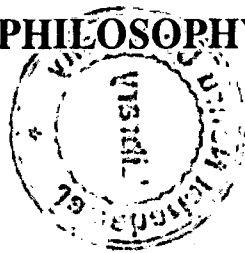


TRIBAL ECOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of*

22-01
11/01/02
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY



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20th July, 2001

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled '**TRIBAL ECOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT**' submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this university or any other University and is my original work.

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

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very thankful to my supervisor Dr. Tiplut Nongbri for her constructive criticisms and suggestions.

I am also thankful to the employees of JNU Library, Nehru Memorial Library and ICSSR Library for their selfless help without which completion of this work would not be possible.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their good wishes and encouragement. Besides Rajeshji deserves special thanks for typing this dissertation.

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New Delhi
July 20, 2001

PREFACE

The present piece of work deals with the problems of the tribal people and the threat to their eco-system due to the developmental projects. The tribal people in India are facing threats not only to their socio-economic life but also to their culture-the symbol of their very identity, which are celebrated by the so-called developmental activities undertaken by the government of India. In the name of development, the tribal people continue to be trapped in the clutches of displacement and destitution.

Chapter 1 deals with some basic ideas on ecology and ecological perspectives. It also focuses on the ideas of Indian environmentalism.

Chapter 2 deals with some definitions of tribes, their socio-economic organization and ecological system. This chapter also highlights on the ideas and perspectives of development.

Chapter 3 deals with the colonial and post-colonial forest policies and their impact on the tribals. It also gives a special focus on the Tribal sub plan and the Ninth Five Year Plan.

Chapter 4 deals with the adverse impact of various development projects undertaken by the government on the life, economy and culture of the tribal people. Development projects like the construction of big dams, mining projects, industrial settlements, wildlife sanctuaries etc have displaced the tribal people and threatened their life-supporting system. This will be the focus of this chapter.

Chapter 5 deals with various approaches to tribal welfare. Approaches like the anthropological approach and administrative approach have proved to be useful in solving of the problems of the tribals, if followed properly. In conclusion, I have highlighted on sustainable development and the concept of tribal self-management as well as least outside intervention.

Hope this paper will be of use for someone who has time and dedication to do some constructive work among the tribals.

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CHAPTER – I

The term 'ecology' is derived from the Greek root 'Oikos', meaning 'house', combined with the root 'logy' meaning 'the science of' or 'the study of'. Thus literally, ecology is the study of the earth's 'households' including plants, animals microorganisms, and people that live together as interdependent components. Because ecology is concerned not only with the organisms but with energy flows and material cycles on the lands, in the oceans, in the air, and in fresh water, ecology can be conceived as 'the study of the structure and function of nature'. It is understood that mankind is a part of nature. Another useful definition that reflects current emphasis is one of the several listed in the Webster's unabridged dictionary that reads as follows: 'the totality of pattern of relations between organisms and environment'.¹

It is interesting to note that the word ecology comes from the same root as the word 'economics', which deals with 'housekeeping', in the sense of management of man's works. As we shall emphasize subsequently, extending economic cost accounting to include the natural environment as well as man made structure and development is an important step in redressing dangerous imbalances between these two necessary components of man's environment. The scope of ecology has expanded considerably as man has become increasingly aware of these imbalances, an attitudinal change currently known as the 'environmental awareness movement'. The term ecology is different from environment as the later includes only the physical surrounding of man and animals like land, water, forests etc. Until very

¹ Martell, Luke (1994) – Ecology & Society – Cambridge – Policy – Press.

recently ecology was considered in academic circles to be a branch of biology. However, ecology has grown from a division of biological science to a major interdisciplinary science that links together biological, physical and social sciences. The shift in emphasis has resulted from an increased interest in, and study of, the ecosystem and global community. It has been increasingly realized that decisions must ultimately be made at the level of the ecosystem and biosphere if man is to avoid a major environmental crisis.

Approaches to the study of ecology

In the study of ecology, we come across with three dichotomous and/or interdependent approaches enunciated by David Pepper in his book "Roots of Environmentalism". They are functionalism versus Marxism, Ecocentrism versus technocentrism, and determinism versus free will.

Functionalism Versus Marxism:- Functionalism looks at society as a composite whole. It holds that as an organic whole, the society integrates the functionally specific parts. The society is constituted of multiplicity of groups and institutions having different as well as incompatible interests. In other words, there are certain groups of people whose activities impinge upon the environment while some others try to protect it. So the interests of these two groups come into conflict with each other. Functionalist approach holds that environmental protection and sustainable development is based on the rules of co-existence and mutual understanding of different communities of people. On the other hand, Marxism holds the view that the contemporary solutions to

environmental problems can be achieved if the existing system is overthrown. According to it, the capitalistic mode of production leads to ecological degradation. The rich exploit the environment in the name of the poor who in turn, do not have any mechanism to oppose and resist them. The rich use high technology which degrades the environment for which the poor have to pay the price. Solution to environmental problem, according to Marxism, lies not in the abolition of classes only but also in the eradication of inequalities and exploitation. We will deal with the Marxist approach subsequently in detail.

Ecocentrism Versus Technocentrism

Ecocentrism in ecology is derived from the 'Romanticism' of the Nineteenth century. This approach looks at the environment through a set of ideologies. It holds that every natural entity in the environment has the same value and therefore, needs equal protection. All things have the rights to be protected, which is called to be their "biotic rights". Ecocentrism as a philosophy allows the incorporation of human sentiments which seeks to protect environment for its own sake. They see man, as the part and parcel of the environment. Man is only a small entity of the huge nature. Both man and nature are responsible for each other's protection. This perspective sees man as the subject of ecological concern. Technocentrism, on the other hand, gives stress on the tools of modern technology which destroys or eats away the environmental entities. Technocentric approach is based on the

philosophy of science. It talks of human development at the cost of the nature. At present the government of a country gives importance to this approach by viewing the progress of mankind simultaneously on the protection of the environment.

Determinism Versus Free Will

Determinism lays emphasis on the philosophical position that people have about the relationship between man and nature. Environment determines human conditions as according to determinism. In other words, the human behaviour, life styles and the economy of living are conditioned by the environment. Determinism gives maximum emphasis on the value of nature. In contrast, free-will approach lays emphasis on human capacity and potential. It holds that man has a free-will capacity to challenge and change the power of the nature (e.g. storm, flood, drought etc). Man can modify the force of environment through technology. Here comes the importance of human consciousness, which signifies man's active involvement in the management of the environment. Man is not the passive entity which remains at the receiving end.

Human Ecology Approach of the Classical Chicago School

Human ecology took its birth in the first quarter of the Twentieth century in the Urban studies of the "Chicago School" whose leading representatives were Robert E. Park, Earnest W. Burgess, and R.D. Mckerzi.

They extensively used concepts and principles developed by plant and animal ecologists and focused their study on spatial aspects of community life. Park, the founder of the Chicago School, regarded human ecology as the study of the forces at work within the units of Urban community – within the limits of any natural area of human habitation, in fact – which tend to bring about an orderly and typical grouping of its population and institutions”. Thus human ecology was concerned with the territorial arrangements that social activities assume in order to discover and explain the regularities appear in man’s adaptation to space.²

In the area studies of Chicago school, “community became the central concern. They regarded human community as sub-social and sub-cultural entity, belonging to the ‘natural order’ like biotic plant and animal communities. Also the emphasis was laid on ‘competition’, as in biological ecology, rather than on ‘cooperation’ among community members”. Thus human ecology was a specialized field of sociological analysis which investigates – (a) those impersonal, Sub-Social aspects of communal structure – both spatial and functional which arise and change as the result of interaction between men through the medium of limited supplies of environment, and (b) the nature and forms of the processes by which this sub-social arises and changes.

² Hayward, Tim (1994) – Ecological Thought: An Introduction – Polity Press

Hawley's theory of Community Structure

A. H. Hawley found the Human Ecology approach of the Chicago school 'incompatible with the fundamental logic of ecological theory'. We find in Hawley's approach the inclusion of social aspects of human community, the aspects of the competition and cooperation and reduced emphasis upon social structure spatial patterns. Another merit of Hawley's theory is his emphasis upon man's possession of culture. Hawley was concerned with technology and social organization which he regarded as the aspects of culture. He asserted man's possession of culture and its potentiality to modify the environment recognizing thereby the essential difference between human ecology and biological ecology which his predecessors failed to make out.

Hawley defined human ecology as "the study of the form and development of the community in human population". By community, he meant the functional system of relationship of a territorially based population. That is, human ecology deals with the problem of social organization, its genesis and development, considering it as a property of a population.

Ecological Complexes Approach of O.D. Duncan

Duncan's ecology based primarily upon Hawley's theory, is more succinct and larger in scope. His frame of reference to Human Ecology constitutes four variable concepts, population, environment, social organization and technology. The focus of interest is on social organization studied in the context of other three factors. For Duncan, a spatially delimited

human population enters into process of continuous and dynamic interaction into environment, in producing its sustenance and this interaction of adjustment or adaptation is greatly facilitated and complicated by man's possession of culture.

Dunean's frame of reference, the two variables, social organization and technology became the focus of interest as aspects of culture. The concept of technology on human ecology refers not merely to a complex of art and artifact whose patterns are invested, diffused and accumulated but to a set of techniques employed by a population to gain sustenance from its environment and to facilitate the organization of sustenance producing activity. And social organisation is conceived as one which arises from sustenance producing activities. It is a property of the population aggregate, is indispensable to the maintenance of collective life, and must be adapted to the conditions confronting a population, including the character of the environment the size and composition of the population itself, and the repertory of the techniques at its command.

Huntington's Environmental Determinism

The relationship between culture and environment was one of the oldest concerns of anthropology. In fact many of them (for instance Morgan and other evolutionary theorists) look environment as explanatory factor for the particular way of life and culture.

The determinist view point was best represented by Elsworth Huntington. According to him, environment factors determined cultural phenomena. He ever sought to explain physiological and psychological development of man in terms of climatological factors Nevertheless even the staunchest believer of environmentalism would include some non-environmental factors such as ethnic or social traits in their explanation.

Cultural Ecology

In reaction to environmental determinists and cultural historians, John steward advocated the method of cultural ecology according to which “the two concepts, environment and culture, are regarded as complementary rather than contradictory to each other”.³

Cultural Ecology is the study of the processes by which a society adjusts to environment. It seeks to investigate whether the adjustment of human societies to their environment require particular modes of behaviour of whether they permit latitude for a certain range of possible behaviour patterns. A major breakthrough and real landmark was steward’s selection of certain variables from the global concepts of culture and environment. Steward he rejected the holistic view of culture which regards all aspects of culture as functionally interdependent, and stated that the degree and kind of interdependence of culture ‘which are most closely related to subsistence activities and economic arrangement’; which he called “Cultural Core”. His

³ Champan, J.L. – Ecology, Principles & Applications

cultural ecology pays primary attention to this core. To him, environment acts not only as a permissive but also as a creative agent.

Steward gave three fundamental procedures of the area strategy of cultural ecology which, he followed in his substantive studies. First, the interrelationship of explorative or productive technology and environment must be analysed. Second, the behaviour patterns involved in the exploitation of a particular area by means of a particular technology must be analysed. The third procedure is to ascertain the extent to which the behaviour patterns entailed in exploiting the environment affect other aspects of culture.

Feminist Approach or Eco-Feminism

'Nature as the feminine principle' is the main slogan of the Eco-Feminist approach. Vandana Shiva, one of the supporters of this approach, is of the view that women produce and reproduce life not merely biologically, but also through their social role in providing sustenance. All ecological societies of forest dwellers and peasants, whose life is organized on the principle of sustainability and the reproduction of life in all its richness, also embody the feminine principle. Historically, however, when such societies have been colonized and broken up, the men have usually started to participate in life-destroying activities or have had to migrate; the women, meanwhile, usually continue to be linked to life and nature through their role as providers of sustenance, food and water. The privileged access of women to the

sustaining principle thus has a historical and cultural, and not merely biological basis.⁴

Maria Mies, another noted eco-feminist thinker has called women's work in producing sustenance the 'production of life' and views it as a truly productive relationship to nature, because women not only collected and consumed what grew in nature but they made things grow. This organic process of growth in which women and nature work in partnership with each other has created a special relationship of women with nature which Mies has summarized in three ways. Firstly, women's interaction with nature, with their own nature as well as the external environment, was a reciprocal process. They conceived of their own bodies as being productive in the same way as they conceived of external nature being so. Secondly, although they appropriate nature their appropriation does not constitute a relationship of dominance or a property relation. And finally, as producers of new life they also became the first subsistence producers and the inventors of the first productive economy, implying from the beginning social production and the creation of social relations, i.e. society and history.

In the eco-feminist argument, therefore, the connection between the domination of women and that of nature is seen basically as ideological, as rooted in a system of ideas and representations, values and beliefs, that places women and the non-human world hierarchically below men. It calls

⁴ Shiva, Vandana (1987) – Ch.6 – Women in Nature in her edited book *staying Alive : Women Ecology & Survival in India* Delhi, Kali for Women.

upon women and men to reconceptulize themselves and their relationship to one another and to the non-human world, in non-hierarchical ways.

Marxist Approach

However different the present day ecological situation may be from what it was in the days of Marx and Engels, their understanding, methods and approach to the solution of the problem of the interaction of society and nature are extra ordinary apt and effective today. It is characteristic of a Marxian analysis of the ecological problem to clarify its links with various aspects of social beings and to turn to matters of great social and humanist importance.⁵

In opposition to 'technocratic optimism' and equally 'Ecological pessimism', Marxism-Leninism maintains a position of rational realism both theoretically and in practice, and concentrates on the scientifically substantiated actions and broad international cooperation of scientists, and international cooperation of countries with different socio-economic systems, to tackle the ecological problem.

The survival urge, the drive for profit are still prevalent in all capitalist enterprises, from small private farms to gigantic industrial complexes. And the survival urge inevitably comes into conflict with the ecological requirements of society and, in some cases, with government policy and its attempts to satisfy these requirements, if only to a certain degree.

⁵ Hayward, Tim – Ecological Thought (19p4).

Analysis of the ecological problem from the standpoint of historical materialism leads us to conclude that to remove the ecological danger, we must abolish private property relations and class antagonisms. For only then will it be possible to apply on a global scale positive technological methods to eliminate antagonistic ecological contradictions. To quote the famous Marxist ecologist, Barry Commoner: -

“In effect..... We now know that modern technology which is privately owned cannot survive long if it destroys the social good on which it depends `the ecosphere`. Hence an economic system which is fundamentally based on private transactions rather than social ones is no longer appropriate and increasingly ineffective in managing this vital social good. The system is therefore, in need of change”.

This should not be taken to mean that socialist countries have solved all their ecological problems, that environment protection is near-perfect, and there are no difficulty of an objective or subjective nature. We have ample of instances – such as Chernobyl disaster in which there was all round damage and destruction. A dialectical approach however calls for a deepening and concretization of the aim of ecological preservation and sustainable development.

Cognitive Ecology or Cognitive Approach

Cognitive ecology is another distinct approach which regards ecology as a study of people’s perception of environment. It seeks to investigate how

people perceive their environment, what meanings they attach to it, what values they see in it and finally how does all this knowledge help people in their behaviour within their ecosystem. According to Frake, the proponent of this approach, "successful strategy for writing productive ethnographies must tap the cognitive world of one's informants..... By discovering what one must know in order to classify plants and other ecological components in Hancince fashion (a people of philippines) and how to behave within their ecosystem. The ethnographer shows that extent to which the ecological considerations in contrast to sociological or cultural ones, enter into a person's decisions of what to do.

Ideas of Environmentalism in The Indian Context

Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee is credited with having published the first constrictive, systematic, theoretical book on 'Social ecology' Mukherjee defined human ecology as a synoptic study of the balance of plant, animal and human communities, which are systems of correlated working parts in the organization of the region. His main ecological thesis is that the 'human regions' form the proper unit for studying human relations because, only within the regional area can one best understand the complex interrelations between culture bearing human groups and the plant, animal, and non-living environments with which they interact Mukherjee considered the idea of region as an intricate network of interrelation as his most important contribution to Social Ecology. The region exhibits a complex pattern of

adaptation between the environmental factors and the plant and animal communities including human societies. He tried to interpret 'regional structures' (organization) and analyze change in this structure, using concepts such as balance, competition, competitive – cooperation, distribution, organization, stratification and succession.⁶

Prof. Mukherjee's Social Ecology is a radical departure from that of the Chicago school. First, he did not overemphasize the spatial aspects of regions. Second, he took account of not only competition, but also cooperation. Third, he did not make the erroneous distinction between social and sub-social aspects of human life. Last, he recognized the important role of culture in man's ecological relation. The Chicago scholars excluded the factor of culture from their conception of ecological relations.

Prof. Mukherjee argues that India's mode of development should aim at maintaining harmony, trying to achieve a balanced relationship between the villages and the cities : the balance between the employers and his employees, the intellectuals and the manuals. He tried to look at the connection between the wide physical aspects and the aspects of human life. Like J.C. Kumarappa, he argues that the mode of production we adopt, should not have adverse impact on nature. He expressed that the concern for environment among human beings should instantly develop. He wanted to raise environmental concern from the level of instinct to the level of ethics.

⁶ Mukherjee, Radhakamal - 'An Ecological Approach to Sociology' in Ramachandra Guha's (ed) Social Ecology (1994) pp. 23

J.C. Kumarappa, a Gandhian Economist propagated the ideas of Gandhi. All his ideas are a strong evidence of the Gandhian insistence on ecology. After thirty years of studying Indian society, Kumarappa gave a model of economic growth. He developed a framework at the centre of planning which is mostly related to agriculture. The idea of a village which we find in the Vedas has been found in his works as a self-sustaining unit. He classified the society into two types – the ‘pack type’ which is characterised by aggressive or violent feature and the ‘herd type’ which is peaceful. The pack type signifies the dominant feature of a ‘wolf’, while the herd type characterises the features of a ‘sheep’. The former relates to man while the later to woman. The pack type is characterized by the factory system of production, a dominant feature of the western industrialised countries, while the herd type is characterized by an agrarian economy, a prominent feature of a third world country like India. The former gives little emphasis on ecology, while in the later’s case, nature is nurtured peacefully.⁷

Kumarappa classified economy into two dominant types: economy of ‘prominence’ which is based on the natural mode of production i.e. agriculture and allied activities, and economy of ‘transience’ which is based on the industrial mode of production. Kumarappa is a strong promoter of the ecology of sufficiency. His model of development is mainly village based.

He is a promoter of agrarian economy as well as sharp critique of industrialization. According to him, agriculture is the best mode of production

⁷ Kumarappa, J. C. – Ecology & Equity.

because it is least violent to the nature.' The ideas of Kumarappa have sharp ecological sensibilities which are very useful for environment and social planning.⁸

Verrier Elwin, an English man came to India as a Christian missionary, and later was influenced by the teachings of M.K. Gandhi. Being converted into Buddhism, he became a Gandhian worker. He was very much interested in studying the tribals of India. Some of his writings reflect a very deep ecological understanding. In his works, 'The Aborigines' & 'The Agaria' he highlighted the ecological wisdom as well as the effect of the British colonial policy on the forests. The 'Baigas' were basically a group of tribals associated with the shifting cultivation. In the 1940's when Elwin visited there, those people were subject to British laws, which banned shifting cultivation and made the forests as protected. Due to this, the very survival of the tribals was impaired as they considered the shifting cultivation to be ordained by the Goddess Earth. Elwin looked at the forest not as world out there but a living above, a natural and social entity. He was against the scientific orthodoxy of the Britishers, and came out heavily against the British laws. An important contribution of verrier Elwin to Ecological perspective is that, he brought a sharp contrast between the civilized man and the primitive man. While the former always fight with ecology, the later always try to enrich it:

⁸ Kumarappa, J. C. – Gandhian Ecology & other Essays.

CHAPTER – I I

In the process of civilization, two types of human community developed. The first type includes those who regard the forest as non-habitable and their relationship to the forest is marginal. The second type includes those who live in the forest in a more or less symbiotic relationship to the forests and subsist on the use of forest produces. This second type of people are the tribal people who live amidst hills and forests since time immemorial. The constitution of India designates them as the Scheduled Tribes or STs.

The imperial Gazeteer of India defines a tribe as "a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so".

Oxford Dictionary defines tribe as "a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a Chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor".

According to D.N. Majumdar,¹ a tribe is a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous, with no specialization of functions, ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect, recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes, without any social obloquy attaching to them, as it does in the caste structure, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas from alien sources, above all conscious of homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration.

¹ Majumdar, D.N. (1994a) The Fortunes of Primitive Tribes, Universal Publications-Lucknow.

Nadeem 'Hasnain² has given a fine picture of the tribal society in an ideal manner as well as actual. He says, ideally, tribal societies are small in scale, are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations, and possess a morality, a religion, and world-view of corresponding dimensions. Characteristically too, tribal languages are unwritten, and hence, the extent of communication both in time and space is inevitably narrow. At the same time, tribal societies exhibit a remarkable economy of design and have a compactness and self-sufficiency lacking in modern society.

According to the 1991 census, the Scheduled Tribes account for 67.76 million or 8.08 per cent of the country's total population. Of these, 1.32 million (1.95%) are primitive tribes. The STs too, have shown a decadal growth rate of 3.12 per cent during the period 1981-91. The actual increase in the percentage of ST population was from 7.53 in 1981 to 8.08 in 1991. The ST's inhabit in all the states except Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry. The highest concentration of ST population is found in the north-eastern states of Mizoram (94.75%), Nagaland (87.70%) Meghalay (85.53%) and Arunanchal Pradesh (63.66%) and in the UTs of Lakshadweep (93.15%) and Dadra and Nagar Haveli (78.99%), while there are high concentrations in the states of Madhya Pradesh (23.27%), Orissa (22.21%), Gujarat (14.92%) Maharashtra (9.27%) and Bihar (7.66%) of the total tribal population of the

² Hasnain, Nadeem (1991) – Tribal India, Palaka Prakashan, Delhi, Chapter –1.

country, a little more than three fifths are found in above-mentioned five states.³

Dr. Verrier Elwin (1994) in his famous book, "The Aboriginals" classified the tribal population into four classes which are given below: -

1. Wilder aboriginals who are still in the most primitive stage, shy to strangers, all represented by Hill Maria, Juang, Gadaba, Bondo, etc.
2. Aboriginals attached to solitude and to ancient traditions, performing axe-cultivation represented by Bison Hill Maria and Baigas, etc.
3. Aboriginals having external contact which impaired their tribal culture and social organization represented by Hos, etc.
4. The aristocratic tribals represented by Bhil, Naga Chieftains, Raj Gonds and Korcu noblemen and wealthy Munda, Santal, Oraon and Khasi Leaders, who are highly cultured and live in modern style.⁴

Social Organisation of Indian Tribes

The social life of the tribal people involves methods of grouping and grading people for the effective carrying out of the various activities for common existence by sharing in common activities under the bonds of kinship

³ Social Sector (vol – II) of the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2001) p-335.

⁴ Bhowmick, P.K. (1980) – Indian Anthropology (Chapter 1) Samaj Sevak Sangh Press, Calcutta.

and community. They have their own structure and organization. As the tribals form a small community of their own in a particular territory their relations are direct and intimate. Their structure may be seen in their social design.

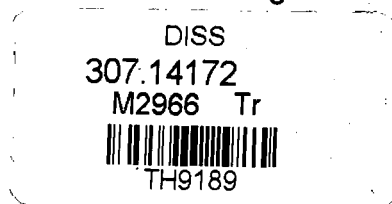
According to P.K. Bhowmick,⁵ most of the tribal societies are based on patrilineal principles, in which descent is patrilineal, inheritance follows the male line, authority is vested in the hands of male persons, succession to office is confined to male and residence is patrilocal, i.e. after marriage, the wife is brought to her husband's place and she stays there. The matrilineal tribes are also not rare. The typical example of this are the Khasis and Garo of Meghalaya and Rabhas of Assam observed many features of the Matrilineal Society. In many tribal societies, specially among the Aimols, or the Gonds, we find the existence of a dual organization, and their societies are divided into two exogamous halves, known as moieties. One of these groups is sometimes regarded as superior, while the other is considered as inferior. Amongst the tribals, the moiety is again divided into the phatries and each phatry into two clans. The moiety, phatry or the clans play quite an important role in regulating marriage in the tribal societies. Amongst some tribes, we also find that their clan is divided into a few lineages and these again into a number of families. These families, clans, moieties are the social units.

Of all important social institutions, marriage is the most important aspect and more or less, universal, though we sometimes find variations like

⁵ *ibid.*

celibacy. Some Ho women are found to be unmarried due to various socio-economic factors. However, the rules of exogamy and endogamy are considered to be the laws of marriage, which are prevalent in many tribal societies. Most of the clans of the tribals are exogamous in nature as the clan members consider themselves as brothers and sisters. So marriage is forbidden among them. Among the tribes of India, we find polygyny, polyandry, levirate, sororate forms of marriage. Polygyny is a form of marriage in which a man marries more than one women. Polyandry is the opposition of Polygyny. In the levirate form of marriage, the man marries the wife of his deceased brother. Sororate is the opposition of levirate. We also find various other forms like marriage by capture, marriage by intrusion, by service, by elopement etc among the tribals. A good many tribal communities are monogamous though polygamy is not uncommon among them.

Tribal Economy



It is an undeniable fact that economic conditions with their ecological setting determine the culture of a particular group of people. Gradual changes in economic pursuits bring corresponding changes in the social system and allow the people to interact at varied degrees in the social and economic sphere. By analyzing the nature of the habitats of the present day so-called primitive people, we can say that a vast number of these people cling to their old forest economy by utilizing various kinds of edible roots and tubers, leaves, honey and wild games.

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Agriculture in different ways is practiced by 90% of the total tribal population of our country. When people do not find any other employment they revert to the land for any sort of production. The important crops that they raise consist of paddy and millets, which they produce in the very primitive way of broadcasting. Transplantation is practiced only in rare cases. Thus in the hill slopes we find terrace cultivation and in many forest the slash and burn type of cultivation or shifting hill cultivation are practiced by the tribals.

Majumdar and Madan⁶ have found nine important traits of a primitive economy as noticed in the tribal India and elsewhere. They are given below: -

1. There is an absence of technological aids in a tribal economy which results in inefficient, inadequate or even wasteful exploitation of nature. An economic surplus is rare in their community.
2. The economic relations among the tribals themselves are mostly based on barter and exchange.
3. The profit motive in economic dealings is generally absent.
4. Cooperative and collective endeavour is a strongly developed feature of their economy.
5. The rate of innovation, internal or induced, is very low and consequently they are stabler and make hardly any progress.
6. The regular market as an institution along with its conditions of market like perfect competition and monopoly is absent.

⁶ Majumdar, D.N. & Madan, T.N. (1985) – “An Introduction to Social Anthropology” (Ch 16, pp-207-217).

7. The manufacture of consumer rather than capital goods is common and the same are consumed nothing being saved or exchanged in trade.
8. Specialization base on specially acquired specific technical abilities is absent.
9. The notion of property is closely related to display and expenditure of wealth rather than to its accumulation.

Tribal Ecology

Forests, lakes hills, streams, wildlife, flora and fauna, rivers etc constitute what we call as the tribal ecology or tribal eco-system. Forests constitute the life-supporting system of the tribal as it plays the most important part in the tribal life. That is why forest and tribe are said to be the two sides of the same coin. One is insignificant without the other. Because of this, tribals are called as 'forest dwellers' or "Vanavasi". For centuries, forests have ensured a steady supply of food, fuel, fodder and other requirements of the tribals. They have always considered the forests as a renewable resource. From an ecological point of view, forests act as the 'safety valve' for the tribals providing them the basic requirements for a healthy life which we find wanting in the mainstream society.

Forest provides the tribals with fuel to keep warm in winter, and shady leaves of the trees to protect them from the scorching rays of the sun in summer. As many of their psycho-emotional or religious questions are solved

from the forest, we find a good many of their gods and goddesses have their abode in the forests and they are linked closely with the forest. Even in the deforested areas, tribal groups are found to keep a few virgin trees uncut and consider these as the sacred groves of their deities. Thus forest plays an important role in the life of the tribals. This forest environment was undoubtedly preferred and enjoyed by the tribals from the hoary part. But various changes in the forest policies of the government, from time to time, displaced the tribals from their traditional groves, and in course of time, brought about a total disruption of their societies.

Forests play an important role in maintaining the quality of the environment. The role of forest in conservation of the bio-sphere is well recognized. They constitute the largest, most complex and most perpetuating of eco-systems. It is in the forests that the natural regulatory processes excel, producing the most stable eco-systems. In view of the fact that forests are a vital element of environment and, there are intricate mutual interaction between them and the environment, the planning and management of the forests reflect the concern for maintaining and improving the quality of environment.

The forest area in the country is 74.74 million hectares covering 22.7 per cent of the total land area. In contrast to this, the National Forest Policy of 1952 has laid down 33.3 per cent of the land area as the minimum limit for maintenance of the eco-system. Of late, stocking of forests has gone down appreciably, and it is estimated that only 10 per cent of the country's area if

having thick forest, capable of performing protective, productive and other ecological functions. Grooves of timber trees and other types of forest have rapidly disappeared due to demographic and commercial pressure.

According to the Ninth Five Year Plan,⁷ the national goal will be to have a minimum of 33 per cent of the total land area of the country under forest cover. If for some unavoidable reasons, any state cannot achieve this norm, the forest cover should not be less than 20 per cent of the total land area in the state and those districts which have less than 1 per cent of the geographical area under forest should achieve 2 per cent during the Ninth Plan period. In the hilly regions, the aim will be to maintain at least 60 per cent of the land area under tree cover.

During the past few decades after independence the tribal areas have been exposed to outside contacts with the rapid implementation of development plans and programmes. The construction of dams, establishment of mining projects, protecting forest areas and wildlife sanctuaries are some of the activities undertaken by the government which give rise to a large number of problems affecting the tribals and their ecosystem. In order to be more clear, we have to understand the concept of development, its perspectives and tribal development.

⁷ The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2001) Social Sector Vol-II.

What is Development?

The dictionary meaning of the word 'develop' is to expand or to bring out the potentialities, capabilities or to cause to come to completeness or perfection, and 'development', gradual evolution or completion and the result of such an evolution or completion. At the most general level, development means the achievement of economic and social progress by transforming conditions of underdevelopment such as low productivity, stagnation, poverty in countries popularly known as poor, underdeveloped or less developed.

Gunnar Myrdal in his famous 'Asian Drama' has defined development as a movement upward of a whose system of interdependent conditions as a complex process in which economic growth is only one of the several categories of causally relevant conditions.

Ronald H. Chilcote⁸ refers to development as modernization. He says, traditionally, development was measured in terms of per capita income and other criteria that would distinguish advanced industrial nations from backward and less developed nations. He finds development both in the capitalist as well as socialist countries but in varied forms.

According to Samuel T. Huntington,⁹ development is the 'institutionalization' of political organizations and procedures. It consists of four important elements such as: - (i) Adaptability i.e. a long and regular chain of leadership adapting to new challenges, (ii) Complexity i.e. existence of a

⁸ Chilcote, Ronald H. (1994) 'Theories of Comparative Politics'. Westview Press, pp-214-220.

⁹ Huntington, Samuel T., - "Political Development and Political Decay". World Politics, vol. 17, p-393.

large number of institutions, each carrying its responsibility without hindrance from others, (iii) Autonomy i.e. independence and full control over a clearly defined jurisdiction, (iv) Coherence i.e. a degree of consensus and internal unity prevailing in the system.

Models of Development

As we have seen above, development in the contemporary context is a minimum socio-economic, political and technological progress which can ensure the fulfillment of basic human needs of food, clothing and shelter and better human existence through universal education, civil liberties, equality and justice. Of the many ways in which socio-economic development could be achieved, R. C. Vermani¹⁰ has given three important models of development such as market model, welfare model and socialist model. In addition, he has also discussed the Gandhian model of development. All these model have been briefly discussed below: –

Market Model

The classical- liberal view of development considers market as central to development. It believes that market economy ideally optimizes economic welfare as well as development. At political level, the market model of development is based upon individual rights, liberty, legal- political equality and liberal democracy. Adam Smith in his famous “Wealth of Nations” has

¹⁰ Vermani, R.C. (1996) – “An Introduction to Political Theory”. Gitanjali Publishing House, Delhi, pp-434-469.

propounded this model equated with minimum state intervention. The market model has important characteristics like consumer sovereignty, efficiency in production, technological innovations, equity in income distribution, full employment, etc.

Welfare Model

The welfare model of development assigned a positive role to the state to act as the guardian of the common interest of the society as a whole so that the fruits of development could reach to each and every members of the society. J. M. Keynes is said to be the propounder of this model. He holds that the state can reshape the economy in such a manner that a minimum level of social living is created for all citizens irrespective of their status and class position in the society. At political level, he believes that only a democratic state can perform the task of development. It is on this ground that the welfare model rejected the Marxist model of development as developed in Russia and China.

Socialist Model

Socialism from Saint Simon to Marx associated the concept of development with that of a particularized class interest and thus introduced an ideological note to development. Socialism viewed development as a social question, a securer question and a specific interest laden problem. Marx's

was the first system of social science framed primarily in terms of developmental models since it related development to social interest.

The socialist system of development is based upon the public ownership of the means of production and centralization of all sectors of economy. All economic decision are made by a central authority. The most important element of a socialist economy was planning. Planning was successful in building the foundations of industrial development. At political level, this planed and command economy was manipulated by a strong one party-system dictating all interest articulation. According to Galbriath, while the socialist system was able to attain its initial goals, it could not adapt to new challenges and requirements placed upon it.

Gandhian Model

The Gandhian view of development is radically different from the western model of development. It was based upon his meta-physical idealism with emphasis on the supremacy of ethical values and a moral approach to the problem of development. It was a plan of political, social and moral reconstruction and a critique of the western model of development based essentially upon industrialization. Gandhi made a distinction between economic development and real development. He talked of "Social Equilibrium", which is at par with a poor country heading towards a balanced development.

Tribal Development

C. B. Tripathi¹¹ in an article has highlighted the approach known as 'Tribal Panchsheel' enunciated by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India. Pandit Nehru viewed that the avenues of tribal development should be pursued within the broad framework of the following five fundamental principles –

1. People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them.
2. Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected.
3. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development.
4. We should not over - administer these areas or over-whelm with a multiplicity of schemes.
5. We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

C. B. Tripathi on the basis of Nehruvian approach, has termed tribal society as egalitarian and democratic. Development in tribal areas should be so guided that deprivation processes do not set in.

Jagannath Pathy¹² has developed the concept of 'Self- Management' of the tribal in the process of development. He advocated the principles to

¹¹ Tripathi, C.B. (1997) – "Approaches to Tribal Development and Experience" in "Tribes & Government Policies" (ed) by Bhandari, J.S. and Channa, S.N., pp-111-138.

¹² Pathy, Jagannath (1998) – "tribal Self-Management and Global Politico-Cultural Development" in Bhupinder Singh (ed) – "Antiquity to Modernity on Tribal India" (vol. II), ICSSR, pp-305-338.

rediscover, defend and promote management practices and knowledge systems of the tribal people which have been developed and repeatedly formed over centuries of trial and error for the sustainable management of natural resources in consonance with their economy and culture.

The sustainability of customary tribal self- management mechanism is being increasingly threatened or made ineffective by exogenous pressures like state intervention, market economy, technological expansion etc. The growing emphasis on integration into the national and global economy, contact with alien and dominant cultures have modified and transformed the approach to development in the tribal areas. The exploitative nature of the interests and values of the dominant classes, and the so called development agencies have given little alternative for the tribals but to gradually abandon their customary management practices.

Pathy expresses the view that the people should not be denied the freedom to choose their own path of development. They should be given opportunity to have the recognition of the their own political institutions and cultures to manage their resources his should be the key to tribal development.

What the government's response to the problems of the tribals will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER –III

Colonial Policies

The political system of tribal India was based on the concept of direct rule. Unlike Africa, which adopted the system of indirect rule, namely, rule through the traditional chief in many territories, a large part of the tribal region and most of the tribal population were integrated within the administration of the provinces of British India or within that of the Indian states where the British Resident kept a watch on the tribal situation and, in some cases, even acted as the agent for the tribal regions. However, there were areas of tribal concentration which were enclaved to 'reclaim to civilization' the tribal who had often rebelled or were difficult to pacify. It was in these enclaves that the concept of protection of the tribes as an ethnic community developed in stages. Its main features were: -

- (a) the paternalistic rule of the district officers – the tribes needed a government by men and not by a system;
- (b) keeping tribal areas out of the operation of the regulations, laws, etc., which were alien to tribal ethos and undermined it;
- (c) laying down a set of simple rules to settle disputes, restriction of the jurisdiction of the courts which enforced normal laws, and exclusion of lawyers from courts;
- (d) special agrarian laws;
- (e) regulation of the entry of the aliens into tribal areas; and
- (f) strengthening tribal institutions and traditional leadership.¹

¹ Singh, K.S. (1985) – "Tribal Society in India" pp – 1-23, Chapter one.

The Agency System established with the objective of quelling rebellions was the earliest mode of protective administration. One agency was set up to pacify the Bhils (1825), another in Chotanagpur, the South-West Frontier Agency (1835), a third in the Meriah tract (1839-65) to abolish the practice of human sacrifice, and the fourth one in Ganjam (1839), which has survived longest. The first three were wound up as soon as the objective for which they were formed was achieved. The Agency settled tribes, opened up the tribal world, laid lines of communication, established chattries along highways to supply the army which brought in merchants, traders and peddlers and which developed into markets later, and set up cantonments and centres of administration and trade. The pace of urbanization gradually went up. With the establishment of regular administration the pace of the colonization of the tribal regions, which had begun in the medieval period, was accelerated.

Thus the colonial system ended the relative isolation of the tribal society; brought it into the mainstream of the new administrative set-up, policy and programmes; put an end to the political dominance of the tribes in the region; and roped the tribal communities which had been spared the strain of surplus generation into a new system of production relations. The colonial system as elsewhere, followed the dual policy of strengthening the feudal crust of the tribal society, formed by the rajas, Chief and Zamindars and

simultaneously creating conditions in which their economy and political system were undermined by the rampaging market forces.²

The principle that the normal laws should not automatically apply to tribal areas underlay the passage of the scheduled Districts Act (1874) and the concept of the backward areas in the Government of India Act of 1919. Whether or not this principle should continue to be applied was a matter that figured in a most lively debate in the early 1930s. While one school contended that the aborigines formed a distinct element and should be placed in charge of the British Government, the nationalists saw in this proposition the continuation of the imperial policy of divide and rule.

The most striking feature of this period was the breakdown of the communal mode of production and the emergence of private right in land. The first was generally related to the technology of hunting and food-gathering, the slash-and-burn cultivation, which were, again, associated with the system of communal ownership/control of land and use of collective labour. To facilitate commercial exploitation of forest shifting cultivation was forbidden in many areas. The pressure of population increased and the carrying capacity of land diminished. The peasantry coming up from the plains introduced, the concept of agricultural season and new crops, implements and practices related to both wet and dry land farming. The tribes had already taken to terrace and wet cultivation, and developed an excellent indigenous technology suited for them on both communal and private family land. The new technology helped

² Ibid.

them to extend cultivation. Thus they were transformed from the reclaimers of land into peasant cultivators, largely living off the land. Multi-caste and multi-ethnic village settlements came into existence underlining the cooperation among peasant and artisans and other functional castes in the process of production. The transition from tribal to peasant system was however neither uniform nor complete. Dependence on forests as a source of food, shelter and occupation was still crucial in many ways. By and large, all major tribes in the nineteenth century were emerging as a community of peasants while the minor tribes still depended on the forest.

Conflicts in tribal and forest development may arise out of the contention and apprehension that tribal development is opposed to forest development and vice versa. Conflict is not an action but always a reaction caused by the interactions of the two parties involved in the conflict. Tribals are original settlers of forests. Major tribes may not live now in deep forest due to technological breakthrough and awareness including the political will to rule others. Going back to the colonial period, the tribals were first convinced by the British rulers about the good-will of the government for their development and were later exploited by the policies made by them. So the colonial forest policies were responsible for evicting the tribals of their natural rights over land and forests.³

The British government was inclined to leave the tribals alone. Attention was only given to them when on account of various grievances they

³ Patel, M.L. (1994) – "Development Dualism of Primitive Tribes" Prents India, New Delhi, pp – 103-121, Chapter-6.

rose in revolt and created a law and order problem. The first reaction was to crush the rebellion and to establish peace and then to look into the grievances of the tribals and remedy them to the extent possible. The policy of leaving them alone could also be attributed to fact that the task of administration in the hills and forests in which the tribals lived was difficult and unrewarding. From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, throughout the country, the struggle for independence was building up and it was necessary to keep the tribals away from it. Besides these reasons, a number of administrative officers sincerely held the view that the tribal people did not need any intervention and were better off and happier as they were. Such an attitude was not specifically basic and was not shared by all the colonial administrators. This view was probably inspired by Rousseau's image of noble savage. There was a feeling that contact with civilization has, the world over, impaired the fine qualities of the tribals.

Such a view may be characterized as the paternalistic view in which the ruler considers himself as the parent or the guardian of the community. The community itself is regarded as so underdeveloped that it does not know its own ailments and maladies. It is left to the parent or guardian to take adequate care about the health and well being of the ward. Such an attitude is not new since it finds a mention in the Dhauli Rock edict of Emperor Ashok. It goes without saying that chastisement or punishment of the community is very well within the purview of the rules as it is in the overall interest of the people. Since the tribal communities were less developed than other communities, the

administrative system of the later would not suit the interest of the former. It is for this reason that tribal areas were converted into non-regulated areas where they were either left alone with their traditional rulers or village headmen under indirect rule or put in charge of rulers with extensive powers so as to enable them to look after tribal interests in a better way.

The policy of isolation was, however, never followed uniformly. The tribals were exploited by landlords and money-lenders and cheated by merchants. There was no check on these elements entering the tribal areas. Social workers were forbidden to work among them, while foreign missionaries were given all facilities and even encouraged in their efforts. The belief in the happy, care free, noble savage was a myth. In many parts of tribal India, people did not have enough food. They suffered from serious diseases and mortality was high and their life was distracted by internecine feuds, conflicts, slavery, etc. and more importantly the colonial government was reluctant to give an eye to their overall development, rather was determined to evict them of their life and ecology (forests) by implementing exploitative policies.⁴

The First Forest Act of 1865

This Act was the first attempt in the direction of regulation of collection of forest produce by the forest dwellers. In the process, the socially regulated practices of the tribals were restrained by law. This was the first Act to reveal

⁴ Bhandari, J.S. & Channa, Subhadra Mitra (1997) – “Tribes & Government Policies”, Cosmos Publications, pp – 51-71, Chapter-3.

the exploitative nature of the colonial policies towards the tribals where the forests, earlier regarded as the natural sustenance of the tribal people became commercialized. The colonial government began to share the rights of the tribal and became the sole owner of the forests of which the tribals were regarded as its mere watchmen.

The Forest Act of 1878

This was the second step in the direction of future extension of state's authority over forests. The control over forests was further tightened by prohibiting certain acts such as trespass or pasturing of cattle and declaring certain activities as forest offences. Imprisonment and fines were also prescribed for these offences. It was a direct attack on the freedom of the tribals to collect forest produce which began to affect their life as well as the ecology to a great extent.

The First Forest Policy 1894

The first Forest Policy envisaged, for the first time, the regulation of rights and restriction of privileges of the users in the forests. This policy was formulated after a prolonged phase of experiments. It was at this stage, that Government of India invited Dr. Voelker, a German expert, to examine the condition of Indian agriculture and to suggest how it could be improved. In his report, submitted in 1893, Dr. Voelcker discussed the role of forests vis-à-vis agriculture and stressed the need for formulating a forest policy with a definite

bias for serving agricultural interests more directly than before. Accordingly, the government issued a resolution, dated 19 October 1894, declaring their policy. This statement of the forest policy of India later served as a model for drawing the forest policies of various countries of the erstwhile British Empire, and other countries where management of forests on scientific lines was initiated. The basic principles enunciated in this policy were: -

- (i) The sole object with which state forests are administered is public benefit. In general the constitution and preservation of a forest involve the regulation of rights and the restriction of privileges of the user of the forest by the neighbouring population;
- (ii) Forest situated on hill slopes should be maintained as protection forests to preserve the climate and physical conditions of the country, and to protect the cultivated plains that lie below them from the devastating action of hill torrents;
- (iii) Forests which are the store-house of valuable timbers should be managed on commercial lines as a source of revenue to the state;
- (iv) Ordinarily, if a demand for agricultural land arises and can be met from a forest alone, it should be conceded without hesitation subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) honeycombing of a valuable forest by patches of cultivation should not be allowed;

- (b) cultivation must be permanent and must not be allowed to extend so as to encroach upon the minimum area of forest that is needed to meet the reasonable forest requirements present and prospective;
- (v) Forest that yield only inferior timber, fuel wood or fodder, or are used for grazing, should be managed mainly in the interest of the local population, care being taken to see that the user does not annihilate its subject and people are protected against their own improvidence.

Ordinarily, only the protection and commercial forest were declared 'reserved' and the existing rights in them either settled transferred, or commuted; the other forests were declared 'protected' and rights over them, which were extensive, were recorded and regulated. As regards government, the chief difference was that new rights could not spring up in the reserved forests though could in the protected forests, and whereas the record of rights of the former was conclusive that in the latter only carried a presumption of truth. From the people's point of view, in a reserved forest every act not specifically permitted was an offence while in a protected forests nothing was an offence that was not prohibited.⁵

⁵ Sagreiya, K.P. (1967) – "Forests & Forestry", NBT, India, pp – 10-14.

The Indian Forest Act 1927

In continuation of the measures already taken, this act was an attempt to regulate further people's rights over forest land and forest produce. Through this Act, elaborate provisions were made in direction of further extension of states' authority and control over the forests. Forest offences were defined as offences punishable under the Act. This Act created an extremely powerful and adequately protected executive consisting of Forest Officers of Indian Forest Service, State Forest Service, Rangers, Foresters and Forest guards. This Act gave powers to the executive to have rules which were not necessarily permanent in nature. These officers enjoyed legal powers. For example Section 64 of Indian Forest Act states that any Forest officer without a warrant could arrest any person against whom a 'reasonable' suspicion exists of his motive to pilferage or forest wealth and his act was punishable with imprisonment for one month or upwards. Section 68 deals with power to compound the offences while Section 70 deals with power to seize and impound the cattle of the offender under cattle Trespass Act 1871.

Such provisions, as stated above, made even some of the lower level officials of forest department like Rangers and Forest Guards very strong. Since it is these officials who regularly come in contact with the forest dwellers, they used their powers arbitrarily and played havoc with the lives of the tribal people. The survey of their interaction with the tribals is replete with the instances in which these officials claimed indemnity for acts done in good faith according to Section 74 and got away. It further states that no suit shall

be against a public servant for acts done in good faith and that all forest officials are deemed public servants. In 1935 Forest was transferred to the state list according to the Government of India Act 1935.

After a brief analysis of the fate of the forests as well as the tribals during the colonial period we will jump into the post-colonial period. Before doing that, an assessment has to be done about the colonial situation. Though from an ecological point of view, forests were preserved or protected by the colonial rulers but the rights and lives of the tribals living in it were at stake. They were denied their basic rights of subsistence and sustenance by the restrictive policies.

Post-Colonial Period – The Continuance of Alienation

The post colonial period set a system of deliberate planning and programmes for the development of the tribals as well as for the preservation and protection of the hilly and forest areas. But in practice, we see the continuance of the alienation of the tribals from their basic rights as well as the destruction of the forests for dams, mining projects, etc. As a result of every programmes of the Government of India, the innocent tribals are always at the receiving end.

The National Forest Policy, 1952

After independence, adopting of a new outlook became necessary to reconsider the policy of administration of forests once more to prevent

indiscriminate use of forests by the tribal folk. Accordingly, the new policy of 1952 was introduced effecting greater restrictions as below:

“Village communities in the neighbourhood of a forest will naturally make greater use of its products for the satisfaction of their domestic and agricultural needs. Such use, however, should in no event be permitted at the cost of national interest.... Therefore the needs of the tribal population must be met to a reasonable extent, national interests should not be sacrificed because they are not directly discernible, nor should the rights and interests of future generations be subordinated to the improvidence of the present generation”.⁶

The National Forest Policy of 1952 belied all hopes of a just and generous treatment of the tribal people. It followed, by and large, the limes of the British administration where the tribals had virtually no statutory right but enjoyed only certain concessions/privileges such as right to take water for agricultural purposes, digging of wells and canals for agricultural purposes, free grazing in open forests, removal of timber, bamboos, reeds, canes, etc for construction and repair of houses and for agricultural implements, collection of dead wood for domestic use as fuel, collection of grass for cattle and for thatching their huts, fishing and hunting excluding the protected fauna and cultivation of forest land.

The President of India under the Article 339 of the constitution of India appointed a commission in 1960 under the Chairmanship of late UN Dhebar,

⁶ Vidyarthi, L.P. (1979) – “Tribal Development & Its Administration” (ed) Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp – 29-40, Chapter-33.

popularly known as Dhebar Commission. In its comprehensive analysis it also studied the forest policy vis-à-vis the tribals. The commission noted that the tribals who hitherto treated himself as the lord of the forest was made subservient to the forest department. The traditional rights of the tribals were no longer recognized as right. "In 1894, they became rights and privileges and in 1952 they became rights and concessions. Now they are being considered as concessions only".⁷

The Recommendations of NCA – 1976 and Tribal Rights

The commission recommended a drastic reduction in the people's rights over forests and forest produce. It was stated that the free supply of the forest produce to the local people and their rights and privileges have brought destruction to the forest so it is necessary to reverse the process. The local people have not contributed much towards the maintenance or regulation of the forests. The commission recommended strengthening of the forest legislation by the enactment of a revised All India Forest Act. The recommendations of the Commission were rejected by the Forest Ministers Conference in 1982. In 1976 the Forests subject was brought in to the Concurrent List through the constitution 42nd amendment empowering the centre to make laws. Consequently, the Forest Conservation ordinance was promulgated in October 1980. Later, it was passed by the parliament and became an act.

⁷ Hasnain, Nadeem (1996) – "Tribal India" Palaka Prakashan, New Delhi, pp – 217-222, Chapter-14.

B.K Roy Burman Committee on Forest and Tribals

The Ministry of Home Affairs under the chairmanship of Prof. B.K. Roy Burman, an eminent anthropologist appointed a committee in 1980 to re-orient the forest policy to serve the tribal economy. The committee submitted its report in 1982. It emphasised the importance of forests in tribal life. Besides getting free fuel, and wood for house construction the tribals also earn one third of their income from the sale of the minor Forest Produce.

The committee noted that the forest operations, by and large, are the revenue earners for the Government the tribal economy has figured little among the parameters of the forest policy and, at best, the tribals continue to be the wage earners. The committee pointed out that the benefits should flow to the tribal people through the imaginative forestry programmes and conservation and recognition of their traditional skills. In other words, the individual tribal, the local tribal community and the national interest should be regarded as three corners of a triangular forest policy. Forest policy must fulfill three sets of needs. These are: -

- (a) ecological Security;
- (b) food, fruit; and
- (c) fuel, fodder and other domestic needs.

The committee also recommended that wherever the community rights exist on the forest land they should be recognized and adapted to serve the

urgent needs of the soil and water management and reafforestation of tracts by suitable species.

The Committee For Review of Rights & Concession –1980

The Ministry of Agriculture constituted a committee to review the rights and concession of the tribals under the chairmanship of Shri M. S. Choudhary, the former chief secretary of Madhya Pradesh in 1961. All other members of the committee were the former forest officials.

The committee observed that the concession and privileges granted to the tribals in respect of fuel wood, timber, grazing etc were confined only to the villages in and around the periphery of forest areas and generally only in respect of non- reserved forests. The rights privileges and concession in areas not under the British rule were mostly undefined. The commission recommended that the exercise of rights and concession should be restricted only to those tribals and other rural people residing within the distance of 8 km from the existing forests.

The committee also recommended that the beneficiaries should not enter the forest to remove the forest produce and that the supplies should be made available through the departmental depots opened outside the forest for this purpose. It also recommended that the barter or the sale of the produce obtained through such concession should be stopped. The committee further stated that the total quantum of rights and concession be restricted to what the forests can bear. The committee also recommended that the grazing of

cattle in the forests should be severely restricted to the carrying capacity of the forest.

New National Forest Policy –1980 and The Tribal Rights

It states that the principal aim of the forest policy must be to ensure environment stability and the maintenance of ecological balance including atmospheric equilibrium, which are vital to the substance of all life forms- human, animal and plant. The derivation of the economic benefit must be subordinated to the principal aim.

One of the striving features of the new forest policy is its reference to the relationship of the tribal communities with the forests. It states that having regard to the symbiotic relationship between the tribal people and the forest, a primary task for all the agencies responsible for the forest management including the forest corporation should be to associate the tribal closely in the protection, regeneration and development of the forest as well as to provide gainful employment to the people living in and around the forest. While safeguarding the customary and interests of such people the forestry programmes should pay special attention to the following: -

1. To reduce the illegal cutting and for the exploitation of the forest the contractors should be replaced by the forest corporations, labour corporation, labour cooperatives and tribal cooperatives.

2. Special attention should be paid to the protection, regeneration and optimum collection of the minor forest produce along with institutional arrangement for its marketing.
3. Family oriented schemes for improving the status of the tribal beneficiaries.
4. Integrated area development programmes to meet the needs of the tribal economy in and around the forest areas.

As for the rights and concession enjoyed by the tribals the new forest policy categorically stated that the rights and concession enjoyed by them should be fully protected. Their domestic requirements fuel wood fodder minor forest produce and construction of timber should be allowed to be fulfilled through forest produce. This is the most welcome feature since it emphasises the needs of the forest dwellers for the first time since the forest administration began in India.

Forest Conservation Act 1980 vs Forest Policy, 1988

Recently the central Government has brought some amendments in the Forest Conservation Act 1980 which are almost in contravention with the National Forest Policy of 1988.

Under these amendments the state government cannot, without previous sanction of the centre, assign by way of lease or otherwise any forest land as any portion thereof any person or to any authority, corporation agency or any other organization not owned, controlled or managed by the

Government. This goes against the provisions of the forest policy resolution that wherever possible, degraded lands should be made available for tree farming on either lease or on the basis of a "tree patta scheme ". The provision in the amendment specifically disallows the lease to any non-government agency except with the prior approval of the central Government. This restricts the giving of degraded land to the tribal cooperatives and organizations for the purpose of afforestation.

Another amendment in the forest conservation act is the offering of the explanation regarding the non-forest purpose. This explanation is very restrictive. The forest department cannot allow the use of forest land by the individuals or organizations even for horticultural crops or medicine plants. The provisions cover all forest lands including degraded lands. These provision are bound to raise hostilities amongst the tribals and the Government. The recently appointed committee by the Prime Minister and the parliament should pass the revised comprehensive forest act in tune with the National Forest Policy resolution.

The Tribal Sub-plan (TSP)

According to Bhupinder Singh,⁸ the seeds of the strategy of the Tribal Sub-plan (TSP) were sown in the report of the Scheduled Area and Scheduled Tribes commission (popularly known as the Dhebar Commission), 1960-61. Keeping in view of the strategy for integrated development of the

⁸ Singh, Bhupinder – The Tribal Sub-Plan: A Critique in "Antiquity to Modernity in Tribal India" (vol. 1) Ed by S.C. Dube, ICSSR 1998, pp – 142-185.

tribals, the government of India launched the TSP in the Fifth Plan Period, 1974-1979. The TSP purports to be a plan within a state plan and each department in a state government and each ministry/department in the union government has a responsibility for making a financial contribution to the TSP.

The major features of the TSP have been the following-

1. Identification of blocks or tahsils and their aggregation into integrated tribal development projects (ITDPs) or integrated tribal development agencies (ITDAs).
2. Quantification and earmarking of funds for the TSP and ITDPs from state plans, Central sector schemes, centrally sponsored schemes and institutional finance, etc.
3. Formulation of project reports in tune with the needs and aspirations of the tribal communities as well as local natural resource endowment, assigning a well- defined participative role to the members of the community.
4. Creation of apt physical and administrative infrastructure for execution of policies, plans, programmes, schemes, etc.

So far 193 ITDPs have been set up in 18 states and 2 union territories covering 26 districts fully and 100 districts partly and 640 development blocks fully and 318 blocks partly. The ITDPs cover about 60 per cent of the total ST population in these states and union territories. If we take into account this coverage as well as the coverage of the 249 MADA and cluster pockets in the

20 administrative units, nearly 70 per cent of the total ST population therein is taken care of.⁹

The Ninth Plan Approach to Tribal Development (1997-2001)

The Ninth Five year plan, 1997-2001 has drawn some valuable and positive safeguards towards the tribals and forests. In the Ninth plan¹⁰ the approach adopted for STs will be the following: -

1. Efforts will be made to ensure that the tribal economy is protected and supported against threats from the external markets. The ownership\patent rights of the tribal people in respect of minor forest produce vis-à-vis the use of medicinal plants will be protected as per the provision of intellectual property Rights (IPR).
2. The primitive Tribal Groups are leading an extremely precarious existence and some of them are on the verge of extinction. Existing development programmes have not been able to alleviate their condition. An Action plan incorporating total food and nutrition security, health coverage, education facilities etc. in keeping with their socio-cultural condition will be prepared by the central/state Government. The proposed Action plan will have in built flexibility to cater to the specific needs of each such tribal and its environment.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2001) Approach Paper Government of India, Publication Division.

3. A national policy for Tribal Development will be formulated at the earliest.

We also find valuable steps incorporated in the Ninth Plan Approach Paper for the protection and safeguard of forests and the tribal communities depending on it. Some of the provisions are given: -

1. The local communities will be conferred with the right to derive the full benefit of the forest produce in their respective areas. The concept of Joint Forest Management between the Government and the local communities will be the basis of management of the forest resources during the Ninth plan. The local institution will play an important role in this. In the management of forests, biological diversity will be promoted as it has multifarious advantages for the local communities as well as for the economy as a whole.
2. Special efforts will be made to afforest all degraded and denuded lands. The local communities will be fully involved in the selection of the plant species. The central and the states agencies will assist the local institutions in promoting proper sivicultural and conservation practices. An adequate proportion of resources available under JRY and other rural development programmes will be made available for social forestry and regeneration Schemes.
3. There is a symbiotic relationship between tribal communities and the forests in which they live. The local tribal communities will be fully involved in the management of the forests. Legislative and

other efforts will be made to prevent damage to forests from encroachments, illicit-felling, forest fires, etc.

4. The Ministry of Environment and Forest will prepare a Bio-diversity Action plan to be initiated during the Ninth plan for conserving the bio-diversity in the Indian forest.

Despite the serious thoughts given by the government for the upliftment of the tribals and their habitats, we find a considerable degree of negligence and apathy. Not content with institutional demolition, there has been a serious run on tribal life-support systems. Natural resources and means of production have been steadily misappropriated from the tribal. He has been deprived of land, forest, water, air etc. in his own habitat in the name of development projects initiated by the government. This will be the main issue discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER – I V

The concept of development has become an important word currently in the national and international fora. The intellectual history of development is rooted in Economics. It draws its main substance from economics. The knowledge gained from subsequent developmental researches and experiences of developing nations added institutional, motivational, cultural, distributional and diffusional dimensions to it. However the term development is such that, it can be applied to every aspect of human life such as economic, political, social, ecological etc. Whatever be the nature of society be it industrial or tribal, the concept of development has created its own place in it. Development generally, is conceived as an overall progress and improvement of a society and its members. As the present study is concerned with the impact of development on tribals, we will analyse what role development has been playing and going to play in the tribal context.

Coming to the tribals and its ecology, it has been seen that, we have remained engaged in the development of the tribal for the last three or more decades. As the policy makers are of opinion that their development is one of our constitutional obligations. Initially they were hopeful that they will lead the tribals to march on the road to the sphere of development, within a period of ten years. But this dream remained unfulfilled and unrealized. Even after fifty years of independences the tribals continue to be buried in the den of illiteracy and suffer under abject poverty. Instead of a positive sign of improvement, their quality of life grew from bad to worse. It has not been possible on our part to restore the tribals and their forests, for we seem to have reached the

pinnacle of deforestation. It is even seen that the new forest policy is more callous to the tribals and holds them responsible for the present forest decay. Most of the fertile and irrigated land has been usurped by the non-tribals or people from the plains who are mainly the encroachers. This has reduced tribes to the level of marginal and small peasants. The tribal's lot, therefore in an era of development is depressed because of the loss of their land and forests.

As per the governmental scheme for reconstruction and development, many roads have been constructed in the interior parts of the tribal areas. But most of the transport network, has proved to be a means of corruption exploitation and dislocation of the tribals. It has been seen that the development programmes such as dam construction, communication networking, opening up of schools and dispensaries which are initiated and implemented by the government are to a larger extent only beneficial to money-lenders, the liquor vendor, the lawyers and the political workers. It has even been seen to have encouraged flesh trade among the tribals. In fact an approach to the concept of development appears to be faulty. Perhaps our connotation of development is not perceived in the same manner as we do, by the tribals. In this context it would be relevant to quote Mahatma Gandhi, who was of opinion that "we must approach the poor with the mind of the poor, that we must approach the tribesmen with the minds of tribesman". It is even seen that the interests, needs, aspirations and values of the tribes have never been taken into account in our efforts to gear their development. And the policy

makers always approach the problem of development from the perspective of the high caste Hindus and the members of the ruling group.

While taking all our efforts of tribal development into consideration, it could be observed that, most of the benefits or facilities given to the tribals have been appropriated by the tribal leaders and elites. The average or the common tribe has received a negligible fraction of the cake. How is that despite our huge expenditure made on tribals, the result has been so disheartening? If sociology, is concerned with the development problem of the tribals, what has it to submit by way of explanation? How is that tribals have not attained the level of development despite so much of our planned efforts?

Coming to the role of sociology as a discipline in tribal social structure, first of all, it has to make some dispassionate criticism of faulty working of the official programmes. Since sociology as an objective discipline, it has to debunk the false assumptions and the comparable system – constructs of the respectable sectors – mostly “the official” sectors of the society. According to ¹S. L. Doshi sociologists and social anthropologists have neglected the area where developmental projects create difficulties for the tribals. This attitude among the scholars and researchers has given unbridled freedom to the development agencies.

The tribals, all over the country have regarded forests as their communal property. They earned their means of living from the forest produce. They had their hunting in the forest. The game so procured

¹ Doshi, S.L. (1997) Emerging Tribal Image. Rawat Publications, pp – 11-57, Chap – 1.

supplemented a part of their need for food. Even when the forests were dense, the government officials enjoyed the freedom of hunting in the forest where as in the old days in the central provinces the forest officers collected and burnt the bows and arrows of the Gonds and Baigas. The hills and forests belonged to the tribals. Again and again they have said that no one has any right to interfere and tamper with their property. But unfortunately the claims and demands of the tribals for the forest did not receive any attention.

Now the forests are controlled by the state agencies. During the past few decades there has been an increasing deforestation drive. It became a matter of concern that who is responsible for this decay. The law formulators and policy makers attach this blame to the tribals it is said that they ruthlessly cut the forest wood illicitly and sell it out to the plain people. By holding the tribals responsible for deforestation, we very conveniently forget that it has been the enhanced consumerism of wood in the city by way of having elaborate furniture and house furnishings, building and shopping and establishments of variety of counters that the forests have been leased out to the contractors. The loss of the tribals in this case has again been colossal. Think of the situation in which the tribals have been deprived of the very source of their livelihood. And all this has been due to the faulty assumptions about the tribals.

It has been seen that in most of the development programmes which are initiated by the government have put the tribals in sale. Since they have been provided with constitutional privileges for their development, we see

most of our things in their name. Items of development be it a school, a dispensary a rail road, telephone, cooking gas availability and many more, are all accounted for the upliftment of the tribals. The multinationals all of a sudden have become aware of the needs of the tribals. They have found with the assistance of the developing agencies that the tribals from all over the country which is in most cases hilly, undulating and rugged, require pumping sets for the irrigation of the fields.

This has become a serious problem before the national as well as international community. Considering the problems of development, the United Nation's General Assembly Resolution 2542 (xxvi) adopted in 1971, emphasized the following aspects for the upliftment of the tribals all over the world:-

1. full utilization of human resources creative initiative, information and participation opportunity.
2. right of work and free choice of employment.
3. participation of all members to productive and useful labour and establishment of forms of ownership of land and other means of production which precedes any kind of exploitations and conditions leading to genuine equality.
4. rapid expansion of national income and wealth and their equitable distribution among members of the society.

Elaborating some of these perspectives and supplementing them, the U.N. declaration of social progress and perspective envisages: -

- a. effective participation of all elements of society in preparation and execution of national plans.
- b. equitable distribution of national income.
- c. acceleration of the process of industrialization with one regard to social aspects.
- d. legislative, administrative and other measures to ensure political and civil rights and full implementation of economic, social and cultural rights.

Besides these above mentioned points, it must cover the following parameters: -

(i) conservation (ii) protection (iii) recuperation (iv) mobilization of basic need satisfaction and optimum standard of living (v) equity (vi) aesthetic quality. It must have both local and global relevance and a time frame. Keeping these parameters in view, the ecological indicators require to be worked out and dovetailed with the socio-political indicators. As considerable untrapped resources are concentrated in the tribal predominant areas, unless the ecological indicators are adequate at the very outset, the tribal communities may themselves be marginalized through the process of development.²

The Government of India has tried to successfully follow all these provisions incorporated in the U.N. Declaration but all went in vain. Since

² Roy Burman, B.K. (1997) (Ch. 5) critical issues relating to Tribal out. During the Eight Plan. In George pfeffer & D.K. Behera's "Contemporary Society: Tribal Studies" (vol. II) Concept Publishing Co.

independence, our government in the name of national development as well as for bringing the tribals into the mainstream of national life has taken some steps, which have adversely affected the tribal life and the environment to a great extent. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India declared that the major dams, industrial plants and mines are the temples of new India, little did he realize that the temples, mosques, cathedrals and monuments of yester years could become a 'class' that pays the price of national development without themselves getting any of its benefits. The recent circulation of a draft Forest Act has once again brought into question the future of India's forest's laws. The draft act proposed to take a strongly conservationist stand against environmental degradation by severely restricting people's rights to the forests. The state's persistence to deny tribals rights to the forests has resulted in an ongoing conflict that today constitutes the biggest obstacle to forest conservation and wildlife protection.

In this context, Dr. ³Tiplut Nongbri opines that:

"There is a major challenge before the policy makers that how to reconcile tribal rights to land and forest with economic growth. The unilateral thrust of the macro national economy has been particularly detrimental to 'land-person relations' in the tribal society. The extension of the macro economic networks like industry and the market and the establishment of the modern means of communication have transformed the tribal concept of land,

³ Nongbri Tiplut (1997), "Land Forest Rights and Development Policies in North-East India", *Eastern Anthropologist*.

from a simple natural resource that constitutes the basic means of their livelihood, into a property which can be traded at will by the owners”.

Development projects are handed down without any concern for the cultural historical and ecological complexities prevailing in the tribal regions. Based on anthropocentric premises of mutilation nature, customary institutions and values, imposition of individualism, statist ideology and reductionist worldview, the development practices have wrecked the physical, cultural and cognitive survival of the large masses of the country, specially tribals, dalits, minorities, women and children. Development has become a label for plunder and violence.

Much has been written on the large scale physical displacement of tribals due to mega hydroelectric and mining projects. But this indicates only a partial truth and somehow inadvertently perhaps, conceals the unpalatable whole truth of capitalist exploitation and imperialist control. Development project encompasses a whole gamut of territorial resources taken away by the state, powerful individuals, private enterprises and transnational corporations as well as displacement from ones own culture, creativity, community, power and knowledge systems through involuntary super imposition of the values and institutions of the globally and nationally dominant societies.

The nexus between dominant development paradigm and upliftment of the tribals can be traced out to the colonial era, though the criticality of their survival is essentially a post-colonial phenomenon. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the colonial administration began conferring legal titles of

land ownership to individuals in some tribal regions and treated the rest of the land as *res nullius*, which effectively meant absolute ownership of the state. After independence, private ownership is institutionalized and massive customary corporate lands and land based resources are alienated by both the state and private entrepreneurs.

The increased commercial extraction of timber, establishment of numerous forest-based industries and so-called development projects have mutilated the forests, sealed away the game, polluted water resources depleted the fish stocks and eventually devastated the tribal livelihoods. Agribusiness, plantation, afforestation by mono-cultural species, refugee settlements, villagification, highway projects, some land reform measures, biosphere reserves, game sanctuaries, national parks, reserved forests etc, have displaced the tribal people from their survival bases and sustainable use of the forest resources.

A common feature shared by most of the tribal habitats is their remoteness and marginal quality of territorial resources. In the past exploitation of such poor regions was found both difficult and uneconomic. But the recent rapid technological advancement and unrivalled economic and political strength of world capitalism and the rising power of neocolonialism through the G-7 directly and the IMF, IBRD, etc., as agencies, have created favourable conditions for the evasion and extraction of natural resources from the economic fragile territories of the tribal peoples. Thus forced eviction of tribal to make way for mammoth capital intensive development projects have

become a distressingly routine and even increasing phenomenon. The zealously extracted water and subsurface minerals accentuated the tribals dispossession from their lands forests, wildlife and water resources. The Land Acquisition Act 1894 (and the amendment 1984) is indiscriminately involved to alienate tribals land in the name of public purposes. That is to say, for the greater good of the Indian people, few tribals should have to make sacrifices in terms of surrendering their survival bases and accept the development projects as fait accompli. ⁴

The tribals like Bhils, Bhilalas, Barelas, Vasavas, Tadavis, Pawras, etc. living in the submergence villages in fact, are islands of deprivation in the Indian Society. Historically, they have been pushed into the interior areas partly because of invasions and wars. Ethnically the dominant non-tribal groups further pushed the tribals into inaccessible hilly forest tracks, acquiring comparatively fertile soil in plains and valleys for themselves. The interaction was characterized by the exploitative relations. Consequently, their dependency on rivers, forests and forest produce increased. They lived a subsistence level of economic life with supportive cultural systems. This brief statement of historical, ethnic and ecological factors explains, what they are today and why. Further, these factors continue to interplay with their conditions, perhaps in some changed forms, still worsening their situations. An analysis of their line of regression and deteriorating quality of life shows that there is little or no scope for any type of development activity. Other

⁴ Pathy, Jagannath (1998) Impact of Development Project on Tribals' (Ch-15) in Tribal Situation in India (ed) by Vidyut Joshi, Rawat Publication, Jaipur.

factors like increasing population, and stronghold of traditions and superstitions and cultural constraints have been at least partly responsible for a low response to developmental schemes. The relative geographical isolation in inaccessible areas has made their access to various social, educational health services, etc. extremely difficult. It appears that the large scale seasonal migration of tribal, which has already become a trend, is likely to be gradually replaced by the permanent migration to small and big towns and cities. As such the migration – exodus to urban centers appears to be inevitable, sooner or later. The other compelling conditions like further penetration of exploitative interests of the dominant non-tribal caste groups, legal and administrative problems push them down the poverty line. On the whole, the conditions do not appear to be conducive to development.⁵

Threat To Ecosystem: Case of Gandhamardan Hills (ORISSA)

The Bauxite mining project at Gandhamardan hills in Koraput District of Orissa entrusted public sector-Bharat Aluminium Company (BALCO) threatens to play havoc there and posing a threat to the living conditions of the tribal people in the area. The Gandamardan Hill range is a virgin reserve forest with rare species of flora and fauna. In a preliminary survey, G.S. Panigrahi, former Director of the Botanical survey of India found these hills to contain around 150 rare species of medicinal plants. Because of this, an

⁵ Philips, W. S. K. (1998) – Tribals Affected by SSP (Ch-13) in Tribal situation in India (ed) Vidyut Joshi, Rawat Publications, Jaipur.

Ayurvedic College with primary research facilities was set up recently in the remote township of Paikmal in Sambalpur district, for its proximity to the hills.

The livelihood of the local people, who are largely tribals, is going to be critically affected even if a part of the forest is cleared. Moreover, the Gandhamardan hills provide the only forest-cover for a large tract of land which is known for recurring droughts and falling agricultural production. This hill range is close to Padampur town in Sambalpur district and Newapara in kalahandi, the places the prime Minister Pandit Nehru in late 50's visited to see the poverty – stricken conditions of the people. The deforestation would, therefore, further affect the already precarious and erratic rainfalls thereby causing greater hardship to the tribals.

As a result of the blasting of stones, the streams have been silting and are beginning to dry up. The irrigation water has already suffered; a large community orchard called Manbhany has already dried up and people are facing severe drinking water problems at the foothills. Even the wild animals of the forest are greatly affected by blastings and tree felling. There have been reports that they are coming out of the forest area and attacking domestic cattle in nearby areas. Thus, if all these costs are evaluated properly vis-à-vis the benefits from bauxite mining, it is very likely that the balance will tilt against the mining project.

The other issue that the project implies is the implicit assumption that setting up of industry or taking up of mining activity will solve the problem of poverty and backwardness of the people. That indiscriminate industrialization

or mining can bring in more hardship to the people in backward regions is ignored. People in backward areas as in the case of the Gandhamardan region are largely illiterate and cannot aspire to get gainful employment in the sophisticated plants. In fact, often they lose their traditional sources of livelihood like agriculture, forest and artisanship through the channelling of the raw materials for better use in the industrial sector. They are often unintentionally and unknowingly subjugated to outside domination, economically, culturally and politically. The tribals are the worst sufferers. They are usually treated as mere instruments for carrying out the most difficult manual jobs in the process of our development.

The tribal backward societies, sometimes do perceive the danger and protest against such life shattering projects. The people around the Gandhamardan hills have stopped working for the project inspite of their stark poverty. They have, in fact, been agitating for the last several years to stall the project.⁶

The Case of Hirakud Dam in Orissa

Hirakud dam in Orissa has only 18.34 percent tribals among its displaced people (Dp's). In that way it is exceptional. In the following section we examine the condition of the displaced tribals after forty years of the construction of the Hirakud dam in Orissa and draw some conclusions for policy implications. Though they were a minority among its Dp's, they remain

⁶ Panda, Hrushikesh – Threat to Ecosystem in Mainstream, 17 May 1986..

the most marginalized among them. In that, even this minority is typical of what happens to the tribals elsewhere.

The construction of the Hirakud dam in Orissa was one of several multipurpose river valley projects which had generated a lot of hope amongst policy makers and others in the post-war reconstruction period (Sovani and Rath 1960). From the point of view of immediate economic calculation and for flood control in the economically developed and politically conscious eastern Orissa, the construction of the Hirakud dam was a historical necessity. There were several locational advantages regarding the site of the dam and it was completed in a 'reasonable' time. However its construction was a foregone conclusion and work started before the feasibility report was finalized. Further, the Public Accounts committees were not satisfied with the financial handling of the project. From a technical point of view there were questions regarding cracks in the dam due to improper curing of concrete at the time of construction; and high rate of silting, affecting irrigation, generation of electricity and desertification of Cuttack city. Further, the unabated release of effluents from the Orissa Paper Mills (OPM) at Brajrajnagar, and the industrial, domestic and municipal sewerage on to the river and the reservoir resulted in water borne diseases and increased alkalinity of water. The reduction in the storage capacity of the reservoir from 8,105 cubic km of water in 1956 to 6,427 cubic km in 1988 was a matter of grave concern for the planners and the people who had become heavily dependent on the dam. On top of it, the increase in the frequency of floods from 11.8 years in 1956 to

3.75 years in 1988 belied all hopes of flood control. Despite the several benefits proclaimed by the government the dam seems to have failed in its avowed objectives.

As regards the social dimensions of the Hirakud dam, it had both economic and political connotations. In the initial phase of declaration of the proposed construction of the dam, most people simply could not believe it. When they came to believe it after getting notification about the acquisition of land, permanent structures in the attachment area and after hearing of and seeing the gigantic construction, they were shattered both mentally and economically. All their protests and peaceful demonstrations were calmed down by the government both by force and by persuasion of sufficient compensation i.e. land for land and house for house. The Government also promised model colonies with modern facilities and economic rehabilitation in the forest cleared colonies. However, because of several anticipated and actual difficulties people did not show much enthusiasm to go to the camps/colonies. The Government was also not in a position to provide land and shelter to the people and it panicked when the date of the filling of the reservoir approached. So people were given the option to stay back in partly submerged villages or to go to old established villages. By doing so the Government simply paid some minimal compensation to the affected people and got rid of its tall promises and social responsibilities.⁷

⁷ Baboo, Balgovind – “Large Dams & Tribals”, Social Action July Sep. 91.

Marooned by Development: Fate of Tribals due to Upper Kolab Hydel Project in Orissa

Fifteen years after the upper Kolab multipurpose project in Koraput, Orissa, displaced them, the affected people, most of them, Paraja tribals or dalits – are fighting for the right to live with dignity. The upper Kolab Displaced Persons Association has been making repeated demands to the President and other authorities for redressal of its grievances. Starvation deaths are increasing and many are forced to beg the association pointed out, while urging government to honour its promises.

Over 50,770 people were partially or fully affected from 206 villages. Over 3,000 families from 57 villages were displaced by this hydroelectricity and irrigation project on the Kolab river. About 52 per cent of the affected people are tribals and 17 per cent Dalits, according to a study by the South Orissa Voluntary Action (SOVA) a non-government organisation in koraput which is helping to organize the displaced people fight for their rights. Only 424 families have opted to live in government rehabilitation camps in remote Kotpad tehsil, and almost all regret it. The rest of the families (82 per cent) have moved or relocated – nobody knows where. The Government has no records of these people.

The Rs. 160 crore project was commissioned in 1984-85. It has two main canals – the right one has a command area of 46,049 ha and the left one, 1936 ha, which will be extended to 22,267 ha. It generates 95 HW/hour. However, for the displaced people, this is of no consequence. While the dam

sites and colonies for the staff were planned in meticulous detail, no such effort has been forthcoming for the people who lost their lands. The project submerges 30,525 acres at its full reservoir level of which 21,870 acres is private land and 189.95 acres forest land, which provided the tribals with valuable produce.

The four government rehabilitation camps are located 80 km from Korapur in Kotpad tehsit people walk to Kotpad block headquarters - 15 km away from the camp if they have to access doctors or the market. About 64 families from seven villages live in camp number five – without any source of income. The promised roads, electricity or schools are a dream. The government has given them three acres each that is supposed to be irrigated but is not. Earlier they used to get 45 kg of paddy from an acre. Now, people have to contend with 15 kg. There is a fresh water pond in this camp which is much sought after. All the families practice pisciculture and share the harvest. Forests for the tribals has become a dream to be seen which earlier used to be the abode in their real life. As all the forests are cut down they have to stay without it, far away from their homes.⁸

Displacement & Rootlessness

Where huge dams are built for irrigation or power or mines are opened or extended, plantation of cash crops or of monoculture forests for commercial use is undertaken, or national parks or wildlife sanctuaries for even tigers or

⁸ Menon, Meena – Research associate with the National tree Growers, Cooperative Press Fellowship programme, Publisher in Hindu Aug. 2000.

other animals are carved out, the people displaced remain basically rural but rootless. Where huge industrial complexes are established, the population displaced may still remain rural in large part, while another section may be absorbed in the emerging industrial community. Of still another genre is the somewhat off beat situation involving the population displaced due to the construction of atomic bomb testing or rocket launching sites which may or may not contribute directly to the economic or industrial development of the country as a whole or of the region concerned.

In the scenario of development and displacement the majority of the affected are tribals and other economically marginal rural populations who have historically been dependent on the natural resource base for their subsistence. A significant point to be noted here is that the tribal communities are roughly 8% of the total population of the country, yet over 50% of those displaced belong to this section of population. The implication is obvious the tribal people are disproportionately affected by our development policies and resultant displacement. The 29th report of the Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the report of the Working Group on Development & Welfare of Scheduled Tribes during the Eighth Five years plan (1990-95) testify to this fact.⁹

In most of the cases people's consciousness and awareness of tribal displacement and impoverishment awakes largely when they come across news about the struggles and movements of the affected people. Among the

⁹ Mahapatra, L.K. – "Development for Whom?" Social Action July-Sep. 1991.

major struggles at present in the Chotanagpur tribal belt are those against the Netarhat pilot project test Firing range (the case now suspended because of the fierce opposition from affected people) in Gumla and Palamau districts which threatens to displace about three lakh people. The Koel Karo dams in Ranchi and Gumla districts threatening to displace about one lakh people, coal mines in North Karnpura valley of Palamau district that may cause displacement of about one lakh people, and the Sabarnrekha dams in Singbhum District threatening to displace another one lakh tribals. Prevailing conditions in other states point towards similar trend. Agitation against the Narmada dam is now known internationally. The Palavaram dam in Andhra Pradesh shall be displacing an estimated three lakhs people majority of them being tribals. In Karnataka, resistance is building up against the Nagarhole wildlife sanctuary. Agitations have been there in Orissa against the Gandamardan bauxite mines and the Chilika project.

The more unfortunate part of the story is the case of multiple displacements. It has also happened that several tribal groups after having made the painful transition and settling into a new lifestyle were again uprooted and displaced. The case of singrauli in Uttar Pradesh and new Mangalore port are the examples. If displacement is inevitable, resettlement must include reconstruction of production systems, raising standards of living and minimizing the conflict with host community. The commitment, therefore, has to be not just for resettlement but for rehabilitation which should be an entitlement and not an act of reluctant generosity. Moreover, the cost of

project should always include the cost to be incurred on resettlement and rehabilitation. All these projects should be open for public debate and more importantly, the affected people or the tribals should be consulted and given participation into it.¹⁰

All we discussed was about national development and its effects on the tribals and their eco-system. We shed lights on the effects of large-dams, mining projects on tribal lives. Another area of concern is about the parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Even official figures of displacement by wildlife sanctuaries are extremely difficult to obtain. The data for 16 project tiger schemes founded between 1972 and 1983 show that 153 villages were displaced by them. This would give us a figure of around 8,000 families or 40,000 persons. An observation from Periyar, Bandipur and Similipa Tiger projects shows that the real number has to be at least double that figure, or 80,000. One can extrapolate from this and state that all the 363 national parks and tiger sanctuaries established till 1982 have displaced at least 6 lakh persons.¹¹

¹⁰ Hasnain, Nadeem – (Ch. 16) Tribal India pp-220-5.

¹¹ Fernandes, Walter (1991) – “Power & Powerlessness: Development Projects & Displacement of Tribals” Social Action, July-Sept. – 91.

CHAPTER – V

Tribal minorities in all parts of the world have suffered for centuries from the adverse effects of expansion outside into territories that were formerly entirely tribal and once supported large tribal populations. This process has often led to the decimation and even to the extinction of these tribal populations. This was generally accepted as inevitable, though by no means always intentional by-product of development. Similarly, depletion of their renewable resources has often severed such people from their economic and social bases and relegated formerly self-sufficient societies to the lowest economic level of the national society.

Dominant societies usually sought to impose their value systems, socioeconomic and cultural patterns and organizations, and language on tribal groups. The option of tribal people to maintain their own culture and to develop fully has not often been recognized in practice. Furthermore, tribal people are only partially served by the national social services available to other citizens, particularly in health communications and education. This deprivation only serves to reinforce the low status of the tribal people, and limit their absorptive capacity for change and adaptation to new circumstances. Where such services are available, they are often used to facilitate the expropriation of tribal resources. Finally, more often than not, diseases and poor level of health and nutrition complete the demoralization

and destruction of tribal societies especially those that are early in the integration process.¹

Tribal groups can make valuable contributions to the wider society, especially to the national society's knowledge of socioeconomic adaptations to fragile ecosystems. At the same time, tribal populations cannot continue to be left out of the mainstream of development. It is incumbent on development agencies to assist in bringing the benefits of development to people who "lie beyond the reach of traditional market forces and present public services". Eventually, or as soon as they desire, tribal people should be as fully participatory in development as other parts of society.²

Value of tribal people's knowledge of ecosystem

Since there are few short term and long-term standards for successful occupation by outsiders (non-tribals) of marginal tropical wet forest regions still inhabited by tribal groups, it would be valuable for the world as a whole to learn how tribal people manage such ecosystems. The traditional tribal way of life sustainably manages the renewable resources in the harsh and complex tropical environment, while leaving the resource base intact. Unlike tribal societies both agro-industrial groups and peasant farmers have shown themselves almost totally unable to manage sustainably and produce effectively in such environments. Four admittedly somewhat circumstantial pieces of

¹ Goodland, Robert (1982) – Tribal people & Economic Development – Human Ecologic Considerations pp-1-8, Library of Congress, USA.

² *ibid.*

evidence are adduced for the assertion that tribal people can manage sustainably the tropical wet forest eco-system in a way that non-tribal people have not yet been able to achieve. Firstly, the prime evidence that tribal people have this ability is that they have done so for millennia and where left unmolested, they continue to be successful. Secondly, these environments, by and large, are inhabited by tribal people effecting no harm to the eco-system. Thirdly, the technique adopted for this ecosystem by outsiders is to liquidate the resources for short term project forcing the tribals people to move on to another tract (dams, irrigation & mining projects). Not only does this technique ruin the resource base but it promotes population growth to exceed the carrying capacity. Finally, where non-tribal people are cut off from external sources of food and other supplies by accident, they starve unless they are assisted by the local tribal people.

Tribal people are not only familiar with the thousands of biological species in their ecosystems, but they also understand ecological interrelations of the various components of their resource base better than do most modern foresters, biologists, agronomists, and ecologists. *Indigenous knowledge* is essential for the use, identification, and cataloging of the biota. Much knowledge accumulated by tribal people regarding ethnopharmacology, the identity, location, and mode of use of myriad foodstuffs and drug plants, animals cures for specific ailments and prevention of many more, contraceptives, abortifacients, arrow poisons, and fish – stunning substances remain unknown to scientists.

The use made to date of tribal environmental knowledge has focused almost exclusively on single items such as quinine, reserpine, and other medicinal or chemical products known to the tribal society and useful to western science, regardless of ecological context. However, tribal knowledge encompasses the ecosystem in its entirety, including the interdependence of floral and faunal species, the specificities of microzones and their interfaces, seasonal and long – term variations in plant and animal life, reproduction, growth movement, and productivity: These aspects of tribal knowledge are almost always ignored. This is in large part because of a lack of perception by non-tribal people, combined with difficulties of communication and the disdain with which tribal knowledge is often regarded by the dominant society.

Tribal people are the repository of accumulated experience passed on through the generation by word of mouth and, thus, permanently record their experiences and knowledge that is inaccessible to outsiders. Therefore, as tribal groups disappear, their vast knowledge vanishes with them. Only as tribal people are they equipped with the necessary values, knowledge, and organization to manage successfully the resources of marginal ecosystems. The preservation of these groups, therefore, is a significant economic opportunity for the nation, not a luxury. Tribes are at the forefront of knowledge in the management of marginal environments and can contribute to the national society. Sustainable exploitation of ecosystems often considered marginal is becoming increasingly necessary for national societies

and the world as a whole Capitalization on these unique strengths is highly desirable for economic development.

Based on these observations, the government of India should take specific measures for tribal development rather than national development (in the name of dams, mining projects) at the cost of the tribals. In other words, the development projects undertaken by the Government undermine the needs of the tribals and greatly affect their survival by displacement, deprivation and exploitation. The constitution of India envisages that "the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation". A period of ten years was set initially to achieve the goal but as the problem was deep rooted and much faceted a single decade was bound to persist through decades.

Since independence Indira leaders have been actively thinking for the uplift of the tribal people. Our beloved leader, late Jawaharlal Nehru, sought the tribal to develop along the lines of their own genius and further assured that in no case should there be any imposition in the name of their development.³ He had great love for the tribals even before becoming the first Prime Minister of free India and has all appreciated for their culture. In his own words: "I am not at all sure which way of living is better, ours or theirs. But in some ways, I am quite certain theirs is better. A great deal of things could be

³ Nehru Jawaharlal (1955), inaugural address at the third tribal welfare conference held at Jagdalpur, MP, Published in the report Bharatiya Adima Jati Sevak Sangh, Delhi.

learnt from their culture especially in the frontier areas. They are people who sing and dance and try to enjoy life: not people who sit in stock exchange and shout at each other and call that civilization". At another place he expressed his disapproval of our false idea "to call some people primitive and to think of ourselves as highly civilized".⁴

Approaches to Tribal Welfare

The term tribal welfare has been used to cover an all-round development of the tribals as a weaker section of the Indian population. They are in a subsistence stage. Their comparative isolation, leaving in and around forest and hill areas, their simple economy and limited world views have placed them in a state of dearth.

Now we shall analyze the different approaches, towards the welfare of the tribal peoples but before we do it, it is important to be acquainted with the thinkers who have presented frameworks about the tribal welfare activities in the country. Majumdar⁵ opines that there are three distinct tribal zones with specific problems awaiting solution and no two areas have similar problems. He finds two types of efforts that have been made for the welfare of the community; viz; (i) Reform Approach, and (ii) Administrative Approach.

In the reform approach, Majumdar includes the social reformer and the administrator backed by the scientists. He is of the view that anthropology is

⁴ Nehru Jawaharlal (1964) – inaugural speech at the conference of tribal and scheduled Areas held at New Delhi in 7th June 1952 published in 'Vanyajati', 1964.

⁵ Majumdar, D. N. (1960) – "Advasi Aur Unki Samasyaen" in "Bihar Ke Adivasi", Patna Book Centre, pp-180-196.

not merely an academic discipline, it is also an applied science, and has worked every-where as a handmaid to politics, imperialism, and colonialism. Reform, he says, should be brought about among the tribals only by first understanding the tribal dynamics. Expert knowledge of anthropological methods and techniques of approach should be used both by the administrators and social reformers. He however, opines that the reform approach can not solve the problems of tribals, unless, and it is important, the tribal leadership is initiated in the matter of tribal reform.

Under the administrative approach, according to Majumdar, the state and central Governments have helped the tribals in a stereotyped way – many wells have been dug, schools have been opened, tribal education is being imparted through their own dialect, etc. What has been done in Hyderabad is being repeated in Assam and in Chotanagpur. This is not correct. The welfare programmes should be suitably adjusted to the requirements of each area. Again he prefers going in for nationalization of welfare activities to leaving the destiny of the tribes in the hands of the so called politicians.

S.C. Dube⁶ feels the approach to the tribal problems so far has been either aesthetic or political. He presents four main approaches to the tribal problems. They are: (i) the social service approach, (ii) the political approach, (iii) the religious approach and (iv) the anthropological approach. In the social service approach the voluntary social agencies did considerable humanitarian work in the tribal areas in their own cultural frame of reference. In the political

⁶ Dube, S.C. (1960) Approaches to tribal problems in India, Anthropology in Action, Ranchi, 1960.

approach in the pre-independence period the British created the 'excluded' and 'partly excluded' areas and gave separate political representation to the tribals. In free India various all India tribal conference have been indirectly creating 'unity' in the tribals. In the religious approach material help is given for converting the tribals to a new faith, e.g., Christianity, which ultimately has given birth to an in-group of Christian tribals. And lastly in the anthropological approach, main stress has been laid on understanding the tribals and then drawing up the tribal welfare programmes.

Thus, we find that there are mainly five approaches which have been employed so far for the welfare of the tribals in India. These are: (i) Political Approach (ii) Administrative Approach (iii) Religious Approach (iv) Voluntary Approach and (v) Anthropological Approach.⁷ All the five approaches have been discussed separately:-

Political Approach

The political approach for the tribal welfare may be understood in the context of the pre and post independence periods. The colonial rule created 'excluded' and 'partly excluded' areas and gave separate political representation to the tribals. Nationalists opposed these measures as part of diabolic conspiracy to a new separatism. This policy of exclusion has been much criticized for its negative character.

⁷ Vidyarthi, L.P. & Rai, B.K. (1976) Tribal culture in India, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, Chapter 12.

After independence the constitution has given the tribals a number of safeguards considering them the weaker section of the population. At the first instance a period of ten years was given to achieve the goal, but the problem was too complicated to be solved in a single decade, it has persisted through decades. We are to continue to guard the tribal interests. This reflects the sense of responsibility of the Indian people towards their tribal brethren. But this has remained a spirit which has never been realized.

A number of Articles of the Indian constitution provide proper safeguards for the tribal people. Though the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15), equality of opportunity in matters of public employment (Article 16) abolition of untouchability (Article 17) prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour (Article 23), securing a social order for the promotion of the welfare of the people (Article 38) and protection of interests of minorities (Article 29) are of general nature, they still incorporate in themselves the tribal people. The Articles of the constitution which are directly related to the tribal safeguards offer them promotion in respect of education and economy (Article 46), other special provisions like the appointment of ministers to look after the tribal interests exclusively (Article 164), special administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas (Article 244), grants from the union to certain states (Article 275), reservation of seats for the scheduled tribes in the House of the people (Article 330) and in the Legislative assemblies of states (Article 332), reservation of seats and special representation (Article 334), special claims to

services and posts (Article 335), provision of special officers for them (Article 338), control of the centre over the administration of the scheduled areas and welfare of the scheduled tribes (Article 339) and special provision for Nagaland (Article 371A), Article 342 of the constitution is on the scheduled Tribes themselves.

Administrative Approach

The political approach is closely followed by the administrative approach. The Government of India has constituted a vast administrative machinery for tribal welfare. We have earlier discussed the important safeguards in the constitution. Here an account of the administrative machinery will be relevant. The present structure of the administrative set – up for tribal welfare has evolved through interactions among the national leaders, social workers, tribal elders and applied anthropologists. The President of India is primarily responsible and has been given powers to safeguard the interests of these communities. And he has appointed the Director General for Backward Classes at national level with special duties of investigating into all matters related to safeguards given to the tribal people. The Director General with the help of Regional Directors virtually handles funds and controls all the tribal welfare activities. He submits his report annually detailing all that has been observed by him personally and through his Regional Directors.

At the state level, the Governor has been made responsible and on his behalf the chief minister and the welfare minister are in charge of the special schemes to be implemented in the tribal areas. Yet it never means that the general development works are dropped. In fact they take their own course. In some major concentrated tribal areas, the state has an Independent Tribal Welfare Ministry. The welfare ministry is advised by two bodies. The Tribes Advisory Council and the Tribal Research Institute – in framing the policies and programmes for tribal welfare. A Deputy Director for Backward Classes is posted by the centre who acts as a liaison between the national and state levels.

Religious Approach with Special Reference to Missionary Approach

The Religious Approach attempted by different religious agencies like the Christian missionaries, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Arya Samaj and other local religious institutions is also engaged in the welfare work of the tribals. At the same time conversion of tribes to a new faith, viz, Christianity, has also taken place. This conversion activity has formed in groups among the tribals.

The missionaries of various denominations have been active in different parts of tribal India especially in tribal Bihar, eastern Madhya Pradesh, north Orissa in middle India and Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram in north eastern Himalayas. Though the old Christians of the Malabar coast

trace their conversion to Apostle Thomas as early as the first century AD, its real expansion began in south India with the arrival of St. Francis Xavier in 1541. In Chotanagpur, Lutheran mission started its activities as early as 1845 under the guidance of father Gossener. They were exclusively interested in the preaching of the Gospel and at least their early history in Chotanagpur consisted primarily in evangelistic campaign. The catholic mission of Chotanagpur was begun about 1885-86 by the Rev. C. Lievens who is said to have been pained to discover that the poor aboriginal was being exploited by the Rajas and Zamindars, while he was not in a position to seek justice owing to his all round backwardness. Pinto⁸ comments that it was only when Dr. Lievens filled with the charity and a true love of justice, took up their cause that a ray of hope shone in the lives of these aboriginals. Between 1895 and 1914 the Christianity of tribal Bihar expanded to the neighbours of eastern Madhya Pradesh and north Orissa. The middle India, a section of Bhills and the Gonds. In the north-eastern Himalayas Christianity began as early as 1812-13, but most of the missionaries which exist in the region have their beginning either in the middle or late 19th century and 20th century. The Nagas and Mizos are the main tribals who were converted.

Since then, the Christian missionaries have been active in tribal India. Though they have been primarily interested in evangelization, the welfare works – educational, economic, hygienic, and social called “work of mercy”, have invariably followed. For both types of work, spiritual and material, the

⁸ Pinto C.D. (1957) – The Church & Social Welfare – Truth shall prevail edited by A Saores, Bombay. The Catholic Association of Bombay, 299.

missionaries did realize the importance of understanding the tribal culture and language. These were, they considered, essential for communicating with them efficiently.

Prof. M. N. Srinivas⁹ maintained that the paramount duty of the believers' religion to convert outsiders to their faith seems natural to the members of the proselytizing religions also but it appears as intellectual as well as moral aggression to the Hindus. This is specially so when the people converted are abjectly poor and illiterate. The opening of schools, hospitals and other welfare agencies by the missionaries in areas where the Harijans and tribals live appears to the Hindus as only a bait in the trap of conversion. The linking of humanitarianism with proselytization has rendered the missionaries suspect. Even every liberal westernized Hindu feels this way.

Voluntary Agencies Approach

Under the Voluntary Agencies Approach, social workers, social welfare agencies, social movement agencies, social reformers, etc are working to uplift the weaker sections of our society in their own ways. Among them the Bhartiya Adimjati Sewak Sangh is the foremost.

When India became independent in 1947, and the attention of the Government to tribal welfare activities increased, the social workers found the political and administrative set up very favourable. They found their own colleagues and partymen at the helm of governmental affairs. The

⁹ Srinivas M.N. (1957) – Sanskritization in "Social Change in Modern India, California University Press, p– 107.

Government, therefore sought all cooperation from the social workers in framing tribal policies and delegated their powers to social workers in the execution of welfare schemes among the tribals. In this way, as a matter of fact, the social workers assumed the roles of both semi-officials and scientists. They began making recommendations to the Government on tribal matters and also setting substantial grants from the Government fund for 'helping' the tribals, and later on they held administrative posts for tribal welfare schemes on small honoraria. They began to organize the tribal welfare conferences on an all India level.

Anthropological Approach

A section of politicians and social workers has taken some sadistic pleasure in maligning anthropologists and in criticizing them for conspiring to put the tribes in a veritable zoo so as to be able to practice their blessed science undisturbed. But this section has obviously been fighting non-existent ghosts. The fact of the matter is that there is not one anthropological approach, there are anthropological approaches, instead of offering an omnibus solution to tribal problems, the anthropologists have been thinking of possible solutions.

The Anthropologists have generally suggested the following:-

1. understanding of tribal organization and value through sustained scientific studies.
2. identifying the problems of tribes of different levels of technological economic and cultural development.

3. identifying the integrative force in tribal life.
4. identifying the areas of minimum and maximum resistance to innovations in their culture.
5. recognizing vital linkages in their cultural fabric.
6. orienting the administrators to tribal life and culture in all aspects, and giving them special training for the tasks they have to undertake among the tribes.
7. cautious formulation of welfare plans with a view to accommodating tribal needs with regional and national interests.
8. careful watch on the trends set in motion by these measures, with a view to eliminating elements that destroy the social solidarity of the tribes and kill their zest for life.

If the welfare projects are implemented with understanding and caution the first effective steps against primitiveness will have been taken. There is much in tribal life that can be preserved without reducing the tribals to the position of museum pieces and without barring their logical development, and there is no doubt that this could be done with imaginative planning and a carefully designed strategy of implementation.

Important Keys to Tribal Development

According to Mann and Vyas¹⁰ on the basis of the assessment of tribal development, there are certain questions and doubts which are to be analysed and interpreted. For a betterment of the tribal people, the developmental plans and programmes should be free of any criticisms or loopholes which will bring consensus among the people who are going to be developed. It is not like the government would go for development projects without the consensus of the tribal who are to suffer later without getting any of its benefits. So before going for a development project or any welfare activities, the following questions are to be set before the administrators and policy-makers. They are:-

1. Whether uniform nature and pattern of programmes, for all areas, was suitable?
2. Whether differing sections of the same tribe were given same kind of treatment that did not strike a working equation?
3. Whether differences in approaches, particularly at practical level, of official and non-official agencies, operating in similar situation, had some effect?
4. Whether the right kind of coordination and understanding among intra-government agencies has come forth?
5. Whether social engineers or at least their skills and techniques could be utilized, and to what extent?

¹⁰ Mann & Vyas (1985) – Indian Tribes in Transition (Chapter 3).

6. Whether the implementation of the tribal development programmes and social engineers and their devices remained in isolation of one another? Whether one to both could not get sufficient room to discharge their respective functions?
7. Whether there was slackness on the part of human agencies?
8. Whether the elements of the strategy of planned social change, in their partial and total form, were haphazardly accounted for and rather dissipated?
9. Whether funds, provided for tribal development, were insufficient, and whether the provision made was not put to proper use?
10. Whether legislations, their enactment and consequences have been compatible with the existing and changing tribal situation?
11. Whether the tribals themselves backed out or remained indifferent to tribal development?
12. Most importantly, whether the development and welfare activities are sanctioned without the due consensus of the tribals? If no, whether the benefits would be at their cost?

Not only the Government of India but the people of India have also to think it and find ways to make tribal development successful. Development in the tribal areas are to be for the tribals first and not for the non-tribals.

Conclusion

The tribals have become conscious of their rights and privileges in the present age of modernization and development. They are not sitting silent when the government is undertaking any activity against their will or at the cost of their survival. According to Prof. B.K. Roy Burman¹¹, what the tribals demand today is not participation in pre-fabricated structures of management, but partnership at every level, local regional, national and global. Slowly but steadily a network of communication and solidarity is emerging among the tribal people. Provided that this is not hijacked by the global hegemonic forces, it is a positive development. Unfortunately, the Government of India is becoming subservient to the global order in the case of whether biodiversity treaty or intellectual property rights. This is against the tribals”.

The 73rd Amendment of the constitution has brought out the limitation of the functional jurisdiction of the sixth schedule either in its original form in several states. A new schedule should be there which will recognize the right of the autonomous bodies to conserve their environment by drawing upon ecological ethics and not merely ecological pragmatism, which the North is propagating and which is tending to be harbinger of neo-colonial hegemonies. Second, the legal epistemology based on 19th century European positivism must go. It promotes the concept of *res nullius* (that which has not been specifically assigned by the sovereign belongs to the sovereign), *terra nullius* which legitimized state's claim over territories which are not under active

¹¹ Roy Burman B.K. (1994) – Tribal people & Global Democratic order, in his “Indigenous & Tribal people”, Mittal publications.

control of any organized polity. Among the jurists in India, Justice Hidayatullah was one of the first to challenge the imperialist concept of *res nullius*, India's concept of many of the tribal and peasant communities was *Lex Loci Sital* – source of law is the way the people organize their life.

Recognition of the community right over the resource should be the kingpin of the new partnership. Today a global norm is emerging in the use of resources by self-regulatory institutions. The autonomous bodies of the tribal communities should be free to draw up their plan for using their resources to meet the basic needs of the population like food, clothing, shelter, water, health care and elementary education.

According to S.L. Kayastha¹², following the western model, we have made money and not man as the measure of all things. It is very largely the greed for the money that is responsible for the rape of our resources and environment. Balanced development of both rural and urban ecosystems, and of nature, economy and society with the adaptation and indigenization of science and technology to respective needs, wherein the frontiers hold promise to help meet the complex needs of nature and society in a sustainable manner, thus providing a measure of much needed national security. The people cooperate when they get benefit from the various development and policies of the economy and the government, and are inspired by exemplary devotion to the cause and country. The leadership in society will have to leave the ivory towers and come down to the market

¹² Kayastha, S.L. (1992) – "Environment & Development" in Mehdi Raza's "Development & Ecology" (Ed.), Rawat publications, Jaipur.

place, and the actual place of action and motivate people and their cooperation by actual participation whenever possible. The egalitarian national environment development policies and changes in resource use, would help sound development and people's cooperation. If this is done, the people will be motivated to join hands with the government in safeguarding the national environmental heritage of India for development and harmony. It will help to remind that India traditions of peace and harmony are very comprehensive and extend to all living and non-living matter.

Tribal participation in Environmental Management

The constitution of India in its fifth and sixth schedules confirms the rights of the tribals by enunciating various provisions to safeguard their interests. The destruction of forests has resulted in the tribal impoverishment and indebtedness in many cases of land alienation and even their bondage, 90 per cent of tribals are below poverty line and entangled in the traps of poverty which extends to all aspects of life: susceptibility to disease, limited access to service and lack of information – degradation of forests is caused due to lack of employment and wage earning source and faulty management system. Shifting cultivation has created a disaster in the path of environmental protection. Degradation of surrounding environment and rigid forest laws have adversely affected food availability, livelihood option and quality of life of local indigenous community. Such degradation has often caused periodic phases of hunger, malnutrition, in the absence of supportive means of livelihood for

acquiring basics of life. Present plantation policy for the protection of environment has suffered due to aimless policy and lack of proper participation of the tribals and other sections of the society. The tribal participation and implementation of forest laws have been contradicted due to the lack of proper realization while framing and implementing restrictive laws without realizing the socio-economic base of the tribals. It is a matter of great concern that destruction of forest resources and herbal medicinal plants have suffered badly due to lack of participatory approach, effective mechanism of resource mobilization and management. Forest resources and common resources provide safety net to the indigenous people. Loss of habitat due to drastic reduction of forest base has endangered the climatic condition.

Tribals Involvement in policy planning with regard to their symbiotic relationship in forests management would be the primary task of all agencies responsible for conservation of social forestry, which ultimately ensures the environmental protection and eco-management system. Forest conservation becomes imperative, including preservation, maintenance, utilization, restoration and enhancement of natural environment. Eco – system can be protected by:

- (a) generating awareness and eco-consciousness among the tribals;
- (b) information facilitation and resource mobilization;
- (c) wage earning programme on employment without endangering environment and forest base;
- (d) horticultural works, cash crops, oil seeds programmes to be enhanced;

- (e) irrigation, land utilization, distribution effective plantation schemes to be implemented;
- (f) community forest management schemes to be launched, local committees to be formed without administration hurdles, by ensuring the objectives of joint forest management;
- (g) generating faith, feeling of owners by motivating them through inter-personal communication, group meeting and community convergence approach, and
- (h) study on fragile areas and development of institutional framework environmental protection.

The concept of "*Sustainable Development*" goes with all the above mentioned points. So every government should give the primary importance to the needs of the people and their participation & consensus, before undertaking any development activity. In other words, constructing big dams, mining projects is not a big deal but it should be in commensurate with the needs and survival values of the people and the environment. Hope this paper would be an inspiration for the future planners scholars and intellectuals to think and care for their tribal brethren.

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