



TRIBAL AND POVERTY

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ABSTRACT

For past 3-4 Decades, the international tribal communities have been trying to draw the attention of world powers to help them to come out of their miseries. Nearly 300 million (30 crores) tribal people live in 70 countries around the world. In India, 461 tribal groups consists nearly 8% of total population which is around 10 crores as per 2011 census. Among them about 80 percent live in the central belt, extending Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west, and across the states of Maharastra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odissa, to West Bengal and Tripura in the east. Most of the remaining 20 percent live in the north eastern states of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim and in the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Andaman and Nicobar, and Lakshadweep. A few of them live in the southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Andhra Pradesh has the largest Tribal population among the southern states of India. The tribal/ indigenous people are among the poorest of the poor. They suffer from extreme discrimination and lead a life of misery and destitution. The development discourse, therefore, needs to concentrate on finding an effective strategy to mitigate these crises.

INTRODUCTION

There are 32 Tribes in Jharkhand. Some of them adopted peasant life style and some of them still practise traditional hunting gathering life style. Tribals of Jharkhand are being historically deprived and strategically exploited. Although acts like CNT and SPT protect tribal land, tribal continue to subject to subsistence economy. During pre-independence era they were exploited by Jaminders and after independence they were displaced due to mining, dams and industrialization. Nearly 6 lakhs tribal were displaced till 1996 in Jharkhand due to various projects. Rehabilitation of these vast populations was done in a half hearted manner and therefore it brought more miseries than any real benefits.

Tribes like Paharias continue to survive on hills and thrive on ecologically most disadvantageous region. Nevertheless rampant stone quarrying mostly illegal further endanger their lives. Birhors and Sabors continue live in destitution. Inter tribe aloofness and diffidence further complicate tribal misery. Good numbers of tribal were benefitted by the education imparted through missionary schools. However, unlike Jews or people of Kachh, educated tribal showed little interest to plow back the impact to their roots. Most educated tribal became permanent migrant to cities and have less concern for their village. In these backgrounds, we would delve into aspect of poverty and tribal in Jharkhand vis a vis other states.

State Of Jharkhand

Jharkhand became the 28th state of the Republic of India on 15 November 2000, covering an area of 79,714 sq km. After the split, the total area of Bihar was reduced to 94,163 sq km. Jharkhand now has 24 districts: Bokaro, Deoghar, Dumka, Giridih, Gumla, Jamtara, Koderma, Lohardaga, Palamu, West Singhbhum, Ranchi, Seraikela-Kharsawan, Chatra,

Dhanbad, Garhwa, Godda, Hazaribagh, Khunti, Latehar, Pakaur, East Singhbhum, Ramgarh, Sahibganj, and Simdega. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes constitute 11.8 per cent and 26.3 per cent respectively of the total population of the state, which stands at 26,945,829 (Census 2001). The state is inhabited by 30 tribal groups including eight primitive tribes. According to the 1991 Census, the prominent tribes at different socio-economic levels living in the area are the Santals (2,067,032), Oraons (1,137,656), Mundas (899,162) and Hos (630,378), who together represent 78.32 per cent of the total tribal population (6,044,010). In undivided Bihar, out of the total Scheduled Tribe population of the state, 93 per cent lived in the Jharkhand region in 1971, which declined to 92 per cent in 1981 and 91 per cent in 1991. The decline in the concentration of the tribal population indicates their migration to other regions in search of work. It is further recorded that growth rates of the total population over the decade of 1981-91 was 24 per cent, while the growth rate of the Scheduled Tribal population was only 13 per cent, which substantially altered the balance between the tribal and non-tribal population in the Jharkhand region. Tribals of the state consider this as their marginalization by the dikus (outsiders). It was their desire that the separate state of Jharkhand be created, mainly to preserve their physical integrity and economic and social well-being and to protect the cultural traditions of the adivasis and moolvasis (first settlers), which are under threat as native people are being overwhelmed by outsiders.

Governmental Effort

Since the inception of the First Five Year Plan, the Indian government has formulated a series of development policies pertaining to the welfare of tribes. Nehru, the main architect of the Five Year Plan, had strongly supported the idea that the tribes should be able to enjoy the advantages of modern medicine, education, agriculture and economic growth, but certainly not at the cost of the rare and precious values of their life. He reiterated that development in tribal areas should be slow and steady; the bureaucrats or the development personnel should be pro-tribal in mind and spirit, and create the environment for increasing participation of tribes in the development process.

After implementation of eleven five-year plans, the schemes under tribal development programmes have ranged from infrastructure building to empowerment, from collective welfare to family and beneficiary-oriented development schemes, and from solitary area development to integrated area development. Though the thrust areas have undergone change from one plan to another, some of the important issues like providing food security and nutrition, improving health services and checking morbidity, and education have been given priority during all the planning periods. The creation of separate Tribal Development Blocks in the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) and of a Tribal Sub-Plan within the state plan in the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79), and formation of the Large Agricultural Multi Purpose Societies (LAMPS), Tribal Development Corporations, Tribal Cooperative marketing development, India limited (TRIFED) and other institutions have contributed significantly to increases in production as well as marketing of the produce in tribal areas. The Crash Special Nutrition Programmes and Crash Employment Programmes in the

Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-74) aimed at supplementing the diet of tribal infants to save them from malnutrition. In the process, they were expected to create more employment opportunities for tribals. The Ninth Five- Year Plan (1997-2002) focused on the issue of empowerment-that is, social and economic empowerment as well as social justice. The Tenth and Eleventh Five Year Plan (2002-2007 and 2007-2012) focussed on right to work and rights to information and rights to education. The objective was to enable the tribes to exercise their rights freely, to enjoy the privileges and to lead a life of self-confidence and dignity at par with other citizens of the country. The very essence of such empowerment comes from the World Summit for Social Development held at Copenhagen in March 1995. This summit proposed that empowerment was inextricably linked with increase in people's capacity to better utilize resources and opportunities.

During the last 50 years, the planning process in India has failed to narrow the disparity between the tribal and non-tribal populations, which according to Andre Gunder Frank (1969) has rather accentuated the dominant relationships and reinforced the unequal exchange between super- and sub- ordinate groups. Such inequality is persistent in the realms of social and economic life. The school attendance rate (5-14 age group) among the tribes is quite low in comparison to others. It is worth noting here that the upward trend in school attendance among the tribes was reportedly higher during the days before or in the initial stages of economic reform (1988-94) as compared with that in the advanced stage (1994-2000). The tribes have the second-largest share of landless people (7 per cent) among them, after Scheduled Castes (10 per cent) in 1999-2000 (it is 7 per cent among OBCs and 6 per cent among other non-tribal populations). The large landholdings (more than 4 hectares) are owned mostly by non-tribals (7 per cent), compared with the Scheduled Tribes (3 per cent) and the Scheduled Castes (1 per cent). Interestingly, the tribes have less chronically unemployed persons than the non-tribals in both rural and urban areas, but their MPCE (Monthly Per Capita Expenditure) is quite low, even worse than that of the Scheduled Caste populations. In rural India, the MPCE of tribes is Rs. 387.69 compared with Rs. 418.51 for the SCs, Rs. 473.65 for the OBCs and Rs. 577.22 for 'others'. In urban areas, it is the second lowest among the tribes (Rs. 690.52 for STs, Rs. 608.79 for SCs, Rs. 734.82 OBCs and Rs. 1,004.75 for others). Such inequality also prevails in other realms of life, though it differs from state to state and even among the tribes themselves.

The average Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE), the prominent economic indicator of development is higher among the tribes of Nagaland, Mizoram and Lakshadweep, followed by the Andaman and Nicobar, Islands, Daman and Diu, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh, but is much lower among the tribes of Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

Besides the socio-economic realm, the tribes of the North-East seem to be ahead of other tribes, including those of the recently formed separate tribal states in central India like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh in terms of the level of political consciousness as well. The demand for greater Nagalim (unified Nagaland) with inclusion of the Naga-inhabited areas

of the North-East is an example of greater ethno-political consciousness of the tribes of the state. It is noticed that the democratic political process of the state has not become free from the influence of the traditional political elite. Rather, the traditional structure got consolidated by linking up its activities with the civil society organizations. The village chiefs (gaonburas) still continue to influence the electoral process and state of affairs. The democratic power structure failed to give a voice to Naga society and the role of elected representatives was marginalized (Mishra 2003: 894).

The overall development process in tribal areas remains uneven but is not completely distressing as would have been predicted before independence. Some of the tribes have succeeded in raising their socio-economic condition and increased their political participation during the last 50 years of the planning process, but many are still lagging far behind. This inequality arising from the development process calls for a detailed scrutiny of the very context in which such development took place and its consequences. In the next section, we will highlight the effects of some such plans exclusively designed for the development of tribes.

Deverse Trends In Tribal Development Before the 1990S

Ideologically, the strategy of tribal development suggests extra care being taken during implementation of any scheme among the tribes, what Heredia (1995:891) calls 'another development from the points of the view of human liberation. The development process should not allowed the ethnic identity to be marginalized, but should rather redress tribals' minority status so that they can actively participate. The kind of the development we then strive for among the tribes are an equity that opposes all exploitation and inequality a sustainability, that is ecologically sensitive to, and respectful of the environment and a participation of people in both making the decisions that affect their lives and implementing them as well.' The process thus rejects the exogenous development model, like large-scale industrialization or big dam projects, as an effective strategy for the progress of the tribes. Contradictorily, however, the mainstream debate goes on arguing that industrialization is unavoidable for progress and those who steer clear of it in the name of loyalty to the peasantry and the poor, end up closing all avenues for their development.

This argument and counterargument can be re-examined in the tribal context, taking the effects of various development schemes into account. At the outset, we may briefly point out that the establishment of big industries and construction of big dams in the past did not benefit the local tribes significantly. That was so because tribal interests were neither given priority nor was their development in-built into the targets of those projects. Instead, the small-scale welfare schemes pertaining to family welfare, capacity building, income generation, health, education and social justice have made a significant contribution in improving the overall conditions of the tribe. The ideal form of tribal development is, therefore, more appropriately identified as non-industrial but pro-local, one which intends to make local resources and environment more congenial to providing for a stable livelihood for the tribes. Many such schemes have been implemented by the government or NGOs in tribal areas. In some cases like schemes of Juang Development Agency (JDA), Bonda

Development Agency (BDA) which actually provoked people to quit their self reliant subsistence economy to be dependent on government sponsored schemes. In other cases some successful adaptation took place among tribal like watershed project of Khakshi Toli, afforestation programmes of BAIF and others.

The Development Process At Work And Its Crisis After 1990

The family- and beneficiary-oriented development schemes undertaken before 1990 mainly covered the areas of education, health service, PDS and several other facilities, which expanded welfare opportunities for the tribes. Besides these, mining and manufacturing units that opened in the tribal areas also provided employment opportunities. The commercial attitude which they fostered among the tribal peasants parallels that among the non-tribal communities. Some of these employees became large landholders and moneylenders after amassing wealth from their industrial employment and lending money at interest people of their own community (Corbridge 1988; Rothermund 1978). In contrast, it is argued that the value of the resources-extracted from tribal areas greatly outweighs the funds employed by central and state governments for tribal welfare and development of those areas. There is a substantial net flow of resources from the under-developed tribal periphery to the more developed non-tribal urban and lowland agricultural centres of the country (Jones 1978). Forest produce and local produce have also come under the web of outsiders. The sal seeds, for instance, are collected from the local-tribals at a lower price, but transported to the cosmetic industries abroad where the final product fetches an exorbitant price in the international market. Commercial tree species such as eucalyptus, pine and teak continue to be transplanted in the forest lands of tribal areas for the international market (Devalle 1992: 99-100). Thus, the development process that took brace before the 1990s has ended the complete isolation of the tribal economy leading it in to the larger realms of a capitalist economy.

One of the most disastrous aspects of large-scale development projects in tribal areas is displacement. This continues despite the end of the era of large-scale industrialization and construction of big dams in 1950s and 1960s. The tribal areas are not completely free from the threat of fresh displacement, even after strong protests from human rights activists, civil society organizations and the tribal victims themselves. The government often tries to revive those projects, which had earlier been discontinued following protests. One example is the Kanahar Dam Project in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh. Authorities declared, after an agreement between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh on 27 March 1998, that it would be restarted, though its construction was postponed 25 years ago. We may note here that a considerable number of tribes had been displaced previously in the same area during the construction of the Rihand dam. The local people vehemently opposed the Koel-Karo Hydro Electric Power Project, under which two dams were proposed to be set up at Basia (Gurnla district) and Lohajimi (Ranchi district) in Jharkhand in 1975. This culminated in a pathetic incident on 2 February 2001, in which nine protesters were killed and 22 seriously injured when a large contingent of police force opened fire on a 4,000-5,000 of strong crowd. Thus, tribal resistance against such projects has intensified in almost all parts of the country since 1990. The sufferings of the tribes from earlier displacement have

not ended till today. Walter Fernandes has dealt with this issue carefully, with specific focus on the plight of women from displaced families. In pre displacement tribal society, these women had considerable control over natural resources. Thus, they not only played a predominant role in taking care of the family but also acquired a higher socio-economic status. Displacement uprooted them from their natural environment and also destroyed their valuable community life. The rehabilitation programme has failed to provide an egalitarian support base that can legitimize the higher status of women in tribal society.

The tribes living outside the industrial areas and dam sites, where agriculture and forest resources continue to form their primordial economic activities, experience a different set of crises. Here they are not fortunate enough to receive the benefits from mainstream development projects; the struggle for bare subsistence continues to be an integral part of their life. In such villages of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa, agriculture rarely provides food for six months; so people migrate to other states to work as labourers in brick kilns, hotels and shipyards. Taking advantage of their poverty and innocence, the non-tribal middlemen often illegally transport them outside the country to work in hazardous conditions. In 1996, it is reported that these middlemen took 90 persons belonging to 45 families of Ranchi, Jharkhand, on the pretext of providing jobs in Darjeeling, West Bengal. Instead of sending them to this destination, they were sent to Bhutan where they were employed in a stone-cutting company in hazardous working conditions. Many of them died due to illness and accidents.

There is another group of tribes in India called 'Denotified Tribes', who have completely different experiences of crises. There were around 150 tribes that the British notified as 'criminal' by enacting the Criminal Tribes Act in 1871. They were denotified in 1952, following the de notification order passed by the Government of India after independence. These Denotified Tribes and ex-criminals now comprise 126 tribes and castes, with a population of about 20 million spread all over India. They are primarily pastoralists and hunter-gatherers, goods-and-services nomads, entertainers, and religious performers by profession. Their traditional sources of livelihood are no longer viable. Grazing and forest land is gradually disappearing, traditional methods of entertainment no longer attract the crowds they used to, as many new sources of entertainment have come into the market, and the spread of scientific outlook and growing education have devalued their religious performances. Because of their nomadic nature they do not have domiciliary status. As a result, they are included neither in the national statistics nor in the planning process. They remain deprived of reservation facilities, as they are not included in the Scheduled list, for they do not belong to a homogeneous social group. The most pathetic part of their tale is recurring custodial deaths and police harassment. The death of a youth of Kheria Sabar in West Bengal in Barabazar Police Station on 17 February 1998, and of another youth of the Pardhi community in Baramati Police Station, Satara district, in Maharashtra on 8 June 1998, are cases in point (Abraham 1999; D'Souza 1999; Bokil 2002).

Future Of The Welfare Model Of Development In The Age Of Globalization

The concept of the welfare model of development spells out steps for empowering tribals

to acquire the benefits of modern development; it shows how the multiple forms of marginalization of tribals in terms of possession of economic assets, skills, adaptability, access to information, and other perquisites of development would be compensated by a specific set of welfare actions. We have already discussed some of the welfare programmes in previous sections. Though the essence of this form of development initially evolved with the beginning of the First Five - Year Plan in the 1950s, it got modified from time to time after evaluation of the continuing welfare programmes by different governmental committees and individual studies. These committees were the Elwin Committee in 1959, the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission (Dhebar Commission) in 1961 and the Shilu Ao Committee (Government of India) in 1969, which examined details of some well formulated development programmes like the Multi-purpose Tribal Development project, 1954 and special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks (SMPT) in 1956. In their wide-ranging recommendations, it is stated that these programmes failed to considerably impact the economic life of the tribals. The problems of indebtedness, land alienation, educational backwardness and inadequacy of communication continued to remain major obstacles to their progress. The National Committee on Development of Backward Areas (Sivaraman Committee) of the Government of India (1981) then suggested introducing the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), which would be effective in tribal areas with their uniqueness in resources, people social constraints, infrastructure development and ecosystem.

A research study has thoroughly examined the effects of a couple of such programmes like the Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Marginal Farmers' and Agricultural Labourers' Agency (MFAL), comprehensive Area Development Programme (CADP), Pilot Projects for Hill and Tribal Areas, and Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) during the period 1975-78 in Bastar district of the present Chhattisgarh state. The study concludes that grants and subsidies provided under these schemes were able to generate more employment among tribal beneficiaries; they created new sources of irrigation and introduced hybrid seeds and fertilizers, causing intensification in cropping and creation of more person days, in weeding and harvesting. This increase in farm employment, it is observed, led to additional active members in the families of the beneficiaries, who were now employed in several non farm economic activities. Increasing employment in both farm and non-farm sectors would obviously fetch more income and consequently formation of more assets (Yadav and Mishra 1980).

In the 1980s and 1990s, the government launched a new phase of development programmes known as the poverty alleviation programmes (PAPs) like the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), employment generation programmes (EGPs) like the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY), the Million Wells Scheme, and the Indira Awas Yojna. While the employment generation programmes are known for the priority given to creation of wage employment, the IRDP intends to create opportunity for self-employment. The impact of PAPs is -quite positive, as shown by a study on the larger project, sponsored by the UNDP and the Government of India, in Ranchi district of Jharkhand. It is recorded that 70 per cent

of the beneficiaries of the IRDP opted for pump sets for cultivating vegetables and quite a number of them started to rear milk animals in place of draught animals. In the meantime the tribal areas became exposed to market facilities and the products of these development schemes could receive a reasonable monetary value from the market. The overall impact of these schemes was displayed in the form of increasing person days and lower incidence of poverty, unemployment and migration. The beneficiaries of the landholding group got more benefits than the beneficiaries of the landless class in terms of generating additional employment (Singh 1996). This observation makes us conclude that the very success of welfare model of development depends on the minimal access of the poor tribals to agriculture and its allied economic activities; without having minimal access like land, the tribes would not be able to receive the benefit of these development programmes.

The programmes pass through a series of encounters with their problems like unsuitability to tribes, government failure in implementation, rampant corruption, non-completion of the targeted projects and consequent diversion of resources to other sectors, and concentration of benefits in the hands of the relatively better-off within tribes and non-tribals. It is alleged that the IRDP beneficiaries are not fairly selected; people not coming under the poverty line often get included in the list of beneficiaries; the selected beneficiaries are not informed in detail about the facilities available under the scheme; and many of them face difficulties before the actual disbursement of the loans.

The Tribal economy in India can be divided into broad categories depending on its association with types of production and fundamental resource base. The first type of tribal economy is characterized as hill forest-dwelling and the second as plain or valley-dwelling. The principal resource of the hill- or forest-dwelling economy is shifting cultivation with supplementary sources of hunting, fishing and food gathering. The tribal of the North-East and Himalayan regions mostly practice this form economy. According to the 44th-round survey of the NSSO (1989), about one-fourth of the tribal households in the North-East depended on primitive agricultural activities like shifting cultivation, whereas this ratio is only 2.5 per cent in the central tribal belt. Besides the North-East, the tribes some areas of Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand also practice this. The economy of plain-or valley-dwelling areas depends mainly on settled cultivation with supplementary sources of horticulture and livestock. Hunting, fishing and non-timber forest produce also significantly supplement the plain or valley-dwelling tribal economy.

The post-independence monetary investment in tribal areas has usually been done under two heads. The first is under development programmes in the form of exploitation of mineral and water resources, leading to establishment of industries and construction of dams. As we have discussed earlier, the social audit of this investment brought a great loss to tribes in the form of eviction, disappearance of community life and deprivation of common property resources, but the economic audit confirms its positive contribution to the growth of the GDP. The second type of investment aims at empowering tribes through distribution of subsidies and loans, and creating self-employment and wage-employment. This form of investment cannot be measured by economic audit; profit of this investment

may not flow back to the national exchequer as it does under the development-induced investment, but it bears abundant significance from the point of view of the human face of development. The present developmental discourse emphasizes this aspect and reiterates the importance of substantial investment for improvement of quality of life, which according to it is a significant means to a balanced and true development of a nation. This qualitative improvement is central to the welfare model of development.

Under the welfare model of development, the tribal economy gets transformed from its earlier isolation towards integration in the national economy, but such transformation has a limited impact on tribal life. For example, the tribal economy has not yet been fully monetized, because of partial continuity of barter system within the communities; though there are periodic markets in tribal areas, they have not yet risen up to an important resource-allocated device. The transformation process rather produces a series of crises during adjustment to the new form of economic activities, like in the case of the shifting cultivators with the resettlement programme.

It is noticed that infrastructural facilities are unequally distributed over the tribal areas, which becomes the cause of dissimilar results of the welfare development programme from one tribal place to another. The North-East, which experiences higher incidence of shifting cultivation, now able to create a higher amount of self-employment under the modern agriculture system (52 per cent) than has happened in the case of low incidence of shifting cultivation in the central tribal belt (38 per cent). This very equation of higher incidence of shifting cultivation with higher incidence of self-employed persons in modern agriculture in the North East traces its formidable links to successful implementation of the welfare model of development on the one hand, and the development of market facilities in their areas on the other. In Nagaland in particular, shifting cultivation in earlier days was meant for self-consumption, but today it produces cash crops like paddy, maize and potato on the same land. In brief, the success of the welfare model of development depends on the performance of the state and market, and the active participation of the target groups.

Tribes in a developing country like India experience a similar threat of globalization. Needless to say, the intensity of that threat is greater for the tribes living in poor states, as the investment on public welfare has started to decline during this period. There is no doubt that the growth rate of the gross domestic product (GDP) has accelerated since the 1980s, from 3.6 per cent between the 1950s and 1980 to 5.6 per cent during the 1980s. It reached 6 per cent in the 1990s in the wake of the economic reforms. On the other hand, the average share of public investment in the total investment has declined from 45 per cent in the early 1980s to about one-third in the early 2000s. The major part of the foreign investment, which flowed into India after the liberalization of Indian economy, gets invested mostly in four to five relatively developed states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, whereas poor states like Orissa, Bihar, Assam and Uttar Pradesh receive far less, on account of their inadequate infrastructure. These poor states usually depended on central grants for investment in public welfare, but these grants are now declining because of fiscal constraints (Bhattacharya and Sakthivel 2004: 1071-74). This shows that the international

capital that has flowed in through globalization contributes less to the welfare model of development, and that the internal investment "" that has been made by the state on this model also comes down to a considerable extent. As the tribal population is greatly concentrated in the poor states, their position becomes more vulnerable in this process. It is noticed that conversion of forest lands into national forest, as part of World Bank project, has brought international capital to the centre stage posing a threat to the tribal right to natural resources, right to access, right to land and right to life. It is correctly said that tribes are now confronting two forms of opposing relations: one with the state and another with international capital (Assadi 2004: 885).

The evidence of such an effect on the tribes is further reflected in terms of decline of their working population during the years of globalization and economic reforms. The work population ratio among tribal males and females declined during the period 1983-88, picked up in 1988-94 and fell again during the period 1994-2000 (NSSO). Such rise and fall in the ratio is higher among the tribals than among other categories of the population. Though there are a series of reasons for this, the increasing school attendance rate seems to be one of the important reasons; falling of forest land resources may be other factors decelerating employment opportunities. In the agriculture sector, tribes remained in a rather stagnant position during the period 1981-91: the percentage of cultivators and agricultural labourers; remained more or less the same over this decade, despite the favourable, situation of agriculture at the national level. This stagnation further indicates; that, even in the days of globalization and economic reforms, the tribes have not yet been able to diversify their occupation or break their traditional sources of employment. In this stagnant position, the welfare model of development needs to reshape its course by correcting the flaws in the present organizational set-up and to accelerate the effort for dissemination of benefits among the most deprived. The situation has not yet ripened to withdraw the welfare model of development from tribes in India.

Demand For Political Autonomy For Development

The first set of political autonomy movements among the tribes began during the colonial period, but the formation of separate states on ethnic lines was done only after independence. The North-East has experienced the formation of more tribal states than central India and has also experienced stronger militant struggles. As the North-East is on the international border, such militancy makes the region more politically sensitive. The Government of India has, therefore, tried to appease the agitated tribes by allowing the formation of more ethnic states in this region. In comparison the struggle for a separate Jharkhand state in central India began in 1915 but the state was formed as late as 15 November 2000. The support structure of the movement also varied in these two regions. In the North-East the movement percolated down to the grassroots level; the leaders at the centre of the movement kept contact with the people of the inaccessible tracts through the village chiefs. That was not the case in Jharkhand, where the movement was mostly confined to the accessible parts. In the year of the formation of Jharkhand state, for instance, the Pahariyas and Santhals of remote village, Murli Pahari, told reporters that they had not heard name

of Jharkhand and had seen no difference in their socio-economic status after the formation of this new state. Unlike in the North-East, village chiefs in Jharkhand were not always tribals; there were many non-tribal persons holding these positions. They did not support the local tribals during such movements.

The local problems in the North-East and central India has shaped their respective autonomy movements in terms of their objective and strategy. The demand for greater Nagaland or Nagalim, with unification of the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, is certainly not the same as the demand for a greater Jharkhand with the tribal-inhabited districts of Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. While the former witnesses extreme militancy, the latter sticks to democratic means. In central India, the autonomy movement is juxtaposed with the radical movement of the Naxalites, which began in Sahar and Sandesh areas of Bhojpur district in the late 1960s and firmly consolidated its position in the hilly terrain of Jharkhand in later years. The areas of influence of the Naxalite movement now extend to the tribal pockets of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, and even to the Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh. The principal distinction between the ideologies of the Naxalites and the political autonomy movements is that the former reject the role of the state as well as its development strategy in ensuring the rights of the voiceless tribes to wealth, power and justice, whereas the autonomy movements approve state control over the system as an alternate means for development of the tribe. As the North-East has already been experiencing one form of radicalism through its militancy, the Naxalite-based radicalism of the central tribal region does not find a fertile ground to grow in the North-East.

The desire for ethnic sovereignty coupled with the need to dethrone outsiders from their control over local resources has been the main motivating force behind these autonomy movements. In Jharkhand, the tribes perceive the meaning of political autonomy as freedom from the domination of Bihar, self-rule, right to land and local resources, and better employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the essence of such political autonomy is still etched on the minds of people even four years after the formation of the separate state. This means that the democratic state has failed to meet the expectations of the common people. Its political power is concentrated either in the hands of the tribal elite or non-tribals, isolating the tribal masses from the centre of the ruling power. That is the reason why the Adivasi- Moolvasi Janadhikar Manch has recently raised the issue of domicile for appointment of 10,000 trained primary school teachers in the new state. According to the protesters, the survey record of land rights, conducted around 1932, should be the basis for declaring a person as local and eligible for a government job. To restrict the domicile status, the Adivasi Chhatra Sangha protested against amendment of the Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act and the Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act, which are the two colonial legislations protecting the rights of the tribes to land as well as their native population status in this region.

Struggles For Rights To Resources

Forest and land are the fundamental livelihood resources of tribes. Among them, rights to the forest are appropriated through collective participation in the form of hunting, food

gathering, grazing, collection of wood, and for meeting all types of needs. Forests are regarded mostly as a common property resource. But the right to land has a mixed pattern: the community owns it as well as the individual member. There are three types of landowning structures in tribal areas: community land belonging to the village, land belonging to the village, land belonging to the clan and land owned by the individual member. Today, voices from the tribal pockets of all regions of India echo a common problem: the art increasing alienation of tribes from land and forest. At the all-India level 1.9 million cases of alienation have been officially reported, out of which only 400,000 cases were resolved by 2001.⁹ All across the country, the struggle against such alienation has intensified. Some of the important struggles reported today are the demand for rights over 'Jongol Jomeen' by the tribes of south Rajasthan; the traditional rights over the forest by the nomadic Van GuJJars of the Shivalik forests in Uttaranchal; the right to mine silica sand and stone from their land by the Kols of Shankargarh in Uttar Pradesh and the rights to land of the tribes of Kerala. The agitation against such alienation has often had a gruesome end: three persons were killed in the police firing in Kshipur, Orissa, in December 2000; 10 persons at the site of Koel Karo, Jharkhand, in February 2001; four persons in Mehandikheda,

State formation also paved the way for the consequent process of peasantization and subordination of the tribal economy to the more advance plough-based economy of the Hindu peasantry. This did considerable harm to tribal society. The landed gentry gained control over tribal territory and employed the tribes in surplus-generating activities. This was a process in which the tribes lost their right to resources after state formation. In Thane district of Maharashtra, for instance, the Maratha ruler created class of lords called 'Panderpeshas' who extracted exorbitant revenue from the tribes and kept them as slaves. Some of the tribes of the district got involved in 'dacoity' and 'gang robbery'. In a later period, to have them settled the British let these tribes cultivate forest land. In this new occupation these tribes had to rely on the local moneylender both for seed capital consumption loans to remain as independent ryots. This in turn led to transfer of land to the moneylender for non-repayment of loans and reduced to the status of tenants of the moneylender-landlord combine. Thus, peasantization is nothing but transformation of the tribe into tenants by alienation from their land (Upadhyaya 1980).

The second phase of land alienation resulted from restrictions imposed on shifting cultivation in the colonial period. The Travancore government in Kerala, for instance, enacted legislation curtailing shifting cultivation in 1866 and gave large areas of forest land to Englishmen on lease to raise plantations. With outsiders being allowed to exploit the forest resources, the area for shifting cultivation gradually shrank. The third phase of land alienation began with the commencement of development projects after independence. The forest land was then converted into plantations and sites for construction of hydel and other projects. The stringent forest laws enacted during this period and encroachment of their land by outsiders have aggravated the alienation.

Judicial intervention has complicated this alienation process in the 1990 The Supreme

Court in its landmark judgement in 1997, for example, upheld the verdict of the Andhra Pradesh High Court on restoration of the tribal rights to land in Scheduled Areas, stating that the operation of industry in Scheduled Areas is illegal except where the lease has been granted for state undertaking. The verdict had a negative impact on the present endeavour of the government to privatize some of those production sectors that operate from tribal areas. The reconfirmation of tribal rights to land in the Scheduled Areas means imposition of restrictions on production activity including exploitation of mineral resources by the outsiders in tribal areas, as mining leases in tribal areas cannot be given to anyone other than tribals. Fresh industrial investment in tribal areas would not, henceforth, be easy. Consequently, the government moved a plan for amendment in the Fifth Schedule to avoid legal hurdles for continuing production activities in tribal areas, which faced stiff protest in many parts of India. The National Campaign against Fifth Schedule Amendment (NCAFSA) complained that 10 million tribals out of their total 80 million populations have already been displaced and rendered destitute under various schemes in previous decades. If the present amendment were to materialize, it would open the flood gates for multinational companies to exploit the forest and mineral resources, abruptly causing fresh damage to the tribal economy.

The struggle for control over resources should be considered the outcome of tribal alienation from the mainstream development programmes which threaten their economic conditions. It is also an indicator of increasing self-initiative among the tribes to overcome this impasse.

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