and accommodation of differences. Therefore, given the truth that any resurrection, any reconstruction of the archetypal primitive is impossible, we have to question and choose among the available options - the political strategy that is least harmful and closest to optimism.

BASTAR : THE REGION AND ITS PEOPLE

Following the thematic introduction of the issue of Developmental Policies and their effect on the tribal communities, in the first chapter, we will now proceed to discuss the specific area of our case study - Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh. The present chapter will be an attempt at discussing the history, socio-economic and cultural features as well as the geo-politics of the region and its people.

Bastar is situated between 17° 47' and 20° 34' North latitude and 80° 15' and 82° 15' East longitude. Bastar lies in the extreme south of Madhya Pradesh bordering Rajnandgaon, Durg, and Raipur districts of Madhya Pradesh in the north, Chanda district of Maharashtra in the West, East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh stretching from south-west to south and Koraput district of Orissa in the east. It is the largest district of Madhya Pradesh stretching over an area of 39191 Sq Kms.¹

Topographically, Bastar is wild - with hills and plateaus creating an uneven country half of whose total space is shared by forestry, the average altitude ranging between 1000 to 3000 feet above the sea level. The main river, Indrawati, flows over 386 Kms across the body of Bastar coming down from the hills of Kalahandi in Orissa, doing a rough bisection of the district. To the north lies the Kotri Mahananda Plain, the Keshkal hills to the south with small low lands in the south and southwest.² This spatial division corresponds to a geo-political divide between north and south Bastar with major political, economic and cultural differences among the tribal population inhabiting the two halves. North Bastar is more

1 - SAHA, S S - 'Genetic Demography and Anthropometry of Muria Tribe'(Narayanpur Muria, Bastar), Pg 1. Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1993.

2 - Ibid, Pg 2.

'developed' - a corollary of it being exposed to outsiders and modern influences over a time much longer than its southern counterpart. South Bastar's seclusion continued till as late as 1960's, the poor transport and communication system of the area being chiefly responsible. ¹ Accordingly, north and south Bastar have been identified separately for Developmental purposes. Out of 32 development Blocks, 19 lie in the north and 13 in the south.²

Bastar is divided into eight Tahsils - Kondagaon, Kanker, Bhanupratappur, Jagdalpur, Bijapur, Dantewara, Narayanpur and Konta.³ It is a tribal dominated district with tribals constituting 68.2% of the total population, that stood at 18,40,449 in the 1981 census. The population density is low - 47 persons per Sq Kms (according to 1981 census) and only a small fragment 6.06% of the total population lies in the urban category.⁴

The major tribal communities of Bastar are the 'Abuj Maria'/'Hill Maria,' the 'Dandami Maria'/'Bison-horn Maria, the 'Muria,'the 'Bhatra,' the 'Halba,' the 'Dorla' and the 'Dhurwa.'

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- 1 - JOSHI, RAMSHARAN - 'Tribals : Islands of Deprivation' National Book shop, Delhi, 1984. Ch-2. 'Impact of Industrialisation on Tribals, A case Study of Bailadila, Bastar.' Pg 13, 1984.
 - 2 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Tribal Encounter with Industry - A case Study from Central India.' Pg 23. Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990.
 - 3 - SAHA, S S - 'Genetic Demography and Anthropometry of Muria Tribe' (Narayanpur Muria, Bastar). Pg 1, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1993.
 4. SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Tribal Encounter with Industry - A Case Study from Central India.' Pg 107. Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990.

Since these communities constitute our subject population in the present research, let us familiarise with the people through short and sketchy introductions of each community.

ABUJ/HILL MARIA

The population of the 'Abuj/Hill Maria' is over 15000.¹ Their habitat is the Abujmar hills and they share their ancestry with the 'Bison-horn Maria', 'Muria' and 'Dorla' - all of them being sub-tribes of the Gonds. Gondi, a central-Dravidian language is the sub-stratum language of all these sub-tribes, even though the dialects practiced by each of them may be incomprehensible to the other. The 'Abuj Maria' are "the least influenced people as far as culture-contact is concerned."² They are the only tribe which practices 'slash and burn/shifting cultivation known as 'Penda.' The principal crop they cultivate is 'Kodra' - a variety of millet. The cultivating units engaging in agriculture are single extended families. Each family selects and prepares a plot according to its requirements and cultivate the land for three consecutive years possessing absolute rights over the plot during the period. The rights cease with the abandonment of the plot of land after three years leaving the land 'non-propertised' and to be claimed by anyone else in future.³

1 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the people of Bastar.' Pg 2, Sharada Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid.

3 - SARKAR A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar,' Pgs 70-71., Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.

Groups of villages which have territorial affinity make up a 'Pargana'. The headman of each 'Pargana' is known as 'Manjhi.' The 'Panchayats', the basic rudimentary form of social administration in rural society, are held both at the village and 'Pargana' levels.¹

The traditional council of the 'Abuj Maria' is headed by a 'Pargana Manjhi', assisted by the 'Patel' - the village headman. They deal with disputes between members of their tribal community.²

'Kudin' and 'Kaksar' are the harvest festivals of the 'Abuj Maria'. 'Kaksar', the 'festival of dance' performed in June, is their central festival that celebrates the harvest with the new crop eating ceremony and at the same time functions as the ritual of honouring the clan gods before the wake of the monsoons. 'Kohalang' the deity of 'Penda' cultivation, and the village deity are also worshipped along with the clan deities. Among the rituals they practice are, the 'hanal katla' - a ceremony in honour of the ancestors, the 'lesketal katla' - dealing with illness and misfortune and 'Kaud tatana' - a harvest ritual held in winter.³

'BISON-HORN'/'DANDAMI MARIA'

According to the 1981 census, the population of the 'Bison-horn'/Dandami Maria' is 70,000.⁴ They derive their name, the 'Bison-horn Maria', from the

1 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar,' Pg 24. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.

2 - Ibid,

3 - Ibid, Pg 25.

4 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 2, Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

traditional head gear/head dress they sport while dancing in marriages and other ceremonies. The headdress is made of bamboo strips with a tuft of feather and a pair of bison-horns attached to it.¹ The Tahsils of Jagdalpur, Bijapur, Dantewara and Konta comprise the habitat of the Bisonhorn maria.²

Like the 'Abuj Maria', the 'Bison-horn'/Dandami Maria' practice the 'Penda' - shifting cultivation, producing a variety of millet. They also practice 'settled cultivation', rice being the crop produced in this form of 'settled' agricultural practice.³

The 'Pargana Panchayat' headed by the 'Pargana Manjhi' assisted by the headmen of the four villages that come under the 'Pargana', - acts as the body exercising social administration. There is another structure for social control, the 'Jati Panchayat' headed by the 'Pedda' - a hereditary office and assisted by the 'Para Mukhia', the 'Kotwar' - a messenger, and the 'Aut Paharia'.⁴

The religious system of the 'Dandami Marias' centres around 'Bhum' - the Earth goddess, 'Danteshwari Mata' - the goddess of the Maharaja of Bastar, and their clan god who resides in the outskirts of every 'Bison-horn Maria' village.⁵-----

1 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 35. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi 1996.

2 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 3 Sharada Publishing house, Delhi 1992.

3 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 38. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi 1996.

4 - Ibid.

5 - Ibid, Pg 39.

The rituals practiced include, 'wete' - the ceremonial hunt, 'Kare Pandum' - the beginning of the timber felling process of clearing forests for slash and burn cultivation and several ceremonies celebrating the first coming of the crops and fruits through community eating rituals, the 'Irupu Pandum' - ceremony of the first Mahua fruits, the 'Marka Pandum' - ceremony of the first Mango fruits, and the 'Kurum Pandum' - that of the new crop.¹

'MURIAS'

The population of the 'Murias' is estimated to be over 1,00,000.² The 'Murias' comprise of the 'Raj Murias' who inhabit Jagdalpur, the 'Jhoria Murias' living in Narayanpur Tahsil, and the 'Ghotul Murias' of Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils.³

The basic agricultural practice of the 'Murias' is the 'settled cultivation' form, but they also engage in 'Parka' the slash and burn/shifting cultivation.⁴

The 'Pargana Manjhi' assisted by the 'Patel' heads the council of social control which includes the 'kotwar' - the Panchayat messenger. The punitive measures practiced by the Panchayat include imposing fines or excommunicating the guilty who breach social norms, Unlike the 'Aduj Marias' or the 'Dandami Marias', the modern statutory panchayat has an important role in the 'Muria' social organisation.⁵

'Danteshwari Mata', the clan gods, and the ancestors regarded as family deities are worshipped among the 'Murias', A very important deity is 'Lingo-pen', the creators of the 'Ghotul' organisation that the 'Muria' practice.⁶

1 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S- 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 39. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi 1996.

2 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 2 Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

3 - Ibid, Pg 3.

4 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S- 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar,' Pg 34 Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.

5 - Ibid.

6. Ibid.

The practice of the 'Ghotul' is a special feature among, the Murias and deserves a brief elucidation. The 'Ghotul' is a hut, situated usually at the centre of the village. It functions as a youth dormitory system where unmarried boys and girls are initiated into gender-interaction and sexuality - a traditional practice fundamental to the constitution of the psyche and ethos of the 'Murias'. "The Ghotul...is an important traditional institution of the Muria...a well organised system to inculcate on the unmarried youth, the tribal's sense of values; it gives... direction and confidence.... Its an institution which sows in every member the seeds of discipline forbearance, broad mindedness, and other virtues...."¹ The organisation of the 'Ghotul' runs by well-articulated, thorough sets of regulations. The male members of the 'Ghotul' the 'Cheliks' and the female members known as 'Motiaris' elect their respective leader representative - the 'Sirdar' among men and 'Belosa' among women. The 'Sirdar' and 'Belosa' enjoy the responsibility of running the 'Ghotul' in a disciplined way. The 'Ghotuls' have two distinct types - one is a more traditional form where the relationships mature into conjugal bonds, and a relatively modern form where the partners are constantly changed.²

1974-75

'BHATRA'

The 'Bhatra' population, according to the 1981 census, is around 117,297.

³ The north-eastern part of Jagdalpur constitute their habitat. They speak 'Bhatri' - an archaic form of Indo-Aryan language. The 'Bhatras' have a hierarchic



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- 1 - SHAANI (GULSHER KHAN) - 'An Island of Sal.' Pg 28. National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1981.
 - 2 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 27. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.
 - 3 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 2 Sharada Publishing House, Delhi 1992.

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division among them, at the top are the 'Bade Bhatra', 'Majhli Bhatra' lie in between, followed by the 'Shan Bhatra.'¹

The 'Jati Panchayat' of the 'Bhatras' is headed by a 'Naik' - a hereditary post, assisted by a 'Paik' - a messenger and five other members. The modern statutory panchayat has a strong influence on them.²

The family deities of the 'Bhatras' are their ancestors known as 'Goti Deo'. Apart from the 'Goti Deo', the 'Bhatras' worship 'Danteshwari Mata', the protecting mother goddess.³

'HALBA'

The 'Halba' with a population of over 40,000 are mostly found to be living in Jagdalpur and Kondagaon Tahsils.⁴ Once attached to the Bastar Maharaja as a garrison, they are the descendants of the old 'Paik' Militia. Historically, it is claimed that they migrated from Warrangal of Andhra Pradesh, alongwith Raja Annam Deo, the Kakatiya King of Warrangal who crossed the Godavari in the wake of Mughal invasions and established a kingdom in Bastar.⁵ They speak 'Halbi', the archaic Indo-Aryan language, which is at the same time the 'lingua franca' of Bastar.

1 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg. 51, Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.

2 - Ibid, Pg 56.

3 - Ibid.

4 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 2. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi 1992.

5 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 48, Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.

Social control exercising bodies are headed by one or two 'Siyane' - elders of the community at the village level, and by a 'Naik' at the community level, who deal with disputes relating to land and customary laws. The inter-community disputes are referred to the statutory village panchayat. ¹

'Danteshwari Mata', is the principal deity. Among the rituals practiced there are, 'Haryali' - the ceremony of cattle worship, and 'Nayakhani' - the ceremonial eating of the new rice. ²

'DORLAS

The 'Dorlas' inhabit Bijapur and Konta Tahsils. ³ They comprise of the eastern 'Dorla' of the Kolab-Sabari riverain tract, the western 'Dorla' of Bhopalpatnam, and the 'Dorla' of the Golapalli reserved forest area:

The Dorlas are primarily an agriculturist community practicing 'settled cultivation'. Their staple produce consists of rice and jowar. ⁴

The council of social control of the 'Dorlas' is headed by a 'Dhurwa', who is assisted by a 'bandhroth'. ⁵

Apart from the family deities - the spirits of the dead ancestors known as 'Anhal', the 'Dorlas' worship their clan god, and a pantheon of deities -

1 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 50, Agmakala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.

2 - Ibid, Pg 51.

3 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 3, Sharada Publishing House, Delhi 1992.

4 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar,' Pg 41. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi 1996.

5 - Ibid, Pg 43.

'Gaman' - Identified with the rain god 'Bhimul', 'Murpu' - worshipped for protection against small pox, 'Kora' and 'Ganganamma' - the deities residing in the outskirts of the village providing protection from evil, and 'Muttalemma.'¹

'DHURWAS'

The 'Dhurwas' whose population, according to 1981 census, is estimated to be approximately 42,370, inhabit the south-eastern part of Jagdalpur and adjoining parts of north kota Tehsil.²

Originally, a section of the 'Parja' tribal community they claimed a separate identity of 'Dhurwa' after practicing abstinence from, beef. They speak 'Parji' a central Dravidian language. The 'Dhurwas' are divided into the northern 'Dhurwa' and 'Dhurwa' belonging to the south of Jagdalpur town. They do not practice inter-marriage among the two communities.³

In spite of the fact that they practice 'settled cultivation' their main traditional occupation is not agriculture, but basketry.⁴

The 'Dhurwa' council of social control is headed by a 'Patel' - a hereditary post, assisted by 'Kotwar' and 'Aut Paharia.' Apart from their traditional council, the 'Dhurwas' maintain connections with the statutory village panchayat body.⁵—

1 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 43. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi 1996.

2 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

3 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 43. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi 1996.

4 - Ibid, Pg 47.

5 - Ibid.

Following the discussion on the major tribal communities of Bastar and their distinctive characteristics, we shall now discuss in brief some of the socio-cultural features that the tribal groups share in common, before entering into a commentary on changes that tribal life has undergone - a process of 'Sanskritisation' influenced by Hindu practices and social reform movements.

As we have seen from the introductory sketches of the communities, each tribal community has a clan god symbolising kinship and differentiating the clans - a crucial social unit in the organisation of tribal life. The clans are unilinear descent groups.¹ All those who descend from a common ancestor, related by blood, either manifestly or in accordance to some myths/legends, form one clan. Each clan is associated with a certain territory - the 'Bhum' or clan territory.² This territory has concrete relation with the ancestry of each clan - the deceased ancestors being buried in the 'Bhum'. The 'Bhum', thus, provides a link in the relationship between the tribal progeny and their ancestors acquiring, in the process, a status of veneration, and generational attachment for the clan.

The clan functions as the basis for marriages. They are divided into "Dadabhai" (brother-clans) and 'Akomama' (wife-clans). Marital alliance within the 'Dadabhai' clan is prohibited, and they are only permitted to marry members of 'Akomama.' The tribals have a partilineal and patrilocal kinship

1 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 22, Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.

2 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Tribal Encounter with Industry - A Case Study from Central India.' Pg 21. Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990.

structure practicing mostly monogamy and preferring cross-cousin marriages. Marriages take place mostly by negotiations,¹ According to the existing convention and practice, the boy's father visits the bride's place with a gift - considered to be the price of the bride (dowry). The marriage takes place once the gift is accepted. In case, the gift fails to satisfy, the boy offers to stay with and work for the bride's family. This practice, known as 'Lamhada', is common among the poor and/or orphaned tribals who have to work for the bride's family for periods stretching from three to seven years, before earning the consent for marriage.² The marriage ceremonies consist of rituals performed by elders accompanied by feasting, drinking and dancing.³

Within the household, the eldest male enjoys the final authority and say in all spheres of life. The land is divided equally among the sons only after the death of the father. The eldest son might inherit a little larger share than the rest, alongwith the responsibility of worshipping the ancestors and the household deity. In spite of the fact that women do not enjoy the right of inheritance, they have freedom in choosing their partners and the right to divorce, Widow-marriage is a common practice. Besides working at the fields with their menfolk, the women

1 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 23. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.

2 - SHAANI (GULSHER KHAN) - 'An Island of Sal.' Pg 62. National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1981.

3 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Tribal Encounter with Industry - A Case Study from Central India,' Pg 20, Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi 1990.

in collecting the forest produces like roots, tubers, leaves, flowers, fruits, honey, bamboo-shoot, mushroom etc, which are important sources for their sustenance.¹

In spite of the fact that with the single exception of the 'Bhatras', who inhabit the urban areas of Jagdalpur, the other tribal groups have come into very little cultural contact with the non-tribals, the tribal communities of Bastar manifest absorption of non-tribal, especially Hindu customs and practices into their mores.

The cultural impact is borne out by the practice of social hierarchisation within the tribes, that operates through ascription of high/low status by acceptance and refusal of food of a community when offered by another. For example, the 'Dhurwas' who practice abstinence from beef, ascribe those who consume beef like the 'Bison-horn Murias' a lower status in relation to themselves.² For the 'Dorlas', similarly, the community they accept food from is ascribed a higher status than themselves, while the community they refuse to accept food from, are placed lower. The 'Raja Murias' are treated almost at par with the 'Dhurwas'. The 'Bhatras', the most Hinduized community, enjoy a status higher than the 'Dhurwas'.³

According to Edward J Jay, the 'Hill Marias' of Abujhmar, who are less exposed to the non-tribal communities in comparison with other tribes,

1 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 55. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.

2 - SARKAR, JAYANTA - 'Social Mobility in Tribal Madhya Pradesh' Pg 40, BR Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1986.

3 - Ibid, pg 41.

conceive the differentiation in terms of big and small, instead of high and low -

"All the Hindus or Hinduized groups other than those who practice degrading occupations were placed in the category of 'big' castes Those were considered to be higher than the Marias. All those castes which practiced low-status occupations... were considered 'small' and placed lower than the Marias ... The other Gonds, such as the Muria and the Bison-horn Maria are considered equivalent to the Hill Maria. The Hill Maria accept food from any 'Koitur' (ie., Gond)...."¹

"The hill Maria, inevitably, speak of big and small castes as groups from whom they can or cannot take food without degrading themselves."²

Apart from the gradual diffusion of Hindu customs among the tribal communities through cultural interaction, Bastar witnessed a more direct Hinduizing influence in the Bhagat movement of Baba Bihari Das, that started in 1970 in the Chapka village of Bastar. A Hindu from Ayodhya, Baba Bihari Das, gained initial popularity and support from the tribals by claiming to be an incarnation of Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo, the last Maharaja of Bastar (who died in an accidental Police firing in March 1996 while leading a tribal uprising). Baba's claim was supported

1 - SARKAR, JAYANTA - 'Social Mobility in Tribal Madhya Pradesh, Pgs 42-43. B R Publishing Corporatin, Delhi, 1986.

2 - Ibid. Pg 43.

immediately by two ex-members of Adivasi Seva Dal (an organisation formed by Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo for the uprising), who were closely associated with the Maharaja.¹

Once legitimised, the Baba toured the villages asking his followers to wear a 'Kanthi' - a bead made of sandalwood, for purification of their sins. ²The Baba "recited the Ramayana" at the gatherings, and asked the tribals to observe the following:

- 1) To give up worship of any deity except Ram.
- 2) To sing a bhajan in praise of Ram every morning and evening.
- 3) To give up eating any kind of meat and drinking of wine.
- 4) To abjure all magical practice.
- 5) (For women) to worship their husbands.
- 6) To avoid eating or drinking water touched by any person who did not wear a 'Kanthi.'³

In the beginning, majority of the converts were 'Bhatras' and 'Halbas'. Then the Baba's associates (ex-members of the Adivasi Seva Dal) organised a meeting of the 'Pargana Manjhis' in 1971. They were asked to join the Baba and work for him in their respective areas. As a result, more tribals were attracted to the Baba.⁴ By mid 1971, the 'Bison-horn Maria', 'Dhurwas' and 'Dorlas' had also joined. The 'Hill Marias', however, remained out of it till the end.⁵

1 - BHATT, VIKAS - 'A Baba in Bastar' in RAMSHARAN JOSHI - 'Tribals : Islands of Deprivation.' Pg 225. National Book Shop, Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 226.

3 - Ibid, pg 227.

4 - Ibid, Pg 228.

5 - Ibid, Pg 229.

This movement, however, proved to be a very crude attempt at a Bhagat Movement. For soon the Baba got involved in politics, exercising his influence over the tribals, to convert it into support for the Congress candidate in the 1972 general elections.¹

In 1974, he had organised a 'Mahayajana' at Chapka village, on occasion of the 'Kumbh Mela' at Haridwar. A large number of tribals attended. One estimate puts it at 25 - 30,000 tribals. The Baba received a lot of cows, ornaments and money as 'dakshina'. But the same year, the crops failed in Bastar. And soon the Baba's influence started waning off. By 1975, he was arrested under MISA for hoarding construction material (which was seized), for a Ram temple and a branch of his Ashram.² In fact, this was not the first time he was arrested in Bastar. In the same year, the movement lost support and his tribal followers discarded their 'Kanthis'.

We will now briefly trace the history of Bastar to complete our discussion, in this chapter, on the socio-economic, cultural and historical features of this region and its people.

"Bastar," writes H L SHUKLA, "was originally split up into a number of tracts inhabited by Dravidian tribes under its own chief. These petty chiefs

1 - BHATT, VIKAS - 'A Baba in Bastar' in RAMSHARAN JOSHI - 'Tribals : Islands of Deprivation' Pg 230. National Book shop, Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pgs 230 - 231.

carried on internecine wars with one another" till 1324 A D when kakatiya king Annamdeo "invaded their country and reduced them to subjection." ¹

Annamdeo was the king of the Kakatiya Kingdom in Warrangal. When the invasions of Sultan Mohamamad Tghlak led to the defeat, capture and subsequent death of his father - Raja Pratap Rudra, Annamdeo crossed the Godavari and after invading Bastar, established the Chalukya rule in Bastar.

The Chalukya rule continued unchallenged till 1774, when the Halba Revolt upset the course of history. The Revolt broke out over the immediate issue of king Dalpat Deva (1731-1774) crowning against conventions, his unpopular younger son Daryaodeva, instead of the elder Ajmer Singh. Shukla states two underlying factors behind the outbreak - the poor socio-economic conditions of the region, and the political instability due to Bhonsla aggression since 1740. Initially, the rebels were successful in making Ajmer Singh, king of Bastar, but Daryaodeva entered into military alliance with the Marathas and the Kingdom of Jeypore, and the rebels were destroyed swiftly by the "trio militia of Bhonslas, Jeypurians and followers of Daryaodeva." ² But this revolt led to the collapse of the Chalukya rule and gave way to Bhonsla occupation. Jeypore Raja received the Kotpar tract in 1777 A D for assistance. Daryaodeva had to agree to pay an annual tribute ('takoli') of Rs.4000 - 5000. But, inspite of the fact that the Maratha power became successful in making Bastar a vassal state, the Bastar Raja avoided political submission causing the irritated Marathas to raid Bastar time and again.

1 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 35. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid, Pg 24.

As far as the Chalukya rule is concerned, its effects on the economic structure, especially the arrangement of land relations and revenue system was complementary to the existing system evolved by the tribals. Statements of H L Shukla like - "the whole land system of Bastar was a compromise of and concession to tribal customs,"¹ "In Chalukya rule, the feudal chiefs, later on known as the Zamindars were the integral part of the kingdom,"² "there is hardly an instance, I believe, of the permanent deprivation of any family of its hereditary possession. This resulted from a political compromise between the authority of the tribe and that of the king."³ - confirm this view which suggests a more tolerant history of conquest than the one to follow.

"The earliest recorded attempt of the Bengal Government to explore the possibilities of establishing Company Rule in Bastar was done by Captain Blunt."⁴ Captain Blunt, however, was only able to visit the bordering areas since he was met with hostile plundering groups all through his journey in Bastar. The East India Company entered the foray through the Nagpur state of Marathas. The British ensured Bastar's total and effective subjection to the Marathas by concluding the Anglo-Maratha treaty of 1819 under which Bastar's "power was restricted 'under new engagement which were conducted with the whole of Zamindars.'(Jenkins, 1877 : 40)."⁵ The humiliating 'Ikraranama' that king Mahipaldeva of Bastar had to sign (with P Vans Agnew on behalf of the Maratha government of Nagpur)

1 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 35 Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid, Pg 35.

3 - Ibid, Pg 35.

4 - Ibid, Pg 27.

5 - Ibid, Pg 34.

declaring clearly the subjection of Bastar to Nagpur State, led to a mass unrest - the Paralkote agitation of 1825 led by Zamindar Gaird Shah.

The rebellion was soon crushed by the British and Bastar was virtually annexed into 'the central provinces of British India.'¹ As the British began to consolidate their conquest, they initiated a process of changes that were, unlike the Chalukya experience, violent to the existing norms and conventions - In the words of Shukla , "the people being unaccustomed to such a shift at local level in the wake of political change at the centre, had offered resistance."²

Form 1842 onwards, a series of rebellions followed the Tarapur uprising, the Maria insurgency at Dantewara, the 1856-57 uprising of the Bison -horn Marias and Telagas (inspired by the Sepoy Mutiny),the koi (Dorla and Dandami Maria) Revolution of 1859, the Maria rebellion of 1876 culminating into the Great Bhumakal of 1910.

What all these outbreaks share in common is the fact that the resentments leading to all the outbreaks were a direct consequence of British Policies, and all the revolts indentified British rule as the principal enemy.

In 1842, Bastar king Bhopaldeva appointed his brother Dalganjam Singh as the Governor of Tarapur, - a place considered to be a military outpost to Jeypore state rather than a revenue source. Nonetheless, the Bastar king insisted on increasing the revenues of the Pargana, in order to raise the 'takoli' payment (stipu-

1 - SHIKLA, H L - ' History of the People of Bastar.' pg 39 Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid, pg 41.

lated by the British). Dalganjam Singh, a popular Governor, denied to carry this out. The people of Tarapur started an armed resistance challenging the Anglo-Maratha rule and the puppet government of Bhopaldeva. The British eventually suppressed the rebellion.

Around the same time, "the superstition of the 'Maria' sacrifice of the tribes, a barbarous ceremony of human sacrifice at the Dantewara temple,"¹ - a fiction, claimed by Shukla, based on hearsay, led the British to intervene in the worship of the temple and appoint a guard. This "became a major cause of tribal rebellion in South Bastar."² Shukla's claim in this instance that there was "never a single authenticated instance of human sacrifice in Bastar,"³ is corroborated by Grigson: "writing in 1861 after a prolonged tour in Bastar and after special enquiries into this matter in both Kalahandi and Bastar states, of which as Deputy Commissioner of Sironcha he was then in political charge, Captain C Glasford stated that the guard had continued to be posted in Dantewara ever since 1842; and that 'even if the abominable rite ever existed, which is doubtful, it has altogether fallen into disuse."⁴

In 1853, Bastar came into direct political relation with the British who made Bhairamdeva (1853-1859) the king of Bastar.

It is evident from both the rebellions we discussed in brief, that the 'objective causes' behind the discontent were provided by the violent transition of the

1 - SHUKHLA, H L - History of the People of Bastar. Pg 47 Sharda Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid, Pg 47

3 - Ibid, Pg 49

4 - Ibid, Pgs 47 - 48 (Grigson; 1942:7)

socio-economic structure and cultural belief systems of a 'self - sufficient' - 'closed' - 'primitive' society. The transformation of a communal land - holding system to a revenue/tax based rental-system of individual landholding, operated against the essential character of tribal societies, and threatened their communal existence. "All these rebellions were defensive movements: they were the last resort of tribesmen driven to despair by the encroachment of outsiders on their land or economic resources."¹

When the news of the rebellion against the East India Company in 1856-57 reached Bastar, the 'Bison-horn Marias' and 'Telagas' of Lingagiri Taluk revolted under their chief Dharma Rao (a different account gives his name as Dhurwa Rao), Claiming that the 'Maria' leaders have received 'Purvana' from some high authority directing them to revolt against the British Government,² Dharma Rao, the Lingagiri Talukdar urged Bhairamdeva to join the rebellion. The Bhopalpattnam Zamindar suppressed the revolt and received the Taluk of Lingagiri from the British for his service.

"Until 1850, the greater part of Southern Bastar was a country rich in teak forest, poor in communication, and of little economic or political importance. A feudal system prevailed then during the Kojs ('Dorlas' and 'Dandami Marias'), who while recognising the sovereignty of the Rajah of Bastar, lived to all practical purposes under the jurisdictions of their tribal heads known as Zamindars."³

1 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 46. (C Von Furer - Haimendorf, Aboriginal Rebellions in Deccan, Man in India, No.4, 1945. pp 208-9)

2 - Ibid, Pg 65.

3 - Ibid, Pg 69

But this system was upset by "the new forest regulations under which the teak forest of Bastar was contracted with the timber merchants of Hyderabad."¹ This led to a violent upsurge as the tribals pledged not to let a single tree to be fallen, and attacked the traders. "It was like 'one human head cut in lieu of one teak tree,'" ² so comments Shukla. Once again, the British troops intervened in favour of the merchant class and restored order.

As the last resource space of the communities were getting absorbed in the commodification logic, the colonial strategy envisaged a unique historical distortion. Instead of purging the system totally of pre-capitalist structures and institutions, they created a feudal gentry class by conferring on them ownership of land (to be rented out for cultivation by them) in lieu of ever - increasing revenue collections. The later, occupying an intermediary rung - politically as well as economically intensified the exploitation at the ground level playing havoc.

"The objective result of the economic policy of the British Government in Bastar consisted in the destruction of community, the braking off the links From the abstract theoretical point of view, it would seem that the historical mission of British industrial capital in Bastar was to eliminate the subsistence economy and its foundations - the unification of craft production and farming and to re-arrange land relations thoroughly."³

1 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of People of Bastar.' Pg 69. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi 1992.

2 - Ibid, Pg 70.

3 - Ibid, Pg 152.

The particular forms the British introduced were, the 'Thekedari' system, - forcibly making the headman a 'Thekedar' and make him collect revenues for the company, and the 'temporary Zamindari System' under which the colonial power "made the village elders its political allies, by turning them into landowners, or 'malgauzars' and employing them to collect taxes. The entire village in which the 'Malgauzar' previously enjoyed only certain privileges was now in his own estate. The tribals....became merely tenants."¹

These measures led to large scale sub-tenancy (which had no laws fixing the rights of the sub-tenants) ; pauperization and practices such as 'begar' (forced labour) and 'kameya'(a form of bonded labour).

In 1876, when the king of Bastar, Bhairam Deo was to leave for Bombay to meet the Prince of Wales, the people protested against being left to the rule of ministers, apprehending increase in exploitative measures during the King's absence. During the disturbances, the Diwan's attendant shot some 'Murias' and this led to the outbreak of the Muria uprising in 1876. About 10,000 'Murias' and 'Bhatras' laid a seige on Jagdalpur. The seige continued till four months, after which the British troops arrived on receiving information about the revolt and suppressed the uprising ruthlessly.

According to Shukla, the institution of forced labour by the contractors and the degradation of the status of 'Manjhis', were major reasons behind the discontent. interestingly, Shukla finds a 'revolutionary context' in the fact that "By this

1 - SHUKLA, H. L. - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 152. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

uprising the 'Munshis' were declared as exploiters of the tribes and were marked out as the immediate enemies of the people."¹

The Muria uprising, inspite of being a failed attempt at organised rebellion, contributed to the accumulating discontent and hatred towards British rule, within the mases which erupted in a grand scale in the Great Bhumakal of 1910.

"The Bhumakal of 1910, in which the people in Bastar took up arms to expel the British was... an organised challenge by hill tribes in the region. The origins of the rebellion are to be found in the tribal reaction to the feudal and colonial exploitation of the British colonial Pattern and the anxiety of the people to maintain their distinct way of life."²

The Bhumakal of 1910 was an outcome of several factors : some of them were accumulation of resentment over a long time and some were immediate instances of further encroachments into the resource-space of the tribes accompanied with missions of modernisation, disrupting the traditional cultural realm violently.

One of the major reasons behind the discontent centered around the Raja of Bastar. THE king of Bastar was integrally related to the tribal community life not only in an administrative way but culturally as well, absorbed within the metaphysics of customs and rituals. Any change in the status of the Raja (who was at the same time the Chief Priest of Danteshwari, combining the political

1 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 185. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid, Pg 217.

religious authority) would disturb the tribal communities. Shukla writes that, "his (King's) degradations invited the displeasure of the tribes and epidemics and draughts."¹ Therefore, the subjection and humiliation of the king by the British was a long source of resentment for the tribes.

The reservation of large areas as state forest was another major issue. "A demarcation of reserved forest had been carried out and the tribes felt that their inalienable rights in the forests had been usurped. By this act some tribal villages and their lands had at places been included in the reserved forest area."²

"In 1908, a policy of reservation of forests was introduced by the colonial ruler to enable the extraction of timber and other forest products to serve the needs of the railways and various industries."³

"The colonial administration created conditions in which the villages were given on lease to extract the money from the aboriginals...and the 'thekedari' system became more effective."⁴

As the tribal communities, pauperized and disintegrating, continued to be exploited by the colonial measures and the 'Pathan money lenders, Telanga and Chattisgarhi traders,' the logic of commodity and schemes of modernisation were destroying their cultural hemisphere - "according to ancient tradition the gods of

1 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 218. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid, Pg 218.

3 - Ibid, Pg 219.

4 - Ibid

the tribes required offerings of liquor distilled by the families worshipping them."¹ Besides, liquor distillation was an integral part of tribal communal life whose festivities, rituals and moves involved communal drinking. But, "the excise rules in 1908 prohibited such distillation."²

N K Das, in his account, mentions the measure of starting new primary schools all over the state as another major cause of the outbreak.³ In Shukla's account we come across Standen's observation that "maltreatment of pupils by school masters in order to extort money, forcible collection by school masters of money to purchase supplies for the tahsildar and inspector, purchase by school masters of supplies at one-fourth of the market price." constituted the main causes of discontent. What in the process was getting undermined and destroyed, in the meantime, was the 'community education' form practiced in the tribal communities, where 'Ghotuls' played an important role. The new education system was entirely insensitive to the context of the tribals and faced fierce opposition.

The system of 'begar' (forced labour) was a constant factor of discontent, alongwith the repressive police force that continued oppressing the tribals brutally.

Another factor, in Shukla's words, was the challenge of the 'self-identity of Bastar' - "with the extension of the market economy to every nook and corner of Bastar, the aboriginals found that their traditional self-image is slipping out of

1 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 220. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid,

3.- DAS, N K - 'Tribal Unrest in Bastar' in B CHAUDHURI, (ed) - 'Tribal Development in India - Problems and Prospects.' Pg 102. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1982.

their control and they were being presented as 'barbarous' by the given image ...so they rebelled."¹

The whole of Bastar became rebellious, once triggered off by the 'Parjas' (later known as 'Dhurwas'). Only the Zamindars, Jagirdars and Mukasdars did not participate. Participated by numerous tribals irrespective of groups (though Shukla mentions 'a tendency to maintain a degree of seperateness') the Parjas were dominant in the South, while the Murias led the revolt in the north. In Shukla's account, we come across the formulation of strategy by Diwan Lal Kalindra Singh and Gunda Dhar (the organising strategist and leader of the outbreak respectively) that makes the Bhumakal uprising a movement declaredly of 'sophisticated political aspiration - "The plan consisted of a programme for the setting up (of) an 'Independent Revolutionary Government' with Gunda Dhar as its head by paralysing and destroying the universally hated foreign administrative system and emancipating Bastar from the bondage of foreign subjugation." ²

The movement came to an end with the arrest of Lal Kalindra Singh and the covert leadrs of the rebellion by the 26th of February by the British forces.³ The aftermath of the uprising witnessed intensification of British exploitative measures like their policy of discouraging the rice cultivation and the re-introduction of 'head-tax system' in 1932 by W V Grigson, the Chief Administrator of Bastar- "From that time every able-bodied male adult was taxed at annual rates which varied from Rs.1/4 to Rs.1/12 down through the years."⁴

1 - SHUKLA, H L - 'History of the People of Bastar.' Pg 223. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid, Pg 228.

3 - Ibid, Pg 247.

4 - Ibid, Pg 330.

The last Kakatiya ruler, the six year old Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo became the ruler in 1936. According to N K Das, he signed a merger agreement and ceded to the government (the post-independent government) full and exclusive jurisdiction over Bastar.¹ In 1953, he was declared incapable of managing the Estate (a privilege he continued to enjoy after the agreement). Deposed of power he formed the 'Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor Seva Sangh.'

For some time he was an M L A of Congress, but resigned and formed the 'Adivasi Seva Dal.' Due to his 'anti-government', activities, he was arrested in 1961, but had to be released in the face of violent tribal unrest. The tribal discontent continued till March 1966, when the police firing on the gathering of protesting tribals in Jagdalpur led to the death of Maharaja Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo.²

Soon after the demise of the king, there arose the Bhagat movement of Baba Bihari Das, which we discussed within the changing social perspective of the tribal communities, earlier in the chapter.

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- 1 - DAS, N K - 'Tribal Unrest in Bastar' in B CHAUDHURI, (ed) - 'Tribal Development in India - Problems and Prospects.' Pg 101. Inter India Publications, New Delhi 1982.
 - 2 - SARKAR, A & DASGUPTA, S - 'Spectrum of Tribal Bastar.' Pg 13. Agamkala Prakashan, Delhi 1996.

POLICIES AND PROJECTS FOR TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN BASTAR

The early capitalist strategy in late 18th Century of growth and expansion had ascribed only a secondary role to the state. Left to a status of 'non-intervention' in the production - distribution - consumption processes of society, the state was to articulate the political structure corresponding to the power situation, which is, in Marxist lexicon, functioning as 'the organ of class rule' for the bourgeoisie. This early modern context sets the perspective to the theories like that of the 'invisible hand' and Adam Smith - Ricardo's conception of the 'economic man' - operating in a free-market' - within the ideological terrain - of 'rational choice' - deriving 'maximisation of satisfaction (profit)'. These are the edified representations of the bourgeoisie and its aspirations in the immediately concluded Industrial Revolution stage. The positing of individual in a 'rational choice' would become the central model of reference for this history; the notions of individual rights and liberties as propounded by Bentham, Mill have all fed into and contributed to this early modern perspective.

However, the narrative of transition from a feudal society to an industrialised advanced capitalist formation needed a strategy of territorial imperialism - the exploitation of other systems, other societies to accomplish the 'primitive accumulation of capital'. The other societies - colonies, as they have been historically nominalised, in the process were annexed to the capitalist agenda. The process of national liberation struggles accompanied the rise of indigenous capital in logical contradiction to imperialist capital. On the other side of the international division of labour, unregulated free-market operation was creating chaotic disequilibriums. The world war weakened the system and finally the Great Depres-

sion of the 1930's revealed the crisis of the system further. The itinerary had to be reoriented in a new liberal direction, for the mere survival of the capitalist state as the modality of its functioning in the 'free-market' form had lost its hegemonic capacity. It was up to Keynes to reformulate capitalism's attitude to state intervention. Intervention was deemed necessary, firstly, to control the chaotic flight of capital and secondly, to re-legitimise the system. Intervention acquired a new dimension - it became 'protectionism'/'welfare'. The notion of 'Development' as we come across it in the present discourse took shape from this history.

But to claim only this history as the geneology of Developmentalism as practiced by the decolonised nations would be problematic. As the discourse of Development and 'welfare-ist state' took shape in the history of Western Capitalism, there was a parallel growth of state-sponsored developmentalism in the USSR, which had taken a socialist course following the 1917 October Revolution. The most striking aspect in the Soviet scheme of development was the social ownership of means of production. Thus, the Soviet model was that of planned economic growth, geared at the same time to redressal of social inequalities like unequal distribution of wealth, thereby throwing up an alternative model of progress and modernisation minus the exploitative profit mechanism of capitalism.

The newly decolonised Third World has to choose their option for growth and modernisation within this perspective ie. the 'welfare-ist' liberal state discourse of western capitalism and the planned construction of a modern socialist society - discourse of the Soviet state. Historically, the post-colonial state had to encounter the question of 'Development' as an inevitable agenda. The entire national liberation struggle was itself based on an ideological critique of colonialism which postulated that colonialism was generating backwardness in the country - proving

to be a fetter for modernisation and progress, after the strategic introduction of these very forces of change at one point. As Partha Chatterjee writes, - "within this framework, therefore, the economic critique of colonialism as an exploitative force creating and perpetuating a backward economy came to occupy a central place."¹

The trajectory of 'Developmentalism' as we know today, has drawn considerable flak, oppositions and criticisms as an universalist strategy of homogenisation promoting further socio-economic rifts in the society. Some of these critiques have been from a reformist perspective, while some have been to the extent of total rejection, which at the same time involved an epistemological questioning of the entire project of 'Modernity' inspired from the intellectual exercise known, aptly as 'Post-modern.'

Broadly speaking, "Development" implied a linear path, directed toward a goal, or a series of goals separated by stages. It implied the fixing of priorities between long-run and short-run goals and conscious choice between alternative paths. It was premised, in other words, upon a rational consciousness and will, and in so far as 'Development' was thought of as a process affecting the whole of society, it was also premised upon one consciousness and will - that of the whole."²

'Developmentalism', therefore, is connected and cross-hatched with a plethora of references to different larger political and theoretical movements. As we face

1 - CHATTERJEE, PARTHA - The Nation and Its Fragments - Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories.' Pg 203. Oxford University Press, Delhi.1994.

2 - Ibid, Pg 204.

it today, 'Developmentalism' stands in a confused status accused as one of the homogenising grand strategy of modernisation that leads to destruction of 'differences' within the community structure.

What we undertake to do in the present context is a scrupulous analysis of the effects of such policies in the particular area of Bastar, Madhya Pradesh. In the course of our discussion, we will try to deal with the resistances and alternatives that have been emerging and discuss their critical potentials. The concrete actuality of a case study will furnish us with the idea of a 'particular' in the larger ideological controversy, and thus would enable us to relocate the political coordinates involved in the defences and critiques of 'Development' - the strategy so critical in the history of the post-colonial state.

'Development' in post colonial India was carried out through the instrument of Planning.

"Theoretical understanding at a given point in time, based on perception of objectives and constraints, led to the formulation of concrete action schemes or plan directives. In turn, these action schemes, with some delay, led to the emergence of conjunctures not always anticipated, which in turn led planners and policy makers to rethink their objectives and strategies. There have consequently been elements of change as well as continuity from one plan to another."¹

This is how Sukhomoy Chakravarty introduces the complex matrix of the process of 'Development Planning.'

1 - CHAKRAVARTY, SUKHOMOY - 'Development Planning : The Indian Experience.' Pg 1. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1987,

Planning in India already had a legacy of debates on the development problems in India - the nature of structural constraints and the direction that development strategies should take. The parlance had two approaches to deliberate on - the 'Gandhian approach' that "talked about the voluntary limitation of wants, the need for having self-reproducing village communities and about issues bearing on a better balance between man and nature." and the Nahruvian approach of 'Modernisation.' Since there was a fundamental agreement on the modality of tackling the central problematique of Development through the strategy of Modernisation, the Gandhian approach was neglected and abandoned (now being referred to by ecologists and some economists, especially as a counter-point to Nehru's approach). The emergence of 'Development economics' in the fifties coincided with the formulation of the First Three Plans - leading to a 'two-way relationship between contemporary theories of Development economics and the logic of the plans.

Nehru's modernisation scheme viewed planning as a "way of avoiding the unnecessary rigours of an industrial transition in so far as it affected the masses resident in Indian villages."² At his initiative, PC Mahalnobis formulated the blueprint of the Second Five Year Plan - considered to be the 'single most significant document on Indian planning.' It was this document that layed down the key strategies for Development as envisaged by the Nehru - Mahalnobis approach.

1 - CHAKRAVARTY, SUKHOMOY - 'Development Planning : The Indian Experience.' Pg 8. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1987.

2 - Ibdj, Pg 9,

The structural constraints to growth as perceived by the earlier planners were -

- A. The 'deficiency of material capital which prevented the introduction of more productive technologies.' The 'effective scarcity of land' in India was considered to be a fundamental problem in view of the high land-man ratio creating massive under-employment in the agricultural sector;
- B. The 'low capacity to save' that put serious limitations on the speed of capital accumulation which was essential for generating resources for carrying developmental activities;¹
- C. The 'structural constraints' that prevent 'conversion of savings into productive investment' even if the capacity to save is raised through 'suitable fiscal and monetary policies.'

Apart from these, there were two basic operating assumptions - first, that "whereas agriculture was subject to secular diminishing returns, industrialisation would allow surplus labour currently under-employed in agriculture to be more productively employed in industries."²

This thrust on 'industrialisation consequently amounted to leaving the question of 'agricultural transition' incomplete and was later on criticised as the 'urban''/industrial bias' in the Plans.

1 - CHAKRAVARTY, SUKHOMOY - 'Development Planning :The Indian Experience.' Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1987.

A K Dasgupta defined India's problem as one of 'primary accumulation of capital.' "Apropos the distinction between developed and developing economies, he wrote that in the former 'it is a follow up of the keynesian theory of under-employment and leads upto models of steady growth. The later is a problem of 'primary accumulation' and leads to models of accelerated growth." Pg 10,

2 - Ibid, Pg 9

Second, market-mechanism could only be allowed to play a limited role and could not be accorded primacy due to the assumption that it would lead to 'excessive consumption in the upper-income groups' along with 'relative underinvestment in sectors essential to development.' This strategy was in keeping with the 'market-failure' theory that followed War, Depression and Recession.

However, there was "a tolerance towards income inequality, provided it was not excessive and could be seen to result in a higher rate of growth than could be possible otherwise."¹

These, then, were the immediate contextual factors which along with the boom in Development economics, the Soviet experience, Nehru's ideological predictions and the hurry of history led to the adoption of a mixed-economy framework and the choice of planning as an interventionist strategy of 'instrumental interference.'

"A modern capital intensive industrial sector was to be created side by side with private agriculture, with the continued functioning of a private industrial sector confined to relatively labour-intensive, light consumer goods."²

The model had three immediate serious implications to consider from the vantage point of developing a critique -

The Indian Development model, understood to be a variant of the Lewis model differed from the latter in a significant aspect - while the key roles for Develo-

1 - CHAKRAVARTY, SUKHOMOY - 'Development Planning : The Indian Experience.' Pg 10. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1987.

2 - Ibid, Pg 15.

ment in the Lewis model were attributed to the 'modern' actors - ie., the capitalists, the Indian model assigned this role to a 'Development Bureaucracy' - subsequently, the butt of controversy and criticism for its role in plan implementation.

The thrust of industrialisation was accompanied by a neglect of the agricultural sector, leaving the process of its transition incomplete and neglecting the crucial aspect of land reforms that is pivotal in the process of socio-economic transition and growth.

Finally, the mixed-economy framework created a stiff competition for the scarce resources between the public and private Sector which precipitated into a major crisis of how to generate the capital resources for the public sector carrying developmental activities, while letting a 'commodity - centred' market mechanism with private sectors to grow.

With this brief introduction to Planning, we shall now move on to a discussion of the Tribal Development policies and programmes undertaken during the Five Year Plans, which will provide us the setting for looking at the specific development projects undertaken in Bastar.

The scheme of tribal development has to be seen in the perspective of the general developmental programmes. Conceptually, tribal development programmes were not anything different except that more effort was needed to bridge the gulf between the tribals and the rest of the country. So, "the problem of tribal development came to be recognised more of finding additional resources rather than that of a different strategy."¹

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A planning Perspective.' Pg 38. Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

The First Five Year Plan was started in 1951, during which a comprehensive programme of Community Development, aiming at all-round development in the rural areas, was started in 1952. The same concept was applied to the tribal areas. However, since the tribal areas needed higher financial investment because of poor communications and little institutional infrastructure, the Community Development programme was supplemented by the Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Projects (The idea being to bring them on par with the rest). Accordingly, 43 special Multipurpose Tribal Development projects were started in 1954.¹

A review in 1956 brought out that, the Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Projects were too intensive to be sustained for the entire tribal region. As a result, during the Second Five Year Plan, a wider programme of Tribal Development Blocks were formulated for areas having a very high tribal concentration, i.e., only areas having more than two-thirds tribal population. This programme of Tribal Development Blocks was conceived in two stages of five years each, the second stage of the programme being pursued during the Third Plan period, when a third stage of five years was added. The review, in Fourth Plan showed that much remained to be done even after the second stage was completed.² By then, there were about 500 Tribal Development Blocks covering about 40% of the tribal population.³

1 - SHARMA, B D - 'Planning for Tribal Development.' Pg 56.
Prachi Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - DEOGAONKAR, S G - 'Tribal Administration and Development.' Pg 42.
Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1994.

3 - RAIZADA, AJIT - Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective, Pg 40,
Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

The programme of Tribal Development Blocks did not, however, have the desired impact. By and large, only areas with more than two-thirds tribal population got the benefit of it, leaving the remaining dispersed tribal population to be served by the general developmental programmes. Further more, the programme gradually acquired a schematic form which became quite rigid. And the task of tribal development became synonymous with the scheme of Tribal Development Blocks, even though they catered to limited areas, with a few schemes and a limited outlay. The protective measures relating to various facets of the transitional phase in the tribal economy - particularly, the regulation of transfer of land, marketing and money lending, were not linked with the new development system under the Blocks,¹.

The drawbacks in the scheme of Tribal Development Blocks were pointed out by the Dhebar Commission, which made the first comprehensive review of the tribal scene in 1961. They recommended extension of Tribal Development Blocks to cover all areas with more than 50% tribal population. They also noted the slow pace of development, the meagre investments in tribal areas and the inadequacy of the protective measures. Another review of the tribal development programmes was undertaken by ShiluAo Committee in 1969. It said that the Tribal Development Blocks were inadequate for dealing with the complex problem of tribal development and that they were too small to function effectively as a basic unit for planning and implementation. The committee also drew attention to the non-implementation of the recommendations of the Dhebar Commission.

1 - SHARMA, B D - 'Planning for Tribal Development.' Pg 57.
Prachi Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984.

A major problem in the tribal areas was that "the concerned departments started functioning only in pursuance of the national programmes for various sectors, for example, mining and industrial projects. In such developmental projects, the level of investment was generally high and the complementary infrastructure also got built up. All this effort, however, did not take the human element into consideration and the tribal became incidental in the whole process. On the other hand, the presence of a tribal welfare programme in these areas gave an impression as if the problems of the tribals were being taken care of..."¹ This was acknowledged by the Expert Committee and the Task Force of the Planning Commission for the Development of Backward Classes, which pointed out "the problem of fragmented sectoral programmes."² The Planning Commission also took note of the "multiplicity of organisations, with diverse organisational goals, working at cross purposes in the tribal areas."³

During the Fourth Plan, a series of programmes for rural areas, addressed to specific target groups were conceived, like the Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA). A new programme on the pattern of SFDA was also conceived for tribal areas, known as the Tribal Development Agency. It was taken up on a pilot basis only, in regions experiencing agrarian unrest. Six Tribal Development Agencies were started during the Fourth Plan. Two of them were started in Dantewara and Konta in Bastar (Madhya Pradesh). The other four were in Gunupur in Koraput and Baliguda in Phulbani (Orissa); Chaibasa in Singhbhum (Bihar); and Srikakulam (Andhra Pradesh). Later two more Tribal Development Agencies were

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh- A Planning Perspective. Pg 39. Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

established towards the end of the Fourth Plan period in Kaptipada in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar (Orissa).¹ Each Tribal Development Agency covered a group of Tribal Development Blocks. They envisaged a comprehensive frame of development comprising economic development, social services and protective measures. But basically they remained agricultural development programmes, with an additional investment on development of roads.² The level of investment in the Tribal Development Agencies was much higher compared to Tribal Development Blocks.³ But they did not cross the pilot stage.

The situation in the tribal areas was reviewed on the eve of the formulation of the Fifth Plan (1972) by an Expert Committee which was required to present a concrete plan of action for the Fifth Five Year Plan. The short-comings of the Tribal Development Blocks were clear by now, as these programmes were too small and schematic to lead to an all-round development of these areas. The tribal situation was so complex and varied, that no single prescription could have universal applicability for all tribal areas. Each area presented a unique situation in terms of its resources, people, stage of infrastructural development etc. Therefore, the schematic approach had to be abandoned to be replaced by a specific programme for each area. It was admitted, ".... it is evident that the entire question of tribal development needs a fresh look... Tribal Development can no longer be left to be tackled piecemeal at the convenience of a multiplicity of organisations,

1 - SHARMA, B D - 'Planning for Tribal Development.' Pg 60. Prachi Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid.

3 - DEOGAONKAR, S G - *Tribal Administration and Development.* Pg 33. Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1994.

subject to availability of men and material and the vagaries of out of context policy decisions.”¹

In this context, the Fifth Plan attempted to present a special policy frame for the development of the tribal areas in the form of a Sub-Plan. It envisaged a total picture of development. The guidelines of the Planning commission clearly stated that all activities of the government and semi-government organisations, financing and credit-institutions and special sector programmes must be fully integrated. It further emphasized that the actual conditions of the tribal areas should be the determining factor for the approach to tribal development.²

The Tribal Sub-Plan approach consists of three main components -

A. Integrated Tribal Development Projects - Comprising administrative Units like Sub-division/Tahsils/Talukas with 50% or more tribal population. The ITDP approach envisaged multi-level planning at all levels - the Development Block constituted the unit of planning at the micro-level. The project area which comprised a number of contiguous Blocks was taken at the Meso level. Two or more tribal development projects taken together formed the highest tier, ie., the macro level.³ (It was taken up in the first phase itself).

B. Primitive Tribal Group Projects - It was realised in the Fifth Plan that there were some tribal communities, which needed very special care both at the stage of planning and implementation of development programmes. Four criteria were

1 - 'Tribal Development in the Fifth Plan - Some Basic Policy papers'. Vol-I, 1975. Ministry of Home Affairs. Government of India in A RAIZADA - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective' Pg 47. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid, Pg 49.

adopted to identify these primitive communities - (1) Communities at pre-agricultural stage, at food-gathering and hunting stage, (2) small Communities, which might find even a minor disturbance in the total system as destabilising (3) degree of isolation (4) level of literacy, those communities with less than 5% literacy.

In the Fifth Plan, 48 such communities were identified.¹ (It was also taken up in the first Phase).

C. Projects for Pockets of Dispersed Tribal Population - In any programme of tribal development for the dispersed tribal population, attention had to be focused on the individual and the group. (it was taken up in the second phase).²

A comprehensive programme of development was prepared during the Fifth Plan. All the areas under the Fifth Schedule qualified for inclusion in the new tribal development scheme. The guidelines by the Planning Commission for the preparation of Tribal Sub-Plans, envisaged that, "the sub-plans should attempt in broad terms, answers to the main issues facing the tribal communities in these areas. It is at this level that a basic policy frame will have to be evolved which could be at variance with the general approach in the sectoral programmes..."³

The situation in every state was reviewed to ensure that the benefit of the new thrust for tribal development was extended to as large a section of the tribal population as possible. This was the first application of the principle of adopting a flexible approach.

1 - SHARMA, B. D. - Planning for Tribal Development. Pg 42. Prachi Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 72.

3 - Ibid, Pg 75.

Elimination of exploitation was accorded the highest priority in the new strategy. "In the conference of the state ministers in charge of Backward Classes welfare held in April 1975, there was unanimity on one point that it was not development but protection which was urgently required in these areas."¹ It was accepted that no development activity could be of any benefit to the tribals unless their exploitation was prevented. The economic issues got a second priority in the new development strategy, next to the protection measures.

The outlay for Tribal Sub-Plans during the Fifth Plan was fixed at Rs.1,440/- crores. Investments moved up substantially under the Tribal sub-Plan approach.² A sectoral break-up of the outlay for tribal development during the Fifth Plan, reflects a pattern of investment veering in favour of high priority programmes and schemes concerning the weaker sections of society. Agriculture and allied sectors claimed the highest investment amounting to about 26%, followed by education and health services amounting to about 21%. Co-operation was given a very high step-up with a total investment of Rs.60 Crores, meant for marketing of agriculture and minor forest produce. The credit and marketing structure in the sub-plan areas was reorganised into Large Agricultural Multi-purpose Societies (LAMPS). Transport and communications were kept at a low key claiming only 8% of the total investment.³

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 40.

According to RAIZADA, in the First Plan, Rs.25 crores were provided for tribal development. In the Second Plan, the allocation was Rs.50.56 crores. The Third Plan made a provision of Rs.59.39 crores. And, in the Fourth Plan, the total outlay was Rs.84.20 crores.

3 - DEOGAONKAR, S G - 'Tribal Administration and Development.' Pg -44. Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1994.

By the end of the Fifth Plan, it was possible to cover about 63% of the total tribal population under the Tribal sub-plan.¹

However, the Tribal sub-Plan approach, inspite of presenting a comprehensive perspective on tribal development, going beyond the earlier thinking on the subject, continued to suffer from certain drawbacks.

On the eve of the preparation of the Medium Term Plan (1978-83), the approach and strategy for tribal development laid down in the Fifth Plan was reviewed. It was brought out that, "notwithstanding the acceptance of the new priority schedule, the bigger programmes continued to dominate the scene as a result of operational convenience and interest in them of the more articulate groups. Similarly, infrastructural development has been doggedly pursued by the concerned authorities on the tacit presumption that it is the first necessary step for people's development, one of the premises which was not accepted in the Sub-Plan approach."²

The Working Group on Tribal Development observed that, "elimination of exploitation has had only limited success... the bigger programmes and infrastructural development have stolen the march, while small programmes of

1 - SHARMA, B D - 'Planning for Tribal Development.' Pg 77. Prachi Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 82.

direct relevance to the tribals have not substantially picked up. Administrative unpreparedness appears to have come up as an important constraint in the effective implementation of tribal development programmes and protective policies."¹

In spite of the critical reviews of the sub-plan approach, the priorities in development programmes during the Sixth Plan, broadly, continued to follow the approach adopted in the Fifth Plan. The "aberrations," however, were sought to be corrected in the Sixth Plan. "The working Group have made a number of important recommendations which have been accepted by the Government of India. A greater use of the provisions in the Fifth schedule of the constitution is visualised to simplify the administrative system.... These provisions may also be used for establishing a clear chain of command with specific responsibility and built-in accountability."²

Education was now accepted as the highest priority programme perse.³ The Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) was adopted to cover smaller areas of tribal concentration having 10,000 or more population, of which 50% or more are tribals.⁴

During the Seventh Plan, the programme of tribal development under the Sub-Plan approach was continued but better co-ordination was sought between

1 - SHARMA, B D - 'Planning for Tribal Development.' Pg 82. Prachi Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

4 - DEOGAONKAR, S G - 'Tribal Administration and Development.' Pg 60. Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1994.

various agencies, and social services were given priority. During this Plan period, Clusters of tribal concentration with 5000 or more population, with 50% or more tribal concentration were identified. Moreover, the Tribal sub-Plan strategy benefits were extended to all the tribals, including the dispersed tribals who were not covered by the ITDP's, MADA, cluster Groups and Primitive Groups. Family oriented programmes were extended to them. The same approach more or less, continued to be followed in the Eighth Five Year Plan.

The Tribal Sub-Plan concept, evolved and implemented during the Fifth Plan, thus, continued to be the main instrument of development for tribal people and tribal areas.

Before we engage into a discussion on the specific developmental projects undertaken in Bastar, the focus of the present exercise. Let us take a brief look at the major development programmes undertaken during the Fifth Plan period in Madhya Pradesh, as concrete manifestations of the development strategy envisaged in the sub-plan approach. The sub-plans, as we have just noted, form the axis of tribal development in India. The discussion acquires all the more relevance in the light of the new different approach - one of accounting for the differences and culture-specificities of the tribal communities and tribal areas, that the sub-plan scheme was understood to be taking. The discussion that immediately follows, would provide us the logistics, and grounding for the arguments concerned with evaluating them, to be taken up later on in details in the next chapter.

1 - DEOGAONKAR, S G - 'Tribal Administration and Development.' Pg - 60.
Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1994.

Approximately, 60.44% of the total tribal population of Madhya Pradesh resided in the Sub-Plan areas. Bastar was one of the four districts of Madhya Pradesh, which was fully covered under the sub-plan scheme.

The emphasis of the first sub-plan document of Madhya Pradesh was on direct economic benefits and elimination of exploitation. There was a steep rise in the level of investments for tribal development under the sub-plan approach. This is clearly brought out by the major difference in the level of investments in the first Four Plans, and the Fifth Plan. "During the First Plan, Rs.348.04 lakhs were spent... In the Second Plan, Rs.489.96 lakhs were spent... The Third Plan provision.... was Rs.1265.80 lakhs, but only Rs.1021.61 lakhs could be utilised.... Rs.1706.24 lakhs were spent during the Fourth plan... The total outlay on the various schemes included in the first sub-plan ... Rs.255.7936 crores."¹

The major development programmes undertaken during the Fifth Plan period under the sub-plan approach for Madhya Pradesh were as follows -

AGRICULTURE- The schemes for the benefit of tribal areas, inter alia, included :

1. Subsidies for fertilizers, pesticides, wells and tubewells etc.
2. Horticulture.
3. Development of minor irrigation.
4. Opening of new seed multiplication farms.
5. Practical training, to teach improved crop technology to tribal farmers.
6. Specialised information support based on the use of audio-visual aids.
7. Establishment of Gram Vikas Kendras, which was to be a complex at the growth centres in each project where a tribal farmer could meet local officers and get extension guidance, input supplies and credit under one roof. It was to house the offices of Gram Sewak, Patwari, Samiti Sewak, and also of the Primary Co-operative Society.

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective.' Pg 63. Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

The Gram Vikas Kendras can be seen as a concrete Manifestation of one of the premises of the Sub-Plan approach - "In the tribal areas it is all the more necessary to have an integrated administrative structure so that all activities can be effectively co-ordinated and supervised at each level of administrative unit... A system, therefore, has been evolved where the tribal has to approach only one authority for the solution of all his problems."¹

The Agriculture Department gave high priority to the developmental programme in the tribal areas. Out of the total Fifth Plan provision of Rs.7297 lakhs for the Department, the sub-plan area got a share of Rs.1817.18 lakhs or nearly 25% of the whole.²

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY- The animal husbandry schemes were designed mainly for the landless labourers and small farmers. These schemes were considered to contribute in a big way towards raising the nutritional level and the economic development of the targeted tribals. In this regard, improvement in the breeds of cattle, goats, pigs and poultry were necessary to confer economic benefits in a "comparatively shorter span of time and a relatively low cost investment."³

The development of Marketing complex, preferably on a co-operative basis was given priority not only to expand the market but also to avoid exploitation of the tribals by other people.

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective.' Pg 60. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 67.

3 - Ibid, Pg 68.

"Climatic conditions, soil, availability of grazing land, occupation pattern and marketing facilities etc, determine the formulation of specific schemes for different areas." ¹ This reflects the approach that, "The first sub-plan of Madhya PradeshThe level of investment proposed.... determined on the basis of specific requirements for each region and the relevance of the different programmes to the tribals."²

CO-OPERATION- In the co-operative Sector, the coverage of the families in the sub-plan area before the Fifth Plan was about 34%. During the Fifth Plan it was proposed to cover at least 60% of the population. 170 Tribal Co-operative Service Societies were proposed to be established in the sub-plan area, with about 800 branches at 'hat'³ places. These co-operatives were expected to disburse short-term and medium-term loans to the order of Rs.4250 lakhs and Rs.1415 lakhs, respectively.

To ensure that the tribals, having once got rid of indebtedness, did not again become indebted, it was considered essential to make credit available to them for consumption purposes. "Hence, post-debt relief care, by providing loans to the tribals for meeting their consumption/social obligations, was proposed to be given to a maximum limit of Rs.150 per tribal family on the security of the state

1 - RAIZADA,AJIT -'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective.' Pg 68. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 62.

3 - Ibid, Pg 96. - "The 'hat' in the tribal areas are a sort of nerve centre of the socio-economic activities in that area and play a vital role in the life of the local people."

government. It was to be recovered from the sale of their agricultural and minor forest produce through the societies."¹

Such an arrangement reflects a concrete instance of the protective measures envisaged in the sub-plan approach, to eliminate the exploitation of the tribals.

MARKETING- "To facilitate the collection of agricultural livestock forest products, to ensure better marketing and to make the agricultural inputs and the consumer products available to the members of the Tribal Co-operative Service Societies, it was necessary to open branches of the Regional Tribal Co-operative Marketing Societies in each district of the sub-plan area."²

EDUCATION- There were 153 Ashram Schools in the sub-plan area. "Ashram schools are residential schools where education upto middle standard is imparted alongwith intensive vocational training in agriculture, spinning, weaving etc."³

Due to the paucity of funds, it was proposed that the existing primary schools be converted into Ashram schools in those areas which need them the most. Thus, 250 existing primary schools were proposed to be converted into Ashram schools during the Fifth Plan.

Four departmental Industrial Training Institutes were started (one of them in Bastar), which provided free residential facilities and a stipend to the trainees. "It

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective.' Pg 78. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pgs 79 - 80.

3 - Ibid, Pg 80.

was realised that one of the important reasons for the slow pace of development was lack of publicity... since the major part of the tribal population is illiterate, publicity has to rely primarily on audio-visual techniques. It was, therefore, proposed to establish 5 Units... to cater to the need of 31 Meso-projects under the sub-plan. The publicity units were to be of mobile Units type, so that they could cover a relatively larger population."¹

INDUSTRIES- The rural industries project was proposed to be established for the development of cottage and small scale units in the tribal areas.

Madhya Pradesh Small Industries Corporation and Madhya Pradesh Laghu Udyog Nigam extended the facility of providing machineries on hire-purchase basis for the newly trained entrepreneurs to set up their industries.²

To promote the growth of industries in the tribal areas, it was essential that financial assistance was made available to the entrepreneurs on a concessional rate of interest. This was in order that, "opportunity for gainful employment be provided to the tribals in the Sub-Plan area."³

The industries proposed under the sub-plan were to be established in the areas where practically no infrastructure existed. "In all the projects it was, therefore, proposed that at least 100 small worksheds ... should be constructed during the plan period."⁴

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - "Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective. Pg 83. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 84.

3 - Ibid, Pgs 85-86.

4 - Ibid, Pg 85.

"A few traditional industries like soft-stone and bell-metal (Bastar), doll making (Jhabua) etc, are dying out for want of proper organisation, guidance, financial assistance and availability of market. An ad-hoc provision of Rs.25 lakhs was made for these cottage industries for the plan period."¹

Training of hereditary artisans was also considered necessary to improve their inherited skill, and it was proposed that they be paid a stipend of Rs.150 per month.²

In the sub-plan area, five pockets which grow oil-seeds abundantly were selected for the establishment of oil-seed crushing units. This was done to remove the exploitative practices of the middlemen who cornered the profits by collecting the oil-seeds from the tribal cultivators and supplying them to the big markets.³

It was also proposed to propagate bee-keeping in collaboration with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission. Accordingly, 50 cultivator families were proposed to be covered in each of the project areas.⁴

Under the seri-culture programme, free supply of cuttings and cocoons reared upto the third stage, was an important aspect. Besides, it was proposed that one member of each rearer's family be given two months training on a stipend of

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective.' Pg 87. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid,

3 - Ibid, Pg 86.

4 - Ibid.

Rs.150 per month. The Madhya Pradesh State Trading Corporation purchased the entire production at pre-fixed rates.¹ This industry was considered to provide subsidiary occupation to the marginal/landless farmers.

IRRIGATION - While selecting various irrigation schemes, priority was given to those medium and minor projects which were going to benefit the tribal areas.

"The major irrigation projects are taken up mainly on technical considerations.... Two major irrigation projects were proposed in the sub-plan area during the Fifth Plan....It is a fact that although both the major projects costing Rs.23 crores were located in the sub-plan area, the maximum benefit from them would accrue to areas outside the sub-plan."²

Due weightage was given to tribal areas in the matter of location of micro-minor and minor irrigation projects.

"The only way in which regional disparities could be removed in the backward areas is through medium and minor projects."³ Therefore, nine medium irrigation projects, in four tribal districts, were to be completed during the Fifth

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspectives.' Pg 87. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 89.

3 - Ibid.

Plan. Out of these nine medium projects , two were to be in Bastar district - Barunadi and Amyana.¹

The total cost of the proposed medium projects in the sub-plan area of the state during the Fifth Plan was about Rs.9.50 crores. This is 21.3% of the state's total allocation on the medium projects. In the case of minor projects, the total cost in the sub-plan area during the Fifth Plan was Rs.12.29 crores. This constituted 25% allocation of the total provision for minor schemes in the state.²

PUBLIC HEALTH - The state Health Department had proposed the setting up of 17 new Primary Health Centres in the sub-plan area. A Primary Health Centre was to serve an area of 775 Sq Kms instead of 976 Sq Kms.³

Even though prior experience of the Health Department in running Mobile Dispensaries had not been very encouraging, it was proposed to establish eight Mobile Units under the sub-plan. "Considering the topography of these area, it was necessary to set up mobile dispensaries in certain areas to provide medical facilities in a more effective manner."⁴

The total Fifth Plan proposals of the Health Department were to the tune of Rs.30.34 crores. Out of this, a sum of Rs.10.43 crores was apportioned

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective.' Pg 9. Inter India Publications New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 92.

3 - Ibid.

4 - Ibid, pg 93.

to the tribal areas. This constituted more than 33% of the total allocation of the Department.¹

ROADS - During the Fifth Plan, the scheme of the construction of rural roads was given a high priority by including it in the Minimum Needs Programme. "Under this programme, all the villages having a population of 1500 and above were proposed to be connected with the district roads by all - weather roads."² In Bastar district under this programme 512 Kms length of roads were proposed to be constructed covering 72 villages.³

However, the scheme under the Minimum Needs Programme could not really benefit the tribal areas. This was because 40% of the total population inhabiting the sub-plan area lived in small villages, each having a population of less than 500. ⁴ The number of villages with a population of 1500 or more was very small.

As a result, a separate rural roads programme for the sub-plan area "was drawn up, wherein all the 'hats' were proposed to be linked with the district roads by all-weather roads District like Bastar....had very little road length per 100 Sq Kms as compared to the state average and had very few villages with

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning Perspective.' Pg 93. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 94.

3 - Ibid, Pg 95.

4 - Ibid, Pgs 95 -96.

population exceeding 1000. For these it was proposed to connect villages having a population of 500 and above with roads..."¹ under this programme, 51 villages in Bastar district were proposed to be connected by the construction of 451 Kms length of roads.

ELECTRICITY - The total allocation of resources of the Power sector during the Fifth Plan was Rs.355 crores. out of which Rs.179.29 crores were made available for the sub-plan area.² Thus, the sub-plan area got a very high share of the total outlay for the state.

The state plan laid great emphasis on the problems of the extension of power lines to the tribal regions, whereas greater efforts were required to bridge the gap between the extent of electrification. While the number of villages electrified in the state by the end of the Fourth Plan was 76,871, it was only 3,620 in the sub-plan area.

Under the programme proposed for rural electrification during the Fifth Plan for the tribal districts, 670 villages were proposed to be electrified in Bastar district.³

We shall now engage in a discussion on the specific development projects undertaken in Bastar district.

1 - RAIZADA, AJIT - 'Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh - A Planning perspective.' Pg 96. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1984.

2 - Ibid, Pg 98.

3 - Ibid, Pg 98.

BAILADILA IRON-ORE MINING COMPLEX - In the post-independent period, several major public industrial complexes were established in tribal areas on considerations of overall national economic policy. One such public project was the iron-ore Mining project established in the Bailadila region of Dantewara Tahsil of Bastar district, popularly known as the Bailadila Complex.¹

This project was set up by the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC). "The NMDC ...on behalf of the Government of India... signed an agreement with Japan Steel Mills for assistance to explore the Bailadila Iron-ore reserve and to export iron-ores to Japan via Vishakhapatnam."² Subsequently, the activities started in 1961 which,inter alia,included the construction of roads, building of two townships (Kirandul and Bacheli), construction of crushing and screening plants needed to prepare iron-ore of requisite size and other items required for fully mechanised mining. Alongside, S E Railway began connecting the project sites Kirandul and Bacheli to Vizag port in order to run iron-ore cargo for its onward shipment to Japan. The 470 Kms long rail line was completed in April 1967.³

The entire project cost was around Rs.5000 crores. In 1968, the plant was put into action first in Kirandul and then later in 1983 at Bacheli.⁴

Since the mining operation was established in Dantewara Tahsil, it is relevant to note some of the socio-economic features of the region. Such a large

1 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Men and Machines : Transformation of Natives of Bastar, India' in B.CHAUDHURI, (ed) - 'Tribal Transformation in India'. Pg 448. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1992.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

4 - Ibid.

industrial mining project was bound to effect far reaching changes in the socio-economic structure of the tribals.

Dantewara Tehsil is spread over 2,203 Sq Kms. Before 1971, the entire Tahsil was 100 percent rural tribal - dominated area. In 1971, 43.8 Sq Kms was classified as Urban. This was because of the creation of two townships, Kirandul and Bachel, near the project sites.¹

Before the opening of the Bailadila Project, the population of Dantewara Tahsil in 1961 was 134, 148. In 1971, the population was 172,174. In 1981, the population of the Tahsil was 194,376, reflecting a 13% increase (of the population) over the past decade.² Besides the internal growth of population, the higher rate could be safely attributed to the opening of the project. This is also clearly brought out by the increase in population of the townships, over the past two decades, from 9,057 to 15,709, that is, a growth rate of 73%, which is more than the rate of Bastar district (25%) during the same period.³

The major tribal communities in Dantewara Tahsil are the Dandami or Bison-horn Maria, Halba, Bhatra and Dorla. Their economy was based primarily on agriculture and forest produce. As per the census figures of 1961, about 60% of the population constituted the workers in Dantewara, of them 82% were cultivators, 8.42% were agricultural labourers, 2.36 % were engaged in forestry and livestock, 5% in mining and quarrying and 2.50% in other categories.⁴

1 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Men and Machines : Transformation of Natives of Bastar, India.' in B. CHAUDHURI (ed) - 'Tribal Transformation in India.' Pg 449. Inter India Publications, New Delhi 1992.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid, Pg 450.

4 - Ibid.

The situation in 1971, after the opening of the project changed sharply. While the percentage engaged in cultivation declined to 77.57%, the percentage of agricultural labourers rose to 9.80% (land-alienation suffered by the tribals, due to the project activities, was a major reason). Moreover, in 1971, 11.34% workers became miners and labourers, which was a sharp increase as compared to only 4% in 1961. Also, the economically dependent population increased from 41% in 1961 to 57% in 1971.¹

According to the 1971 census, there were only 6% tribals in the town of Kirandul. Of these, 63% were engaged in mining and quarrying activities, while a little over 12% were in construction and other jobs. None of the tribals were found engaged in the agricultural sector. The situation had changed considerably by 1983, when the author conducted his field study.² It was found that majority of the tribal workers, engaged in various jobs at the time of the 1971 census enumeration, had left Kirandul to return to their original villages. The tribals who had cultivable land started working on it, while the rest stayed in colonies provided by the NMDC.³ "During the initial phase of the new production and export system of iron-ores quite a few tribesmen found employment, but today when the production of iron-ores is in full speed by means of mechanised system and experienced skill-workers, tribals have lost their source of income.... there is a serious unemployment problem among them now."⁴

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- 1 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Men and Machines : Transformation of Natives of Bastar, India' in B CHAUDHURI(ed) - 'Tribal Transformation in India.' Pg 451. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1992.
 - 2 - The author, A R N SRIVASTAVA, undertook a Survey of the project areas from August 1982 to October 1983.
 - 3 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Tribal Encounter with Industry - A case study from Central India.' Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990.
 - 4 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Men and Machines : Transformation of Natives of Bastar, India' in B CHAUDHURI(ed) - 'Tribal Transformation in India.' Pgs 451 - 452, Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1992.

A serious environmental fall out, since the operation of mechanised mines at Bailadila, has been on drinking water. This happened because fresh iron-ores needed to be washed thoroughly before being loaded into wagons. And the screening and washing plants are located at the very source of Sankhani river, which is the principal source of water for the people. Red coloured dust began polluting the hill river. The tribals no longer fetch water from there, not even the animals go there. It has also been rendered useless for irrigation purposes. This has created a serious problem in as many as 23 villages surrounding the complex.¹

The management of the complex did not do anything to solve the problem. Even when they decided to set up a few hand-pipe water wells in a few villages they thought were seriously affected, the villagers were not taken into confidence. As a result it has been more of an eyewash, than any genuine attempt at solving the problem.

Land-alienation has been intensified due to the Bailadila Complex. According to a survey - "...in 11 villages surveyed (in Bastar district) the number of illegal holdings comes to 2 in each village. But in Dantewara Tahsil, it comes to 5 in each village.... in some of the villages falling within a radius of 30 to 40 Kms from the Bailadila Complex, situation has become alarming. The percentage of illegal land occupation has been estimated at about 12 in each of them."²

With the start of the project activities, there was a sudden influx of immigrants in the region. Well versed with the operation of the market mechanisms,

1 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Men and Machines : Transformation of Natives of Bastar, India' in B CHAUDHURI(ed) - 'Tribal Transformation in India.' Pgs 451 - 452, Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1992.

2 - 'Impact of Industrialisation on Tribals - A case Study of Bailadila, Bastar' in RAMSHARAN JOSHI - 'Tribals : Islands of Deprivation.' Pg 29. National Book Shop, Delhi, 1984.

these non-tribal traders, shop-keepers, contractors etc. exploited the tribals, who initially were unable to grasp the workings of money economy.

According to a survey, undertaken by A R N Srivastava in the project areas and the villages surrounding the complex, it was found that "unemployment among the tribal youths of surrounding villages had driven some of them to indulge in unlawful activities in project areas."¹ This is amply corroborated by Joshi, according to whom, "the crime rate has increased by more than 200 percent since the penetration of industrial activities into the Tahsil of Dantewara."²

There was another serious fall out of the industrial activities of the Bailadila Complex. Initially, both the male and female tribals joined the work force. Soon, the tribal girls started getting exploited by the non-tribals, who in the beginning even married them, to get tribal land, but then left them soon after. This had a very adverse effect on the participation of tribals in project activities. When the situation became worse, the then Collector of Bastar took strong steps. A committee was constituted to enlist the women subjected to exploitation and the persons keeping tribal women as maid servants or in any other capacity were served a week's notice to report to the administration.

The help of the tribal Panchayats was also sought to deal with the situation.

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- 1 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Men and Machines : Transformation of Natives of Bastar, INdia' in B CHAUDHURI (ed) - 'Tribal Transformation in India.' Pgs 451 - 452. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1992.
 - 2 - JOSHI, RAMSHARAN - 'Tribals : Islands of Deprivation.' Pg 34, Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984.

According to the 28th Report of the Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes -

“Bailadila... has not benefited the local economy in a significant way. It has emerged as an enclave of migrant population who were drafted for the modern industrial activity and of others attracted by the new opportunities... only a few amongst the tribals have managed to creep into the modern sector at the lower levels. Its impact on the social organisation of the people in the surrounding area has been very adverse which has created tribal antagonism against the new establishment.”

BODHGHAT HYDEL PROJECT

A major developmental project in Bastar has been the (under construction) Bodhghat project on Indravati River. This is one of the series of Hydel Projects planned in Bastar district. The total power potential of all these projects is 1500 MW, while that of Bodhghat is 500 MW. These projects barring a single (at Inchampalli) do not have any irrigation potential.¹

The first survey around Bodhghat was started in the late sixties. The foundation stone of the project, however, was laid on 21-1-1979. The project is being executed by the Madhra Pradesh Electricity Board.²

Initially, infrastructure for the construction of the hydel project was constructed, which included a road from Geedam to Barsoor and from Barsoor to Bodhghat, and a bridge across Indrawati to facilitate transport of building materials from the other side.³

The total area likely to come under submergence and required for other purposes of the project is 13,783 hectares.⁴ The break-up is :

	Forest land	Revenue land	Private land	Total
Submergence	5433.862	2708.427	4698.188	12840.477
Construction	270.470	360.101	312.099	942.670
Total	5704.332	3068.528	5010.287	13783.147

1 - Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes, 28th Report, 1986-87. Pg 155.

2 - Ibid, Pg 160.

3 - Ibid.

4 - Ibid.

The early phases of the work at the project went almost unnoticed by the people, as the only major works undertaken so far were those of the roads and the bridge. And the initial impression of the people was, that the project was concerned only with those schemes.¹

It was only much later, when some excavations at the dam site were started that the people got the first inkling of the proposed hydel project and their possible displacement.² "According to them no official or political leader ever visited their area and confided in them about the nature of the project."³ It was only later that a Congress legislator, Shri Jaikishan Sharma, was known to be articulating the plight of the tribals.

The process of the land acquisition began, land in four villages was taken over by Project authorities, and compensation at the rate of Rs.1900 per acre was paid to the villagers. They were not resettled, nor do they have any idea of possible resettlement, even though it was conceded that the project would meet the cost of their rehabilitation. "According to this scheme, every family is to be provided 5 acres of land developed at the cost of the project, a house site measuring about half acre and a small house. Each habitation will have about

1 - Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. 28th Report, 1986-87. Pg 162.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

25 units which will be provided common facilities like a drinking water well, a community centre and a school.”¹

However, the situation about rehabilitation of the displaced persons is not clear at all. “Some of them, were once taken by a project officer to different parts of the district in a jeep and generally shown the areas..... they had no opportunity of meeting the people or their leaders of the concerned areas. The lands which they have seen are mostly of low quality or ‘bhata’ lands. They are far away from the forests.”²

According to the official report, this is just the people heard about their prospective resettlement plan. Therefore, “the people are extremely sceptical about possible rehabilitation by the Government.”

Such a situation, is considered surprising in view of a formal decision of the Government to accept the responsibility of their rehabilitation as a part of the project itself.

Even though, a committee was constituted for the rehabilitation of displaced persons under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of Baster, which inter alia,

1- Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes - 28th Report, 1986-87. Pg 163.

2- Ibid.

3- Ibid.

has people's representatives as its members, the people's side appears to have remained unstated. This brings out the wide gulf dividing the people and their representatives.¹

It is, however, the ecological implications of the Bodhghat hydel project, which have given rise to a debate at the national level on the viability of the project.

Even some senior forest officials, according to the Area Report, have opposed the hydel project. In a secret report to the Government, the forest conservators of Jagdalpur and Kanker, have said that "if the project is finalised 50 lakh sal trees, 30 lakhs bamboo tree, Beejas, tendu, teak, rosewood, Mahua etc, and many precious forest products including medicinal plants will be destroyed."²

The resistance to the project from the ecological point of view, coupled with the insistence of the Central Government on environmental clearance, caused the project work to stop. This has led to lobbying and counter-arguments by a certain section of the population, allegedly the elite groups and contractors, in favour of an early sanction of the Project.

However, the controversy does not include the question of tribal displacement at all. The tribals have strangely enough, not been a party to the debate on a project that would affect their lives drastically.

1 - Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribes. 28th Report, 1986-87. Pg 167.

2 - 'Scenario of the 7 Percent' Vol 2, March 1985. Pg 70. Cinemart Foundation, New Delhi.

PINE PLANTATION PROJECT (MADHYA PRADESH FORESTRY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT, 1978-82)

Madhya Pradesh Rajya Van Vikas Nigam Limited (MPRVVN) was set up in 1975, with an initial authorised capital of Rs.20 crores. The main strategy of the Nigam was clear felling of areas of miscellaneous forests and raising plantations of teak and bamboo. The Madhya Pradesh Government had transferred 2.67 lakh hectare forest land to the Nigam for its plantation projects.¹

The clear felling of mixed forest on a huge scale by MPRVVN, after 1975 increased the gross revenue of the Forest Department. From 1977-78, clear felling by the Nigam was carried out in full scale.²

Meanwhile, in 1976, the Nigam as part of its Modernisation programme had accepted a \$ 8.2 Million World Bank funded pilot project to clear 20,000 hectares of natural forest in Bastar district, and plant tropical pines. This plantation was to yield 50,000 tonnes of pulp every year for a new Rs.250 crore paper Mill that was to be set up in Bastar.³

The acceptance of the World Bank funded pine plantation project was in keeping with the policy of Madhya Pradesh Government, which had "planned to invest Rs.367.50 crores in pulp based industries like newsprint, paper and rayon grade pulp. The newsprint and paper plants were to have an annual capacity of

1 - 'Scenario of 7 percent.' Vol 2, March 1985. Pg 55. Cinemart Foundation, New Delhi.

2 - Ibid,

3 - Ibid.

3.83 lakh tonnes of finished paper... the target for just Bastar alone ...(was) 2.64 lakh tonnes... In addition, the State Government also plans to increase the plywood out put by 90 million sq metres and hardboard by 62 thousand tonnes.¹

"It makes clear," according to the Area Report " that the Madhya Pradesh Government thought... the main aim of forest development is maximisation of production of raw materials for forest based and other allied industries.²

It is not exactly known how many thousand hectares of mixed forest of Bastar was clear felled for the pine plantation experiment, since no details are being given out by the State Government. It is understood that in Machkote region of Bastar 1586.50 hectares of mixed forest was cleared for tropical pine plantation between 1977-81.³

The project was in complete disregard to the people's requirements and aspirations. It would adversely affect tribal economy, as any change in the character of the forest would lead to a loss in their source of livelihood.

The Government faced opposition not only by the tribals, but the ecologists as well. Accordingly, a memorandum presented to the Study Team of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India in 1981, by the Bastar Society for Conservation of Nature, Jagdalpur advised the State Government to abandon the project. In their opinion, " the programme of creating pine plantations in Bastar is a typical example of the Forest Departments blindness to the question of environment,

1 - 'Scenario of 7 percent' Vol.2, March 1985. Pg 56 cinemart foundation, New Delhi.

2 - Ibid

3 - Ibid, Pg 57

ecological balance and the local needs."¹ Forests of Saal are being clear felled to make way for plantation of commercial species.

Even the Chief Conservator of Forests, Madhya Pradesh, M.A.Waheed Khan, in a report he had prepared in 1978, had requested the State Government to abandon the pine plantation programme in Bastar. According to his report, "the soil and climatic conditions of Madhya Pradesh are not conducive to the growth of pine... The pine forests do not support any undergrowth, not even grass. The floor of a pine forest is covered with its needle shaped leaves and boughs. The pine leaves and boughs take a long time to biodegrade, as a result very little nutrient is put back into the soil by pine trees. Therefore, pine forests cannot serve any other purpose than the production of wood."² On the other hand, he had proposed a viable alternative -, "Bamboo is native to Bastar, and can grow alongside the natural species. The presence of bamboo in Bastar does not upset the delicate environmental balance of the forest. Bamboo allows undergrowth and supports a whole host of biological life."³ He had, thus, proposed, "the maximum use of existing vegetation, rather than resorting to artificial planting and monoculture."⁴

This report, however, was suppressed by the Forest Department after his retirement in 1978.

1 - 'Scenario of 7 percent' Vol 2, March 1985, Pg 60. Cinemart Foundation, New Delhi.

2 - Ibid, 58

3 - Ibid.

4 - Ibid.

A critique of the programmes of the Madhya Pradesh Rajya Van Vikas Nigam Limited was made by Professor Robert S Anderson.¹ He visited Bastar in 1978, and after examining the effects of the project on the tribals, pleaded for its slowing down. According to him, "all project feasibility research efforts concentrated on trees, water supply, rainfall, prices of pulp and paper etc. The research on the tribal use of forest and on the impact of this industrial forestry project is trivial in comparison. Two firms are carrying out all pre-construction studies. They wish only to satisfy what their clients, the Governments of Madhya Pradesh and of India, want. There has been a conspiracy of silence."² Finally, the project was abandoned in 1982, on considerations of ecology.

1 - ANDERSON, ROBERTS & HUBER, WALTER - 'The Hour of the Fox - Tropical Forests, the World Bank and Indigenous People in Central India.' Vistaar Publications, Delhi, 1988.

2 - 'Scenario of 7 percent.' Vol 2, March 1985. Pg 64. Cinemart Foundation, New Delhi.

THE CRITIQUE OF 'DEVELOPMENT' AND THE EMERGING ALTERNATIVES: A REVIEW

After discussing the developmental policies, programmes and projects undertaken so far with special reference to Bastar, we will proceed to analyse the measures and reviews of the criticisms launched at these policies in the present chapter. The first part of our discussion would be concerning the proceedings of the two seminars held at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies in Shimla - in 1969 and 1990, as well as proceedings of the workshop held at NICD, Hyderabad in 1974 - all concerning the question of tribal development strategy. This section would provide us with the changing perspectives within the debate, and thus form an understanding of the situation that would help us in evaluating and interpreting the critiques against Developmentalism, which we deal within the next section of the chapter.

We start with the seminars held at IIAS, Shimla. The first one was held in 1969 -

"The IIAS,,, convened a seminar on the tribal situation in India... A new tribal image was emerging. It was time to take stock of the situation and help to evolve guidelines that could promote the development of emerging forces within the framework of unity, strength and integrity of the country."¹

1 - SINGH, K SURESH (ed) - 'The Tribal Situation in India.' Pg xi IIAS, Shimla, 1972.

To begin with, we come across an effort of tracing and constructing a history of the tribals antithetical to the present reality of their isolation. As K S Mathur writes, "On the cultural and linguistic plane, the 'tribes' have never been markedly different from the neighbouring non-tribes... It looks as if these 'tribal' people have all along been living in harmonious existence with their more civilized neighbours. From time to time, groups from them moved out of their semi-isolation in more remote hills and jungles and entered plains, villages and the caste system at their periphery."¹

The historical background to the contemporary tribal situation was narrated by Nihar Ranjan Ray, who dealt with the peaceful assimilation of the 'janas' into 'jatis', the coming of British - extension of communication and administration, the advent of Christianity and the beginning of anthropological studies.²

After having reconstructed the history of harmony, the difference of the tribals and their isolation from the mainstream was traced back to the British policies. As Mathur writes, "Purely for the sake of classification and enumeration, the British government in India introduced the category of 'tribe'..."³ The British bequeathed a 'legacy of friction' as S C Dube refers to it - a 'policy of isolation and protection' which in the absence of 'dynamic purposive social action' perpetuated backwardness and kept the tribes out of the 'mainstream of national life, economic development and social progress.'⁴

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- 1 - MATHUR, K S - 'Tribe in India : A Problem of Identification and Integration.' in K SURESH SINGH (ed) - 'The Tribal Situation in India. Pg 459. IAS, Shimla, 1972.
 - 2 - SINGH, K SURESH (ed) - 'The Tribal Situation in India.' Pg xii. IAS, Shimla, 1972.
 - 3 - MATHUR, K S - 'Tribe in India : A problem of Identification and Integration' in K SURESH SINGH (ed) 'The Tribal Situation in India', Pg 459, IAS, Shimla, 1972.
 - 4 - SINGH, K SURESH (ed) - 'Tribal Situation in India.' Pg xii. IAS, Shimla, 1972.

Both the themes established above - the construction of a history of harmony, and that of the British foisting the 'legacy of friction', serve a major purpose, i.e., pave the way for and legitimise the project of integration which seemed to be the cardinal intent behind developmental policies. The task of nation - building was the final objective and axis of all strategies, and the tribal question was viewed from this vantage point - "...there is the problem of bringing the tribal people out of their isolation into the mainstream of Indian nationalism (Roy Burman, Puri, Mankekar)... There is also the paramount task of the assimilation and integration of the tribes into the Indian nation for sheer humanistic reasons (Mankekar)... It was all part of the process of nation-building..."¹

The modern basis for this process of integration would be constituted by the ideals laid down in the Indian constitution - democracy, socialism and secularism (Uberoi, Roy and Others). Thus, this would counteract to dispel any misunderstanding, that integration implies acceptance of the Hindu way of life.

This particular theme - that of integration not implying homogeneity was stressed in the seminar by a number of the participants, implying a perception of this particular issue problematising the notion of integration. As S L Doshi comments - "But then, integration should not be confused with homogeneity, It is 'Organisation', rather than homogeneity. A group is said to be integrated in the degree to which its members, its social categories and statutes, and its culture are organised for the achievement of common purposes and goals."²

1 - SINGH, K SURESH (ed) - 'Tribal Situation in India.' Pg xiv. IIAS, Shimla, 1972.

2-- DOSHI, S L - 'An Assimilationist Society and National Integration ' in K SURESH SINGH (ed) - 'The Tribal Situation in India.' Pg 464, IIAS, Shimla, 1972.

K Suresh Singh observes in the same vein - "Integration into the mainstream of Indian life does not imply a loss of cultural autonomy of the components making up the nation. The problem has to be tackled on the basis of levels of understanding; many bridges of understanding have to be built to promote national integration,..."¹

Alongwith modernisation and expansion of productive activities, another strategy that was discussed with the objective of assimilation was 'sanskritisation.' It was maintained that transformation of a tribal group into a group in the greater Hindu society could come about through practices of sanskritisation, such as 'abstention from beef eating' and 'partial or complete abandonment of non-Hindu deities.'

The emergence of tribal elite was another major issue at the seminar. This tribal elite was appropriating the special privileges and provisions laid down in the constitution and exercising a vested interest in the entire scheme of developmental programmes - "...a new tribal elite, a class of tribal entrepreneurs, was coming of age and exploited its fellowmen (Singh, Sirsalkar, Moorthy). It was an instrument of modernisation, but effective safeguard against its exploitation must be built into the development mechanism in the tribal region."²

Singh suggests a measure to circumvent the problem - "a redefinition and re-scheduling" of tribe, which had been introduced as a mere classificatory device by the British. This process of redefinition and rescheduling on the basis of

1 - SINGH, K SURESH (ed) - 'The Tribal Situation in India,' Pp xxiii. IAS, Shimla, 1972.

2 - Ibid.

'rational social and economic criteria' would ensure even flow of benefits to the really needy and backward sections of the tribal community.¹

Apart from the emergence of a tribal elite as an outcome of the economic aids and provisions for preference in education and services, Doshi locates the genesis of separatist tendencies within the tribal communities as a fallout of economic benefits. Mathur agrees with him. - "In contemporary India, the word 'tribe' has, thus, little cultural or social implications ... like caste consciousness, linguistic consciousness or regional consciousness, tribal consciousness is fast developing to be a political tool which has become symbolic of privileged treatment, separatist tendencies and in places a barrier to national integration."²

Thus, the problem of political and cultural assertion of the tribals were fusing with other disturbing factors such as separatism, proving, in the process, to be problematic for nation-building. The roots of such problems were analysed by the scholars at the seminar to be the special provisions and safeguards provided in the Constitution. Consequentially, we find the seminarists arguing for a re-working of the provisions, to achieve the process of "levelling" - vital for national integration. As Mathur writes - "Perhaps in a romantic mood, exotic aspects of tribal culture were magnified and sought to be perpetuated, thus defeating the very object of our constitution in providing the safeguards, viz. 'the levelling up of the tribes' so that eventually they becomes integrated with the Indian population."³

1 - SINGH, K SURESH (ed) - 'The Tribal Situation in India.' Pg xxiii. IAS, Shimla, 1972,

2 - MATHUR, K S - 'Tribe in India : A Problem of Identification and Integration' in K SURESH SINGH (ed)- 'The Tribal Situation in India.' Pg 460. IAS, Shimla, 1972

3 - Ibid.

Doshi as we shall see from the quote that follows , shares the same conviction - "A society fed with an overdose of integration may get suspicious of the dominant group and seek cultural and political independence. So far our leaders have made compromises and offered that tribals 'develop along the lines of their own genius... we should encourage their traditional art and culture.' The present level of integration seems satisfactory and the tribals have reached a stage where they will soon lose their social identity and distinctions. Now these tribes should be despecified who have reached a level of integration, where they suffer from economic backwardness and are included in the schedule of backward classes. For, the overflow of economic aid and preference in service and education have encouraged separatist tendencies."¹

We have noted the general approach of the seminarists which consisted in a pedagogical historiography of non-difference - with the rift sown in by the British policies and the 'Compromise' of the leaders eventually giving rise to separatism proving a bane for integration. The thrust of this entire understanding certainly goes against the mood reflected in the discussion, of integration not being co-terminous with homogeneity. The ambiguous phrases used in spelling out the later stance such as 'organisation' or 'bridges of understanding' provide scopes for the assumption that such concerns were only being incorporated at a mere rhetorical level treated more often than not with a dismissive attitude. Before we complete our discussion on the first IAS Seminar, let us briefly look at how the developmental measures were assessed by the Seminarists.

1 - DOSHI, S L - 'An Assimilationist Society and National Integration' in K SURESH SINGH (ed) - 'The Tribal Situation in India;' Pg 474, IAS, Shimla, 1972.

The mood of analysis is essentially optimistic as the quotation below demonstrates -

"Earlier the motivation behind tribal economic activities was only meagre subsistence - done by hunting, food gathering or shifting cultivation. Now the new economic policy has provided the tribals with a motivation - of, a definite purpose of action charged with developmental sentiments. The forces of modernisation released at the hands of Community Development Blocks and communication links have created a congenial situation in which the tribals are confidently responding to improved seeds, chemical fertilisers, pumping sets, commercial crops. This obviously is a positive step towards tribal integration."¹

Another 'Optimistic feature' noted was the weakening of the traditional structures of the tribal community - "The tribal councils are now weakening, for the administration has abrogated their right to sit in judgement on criminal cases... The general elections and reservation of seats for the tribals has created a political awakening among them, for which Panchayati Raj offers opportunities for increased political involvement of the tribals."²

However, as far as imparting education was concerned, it was maintained that there was no need for a separate education system of the tribals since the one existent was deemed sufficient to bring them into the national fold. The emulation of symbols, values and norms by one tribal group from the customs of the groups surrounding them was viewed as having the needed cohesive effect.

1 - DOSHI, S L - 'An Assimilationist Society and National Integration' in K SURESH SINGH (ed) - 'The Tribal Situation in India' Pg 468, IAS, Shimla, 1972;
2 - Ibid, Pg 469.

The analysis of the development policies and concrete programmes, constituting of almost unqualified appreciation for them and the optimism expressed at breakdown of traditional authority structures among the tribal communities leave us with no doubt about the general understanding and approach of the participants regarding Modernization and Intergration. However, the stand on education, even from such a monolithic developmentalist perspective seems inadequate and illattended to, as an issue, considering the momentous importance education involved in such a process. The seminarists were, clearly, the optimistic nation-builders, who saw in the postcolonial programme of modernisation - an unproblematic course of a modern future.

Twenty years after the first Seminar took place, a second seminar took place at IIAS, Shimla on 'Tribal Society : Continuity and Change' in December 1990. It was a review of the developmental processes going on in the country, as well as a reassessment of the stands adopted at the first Seminar.

As Mrinal Miri observes - "The first seminar emphasised many inadequacies in our approach towards the understanding of tribal societies, and, in our ideas about 'developing' these societies. But, on the whole, it was informed by an optimism which generally marked the intellectual life of the country in the years after independence. Thus, the seminar issued a fifteenpoint statement... as a guideline for policy makers, administrators and researchers. But our experience of

the last two decades of national life and its imponderables has taught us more caution, if nothing else.”¹

K Suresh Singh puts forth the point more sharply, - Around the time of the first seminar in 1969, we thought of tribes as a relatively homogeneous category and of tribal regions as of a piece. Today we are sharply aware of the complexities, diversities and variations in the study of the tribal people in dealing with tribal matters.”²

Besides taking account of the ‘Complexities, diversities and variations’ - in short, the ‘differences’ in the corpus of tribal communities, the seminar had to attend to the new complex issues that had come to the fore and the issues whose imminent emergence as major factors could be anticipated. Primary among these issues was the question of environmental rights of the tribals and the related questions of socio-cultural identity and ethnicity. K S Singh puts the matter in the following manner - “The tribal movements in 1990’s are going to focus on the twin issues of ethnicity and environment... Ethnicity is closely related to environment which encompasses the tribal’s right to their resources. Therefore, we have to rethink the developmental strategy in order to protect, even guarantee the rights in local resources of the tribal people who cannot be fobbed off with promise of liberal resettlement and employment. What is at stake is the survival of the

1 - MIRI, MRINAL (ed) - ‘Continuity and Change in Tribal Society.’ Pg 1. IIAS, Shimla, 1993.

2 - Ibid.

of the tribal culture which cannot exist without the tribals' control over their resources and their environment.... Grant of autonomy to tribal majority areas may become necessary in order to satisfy the tribal aspirations."¹

The seminarists, in marked contrast to the seminar held in 1969, were very critical in analysing the developmental measures. As Sachidananda writes, "The resource base and the social and cultural heritage of the scheduled Tribe population is getting eroded through a combination of developmental interventions, commercial exploitation and ineffective legal and administrative systems....wherever new development is taking place in tribal areas, the tribal people are losing land and are being pushed back from wherever new opportunities are arisingThe tribals have either no place in the new industrial complexes or are reduced to the bottom sub-structure of the new socio-economic system."²

Walter Fernandes, was equally incisive in his paper and put it as, "...the intimate organic relationship between the life of the tribesmen and the forest has now been replaced by a destructive relationship corresponding to a transition from the traditional, informal, community based economy to the formal, profit based individualist economy. Do the programmes of development initiated and sustained by the government hold any promise?"³

Concrete instances of developmental policies proving ineffective or inadequate, were provided by Sachidananda in his article, 'Tribal Development :

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- 1 - SINGH, K S - 'Tribal Perspectives, 1969-1990' in MRINAL MIRI (ed) - 'Continuity and Change in Tribal Society.' Pg 9. IAS, Shimla, 1993.
 - 2 - SACHIDANANDA - 'Tribal Development' Challenge in the Nineties' in MRINAL MIRI (ed) - 'Continuity and Change in Tribal Society,' Pg 338, IAS, Shimla, 1993.
 - 3 - MIRI, MRINAL (ed) - 'Continuity and Change in Tribal Society.' Pg 2. IAS, Shimla, 1993.

Challenge in the Nineties.' -

"The rigid implementation of the Forest Conservation Act without any regard for the local situation has worsened the relationship.... The Principle of partnership of the tribals in the management of forests has not emerged upto now."¹

"In the co-operative sector, the working of the LAMPS is far from satisfactory... Most of the LAMPS are non-viable. No attention has been paid to consumer credit."²

"The sectoral allocations of the Tribal Sub-Plan do not reflect the felt needs of the people and as such have not created the desired impact.... The ITDP has not been accepted as a unit for planning. The schemes are implemented without being adapted to the needs of the tribals and tribal areas."³

Such a critical stance was reflected in the general approach of the participants - "A point on which there is great deal of emphatic agreement... is the tribes man's loss of traditional customary rights over land, forest and water and the consequent degradation of his life style, leading in many cases to his near total moral, spiritual, intellectual dessimation..."⁴

Thus, by the second conference held twenty years later, we find a major change in the outlook and concerns. The survival of tribal culture is now supposed to be a major issue, something that was subsumed within the meta-narrative urge of modernisation earlier. Differences of culture and community values are

1 - SACHIDANANDA - 'Tribal Development : Challenge in the Nineties.' in MRINAL MIRI (ed) - 'Continuity and Change in Tribal Society,' Pg 339. IIAS, Shimla, 1993.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid; Pg 349.

4 - MIRI, MRINAL (ed) - 'Continuity and Change in Tribal Society'. Pgs 1-2. IIAS, Shimla, 1993.

now seen to claim much more sensitised approach than ever before. A critical

stance has now replaced the optimism with which developmental policies were analysed. This process of change can be analysed much better, if we take a cross-section of the time between the two. Let us consider the proceedings of a workshop, held at Hyderabad in 1974 on, 'Perspectives of Tribal Development and Administration.'

The workshop held at Hyderabad by the National Institute of Community Development gave rise to a plethora of suggestions on the Developmental strategies to be undertaken for the tribals. Most importantly, the workshop recognised the problematic of Development and cultural autonomy as becoming increasingly two mutually exclusive categories opposed to each other.

Srivastava writes - "Development should mean progress without undermining or destroying their heritage, both material and non-material. Development must recognise the cultural factors, the sentiments and social value of the tribals."¹

It was noted that the laws and provisions that provided the tribals with special benefits failed short of their objective, getting in the process appropriated and misused by the non-tribals. The timber tree rights, to provide an example, instead of benefitting the tribal community have instead proved immensely beneficial for the non-tribal contractors.

On the other hand, the programmes and strategies adopted had unrealistic assumptions and instead of delivering the goods, created further confusion and problems. This was especially true about Madhya Pradesh. Srivastava writes - "It

1 - SRIVASTAVA, S S - 'Welfare of Tribals in Madhya Pradesh - Retrospect, Prospect and Proposals' in 'Perspectives on Tribal Development and Administration' - Proceedings of the Workshop held at NICD, Hyderabad (1974), Pg 133. NICD Hyderabad, 1975.

is observed that attempts to implement schemes in the manner unsuitable to tribal setting of Madhya Pradesh have created more distrust among tribals. The question, therefore, is what should be the approach and method of tribal welfare in Madhya Pradesh...."¹

It was observed that in Madhya Pradesh, bulk of the tribal population lived in remote hills and villages with a pattern of scattered habitation, their occupation being agriculture or labour involved in collecting the forest produce. While the pattern of cultivation failed to fully exploit the land potential and could hardly generate any surplus, the middlemen exploitation went on unabated. Thus, if 'tribal labour is properly organised and given work and reasonable wages.' it could provide a stable base to "ensure the upward movement of the tribal economy."²

Srivastava suggests a key strategy of a non-programmatic nature which would, nonetheless, go a long way in meeting the problems - "...there should be continuous and free communication of the people of developed areas and flow of their ideas to the interior of tribal areas. The tribal should also move out to establish better and more permanent contact with developed people in developed tracts.

1 - SRIVASTAVA, S S - 'Welfare of Tribals in Madhya Pradesh - Retrospect, Prospect and Proposals' in 'Perspectives on Tribal Development and Administration' - Proceedings of the Workshop held at NICD, Hyderabad,(1974), Pg 135. NICD Hyderabad, 1975.

2 - Ibid, Pg 134.

This is possible by providing a network of communications and better facilities of movement.”¹

Srivastava suggests another strategy in the field of economic development, the introduction of co-operatives. According to him, the tribals believe in the philosophy of cooperation and cooperative societies, therefore, stand a good chance of success among them. However, he warns that, “Any programme proposed to be implemented in tribal areas wholly by government servants by framing laws and rules and prescribing elaborate procedure without generating the necessary faith... and involvement of the tribals, will perhaps not succeed... It is, therefore, necessary that there should be more public vigilance and involvement of local people in all schemes undertaken in tribal areas...”²

According to Srivastava, the question of development of a tribal community is linked up with the improvement of communications and infrastructure of the area, thereby facilitating industrial and economic growth. The programmes of tribal development, therefore, “under taken simultaneously with area development or even following it” will prove to be “a wiser policy ensuring better utilisation of funds and achievement of objectives.”

1 - SRIVASTAVA, S S - 'Welfare of Tribals in Madhya Pradesh - Retrospect, Prospect and Proposals' in 'Perspectives on Tribal Development and Administration' - Proceedings of the Workshop held at NICD, Hyderabad, 1974. Pg 135. NICD Hyderabad, 1975.

2 - Ibid, Pg 136.

A major contribution of the workshop was the paper presented by Abdul L Thaha on education, an issue that failed to draw much attention in the IAS Seminar held in 1969. Thaha's paper was a case study of Bastar, Madhya Pradesh. Thaha's perusal of the reports of the committees on Tribal Welfare demonstrated that there were divided opinions on the issue - "while the former argues that the tribal world is ridden with poverty and needs means of surviving, the latter argue that the tribal people are mostly backward because they are least educated and education should get the first priority.."¹

According to the 1981 census, the total literacy of Bastar was 9.63%, while tribal literacy was only 4.23%.² Thaha's paper draws on the 1971 census figures and points out the even lower percentage of literacy among the females. Thaha elaborates the overall situation in the following passage with concrete statistics: "The average area served by a primary, middle and higher secondary school, in Bastar district in 1965 was 51.5, 1119.4 and 8918.1 Sq. Km respectively. This means at an average the school children in the above categories had to cover distances of 4.2, 19.0 and 35 Kms to reach their schools. When we compare these figures with the norms of a primary school within 1.5 Kms, a middle school within 5 Kms and a high school within 8 Kms from each village suggested

1 - THAHA, A L - 'Planning for Educational Facilities in Tribal Areas - A case Study of Bastar district, Madhya Pradesh' in 'Perspectives on Tribal Development and Administration.' Proceedings of the Workshop held at NICD, Hyderabad, (1974). Pg 217. NICD, Hyderabad, 1975.

2 - SRIVASTAVA, A R N - 'Tribal Encounter with Industry - A case Study from Central India,' Pg 107 - Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990.

by the Planning Commission, it gives a gloomy picture of the District."¹

Accordingly, Thaha laid out a modified education programme taking into account the specific problems and requirements of the situation.

First and foremost among his suggestions was the need of imparting education to the tribals making use of their own language as far as possible. "This," Thaha writes, "Can be done most effectively through audio-visual methods in view of the shortage of trained personnel, and the need to impart education in each village, rather than in schools in some villages to which children, have to come."² Thaha stressed the need of using 'local dialects' as the medium of education and training upto middle stage after which there should be an initiation into the normal medium giving them a working knowledge of the latter.³

As the paper had called attention to the lack of vocational bias in the formal education system, Thaha suggested that, "the educators acquire proficiency in vocational education like agriculture, poultry and dairy farming, horticulture, animal husbandry and forestry, village crafts, cottage and small scale industry."⁴

Thaha took notice of the problems that arose from the strictures of formal education like regular attendance of classes (which clashed with their agricultural work) and suggested that the months of agricultural activities be considered as holidays.

1 - THAHA, A L - 'Planning for Educational Facilities in Tribal Areas - A Case Study of Bastar District, Madhya Pradesh,' in 'Perspectives on Tribal Development and Administration' - Proceedings of the Workshop held at NICD, Hyderabad, (1974), Pg 221. NICD, Hyderabad, 1975.

2 - Ibid, Pg 222.

3 - Ibid, Pg 224.

4 - Ibid.

Last but not the least, "Besides making education free, provision should be made to provide the tribal children with free meals, clothing and educational equipment, and scholarships at the secondary level to encourage them to go for higher studies."¹

The last paper that we are going to discuss among the ones presented at the Hyderabad Conference is that of a theoretical nature. B K Roy Burman's, 'Perspectives for Administration and Development of the Scheduled Tribes' traces the trajectory of a certain phenomena like isolation and primitiveness - the nomenclatures we come across often while discussing the issue of tribals.

Burman starts with : "There is a point of view that until recently the tribes lived in isolation. There is an opposite point of view that tribal communities have always been part of the Indian nation society. Both are myths."²

Burman sees isolation as a phenomena arising only recently in the context of modernisation and particularly as a "by-product of the development of Modern transport." Prior to this stage, Burman believes that the tribals had contact with different cultures and political-social entities but 'they considered themselves to be different,' and so did the 'others.' Hence, there was no question of "the tribals regarding themselves as primitive or backward." The colonial rule, according to Burman, "accentuated this sense of difference" by isolating the tribals in many areas. But at the same time modern science and technology began to penetrate

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- 1 - THAHA, A L - 'Planning for Educational Facilities in Tribal Area - A Case Study of Bastar District, Madhya Pradesh,' in 'Perspectives on Tribal Development and Administration' - Proceedings of the Workshop held at NICD, Hyderabad, (1974). Pg 224. NICD, Hyderabad, 1975.
 - 2 - ROY BURMAN, B K - 'Perspectives for Administration and Development of the Scheduled Tribes' in 'Perspectives on Tribal Development and Administration' - Proceedings of the Workshop held at NICD, Hyderabad, (1974).Pg 32 - NICD, Hyderabad, 1975.

the tribal areas. "Gradually a sense of inadequacy to cope with the modern world dawned on them. The primitive was born."¹

But the primitive complex did not overwhelm the tribals at this stage. They were protected by "another complex, namely majority complex". As Burman illustrates the transformation - "... about half of the tribal population lives in areas where they are in a majority.... The fact that they were a majority at this level was a greater social reality to them than the fact that they were a minority at the State or the national level... But the situation is rapidly changing. The special rights and concessions provided in the Constitution have enabled many of the tribals to take to higher education and go in for higher administrative and political positions. The primitive complex... is giving place to a minority complex. It is the gift of Modernisation."²

Burman's analysis almost verging on a critique of Modernisation brings us to the second section of the present chapter. In this section, we shall review in brief, two of the critiques on Tribal Developmental Policies and programmes; follow the analysis with concrete instances of resistance as narrated by different commentators' and in the concluding part, look at the alternatives that have been emerging of late.

Let us begin our analysis with the critique put forward by Walter Fernandes and Arundhati Roy Chowdhuri in the article - "Search for a Tribal Identity : The

1 - ROY BURMAN, B K - 'Perspectives for Administration and Development of Scheduled Tribes' in 'Perspectives on Tribal Development and Administration.' - Proceedings of the Workshop held at NICD, Hyderabad,(1974). Pgs 32 - 33. NICD, Hyderabad, 1975.

2 - Ibid.

dominant and the Subaltern." While being similar in tenor to Burman's analysis we just concluded discussing, the analysis of Fernandes and Roy Chowdhuri is somewhat more of a pronounced Marxist nature. The authors discuss the issue beginning with an accusation towards the ruling class of India, ie., the bourgeoisie,, who evolved from the Freedom Movement, - "Controlled as it was by the Indian Bourgeoisie, the attitude of the nationalist movement towards the tribals could at best be called ambiguous. The freedom fighters coined terms such as 'Raniparaj', 'Girijan', 'Vanyajati', 'Kalipraja' to identify them... conveyed the idea of the wild yet noble denizen of the forest and were patronising. They continued to imply barbarity as well as childishness."¹

The contradiction involved in such a stance resulted, according to the authors, in a construction of "a kind of national unity" which could "at best tolerate ethnic diversities but could not fully accept them. Hence, Pluralities came to be under played for the sake of national integration while ethnic and cultural differences were reinforced as exotic exhibits."² What integration came to mean in this context was that it led to the fatal assumption that "the lifestyle of the tribals has to be in accordance with that of the advanced sections of society."³ Such an understanding, in its turn led to a notion of assimilation whereby the dominant elite culture is imposed on the tribals. At the same time it serves as a legitimation sanctioning the exploitation of the tribals. Alongwith this process, the writing of fictitious history - contrived accounts of 'mythical isolation' of the tribals, espe-

1 - FERNANDES, W & ROY CHOWDHURI, A 'Search for Tribal Identity : The Dominant and the Subaltern' in WALTER FERNANDES (ed) -The Indigenous Question : Search for an Identity.' Pg 16. Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1993.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

cially done by the 'RSS and BJP' leads to a denial of the "economic, Political and cultural human rights."¹

And, thus, Fernandes and Roy Chowdhuri conclude - "One notices an attempt on the part of the state and other vested interests to incorporate diversity not by recognising it but by eliminating it by categorising the adivasis as backward."² This attitude "smacks of the 19th Century utilitarian approach of the colonised people being considered the white man's burden" - and finds parallel in "the present day developmental policies" which perpetrates "a new economic colonization."³

The next article that we take up for analysis is that of B Singh. Singh's approach is markedly different from the one we just discussed in the sense that it is not a discussion/analysis on the larger theoretical issues concerning Development or Tribal Identity. Rather, it is a short appraisal of the Planning Process - the concrete manifestation of Developmental Policies.

Singh points out that the increasing investment in the agricultural sector has brought only "minimum returns" in terms of tribal development. This is due to the fact that by and large the tribals are not in a position to afford the "innovation cost" involved in implementing the new measures. Besides, the Minimum Wages Act is not followed while employing the tribals "even in government employment" and other malpractices like underpaying the women are still in vogue. At a general level, Singh maintains that "The main problem of the tribal population with a very

1 - FERNANDES, W & ROY CHAOWDHARI, A - 'Search for a Tribal Identity : The Dominant and the Subaltern' in WALTER FERNANDES(ed)-'The Indegenous Question : Search for an Identity. 'Pg 18. Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1993.

2 - Ibid, Pg 19.

3 - Ibid.

few exceptions, is of abject poverty" coupled with "lack of education." The problem of the developmental programmes, on the other hand, is that they are largely "plan-based." Singh maintains that the problems are actually context-specific in their manifestations and complexities and have to be tackled at the "micro level."¹ The general position he takes by the end of the analysis can be summed up as follows - "They need micro-level analysis, immediate attention and essentially local solutions. Governmental interference is needed at the local level itself."² And, therefore, "We must think of a developmental programme at the micro-level, at the village level."³

The above analysis reveals the shift in the discourse of development at two levels - Fernandes's article puts forth the new theoretical framework that is increasingly gaining grounds. Significantly, Fernandes's position, inspite of being a Marxist one, differs in its reading of the nationalist project of integration from other traditional Marxist analysis, which lacked the scepticism that Fernandes and Roy Chowdhuri introduces in their understanding. On the other hand, in sharp contrast to Fernandes and Roy Chowdhuri, Singh takes a critical position without rejecting the interventionist role of the state as strongly as the former.

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1 - SINGH, B - 'Tribal Development without Much Success' in BUDDHA DEB CHAUDHURI(ed) - 'Tribal Development in India - Problems and Prospects.' Pg 372. Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1982.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

4 - Ibid.

5 - Ibid.

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But before we discuss the construction of new alternatives taking place today, we will attend to a brief account of the general forms of exploitation and instances of resistances in Bastar.

The transfer of land from tribals to non-tribals constitutes a major exploitative practice in Bastar. The Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Act, 1950 had banned this practice. But the practice continued since effective implementation was found to be impossible in view of the fact that the tribals were steeped in abject poverty and suffered from lack of education. After taking stock of the situation, the Act was reformed in January 1984 to the effect that the "Government will fight the cases of those tribals whose land has gone to the non-tribals and will restore their land." It was also provided that in such disputes the non-tribals will not be able

1 - Refer to the discussion of RAJNI BAKSHI - 'Development not Destruction.' Alternative Politics in the Making in Economic and Political Weekly. Pg 255. February 3, 1996. Vol xxxi, No.5

to procure a stay order or injunction from the court and the tribals will not be made a party in the court,¹

The Area Report - 'Adivasi in Madhya Pradesh' published in March 1985 refers to the Act quite optimistically - "If implemented properly, this Act can bring much relief to the tribals from 'Benami' or illegal transfer of land."² However, in the very second line the Report hastily adds, that at present it is mostly the administration that deprives the tribals of their land, through the projects of big dams, factories, mining, electricity schemes, defence installations etc.³

The exploitation of forestry constitutes the other major form of exploitative practice in Bastar. The issue of forestry has continued from the colonial times, when timber trade was rampant in the area. In gross violation of the Indian Forest Policy. "the forests are being used for commercial purposes." even after Independence, "Which have not only endangered the existence of forests, but also destabilised the tribal way of life."⁴

The report mentioned above, reveals that - "Big merchant houses get forest resources at throw away prices. The Birla paper factory in Madhya Pradesh purchases bamboo at the rate of two rupees per hundred (bamboos) while the local farmers pay two rupees for each bamboo."⁵

1 - 'Scenario of the 7 percent'. Vol 2, March 1985. Cinemart Foundation, New Delhi. Pg 72.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

4 - Ibid, Pg 80.

5 - Ibid.

The depletion of the social forestry has already attained a stage of major crisis, since under the Afforestation and Social Forestry schemes that have been undertaken with an objective of restoring the situation (through improvement of degraded forest and development of other forests), "only such species are being planted which are required by these industries."¹

Some senior forest officials have opposed the proposed 107 megawatt Bodhghat Hydro-electricity Project, which, if implemented, would lead to submergence of 5,533 hectares of land in the area. A 'Secret Report' of the Forest conservators of Jagdalpur and Kanker submitted to the Government, according to the 'Adivasi in Madhya Pradesh.' Area Report, states that the finalisation of the Project would lead to the destruction of "50 lakh sal trees, 30 lakh bamboo trees, Beejas, Tendu, Teak, Rosewood, Mahua etc., and many precious forest products including medicinal plants." The 'Secret Report' is supposed to have suggested "alternatives for the production of electricity," that will "neither destroy the forests nor evict the tribals living there."²

On November 6 and 7, 1993, the All India People's Resistance Forum had organised a two day seminar on 'Bastar : Pro-imperialist Development strategy versus People's struggles.'

B D SHARMA, delivering the inaugural address at the seminar traced the history of exploitation and resistance in Bastar, that we would like to encounter

1 - 'Scenario of the 7 percent.' Vol 2. March 1985. Cinemart Foundation, New Delhi, Pg 80.

2 - Ibid, Pg 82.

3 - For a General Account of the exploitation of tribals, refer to, K S SINGH - 'The Problem' in SEMINAR. Pg 12. December, 1993.

According to Sharma, the transfer of power in 1947 did not bring any real improvement for the tribals of the district, "instead saw the growth of a new form of exploitation, with the emergence of the land lord-trader class..." The real rupture occurred in the 1960's, when Raja Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo was divested of his authority by "the Delhi Government." People perceived this, according to Sharma, as the "eclipse of a symbol...served to emphasise their now near total alienation from the land and the forests which they had once controlled." The people revolted and there was police firing that led to the death of Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo. The revolt in itself, in Sharma's language was "symptomatic of the simmering discontent (which) permeated many a tribal area in the country in the sixties."¹

The administration introduced the sub-plans from the Fifth Plan period as the new strategy of development. The result, according to Sharma was "a very heavy dose of financial investment" bringing in its wake "an army of contractors, technicians, labourers and government officials" who indulged not only in "siphoning of funds" but also in "open loot of the resources, landgrabbing and what not."²

Stephen Rego provides a theoretical formulation on the political economy of exploitation operating in Bastar during the period - "the plan for developing limited industrial pockets based mainly on foreign technology.... while leaving vast areas of feudal, and sometimes even pre-feudal relations of production intact in the rural areas, has resulted in a dual bondage.... The contradiction inherent in utilising the most advanced imperialist technology in a backward area has led to the massive displacement of tribal populations from the land and forests without the creation of any alternative forms of employment or livelihood. In the context of Bastar, this was exemplified by the experience of the Bailadila mines for export

1 - REGO, STEPHEN - 'Destructive Development and People's Struggles in Bastar.' Economic and Political Weekly, February 12, 1994. Vol xxix No.7. Pg.351.

2 - Ibid.

of iron ore to Japan, the World Bank funded pine plantation project of the 70's, proposals like the Bodhghat Hydel Project and the recent steps to setup Steel Plants in the district."¹

The 'recent steps' that Rego mentions refers to the decision of establishing 'three highly mechanised steel plants' under the New Economic Policy involving an investment of Rs.3,000/- to 5,000/- crores in a district (which has only a single railway line). B D Sharma has criticised this decision accusing, that the process of globalisation and liberalisation has intensified 'the colonial pattern of loot of the districts' natural resources.' Sharma concluded in the note that the emancipation of the tribals could only take place through the assertion of their rights of control over all natural resources and community ownership of any industry started in the district. Significantly, he welcomed the 'so-called extremist intervention' that started in the early eighties as a "new phase in the people's struggles."²

The Area Report entitled, 'Adivasi in Madhya Pradesh.' illustrates the account of resistance referred to by Sharma as the 'so-called extremist intervention.' According to the report, the tribals, driven to the brink by "loss of traditional rights over forests, exploitation by the Forest Department, Public Works Departments, contractors, merchants" and the 'anti-people' policy of the Government "organised themselves and started a movement in south Bastar that has spread all over the district gradually. "The Government and other vested interests" propagated that Naxalites in the area have incited the outbreak. The Government took steps in retaliation like deploying a special police force alongwith additional battalions

1 - REGO, STEPHEN - 'Destructive Development and People's Struggles in Bastar'. Economic and Political Weekly, February 12, 1994. Vol xxix, No.7. Pg.351.

2 - Ibid.

and setting up of special Forest Department cell and Police Department Cell to tackle the issue."¹

The Area Report provides several other concrete instances of resistance of the tribals in the area (Bastar) -

In 1977, the tribals participated in a large scale labour movement under the leadership of AITUC in Bailadila. Several workers were reported to be killed in subsequent police firing on a demonstration.²

In 1981, thousands of tribals, 'started an agitation and 'gheraoed' the Jagdalpur Collectorate' acting on the issue involving 'the abduction of a tribal girl named Kamla out of Bastar to work as a Maid servant and the retrenchment of tribal women labourers.'³

In the same year, the tribals stopped trucks full of wood in protest against the forest policy in Mardapal, a village near Kondagaon. Police Firing was reported.⁴

April 1983 witnessed a powerful agitation by the tribals under the leadership of the tribal MLA. Mahendra Karma and Laxman Shadi, the district Secretary of CPI in the area. The issue, this time, was the exploitation by Forest Department and Merchants around the Tendu leaf. As the Report says - "The rate of Tendu Leaves was increased by 2 paise per bundle and the forest department had to pay lakhs of rupees to the tribals."⁵

1 - 'Scenario of the 7 percent.' Vol 2, March 1985. Cinemart Foundation, Delhi, Pages 84 - 85.

2 - Ibid, Pg 83.

3 - Ibid.

4 - Ibid.

5 - Ibid.

As per the organisations of resistance are concerned, Stephen Rego's article, 'Destructive Development and People's Struggles in Bastar' informs us of the existence of an organisation that has challenged the plans of the Indian state - the 'Dandakaranya Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor Sanghatan (DAKMS). The DAKMS has reportedly taken up the issues of "better wages and higher rates for collection of minor forest produces. "Pattas" regularising cultivation on forest land." It has been operating in the area since the early eighties.³

Another organisation has come up in recent times in Bastar over the issue of the establishment of steel plants in the area -

This organisation is the 'Bharat Jan Andolan' headed by B D Sharma, which has of late come to the fore in organising people's resistance in the area.²

Following the short commentary on the accounts of people's resistance in Bastar, we will now look at the construction of new alternative strategy of peoples's resistance in Bastar. The concrete instance that we come across as the articulation of such a strategy is the Mavalibhata Declaration, 1992.

The incident that led to the declaration is described by B D Sharma in the following passage - "The people's struggle against the authoritarian state and money power took a new turn on October 10, 1992 at Mavalibhata in Bastar, Madhya Pradesh. The foundation stone of a giant steel plant laid by the Chief

1 - REGO, STEPHEN - 'Destructive Development and Peopl's Struggles in Bastar.' Economic and Political Weekly, February 12, 1994. Vol xxix, No.7. Pgs 351-352.

2 - Ibid, Pg 351.

Minister - the symbol of state power and of the marginalisation of the remote tribal areas of our country - was reduced to rubble quietly by the simple people of that village, and thrown away with the type of contempt which, they were convinced, it deserved. Through this act and the declaration that accompanied it, the community's command over its natural habitat was reaffirmed..."¹

The Mavalibhata declaration, inter alia, stated - "only those enterprises will be allowed to be established in our respective areas which agree to accept community control over them. This provision will not be against money, but will be in lieu of the real contribution of the community, by way of co-operation and consent for use of those resources by the enterprise which have provided the community and its members with sustenance in all aspects of their life. Other partners in the enterprise who may invest capital and all categories of workers."²

In his article, 'Community control over Natural Resources and Industry : The significance of the Mavalibhata Declaration,' B D Sharma lays down the perspective to the Declaration. Sharma traces the illusory promise of a 'new era of prosperity' with the coming of big industries eventually leading to displacement and disruption of tribal communities who continue to suffer as the industry exploits them and unleash the 'devastation wave' of 'gases and chemicals poisoning the air' and destroying the fertility of the soil.³ - "But the suffering of the people is considered a necessary concomitant of industrialisation and legitimate price of development."⁴

1 - SHARMA B D - 'Community Control over Natural Resources and Industry: The Significance of the Mavalibhata Declaration' in W FERNANDES,(ed) - 'The Indigenous Question : Search for an Identity'. Pg 107. Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1993.

2 - Ibid, Pg 108.

3 - Ibid.

4 - Ibid, Pg 109.

Thus, the trauma of 'structural transition' from agrarian to industrial economy has to be borne by the tribal communities who have become the 'colonial under-worlds of the erstwhile colonies. And it is this very process of structural transition that leads to the loss of community's rights over its habitat and traditional resources.¹

The process, something Sharma finds anachronistic to the spirit of the Indian constitution (as laid down in Article - 39, the Directive Principles of State Policy), acquired a much more devastating dimension with the decline of Public sector and rise of the liberalisation process which consolidated the eclipse of any notion of community ownership.

Thus, "the distinction between the right to use the resources and their ownership got obliterated defacto and even de jure in the bewildering maze of usage, contract, rules and laws."²

Liberalisation would result in a rapid escalation of this process as the command over natural resources "can be simply purchased with no constraints of any description. As the logic of the free market and modernisation of technology unfolds and opportunities for human labour shrink, people will be thrown out of the system."³

1 - Refer to the discussion of WALTER FERNANDES - 'The Price of Development' in SEMINAR. Pg 19, December 1993.

2 - SHARMA, B D - 'Community Control over Natural Resources and Industry : The Significance of the Mavalibhata Declaration' in W FERNANDES, (ed) - 'The Indigenous Question : Search for an Identity' Pg 113. Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1993.

3 - Ibid, Pg 114.

Hence, the Mavalibhata Declaration spells out two rejections at the theoretical and Practical political levels.

Firstly, it rejects the 'role of capital' in all vital sectors of national life, the community resources being one such sector, since capital that was conceded the central place in the economy in 'the colonial capitalist era, stands thoroughly debunked' in the present state of the economy."¹

Secondly, a the state which has 'formally' absolved itself of the responsibility of representing the aspirations of the community, with the acceptance of globalisation as a policy challenged by the community's re-affirmation of its "natural and inalienable rights...."²

Sharma traces a trajectory from a legitimate intervention of the community to the construction of a new alternative of 'Sustainable Development with Equity' - "The story of the earlier surrender cannot be allowed to repeat itself. The 'Mavalibhata Declaration' stands for creating an alternative equitable order by suitably changing the law and, if necessary, also by amending the Constitution."³

Sharma proceeds to lay down the structure of such an equitable alternative order in concrete terms - The Sabha, ie., the community will undertake full responsibility for managing the village affairs. The 'second tier of regional councils'

1 - SHARMA, B D - 'Community Control over Natural Resources and Industry : The Significance of the Mavalibhata Declaration' in W FERNANDES,(ed) - 'The Indigenous Question : Search for an Identity.' Pg 116. Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 19193.

2 - Ibid, Pgs 115-116.

3 - Ibid, Pg 118.

will be vested with adequate legislative and executive power.¹ The concern of such a community will be 'sustainable and non-destructive development' the process and contents of which will be decided by the people. The community will be the owner of natural resources and control the industries - "The economics of industrial development will become an integral part of the company accounts. Any rise in the share index will reflect the honest gains of industrial activities ... What is taken out of an area shall flow back to the community in the form of money entitlements.... used to maintain and improve social economic and ecological status of the habitat."²

There would be a system of majority share holding in favour of the community with the workers associated with any industry holding necessary proportion of equity shares among them. Share entitlements within the community would be in the name of 'gaons/Mohalla' - the "natural basic unit of informal social interaction, humanised economic transactions and participative democracy."³

Towards the end of his analysis of the Mavalibhata Declaration, Sharma makes the most radical claim, by urging the 'fragmented and fractured working class' to unite with the peasants and tribals to launch a struggle for changing the system. The 'new scheme' of social construction that Sharma envisages moves forth from the question of 'Sustainable Development with Equity' to a direction that is declaredly Marxist in intent, scope and concern - "... the struggle of the organised sector workers against capitalists have remained an exclusive urban

1 - SHARMA, B D - 'Community Control over Natural Resources : The Significance of the Mavalibhata Declaration' In W FERNANDES (ed) - 'The Indigenous Question : Search for an Identity.' Pg 118. Indian Social Institute, New Delhi 1993.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

phenomena with sectoral interests the community at large and the rural people have stood apart, unconcerned, alienated.... not realised that both are victims of the same system,... The middle class in the tertiary sector have remained satisfied with crumbs...making all sorts of noises, sadly only for a larger crumb..."¹

In the Mavalibhata Declaration, Sharma sees the possibility of that fatal coming together of all the exploited masses - the revolution that has eluded so long. In spite of the fact that , the articulation of such a possibility is phrased in careful idioms of contemporaneity and context, the polemic certainly discloses a Marxist contention - "The call for struggle in the Mavalibhata Declaration is qualitatively different.... it is ordinary people - farmers, artisans and tribals - who have been trapped.... they are no longer ready to accept the current ownership concept of industry or its revised version of control through Management structures. The choice before the workers of all hues, with all their faults and fractures, is clear. They must close their ranks, align with the community to which they belong and accept the place of honour designated in the new scheme."²

The revolutionary potential of the Mavalibhata Declaration, that B D Sharma suggests towards the end of his analysis by proposing a strategy of class alliance remains a claim that cannot be concluded in a foregone manner. Emotionalism apart, it might prove to be too expensive a reverie for its spokesperson especially in a situation as complicated and confusing as the present one. This, however, does not amount to declaring a strategy of revolution to be obsolete. As one takes

1 - SHARMA, B D - 'Community Control over Natural Resources and Industry : The Significance of the Mavalibhata Declaration' in W FERNANDES (ed) - 'The Indigenous Question : Search for an Identity.' Pgs 120 -121. Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1993.

2 - Ibid, Pg 121.

stock of the situation and the processes, even the most optimistic revolutionary is led to the conviction that the strategy of change today has little chances of partaking the linear way as Sharma envisages. The changes taking place are much more complex and cross-hatched with other changes at other strata - often contradictory but at the same time deciding the courses of action and discourses through continuous and violent contentions. Interestingly, the Mavalibhata Declaration signifies the acknowledgement of a major political reality - the alienation of the civil society from the state. This becomes all the more relevant since the realisation is not registered and articulated by an elite intellect only. When a population issues a declaration re-affirming the rights of the community, it takes away the hegemonic pretensions of the state and thus, questions its legitimacy to rule. The issue gains momentum, when one comes across a locally constructed strategy of power structuration, administration and communitarian ownership.

What such strategies lack in evolving is a comprehensive degree of systematic politicisation. But then with the radical agenda shifting away from partisan politics to the new non-party fragment formations, practising local resistances, one can hardly accuse the emerging alternatives of not maturing into the more concrete forms that the party model is attributed with. The comprehension of the exploitative situation today no longer suffices only a class pedagogy - Radical strategies are in the middle of a circulation of multitude of discourses on culture, historiography, anthropology to name but a few. The issues claiming addressal have multiplied as well - Ethnicity Gender, Class, Marginality and so on.

With such a perspective that the history of Capitalism places us in today, the Mavalibhata Declaration spells out an alternative at two levels -

Firstly, it in itself constitutes a step in the quest of alternatives engaging the problematic of Development in not only a questioning of the ramifications of Modernity but issues stretching well beyond it - that of exploitation and change, individual and community, agency and revolution.

Secondly, and this is at the level of pragmatic considerations - it exemplifies a process of ongoing 'discursive displacements' within the masses, accumulation of newer categories of understanding and radical political action among them and their concrete politics committed to changing the existing order.

CONCLUSION

There exists a considerable volume of literature on the tribals in India and the question of Development. In spite of the fact, that the earlier works of the Indian scholars drew upon the primary works of the colonial anthropologists, they posited a perspective (in their research) that is declaredly contrary to the framework provided by the British intellectual efforts. This tendency started as a rejection of the 'colonial' 'ethnocentric' bias manifest in the immediately identifiable categories of the studies. However, the underlying ideological component affect even the early Indian efforts. Needless to say, that the course of such development was heavily influenced by the larger intellectual debates on 'Imperialism - Capitalism - Modernity' and the related epistemology.

For the purpose of our discussion, we will indicate certain methodological as well as theoretical problems with such literature. The records and accounts are replete with repetition, especially on the critical aspect of the anthropological details of the tribes and their respective culture. In the process, the registers concentrate more on providing the narratives in terms of economic histories of production. This, despite the honest intentions on the part of the researchers tend to create homogeneous histories. What these alternative discussions provide us with is a narration in keeping with a schematic form of Marxist analysis. Consequently, exploitation becomes the logic of the narrative which is then sought to be explained in terms of 'class' 'base-super-structure' and concepts like B D Sharma's 'Fourth-world theory.' Giving due credit to the analytical progress that such works have made, they lack in bringing out the sociological implications - For example, such accounts do refer to the essential link between the religious value and belief systems of the communities with their existence, but they curiously lack the

136articulation of how modern values destroy them even when not initiated in the shape of big 'developmentalist' projects. .

However, the fundamental concern that unify all these accounts and discussions is now to integrate and assimilate these marginal communities within the political, economic and social mainstream of the sub-continent. Viewed from this vantage point, the critical issue is the question of representation. The response to this question has been more or less uniform - the assumption that a particular section of the populace, be it bureaucrats, intelligentsia or activists, are to act as the intermediary - the articulating medium of representation. And it has been this issue that has given rise to claims, counter-claims as well as accusations from time to time as to whether the section practicing mediation do actually represent the marginals, ie., have the legitimacy of the representative status of such sections.

We have a logical recourse to this problem - the tribals representing themselves. But this strategy has its own problems. Since the question of representation involves a thorough familiarity with the modern institutions, their way of functioning and the modes of communication within such a realm, one can hardly expect the backward tribal to perform the representative role within the mainstream setup. At the same time, the 'empowered' and privileged section of the tribals who have managed to accomodate themselves in the mainstream and framiliarise with its ways, have increasingly distanced themselves from their roots and mores. They become, therefore, more identified with and as the mainstream than to represent what they once belonged to.

Under the circumstances, perhaps, what is needed more than anything else is establishing a dialogical relationship between the mainstream and the maerginals - the tribals. Such a communication would involve going beyond a one-way pedagogy.

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