Chapter –I

Introduction
CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

The Scheduled Tribes are also referred to as Adivasi, Girijana, Moolanivasi, Indigenous people, or Vanavasi as they live in the 15% geographical forest areas of India. The tribal’s life style is linked with the forest, as their cultural relationship is based on the worshipping of stones, water, trees, and animals and their livelihood depends on forest resources such as tubers, leaves, honey, fruits, flowers, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, seeds for consumption, Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), and subsistence agriculture.

In ancient times the tribals lived in the forest without constrain and used available forest products for their sustenance. But this all changed when the British brought in different forest policies to harvest timber from the forest and restricted the tribals’ use of the forest during the Pre-colonial period. After independence, the Government of India continued the old forest policies besides bringing in new ones. From this emerged the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 which put limitations on the tribals in many ways. The forest areas were declared as Wildlife Sanctuary, National Parks, and Tiger Reserves in the name of conservation and which very effectively restricted their movement within the forest. To compound their misery, the government also undertook different types of developmental projects such as big dams, mines, and hydropower projects which displaced millions of tribals. The rehabilitation done by the government was not commensurate to what the tribals had lost - their traditional culture and way of life. In the name of the development projects and conservation, the Adivasis still face displacement problems. Even with the Constitutional guarantees and different tribal development programmes they are facing a lot of problems and live below the poverty line.

The government has implemented different development schemes for the welfare of the tribals which sadly has not reached the people for whom it has been implemented and the tribals still lack basic facilities like housing, drinking water, sanitation, electricity, etc. in the tribal areas. The government officials did not implement the schemes properly and there was no follow up to the programmes so
initiated. Most of the tribals do not have land rights and irrigation facilities; they depend on rain for agriculture and lack educational and health facilities for which they have to walk miles to take advantage of. Tribal rights are violated in the name of development projects and conservation. The lifestyle of the tribals is based on their social systems, culture, economic, traditional council, food habit, agricultural practices, values and rituals, etc. Globalisation and modernisation has influenced the tribals; they are slowly losing their culture and adopting modern ways because of ease of communication, transport and education facilities, interaction with outside communities and use of modern media. All these can be sensed in the social changes among the tribals which includes the Soliga tribes of the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary.

As per the 2001 Census, the Scheduled Tribes population in the country is 8.43 crore, constituting 8.2 per cent of the total population. There are over 700 Scheduled Tribes notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India, spread over different States and Union Territories of the country (MOTA, Annual Report, 2010-11). Geographically, the tribal population is scattered all over India with certain important pockets of concentration. Broadly speaking, they can be divided into six major zones: (1) North-Eastern Zone, (2) North and North-Western Zone, (3) Central Zone, (4) Western Zone, (5) Southern Zone, and (6) Oceanic Zone (Chatterjee, 2012; Chaudhuri, 1997; and Bhengar et al., 1998). The major tribal groups are the Santhals, Munda, Oraon, Kharia, Ho, Gond, Bhils, Meena, and Lodha. They are also spread over the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan where they had migrated in the early colonial period in search of employment and now are settled in the respective areas. Tribals inhabit resources-rich lands, but are poor and exploited (Lakra, 2011).

The term ‘tribe’ indicates more about a group’s present political and economic status than what they represented in the past. And if we look at the present scenario then all tribes have one factor in common, i.e., it represents all the people who are either economically or geographically or socially marginalised with respect to the mainstream Indian population (Channa, 2008). The word “Adivasi” means the original inhabitants or indigenous people in Sanskrit. The Adivasis are thought to be the earliest settlers and the original inhabitants of the Indian peninsula (Bhengar et al., 1998). According to D.N. Majumdar: A Scheduled Tribe refers to “a collection of
families or groups of families, bearing a common name, members which occupy the
same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding
marriage, profession or occupation and have developed as well as assessed system of
reciprocity and mutuality of obligation”. According to Gillin and Gillin: “A tribe is a
group of local communities which lives in a common area, speaks a common dialect
and follows a common culture” (Rao, 2012). The terms “indigenous people”,
“indigenous ethnic minorities”, “tribal groups”, and “Scheduled tribes” describe
social groups with a social and cultural identity distinct from the dominant society
that makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the development process
(Satish, 1999).

The essential characteristics, as laid down by the first Lokur Committee, for a
community to be identified as Scheduled Tribes are: (a) Indications of primitive traits,
(b) distinctive culture, (c) shyness of contact with the community at large, (d)
geographical isolation, and (e) backwardness. (Seventy-five Primitive Tribal Groups)
Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups who are characterised by: (a) a pre-agriculture
level of technology, (b) a stagnant or declining population, (c) extremely low literacy,
and (d) a subsistence level of economy. More than half of the Scheduled Tribes
populations are concentrated in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh,
Maharashtra, Orissa, Jharkhand, and Gujarat (MOTA, Annual Report 2010-11).

Scheduled Tribes are those, which, are notified as such by the President of
India under Article 342 of the Constitution. The first such notification was issued in
the year 1950. The President considers characteristics like primitive traits, distinctive
culture, shyness with the public at large, geographical isolation, and social arid
economic backwardness before notifying them as a Scheduled Tribe. The tribal areas
are generally characterised by undulating terrain, dense forest, difficult
communication, and low density of population. Each tribal group with its own social
customs and dialects usually live in a compact area (Himani, 2010). In 1967, a Joint
Parliamentary Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri. Anil K. Chanda, was
constituted to consider the claim of various communities for inclusion in the category
of Scheduled Tribes. This Committee adopted the following five criteria for judging
the eligibility of any group as a tribe: (1) Indication of primitive traits, (2) Distinctive
culture, (3) Geographical isolation, (4) Shyness of contact with the larger community,
and (5) Backwardness (Atal, 2008).
Tribal situation in India

The resources-rich areas have predominantly been the habitat of tribal populations and it is proving them costly to be in a symbiotic relationship with nature in the midst of flora and fauna (Kujur, 2008). It is a well known fact that forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes have been residing on their ancestral land from times immemorial and that there exist a symbiotic relationship between the forest dwelling scheduled tribes (FDSTs) and the biological resources in India. They are integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest eco-system, including the wild life (Rajeswari, 2012). Indigenous people continue to be among the poorest and most excluded and marginalised- politically, economically, educationally, and socially. There are threats to the lands and resources of the indigenous people from the pressure of globalisation. Their underdevelopment, backwardness, low literacy, high mortality, poor health and hygiene, malnutrition, indebtedness, lack of basic amenities of life, and human rights violation reflects poorly on them (Kujur, 2011). It is quite well known that different scheduled tribes are at different levels of the socio-economic development and culture scale, and therefore there is vast difference in their ecological set-up and resources position. The nature of acceptability and assimilative power also vary from tribe to tribe (Das, 1997).

Majority of the tribals are backward, living in inaccessible and remote forest and hill areas where modern health facilities are not available as a result of which there is a rapid decline in the growth rate of the tribal population that is threatening their very survival (Lal, 2006). The Indian sub-continent has the largest population of tribals. They are born and grow as children of nature, but are deprived of many civic facilities. They are spread across the country, mainly in the forest and hilly areas. Most of them live below the poverty–line and suffer from illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, indebtedness, liquor habits, health problems, and insufficient infrastructure facilities (Nanjunda, 2007).

Majority of the so-called development projects, especially pertaining to water resources, mine, industries, tourism, etc., have been established in tribally dominated areas, indirectly displacing hundreds and thousands of the locals who are left to fend for themselves (Kujur, 2008). The poverty of the indigenous people has its roots in
dispossession, lack of rights, and territorial abuse of indigenous resources. Outside forces have always tried to restrict and reduce their living space, at the same time blaming indigenous peoples for unsustainable practices on ever decreasing areas. The process of dispossession continues with global extractive industries, bio-fuel plantation, and land speculation and grabbing and even by the establishment of nature parks (Viitanen, 2010). The real tribals actually became the victims of this lopsided development. They got permanently displaced, moved out of their own settlements, denied rights in their territories, and access to their resources. They are now without the means of earning a livelihood and are dependent on others (Prasad, 2008). Over time tribals have been constantly changing and have problems caused by land alienation, soil erosion, introduction of cash crops, poverty, indebtedness, industrialisation and urbanisation, social problem like prostitution, and from conversion to other communities and religion (Ghosh, 2008).

The vulnerable sections, mainly the tribals, have been deprived of land and livelihood by the state to build large development projects (Sahay, 2008). A major portion of India’s coal, forest, hydro-electrical, and mineral resources are located in traditional Adivasi lands. The Adivasis have never benefited from the wealth generated through exploiting these assets (Viitanen, 2010). Even though the tribals inhabit resources-rich regions they are powerless. The decision-makers, therefore, seem to assume that they can be displaced without any fear of resistance from them to the deprival of their livelihood (Fernandes, 1997). Over the last 30 years, the life of the tribal people has changed drastically. Government officials have been sent to the areas, but they often exploit the very people to whose lives they should be bringing a sensitive and positive development (Kachhap, 2011). Roadside villages have better infrastructure, transport, and communication facilities when compared to interior villages. The residents of the roadside villages are more exposed to the outside world when compared to the tribals who live in the interior regions. The extension of road, transport, and communication facilities to the interior areas helped bring the tribals to the mainstream, and as they came into contract with the advanced communities of the plains, they tried to change their life styles to mimic the so-called more civilised communities (Subramanyam and Mohan, 2006).
**Tribal movements**

Most often the tribal movements are ascribed to land alienation, indebtedness, bondage, and unequal exchanges and are directed against individual landlords, moneylenders, contractors, traders, and officials of the forest and revenue departments (Pathy, 2009). Right from 1798 to 1947, the tribals fought the British, refused to surrender and forced them to consider their spirit of freedom. Kanhu Santhal, Birsa Munda, Jatra Bhagat, Laxman Naik, Tantya Bhil, Bhagoji Naik, Kuvar Vasava, Rupa Naik, Thamal Dora, and Ambul Reddi are a few of the thousands of tribals who entered the battlefield (Prabhu, 1998). Pre–independence tribal India attracted the attention of social workers, social reformers and to some extent, administration hierarchy, therefore, after the colonial period an organised concern to protect the tribals against exploitation and improve their socio-economic life became a matter of vital importance. For the last three-four decades they have been the focus of national planning (Monga, 2010).

Tribals also know that their unity and leadership will help them fight inequality and unjust systems. The tribes are becoming more conscious of their identity. It is process whereby a ‘tribe in itself’ is being transformed to a ‘tribe for itself’. Not only are the tribes busy in creating a self-image, consolidating their own culture, but also in many parts of India they have started their own movements and founded their own organisations to combat injustice (Srivastava, 2010). In the past tribal communities were fighting the colonial rule and now they are fighting with the non-tribals as well as governments/ dominant political classes who have taken over their pristine resources, thus depriving them of their identity and livelihood. Tribals are primarily the victims of ‘development’ in post-Independent India. In British India they had been the victims of their expansionists and plundering policy. The tribal lands and resources got alienated during the British rule as well as in the post–British period. Whether in pre-Independent or post- Independent India, their condition remains the same, and they are the victims of pre- and post-Independence colonisers. Ironically, the same coloniser invented terms to categories them as “tribe” and attempted to reform them (Prasad, 2008).
Constitutional Guarantees

The Constitution of India provides social, economic, and political guarantees to the disadvantaged sections of the people. Some provisions specific to the Scheduled Tribes are:

Social

**Article 14 Right to Equality:** The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

**Article 15** [(4) Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.]

**Article 16** (1) There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

**Article 16**¹ (4A) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for reservation² [in matters of promotion, with consequential seniority, to any class] or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes which, in the opinion of the State, are not adequately represented in the services under the State.

**Article 338A** ² (1) There shall be a Commission for the Scheduled Tribes to be known as the National Commission for the Scheduled Tribes.

(5) It shall be the duty of the Commission—
(a) to investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes³ under this Constitution or under any other law for the time being in force or under any order of the Government and to evaluate the working of such safeguards;

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¹ Ins. by the Constitution (Seventy-seventh Amendment) Act, 1995, s. 2.
² Subs. by the Constitution (Eighty-fifth Amendment) Act, 2001, s. 2, for certain words.
³ The words “and Scheduled Tribes” omitted by the Constitution (Eighty-ninth Amendment) Act, 2003, s. 2 (w.e.f. 19-2-2004).
(b) to inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Castes; 
(c) to participate and advise on the planning process of socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State;

**Article 339 (1)** The President may at any time and shall, at the expiration of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution by order appoint a Commission to report on the administration of the Scheduled Areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the States.

The order may define the composition, powers and procedure of the Commission and may contain such incidental or ancillary provisions as the President may consider necessary or desirable.

(2) The executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of directions to [a State] as to the drawing up and execution of schemes specified in the direction to be essential for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the State.

**Article 342. (1)** The President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be.

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4 Cl. (3) renumbered as cl. (10) by the Constitution (Sixty-fifth Amendment) Act, 1990, s. 2 (w.e.f. 12-3-1992).
5 Ins. by the Constitution (Eighty-ninth Amendment) Act, 2003, s. 3 (w.e.f. 19-2-2004).
6 The words and letters “specified in Part A and Part B of the First Schedule” omitted by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, s. 29 and Sch.
7 Ins. by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, s. 29 and Sch.
8 Subs. by the Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951, s. 11, for “may, after consultation with the Governor or Rajpramukh of a State.”.
9 The words and letters “Specified in Part A or Part B of the First Schedule” omitted by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, s. 29 and Sch.
10 The words “or Rajpramukh” omitted by s. 29 and Sch., ibid.
Economic

Article 46 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.

Article 275 (1) such sums as Parliament may by law provide shall be charged on the Consolidated Fund of India in each year as grants-in-aid of the revenues of such States as Parliament may determine to be in need of assistance, and different sums may be fixed for different States:

Provided that there shall be paid out of the Consolidated Fund of India as grants-in-aid of the revenues of a State such capital and recurring sums as may be necessary to enable that State to meet the costs of such schemes of development as may be undertaken by the State with the approval of the Government of India or the purpose of promoting the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in that State or raising the level of administration of the Scheduled Areas therein to that of the administration of the rest of the areas of that State:

Article 335. The claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State:

Political

PART X THE SCHEDULED AND TRIBAL AREAS

Article 244. (1) The provisions of the Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State other than [the States of Assam, Meghalaya, and Tripura and Mizoram]].

12 The words and letters “specified in Part A or Part B of the First Schedule” omitted by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, s. 29 and Sch.
13 Subs. by the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 (81 of 1971), s. 71, for “the State of Assam” (w.e.f. 21-1-1972).
14 Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 2, for “and Meghalaya”(w.e.f. 1-4-1985).
(2) The provisions of the Sixth Schedule shall apply to the administration of the tribal areas in [the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram].

**Article 330 (1)** Seats shall be reserved in the House of the People for — (a) the Scheduled Castes; (b) the Scheduled Tribes except the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam; and] (c) the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam.

(2) The number of seats reserved in any State or Union territory for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes under clause (1) shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to that State or Union territory in the House of the People as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or Union territory or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or Union territory or part of the State, as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State or Union territory.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (2), the number of seats reserved in the House of the People for the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam shall bear to the total number of seats allotted to that State a proportion not less than the population of the Scheduled Tribes in the said autonomous districts bears to the total population of the State.

**Article 332.** (1) Seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, except the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam, in the Legislative Assembly of every State.

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15 Subs. by the State of Mizoram Act, 1986 (34 of 1986), s. 39, for “Meghalaya and Tripura” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987).
16 Constitution (Forty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 2, for “and Meghalaya” (w.e.f. 1-4-1985).
17 Subs. by s. 39, ibid., for “Meghalaya and Tripura and the Union Territory of Mizoram” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987). Subs. by the Subs. by the State of Mizoram Act, 1986 (34 of 1986), s. 39, for “Meghalaya and Tripura” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987). Subs. by s. 39, ibid., for “Meghalaya and Tripura and the Union Territory of Mizoram” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987).
18 Subs. by the Subs. by the State of Mizoram Act, 1986 (34 of 1986), s. 39, for “Meghalaya and Tripura” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987).
19 Subs. by s. 39, ibid., for “Meghalaya and Tripura and the Union Territory of Mizoram” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987).
20 Subs. by s. 39, ibid., for “Meghalaya and Tripura and the Union Territory of Mizoram” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987).
21 Subs. by the Constitution (Fifty-first Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 2, for sub-clause (b) w.e.f. 16-6-1986.
22 Subs. by the Constitution (Fifty-first Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 2, for sub-clause (b) w.e.f. 16-6-1986.
23 Subs. by the Constitution (Fifty-first Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 2, for sub-clause (b) w.e.f. 16-6-1986.
24 Ins. by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, s. 29 and Sch.
25 Ins. by the Constitution (Thirty-first Amendment) Act, 1973, s. 3.
26 Subs. by the Constitution (Fifty-first Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 3, for certain words (w.e.f. 16-6-1986).
27 Subs. by the Constitution (Fifty-first Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 3, for certain words (w.e.f. 16-6-1986).
(2) Seats shall be reserved also for the autonomous districts in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Assam.

(3) The number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of any State under clause (1) shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats in the Assembly as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or part of the State, as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State.

(4) The words and letters “specified in Part A or Part B of the First Schedule” omitted by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, s. 29 and Sch.

**Article 243D (1)** Seats shall be reserved for—

(a) the Scheduled Castes; and

(b) the Scheduled Tribes,

in every Panchayat and the number of seats so reserved shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in that Panchayat as the population of the Scheduled Castes in that Panchayat area or of the Scheduled Tribes in that Panchayat area bears to the total population of that area and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

(2) Not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes or, as the case may be, the Scheduled Tribes.

(3) Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

(4) The offices of the Chairpersons in the Panchayats at the village or any other level shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide: Provided that the number of offices of Chairpersons reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the

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28 Subs. by the Constitution (Fifty-first Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 3, for certain words (w.e.f. 16-6-1986).
Scheduled Tribes in the Panchayats at each level in any State shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of such offices in the Panchayats at each level as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State bears to the total population of the State:

**Policies for tribal empowerment**

The Government passed several Acts to aid the tribals. In order to protect the interests of the Scheduled Tribes with regard to land and other social issues, various provisions have been put forth in the Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution.

The Fifth Schedule under Article 244(1) of the Constitution defines “Scheduled Areas” Article 244. (1) The provisions of the Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State other than the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram].

(2) The provisions of the Sixth Schedule shall apply to the administration of the tribal areas in the States of Assam [Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram].

A Commission for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes was created in 1950 for effective implementation of the various safeguards provided in the Constitution for the SCs and STs and various other legislations. A separate National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) was set up on 19.2.2004.

As the increasing incidence of crimes/atrocities against STs has proved to be detrimental to their development, the Tenth Plan took special cognisance of this fact and initiated action to reactivate the Enforcement Machinery to ensure effective implementation of the Special Legislation, viz., the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 which was specially enacted to protect

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29 The words and letters “specified in Part A or Part B of the First Schedule” omitted by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, s. 29 and Sch.
30 Subs. by the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 (81 of 1971), s. 71, for “the State of Assam” (w.e.f. 21-1-1972).
31 Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 2, for “and Meghalaya” (w.e.f. 1-4-1985).
32 Subs. by the State of Mizoram Act, 1986 (34 of 1986), s. 39, for “Meghalaya and Tripura” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987).
33 Subs. by s. 39, ibid., for “Meghalaya and Tripura and the Union Territory of Mizoram” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987).
these vulnerable groups by extending more stringent punishment than provided under the IPC. The Comprehensive Rules framed under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 will continue to provide relief and rehabilitation to the affected persons.

The Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act of 1996 Act. With the strength and support of PESA Act, 1996 the traditional Gram Sabhas in the tribal areas are being endowed with special functional powers and responsibilities to ensure the effective participation of the Tribal Societies in their own development that is in harmony with their culture so as to preserve/conserve their traditional rights over the natural resources. All states, except for Bihar, have so far, enacted parallel State legislations to give effect to the provisions of the PESA Act, 1996. Thus, the PESA Act, 1996 is a landmark legislation which is going to legitimise the involvement of tribals in their own empowerment process not only as active participants, but also as effective decision-makers, implementers, monitors, supervisors, and evaluators.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has, during the year 2006, formulated a draft’ National Tribal Policy covering all important issues that concerned tribals. But this tribal policy has not yet been passed in the Parliament till date because of the lack of interest among the political parties on this issue.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 and rules 2008 which has been brought out by the Government of India, will help the tribals to record their rights which had not been possible till now since they were living in the forests for generations. As per the Government notification issued on 1.1.2008 this Act would also prove to be very beneficial in getting their land, community, and basic rights.

**Government Programmes and tribal development**

The first five year plan emphasised the provision of additional finance through a community development approach to address the problems of tribal people. Towards the end of the plan (1954), 43 special Multipurpose Tribal Development Projects (MTDPs) were created. This approach continued during the Second Five
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Year Plan. In the Third Five Year Plan, the Community Development Blocks where the concentration of tribal population was 66% and above was renamed the Tribal Development Blocks (TDBs). The Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) was started in 1972 for the rapid socio-economic development of the tribal people and was adopted for the first time in the Fifth Year Plan. The Government also initiated different programmes like the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Modified Area Development Approach Pockets (MADA), cluster and Primitive Tribal Groups, educational programmes etc, for the development of the tribals.

The tribal communities are not treated as equal partners in the process of development. They are merely looked at as passive recipients. As a result, tribal communities are becoming increasingly alienated because the programmes are based on top-to-bottom approach rather than bottom-to-top approach in which the tribal communities will be able to participate in terms of equality with their native genius of looking at their problems and arriving at solutions (Suryanarayana, 1997).

The state usually declares a myriad of ineffectual development programmes one after another and this practice is more commonly to be observed at the announcement of elections when the party may not even possess the necessary majority to successfully implement these programmes, but is simply a political gimmick to hoodwink the poor. Studies have shown that 75-90 per cent of the tribals have never received any help from any of the welfare schemes. Even the Eighth Plan acknowledges that no more than 20 per cent of the tribal people have received any benefit from the special welfare schemes (Prabhu, 1998). A majority of the tribals receive no benefits and continue to live in poverty and ignorance. The existing policies and schemes of the government have succeeded in perpetuating the inequality syndrome. So far, the development schemes have only benefited the elite. They have taken maximum advantage of the protective safeguards. The elite and the bureaucrats control the power structure and exploit the tribals. The present tribal development approach lays emphasis on the development of agriculture, land reclamation and land development. Development projects like digging of wells, promotion of left irrigation, animal husbandry and poultry farming are important in the Tribal Sub-Plan (Mallick, 2011).
Many development schemes introduced in the tribal areas after independence did not take care of the cultural background of the tribal people and their traditional skills. Development implies growth plus change which involves both material and human factors. Thus, the concept of development has to be defined in terms of the tribals’ cultural background, their values and historical experiences (Samal, 2010).

Government and non-government agencies which try to usher change in the name of development seldom pay much heed to the consequences that such changes may bring to the lives of the tribals. As a matter of fact, these so-called developments bring about drastic changes in their traditional culture (Ghosh and Johnson, 1997). There are several schemes in Karnataka for the progress of the tribals under the Intensive Tribal Development Projects (ITDP) introduced in 1978-79. Annual tribal sub-plans are formulated for the intensive development of the tribals with a cluster approach to cross the poverty line. The schemes implementation is far from satisfaction. If ignorance and indifference are the reasons on the part of the tribals, the negative attitude of the officials towards the concept of development itself and their lethargy in implementing the schemes are responsible for such sluggish development (Damle, 1997). The socio-cultural and economic conditions of the tribals vary considerably. Though the Central and State Government have been trying their best for the all-round development of the tribals, it has not yet achieved the desired results. The tribals have been the victims of colonial-feudal domination, ethnic prejudices, illiteracy, poverty, and isolation (Saran, 1997).

The life style of tribals

Life styles serve as “social conversations”, in which people differentiate themselves from other people, signal their social position and psychological aspirations. Since many of the signals are mediated by goods, life styles are closely linked to material and resource flows in the society.

“Sustainable life styles are patterns of action and consumption, used by people to affiliate and differentiate themselves from others, which meet basic needs, provide a better quality of life, minimise the use of natural resources and emissions of waste and pollutants over the lifecycle, and do not jeopardise the needs of future generations.” (UNCED, 1992) Sustainable life styles should reflect specific cultural, natural, economic, and social heritage of each society.
Sustainable consumption is related to the process of purchasing, consuming and disposing of products, while sustainable life styles comprise a broader set of activities and values, such as interactions and education, which include, but are not limited to material consumption.

The current consumption patterns and life styles have been formed by centuries of our civilisation and are driven by economic forces, technological progress, political settings, environmental issues, sociological and cultural contexts, and psychological determinants.

Sustainable life styles means rethinking our ways of living, how we buy and how we organise our everyday life. It is also about altering how we socialise, exchange, share, educate, and build identities. It means transforming our societies and living in harmony with our natural environment (Falemo, 2009).

India has the largest concentration of tribal people anywhere in the world except perhaps for Africa. The tribals are children of nature and their life style is conditioned by the eco-system. India, with a variety of ecosystems, presents a varied tribal population throughout its length and breadth. A life style takes shape within the specific interweaving of economic, political, cultural and religious frameworks, patterns and discourses. Under conditions of globalisation, it is also greatly influenced by demography and technology. Tribal people are usually understood as those who have a mainly self-sufficient way of life, largely outside the mainstream of urban nation-states. According to the International Labour Organisation Convention 169 also makes a distinction between ‘indigenous and tribal’ through it defines tribal peoples whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations (Corry, 2011).

Tribal people living within or close to the forest always try to maintain a close link of their socio-cultural and ritualistic life with the forested environment. In their various social and religious observances the nature gets prime importance and this attitude is then extended to the economic life which has direct reliance on the forests (Sarkar, 1997). The forest is intimately connected with tribal life as many tribals rites,
rituals, and festivals are centered around forests (Bhowmick, 1997). With passing days, pressure is mounting and the state machinery is using every trick in the book to force or harass the Ban Gujjars, in the Uttarakhand state in general and in the national park in particular, to give up their simple and eco-friendly life style and settle down in the plains, without being provided any option for relocation, into not just leaving the park but also giving up their traditional life style (Pallavi, 2010). In the process of development, some changes have occurred in the economic life of the Nyishi, which are also visible in the socio-cultural life of the people (Hina, 2010).

The process of tribal transition is related more to the change in the basic socio-economic conditions of their life. There is no doubt that the assimilation of tribal population into the wider folds of society through the adoption of the language of the dominant landowning section of the locality by accepting their belief systems and thereby becoming Hindus or Christians are important aspects of transition (Damle, 1997). The tribal societies of India have come in contact with various external and or internal forces and are in constant change. As they are no longer in isolation, but exposed to various forces, so change in their culture is inevitable. Many people started exploiting the poor, illiterate, helpless tribal people and pushing them below the poverty line.

**Tribals in Karnataka**

The Government of India has notified 50 Scheduled Tribal communities in Karnataka, of which the Jenu Kuruba and the Koraga are Primitive Tribal groups. A majority of the Scheduled Tribals is living on the plains in the rural and urban areas and around 12 tribal communities are living in the forested areas and their livelihood depends on the forest resources. They constitute 6.6 per cent of the State and 4.1 per cent of the country’s ST population (Implementation of the SC& ST (PoA) Act, 1989 in Karnataka, Report 2009). The growth rate of the Scheduled Tribal population in 1991-2001 was 80.8 per cent which is considerably higher in comparison to the overall 17.5 per cent of the state population. This steep growth is due to the addition of Naik, Nayaka, Beda, Bedar, and Valmiki as sub-groups of Naikad. This sub-group has been enumerated for the first time in the 2001 Census. Naikad, the largest ST has registered a high growth rate of 113.0 per cent compared to 8.8 per cent during 1981-1991. Of the STs, namely, Jenu Kuruba and Koraga have a population of 29,828 and
18.071, respectively, in the 2001 census. Jenu Kurubas are living in Mysore, Kodagu, and Bangalore districts and the Koraga in Dakshina Kannada and Dharwad districts. Naikad alone constitute 84.3 per cent of the ST population of the state. Gond 136,700(3.9 per cent), Koli Dhor 80,627 (2.3 per cent), and Marati 63,549 (1.8 per cent) are in the second, third, and fourth positions (Census of India, 2001). The tribal population of Karnataka increased from 19.1 lakh in 1991 to 34.64 lakh in 2001. (Sudarshan, 2006).

There are 34.64 lakh tribals distributed throughout Karnataka as per the 2001 Census. Raichur and Bellary contain a large number of tribal communities. Toda, Beda, Soliga, Hakki –Pikki, Konda Kapu, Koraga, Bhils, Chenchu, Gonds, Maleru, Badaga, Hasala, Media, Iruliga, Jenu Kuruba, Yarava, and Siddis are some important tribes of Karnataka (Manjunatha and Annapurna, 2012). Jenu Kurubas, Kadu Kurubas, Betta Kurubas, Sholagas, and Yeravas are the major tribal groups living in Heggedadevanakote (H.D.Kote), while Sholigas are a numerically dominant tribal group in Biligiri Ranga Betta (B.R.Hills). Among these tribal communities, Jenu Kurubas, a matriarchal tribe, are recognised as the most backward tribe and they are numerically dominant in H.D.Kote. The Jenu Kurubas are traditionally a hunting and gathering tribe with their livelihood system centered on forest products. In 1970, when the forest habitat of the Soligas in the B.R.Hills, was declared a protected area, they had to stop some of their traditional livelihood practices such as shifting cultivation. Similarly, Jenu Kurubas were displaced from their forest habitat when dams were constructed across the rivers Kabini and Taraka, and Nagarhole, Kakanakote, and Bandipura were declared as National Parks. Tribal groups who are displaced from their forest habitat do not have access to development, an alternative livelihood should have been provided for them (Vijayalakshmi, 2003).

The Betta Kuruba and Jenu Kuruba tribes live in the Nagarahole and Bandipura national reserve forest areas (Karnataka and Kerala), Soligas live in M.M.Hills and B.R.Hills (Karnataka) and Nilagiri Hills (Tamil Nadu), and the Yerava tribe in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. This is the geographical distribution of these four tribes (Puttaraju and Heggade, 2012). The Iruligas residing at Ramanagar district are different from the others, being far less civilised. They are jungal tribes of the plains (Padma and Sushi, 2010). Historically, the tribal economy was based on subsistence
agriculture, hunting and gathering, but since the tribal people treated land as common resource and they rarely had land titles they lost their lands to outsiders when the exploitation of forest resources began to take place on a significant scale. This caused a majority of them to end up as small and marginal landholders. The human development status of the Schedule Tribe is more than a decade behind the rest of the population of the state and they are the poorest and most deprived of all sub-population in the state (Sudarsha, 2006).

Of the 50 Scheduled Tribes, the Jenu Kuruba, Betta Kuruba, Soligau, Yerava, Male Kudiya, and Iruligas are living in wildlife sanctuaries, National parks, tiger reserves and protected forest areas of the Western Ghats without basic facilities. Due to various forest policies they were relocated from the interior of the forest to the exteriors and even today they are facing relocation problems in the name of the tiger conservation. The forest based tribals have a symbiotic relationship with nature and their economy and culture is associated with the forest, having an in-depth knowledge of the forest ecosystem. This knowledge can be used for forest conservation. If the government can provide all the facilities within the forest reserve and involve the tribal youths and the community in their present work it would serve the dual purpose of conserving the tiger and preserving the life style of the Soligas.

Soligas distribution

The Soligaru, more popularly known as Soliga, are one of the Scheduled Tribes and inhabit the hilly and forest tracts of the Western Ghats of Mysore district. They are found concentrated in and around the forest tracts of Mahadheshwar Hills and Biligiri Rangana Hills in Kollegal and Yelandur taluks, respectively, and also in Gundlupet and Heggaddevana Kote taluks of Mysore district. They are to be found in minority outside the state; they go by the name Sholaga and are found in the contiguous area of Tamil Nadu. In the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, this community was notified only in the districts of Bangalore, Tumkur, Chitradurga, Kolar, Mysore, Hassan, Shimoga, Chikmagalur, and Mandya (Koppad et al., 1961). According to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 and the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Part C State) Order 1951 as modified by The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956 and all subsequent amending notifications issued up to-date, the communities indicated under
each of the different regions specified hereunder have been declared as Scheduled Tribes in the respective regions of Mysore district. Persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes, namely, Gowdalu, Hakkipiki, Hasalaru, Iruliga, Jenu Kuruba, Kadu Kuruba, Malaikudi, Maleru and Soligaru, may profess any religion.

The Soligas are an aboriginal forest tribe inhabiting the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In Karnataka, they use term Gowda, meaning a headman, as their title. According to the 1981 Census, their total population in Karnataka, written as Soligaru, is 16,390 (Singh, 2003). They are mainly distributed in the interior of the forests skirting the slopes of Biligiriangana (BR) hills and other hilly areas of Chamarajanagar and Mysore district (Manjunatha B. R. et al., 2012). The forest regions of Yelandur, Chamarajanagar, Nanjangud, and Kollegal which includes the Biligiri Rangaswamy and Malai Mahadeshwara Hill ranging to the southern part of Karnataka are inhabited by nearly 20,000 indigenous people, called Soligas (Somasundaram, 1998 and Vani et al., 1990). Soliga settlements are traditionally known as ‘Podu’ or ‘doddi’. These simple folk lived a unique life of peace and freedom though the hardship of living in the forest is no less severe. After all they are children of the forest who live in perfect harmony with nature (Vani et al., 1990). The Soligas are an indigenous tribal community who live in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary (Setty et al., 2008). A total of 115 podus/ doddies/colonies come under Yelandur, Kollegal, and Chamarajanagar taluks of which 61 Podus come under the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary as they live on the periphery of the Sanctuary.

**Soligas of Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary**

The Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Chamarajanagar district of Karnataka state, India and is spread across the three taluks of Yelandur, Kollegal, and Chamarajanagar. The sanctuary derives its name "BILIGIRI" from the white rocky cliff over which on the tabletop is a temple of the Lord Vishnu locally known as Rangaswamy. It is also said that the hill gets its name from the white mist and silver clouds that cover it for a greater part of the year. In Kannada, Biligiri means white hills- hence the name. This unique bio- geographical entity which is situated in the middle of the bridge between the Western and Eastern ghats in South India is located 11°43’ and 12°09’ North latitude and 77°01’ and 77°15’ East longitude. The whole of the sanctuary lies in the southernmost district of Chamarajanagar of Karnataka State.
The Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Wildlife Sanctuary is spread over 574.82 sq kms and is well known for its rich biodiversity of flora and fauna. It is a uniquely diverse area having scrub forest, dry-deciduous forest, moist-deciduous forest, semi-evergreen forest, evergreen forest, shola forest, and grassland.

The indigenous tribe of Soligas have been living here since time immemorial. 148 podus/colonies/doddis of 31,444 forest based tribal peoples are living in Chamarajanagar district of which around 12,500 Soligas have been living in 61 Podus in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary. The Soligas life style is derived from living in the forest, from where they derive most of their basic requirements such as tubers, leaves, honey, fruits, flowers, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, seeds, fuel, fodder, fiber, medicinal plants, and they also collect Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs) like honey, lichen, amla, soapnut, soap berry, wild mango, etc. and make broomsticks, all of which they sell to LAMPS thus earning nearly 60% of their income from the forest. The Soligas have a symbiotic relationship with the forest and, they worship 489 sacred sites of Devaru (God), Maramma or Tayi (Goddess), and Veeru or Muni (Hero). All these are in the formation of small or big stones; Habbi or Jala (water) is in the formation of water pits and streams while Kallugudi (ancestral temple) are small stone temples. The Sagga (burial ground) are sacred sites which are to be found all over the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary. Each Kula or clan has six types of sacred sites to worship. They celebrate the Rotti habba and Hosa ragi habba which are the traditional harvesting festivals during which they sing songs about the forest flowers, trees, animals, god, goddess, birds, agriculture, animals, rain, ragi, etc. This ecological knowledge is passed from the older generation to the younger generation every year during the festival days. Soligas were engaged in shifting cultivation, but this was banned in 1974 under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, when the Biligiri Rangaswamy Reserve forest areas was declared as the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary. This forced the Soligas to practice agriculture as practised throughout the country on a given land without land record and they were also engaged by the forest department for local labour work.

The Government of Karnataka banned the NTFPs collection in 2004 at the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary; one of the Deputy Conservator of Forests allowed the NTFPs collection till 2006 after which the new Deputy Conservator of Forests totally
stopped the NTFPs collection and sale. Soligas used to get 60% of their income from NTFPs, after which they faced unemployment as the Government did not provide any alternate sources of employment, causing the Soligas to migrate for employment or face food insecurity.

**Social structures of Soligas**

A tribe (or sub-tribe) is segmented into patrilineal totemic clans. All these communities are patrilineal, patrilocal, and patriarchal and possess both nuclear and extend forms of family, patrilineages, and clans. The social structure of the tribal society is almost homogenous, non-hierarchical, segmentary, kin –based and relatively closed as social solidarity, cohesion, and egalitarianism constitute the hallmark of tribal society. A tribal social structure is elementary in nature; individuals are grouped according to kin or clan. The largest significant reference group is the tribe or a segment of it, the ‘sub-tribe; which is endogamous. Such a social unit is segmented into a number of homogenous exogamous totemic clans (Behura et al., 2006). The clan system prevails in most tribes as it is a significant tribal practice. It avoids consanguinity and keeps the population genetically healthy (Jayadeva et al., 1990).

Soliga are also divided into a number of exogamous steps locally known as Kula. At different areas the number of Kulas followed by a division vary so that, some follow five Kula, others seven Kula, and still some others follow twelve Kula (Koppad et al., 1961). The clans are guided by the principle of patrilineal descent. The Soliga call themselves as belonging to five –clans(eidu Kulada Soligaru) but in the course of time, a sixth clan came into existence. The names of the traditional five clans are Teneru, Haleru, Shalikiru, Belloru, and Suraru. For ritual and ceremonial occasions, members of the above five clans are invited. When death and birth take place, ritual impurity accrues to all members of the five clans (Morab, 1977). Each Kula ascribes to particular responsibilities. Now six Kulas have evolved: Halaru, Baleyaru, Suriru, Selikiru, Belliru, and Teneyaru and out of marriage (exogamy) between Kulas became the norm. The elders assert that there are no hierarchies between Kulas as it is the functional mode of allocating responsibilities for better administration (Mandal et al., 2010). The Soligas of BRT Wildlife Sanctuary have five clans or Kulas and over the years one more clan was included in the Kula structure and so seven Kulas or clans Soligas are living on the periphery of the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary and Tamil Nadu forest areas.
Social functions (Tribal Council)

The social life of the Soliga is governed by a strong feeling of kinship. They have proved exemplary with regard to individual as well as group relationship. Violence is almost non-existent. All issues and difference are sorted out by the Nyaya (justice) system which is held in high esteem. Intricate problems are solved in a dignified manner. The unique feature in this system is compassion for the culprit without lowering the standards of justice (Rao, 1990). The tribal justice system is another important aspect of tribal culture. It provides justice to its member according to accepted tribal code. Special rituals of burial are unique to tribal culture (Jayadeva et al., 1990). One of the stronghold of the tribal traditional knowledge is their Nyaya (justice) system. For the past centuries, the Soliga have had their own justice system which they have still preserved till the present day. It may be worthy of observation that not a single dispute has ever gone to the police or been settled outside their community. The Yajamana, Cheluvadi, and Kolukar are the discipline implementing authorities and the nyaya sabha is the congregation of the people (Somasundram, 1990). All differences are settled in their Nyaya Panchayat (Court of Justice) amicably and with due regard to the age, economic, and other considerations of the people involved (Somasundaram, 1998).

The traditional council of the Soliga is known as the Kula Panchayat. This was very effective about 25 years ago. There were hereditary office bearers such as the Yajaman (headman), Pattegar, Kolkar (messenger), and Chalevadi (assistant). Certain clans were associated with these offices. For instance, the Yajaman (headman) was always selected from the Chalikeru and Haleru clans. The Pattegar belongs to the Teneru clan, the Kolkar from the Belleru clan, and the Chalavadi from the Suraru clan. They dealt with cases of theft, adultery, and disputes, and cash fine or social boycott was imposed on the offenders. Nowadays, the families carry the titles of these offices, but the functionaries are not effective (Morab, 2003). Exposures to external socio-cultural changes have altered the traditional authority structure (Lele, 1998). The Soliga traditional council (Kula panchayat) is not so effective now instead, they have established an association at the village and taluk levels (Singh, 2003). The Soliga Nyaya Panchayati or Kula Panchayati (tribal council) structure is continued and practiced in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary. It is not so effective nowadays because
of the modern practices involving law courts and police stations, but some of the minor disputes are settled by the tribal council while major disputes are referred to police stations. Sometimes the Soliga Association of Taluk Soliga Abhivrudhi Sangha and the Zilla Budakattu Girijana Abhivrudhi Sangha handle the disputes and settle the problems within their association.

The Dress Code of the Soligas

The men wear Pancha - a piece of cloth four yards in length which is wrapped round the waist and covers the knees along with a Kavacha (tailor–stitched shirt). The women wear Sele (Sari) and Ravike (bodice) (Morab, 1977). The traditional apparel of the Soliga is very simple. The men also wear a small Jotra (cloth from waist down to knee). A piece of cloth is wrapped around their shoulder to ward off the cold. Wearing shirts has come into vogue in recent years and is called as Kavacha. Women wear sarees of colours that blend with the forest hues (Rao, 1990). Soliga dress is very simple; the conventional dress of men includes a loin cloth extending up to the knees and is known as mundu. The younger ones may however, use a shirt and instead of the mundu, wear a tailored half pant like undergarment of cheap cloth. The traditional dress of females is the cotton colored sari wrapped around their body. The upper border of the back and the front may be pulled up, to cover the bosom and it is secured by a knot tied on the right shoulder (Koppad et al., 1961). The Soligas men wear shirt and Pancha, the younger generations wear the shirt, pant, and T-shirts, and women wear Sarees and blouse. The present younger generation dress up like outsiders. The influence of the outside world is reflected in their modern dressing patterns and the traditional dressing has changed among the Soligas.

Food of the Soligas

The staple diet of the Soligas is Ragi (millet) (Morab, 1977; Somasundaram, 1998; Koppad et al., 1961). Musukinajola (maize) is also grown in the forest fields and consumed in large quantities. Among the pulses, Hurali (horse gram), Alasande(vigna catjang), and Avare (Phaseolus radiatus) are commonly consumed. The vegetables used are the leaves of Sasavi (mustard), Hedda (omaranthus oleraceus), Keera (amarantus mango stanus), and kumbal (pumpkin) which are cultivated. Among the wild varieties, Halasu (Juck), Seebe (Guava), wild plantain, and Bidiru
Kalale (young bamboo shoots) are used in the preparation of vegetables. Cherries and fruits (raw ones) such as Tebura, Geru, Kadu Sebu, Nerilu Mavu, etc. which are grown in the forests are extensively consumed (Morab, 1977). Leaves and other forest produce which form part of their diet are tender bamboo shoots, fruits, honey, edible roots like yams, etc. (Koppad et al., 1961).

The traditional food system of the Soligas which is based on hunting, shifting cultivation, and collection of a wide variety of NTFPs, is intrinsically linked with the forest. These traditional food systems are already being affected by the reduced access to forest resources and the widespread growth of Lantana (Mandal et al., 2010). Traditionally the Soligas consume different types of leaves, fruits, mushrooms, seeds, flowers, tubers, honey, bamboo shoots, etc. From the forest; cultivated crops of cereals, legumes, and oil seeds, as also vegetables, spices and condiments, aromatic plants, tubers, fruits besides consuming purchased shops food items of rice, wheat, vegetables, green leaves, fruits, milk and milk powder, oils, beverage, etc. for daily consumption. The Soligas have adopted modern food items under the influence of globalisation, but they are also eating their traditional food resourced from the forest. The food habits of the Soligas is slowly but surely changing from eating naturally occurring produce from the forests to cultivated agricultural produce and readily available market products. Earlier they would consume one meal a day, nowadays the families are having two meals a day, once in the morning (breakfast) and the second towards the evening (dinner). In addition, those who are working on daily wages basis are eating two times a day and sometimes three times a day.

The Marriage Systems of the Soligas

The Soliga of the Hills have the following types of connubial relationships, namely, (1) Marriage by force, (2) Elopement, (3) Marriage by services, and (4) Negotiated marriage (Morab, 1977). The Soligas marry when they are adults and generally the alliances are arranged through negotiation. Some cases of marriage by elopement have also taken place (Singh, 2003). Marriage by elopement takes place when a young boy and girl fall in love with each and elope to a distant Podu where they are provided food and water. They are then brought back to their native Podu where a “Nyaya” (inquiry) is held in which it is decided to levy a fine of Rs. 12.50/-. 
After which a simple marriage ceremony is held and the young couple are blessed by the elders and it is celebrated with a community feast (Somasundaram, 1998). The Soliga marriage system is simple. The tribal youth begin their courting and married-life on a romantic note. There is nothing mechanical or routine in a Soliga marriage. The couple who are interested in each other first share fruit and honey and become intimate. Later they elope into the interior regions of the forest. If they choose to visit another Podu they are received well and given food. Eventually they are traced by their own Podu people and brought back. After the Nyaya at which they are nominally fined, they are permitted to live a married life and set up a home. There are no forced marriages (Rao, 1990).

Currently, Soligas are practicing four kinds of marriage, namely, Love marriage (Elopement marriage), Arranged marriage, Kuduvai marriage, and Marriage by services, this type of marriages continued among the Soligas. Among all these love marriages (elopement marriage) and arranged marriages are more preferred by the Soligas, and the other two types of marriages can also be observed but the numbers are small. In recent years they are becoming more inclined towards arranged marriages as they try to imitate other communities. Media, marketing, and interaction with outside communities is making them adopt alien cultural aspects of marriage. The marriage system is slowly changing among the Soligas.

**The Language of the Soligas**

Soligas have two dialects: one which is spoken by the five clans group of the Male Soliga and has more affinity with the Kannada language and the other is spoken by the seven clan group of the Urali Soliga, which is a mixture of Kannada and Tamil. Both groups speak Kannada with others (Morab, 2003). The language they speak among themselves is a dialect of the Dravidian language, Kannada. But Urali Soliga divisions use the Soliga language for intra-group communication and Kannada for inter-group communication. They use the Kannada script (Singh, 2003). Soligas speak Soliganudi, a dialect that has 65% lexical similarity with Kannada, a Dravidian language spoken in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra (Morlote et al., 2011). The dialect of the Soliga is Soliganudi which has a melliferous rhythm and is sonorous. Having no original script, the Kannada script is used for writing and learning purposes (Rao, 1990). The Soligas residing within the BRT
Wildlife Sanctuary speak Soliganudi and those who live in different parts of Karnataka state speak Kannada, while those who live on the borders of Tamil Nadu speak Elukulada base or the seven clan language which is a mix of Kannada and Tamil. As for the Soligas who have migrated elsewhere for employment, are found to speak different local languages. For the purpose of education, the Soligas are being taught Kannada, English, and Hindi which in turn has decreased the number of people speaking Soliganudi in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Economy of the Soligas

The tribal economy is a forest-based economy. Many forest products are used one way or the other in the rites and ritual of the tribals (Bhowmick, 1997). Almost 90 per cent of the tribals still live in the forest tracts. As forest dwellers, their life support system has been intricately linked with the forest in the forms of ‘anna’, ‘aarogya’, and ‘aasra’ (food, well-being, and security), the basis of their symbiotic relationship and their physical and cultural survival (Prabhu, 1998). Tribal people are traditional forest dwellers and they consider the forests as their nourishing mother who supplies them with food, fuel, and fodder (Tripathy, 1997).

The traditional economy of the Soliga is mostly based on shifting cultivation and collection of minor forest produce. There also other small economic activities, like hunting, trapping, fishing, and honey collecting (Morab, 1977; Setty et al., 2008; and Singh, 2003). When BRT was designated a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1972, shifting cultivation and hunting was completely banned and the Soligas were allocated small pieces of land to practice settled agriculture (Setty et al., 2008). Now they have taken to forest and agricultural labour. A few of them are landowning cultivators (Singh, 2003). Besides subsistence crops such as millet and maize, mulberry and coffee are also grown. Minor forest produce such as honey, barks of certain trees, soapnut, medicinal roots, etc. are also collected by the people (Bhat, 1997).

Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)

While the Soligas collect different types of NTFPs like honey, lichen, soapnut, soap berry, amla, wild mango, etc. throughout the year, these products are seasonal and hence can be collected only within a particular time frame. Handmade broomsticks are to be had year round. The NTFPs thus accumulated are marketed
through Large Scale Adivasi Multi-Purpose Societies (LAMPS) and are a major source of income. The Government of Karnataka set up LAMPS for the development of the Soligas. At present, there are three LAMPS functioning in B.R.Hills, Hanur, and Chamarajanagar of the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary. A significant portion of the Soligas income comes from the sale of non-timber forest produce (NTFPs) - primarily honey, lichen, gooseberry, and shikakai (Gandhi, 2010 and Lele, 1998). Coffee is fast replacing ragi, maize, and banana as the major produce here as it not targeted by wild boars, which once decimated up to 80 per cent of the food crops (Gandhi- 2010, 1998). Estimates indicate that the contribution of income (including imputed income from subsistence crops) is ~60 per cent (Lele, 1998).

The Soligas retained sole right to NTFP extraction under the agency of tribal cooperative, LAMPS (Setty et al., 2008 and Bhat, 1997). The community at B.R.Hills derives nearly 59% of their total cash income from NTFPs, in Nagarahole 24 per cent, and in MM Hills 16% (Shaanker et al., 2004). Their predominant livelihood is through agriculture, NTFP collection, and labour in coffee estates or the forest department (Kothari et al., 2012). Very few families are engaged in livestock rearing. Most of the livestock is reared for self-consumption and the sale is limited. 75 per cent of Soligas have land and the remaining 25 per cent are landless. They have small size of landholding and are dependent on the rains for agriculture as they do not have irrigation facilities for their agricultural lands. Now Soligas cultivate agricultural crops like ragi (millet), maize, and horticultural crops like coffee, pepper, banana, and fruits. They have started to cultivate vegetables like potatoes, beans, etc. as they adopted modern agricultural technology, but have retained their traditional methods of cultivations even today. The style of agricultural cultivation pattern is slowly changing among them as they are cultivating new crops. In the earlier days they used to cultivate agricultural produce only for personal consumption, but in recent years this trend has shifted to cultivating commercial and agricultural crops for personal consumption and as well as for sale.

**Health status of Soligas**

There are several tribes in India who suffer from one or another form of grave health problems (Chaudhury et al., 2008). The health and nutrition problems of the vast tribal population of India are as varied as the tribal groups themselves who present a bewildering diversity and variety in their socio-economic, socio-cultural and
ecological settings (Basu, 2000). Tribal people suffer disproportionately from malaria, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, genetic disorders like G6PD deficiency, and sickle cell anemia as well as nutritional deficiency diseases (Chhotray, 2003). Soligas suffer from a genetic disease called sickle cell anaemia, currently treated and monitored at the VGKK hospital (Veena et al., 2006). In recent times the Soligas indigenous system of medicine had negligible contribution to the treatment of both general and chronic diseases affecting the tribe (Ghoshi et al., 2007). Dr. Sudarshan gives various instances of diseases/conditions such as appendicitis, colonic cancer, vitamin deficiency, ischaemic heart disease, hypertension, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which were once unknown among the Soligas. Also caesarian deliveries and eyesight disorders were absent among them (Sekhsaria et al., 2000).

Soligas have a much better health profile than their counterparts in the adjacent villages and towns, despite having much less access to "modern" health facilities. For instance, there are no instances of appendicitis, colonic cancers, sexual diseases, and other stress-induced illnesses. The reason was access to a diversity of wild and semi-wild foods, and the natural surroundings in which they lived (Kothari, 2001). There are no doctors and nurses in the PHCs. Compared to government hospitals, private hospitals provide better treatment. Many of the quality health care services for chronic diseases and illnesses are still being provided by private hospitals and nursing homes, which is quite expensive and in most of the situations appear to be non-affordable for the rural poor (Hazar, 2012). Soligas now have common diseases of the body, leg and hand pain, fever, headache, diarrhoea, dental problems, stomach aches, cough and cold, eye problems, as also heart diseases, tuberculoses (TB), jaundice, nerve problems, chest pain, scabies and skin problems, and hearing problems. 56.5 per cent of the Soliga families have adopted family planning, but they also rely on their traditional methods of family planning and use medicinal plants during child birth and to control child birth. This practice has decreased nowadays because of the influence of the outside world and heightened health awareness. It has made the Soligas to change their health practices. They started adopting and using modern health facilities and hospital services.

Many Soliga tribals suffer from the genetic disorder of the Sickle Cell Disease. The Soligas could not name the disease, but were experiencing joint pains and swelling. The common symptoms experienced by Sickle cell anemia patients are
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joint pains throughout the body, while some had body ache, abdominal pain, and swelling in the legs. All of them mentioned that they did not know the name of disease, but had been suffering from different types of pains and swelling on their legs. Sickle cell pains are mostly experienced during the cold season of every year and very few mentioned the rainy season. Soligas eat different types of folic acid or iron related green leaves and fruits from the forest which helps to a certain extent in controlling Sickle cell anemia. During times of illness they eat a diet of finger millet, legumes, and green leaves, and use different types of medicinal plants for physical application on the joint pains and swollen parts while some of the medicinal plants are taken orally. The VGKK hospital provides treatment along with the Sickle cell test, but the other Primary Health Centers (PHCs) in the tribal areas do not offer any treatments as mentioned by the Soligas.

Soligas culture

The tribals worship nature. Even in the ancient times the people of Greece and Italy used to worship trees. The Hindus are also tree worshipers. It is also true that the forests have been not destroyed by the tribals. They never cut a tree unless required. In most of the tribal villages, there are “sacred groves” which are believed to be the abodes of their deities. Tribals never cut even a branch of a tree within the sacred grove. These aspects of their culture must be taken care of while planning for the regeneration of forests in the tribal areas (Samal, 2010). In spite of the exploitation and destruction of the tribal environment, the tribal culture is still discernible. Today, this part of their cultural identity that has survived against all odd forms the axis of the tribal life and includes their time honoured values, like sharing and managing to live a life of contentment with minimal requirements (Jayadeva et al., 1990).

The culture of the Soliga relates to daily life of which the forest is the predominant factor. Many of the deities they worship belong to Hindu pantheon and they observe Hindu festivals and follow the Hindu calendar. Some of the names of their popular gods are Basavanna or Nandi, Madheshwara, Rangaswamy, Jadeswamy, Kyathe Devaru, Beera Devaru, etc. Among the goddesses Maramma and Yellamma are very popular (Koppad et al., 1961).
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The Soliga cosmology is an extension of the natural world and their sacred sites are identified as composites of five elements. The five elements are bounded within a limit. The elders have identified five essential elements associated with the Gods, for example, ‘devaru’ (God - associated with Sun /light), ‘maramma’(mother goddess, associated with fire), ‘veeru’(demon), ‘kallugudi’(burial stones, associated with wind), and ‘abbi’(spring/stream, associated with water). Each of these pertains to one of the five elements of nature - earth, water, fire, wind, and either/space. They identify the role of Veeru (demon) to be crucial to their existence and hence is feared and respected (Mandal et al., 2010).

Soligas traditionally worship gods (Devaru) like Karaiah, Jadeswamy, Kethappa or Kyatedevaru, and Mahadeswara (Morab, 2003 and Singh, 2003). The Soliga are Hindus. They also worship family deities such as Basaveshwara, Kumbeswara, Nanjundeswara, and so on. Madeswara is their regional deity. Lord Rangaswamy of the Biligiri Rangana Hills is believed to be their bava (brother –in-law, i.e. wife’s brother). According to legend, Lord Rangaswamy is supposed to have abducted a girl from this community (Morab, 2003). The Soligas worship, Hindu Gods, Mahadeswara swamy, Biligiri Rangaswamy, Nanjundeswara swamy, Siddappa, Basaveswara swamy, Kumbeswara swamy, Goddess of Chamudeswari and the marammas as well as Karaiah, Kethappa, Jadeswamy, Hullu pache devearu, Doddarayaru Pandeswara, etc. and the goddesses, Hatti maramma, Kote maramma, Hidumandi tayi, Edini tayi, Semati maramma, Bisilu maramma, etc. They also worship different type of Veerus or Muni like Munnukai Veeru, Jagate Veeru, Nelliare Veeru, Kambali Ethappa, etc. Each Kula or clan has their habbis (water) ancestor temples called Kallugudi (stone temple) and Sagga (burial ground). Each kula or clan has its private burial grounds and common burial grounds in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary.

Festivals

Two main festivals, namely, the Rotti Habba and the Mane Habba are observed by the Soligas. The former is a community festival in which people from different tribal settlements participate. The symbolic representatives of their family deities are worshipped on this occasion (Morab, 2003). The important festivals observed by Hindu castes in the village temple are Ugadi, Gouri, Divalige, Sankranti,
and Sevaratri, are also observed by the Soligas (Morab, 1977). The Rotti habba and the Hosa ragi habba is celebrated with traditional cultural songs and dances. All the songs relate to nature, birds, trees, flowers, animals, agriculture, rain, god, goddess, water, etc.

**Policies affecting the Soligas in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary**

**Ban on shifting cultivation and displacement**

The Indian state still adheres to the old concepts of land policies which are based on the earlier British colonial legislation that had served the British crown well in its industrial exploitation of India. The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 severely restricted the rights of the Adivasis over their traditional resources, while turning their lands into wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. Land grabbing and bonded labour continued, while traditional moneylenders choked the rural people with exorbitantly high interest rates (Viitanen, 2010). The tribal people who had lived a fairly undisturbed life till independence and a little later, had to virtually give up their traditional life due to choking forest regulations (Vani et al., 1990).

The declaration of the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary in 1974 had far-reaching consequences for the lives of the resident Soligas communities (Mandal et al., 2010). The first batches of Soligas were given up to four acres of land while the remaining were denied land and left to fend for themselves along with a ban on shifting cultivation. The Soligas got proletarised and were forced to enter into the semi-colonial production relations, by selling their labour to the Forest Department for most part of the year and gathering tubers and greens when work was not available (Rajan, 1989). In 1974 when BRT was declare a Wildlife Sanctuary thousands of Soliga were evicted from the forests, often with violence. Then they made the difficult transition from shifting agriculture in these ranges to sedentarised cultivation in the peripheral plains where they were resettled (Gandhi, 2010).

**Ban on Non-Timber Forest Products collection**

The Karnataka Government notification, in adherence to the recently legislated Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2002, banning the collection of NTFP for commercial use in the Biligiri Rangana Temple Wildlife Sanctuary (BRT) brought 25,000 Soliga tribals subsisting on non timber forest produce (NTFP) to the
brink of destitution. More than 7,500 Soliga families live in and around the protected area (Sethi, 2004). The ban on collection of produce like amla (gooseberry), medicinal plants, honey, and lichen, hit them badly. In some cases such produce comprised over 60 per cent of their income, apart from their own use for food, health, housing and other requirements (Kothari, 2007).

Soligas, literally meaning the “bamboo children”, are known for their environment-friendly practices and sustainable collection of minor forest produce. But most have migrated in search of livelihood since the government banned the collection of non-timber forest produce about two years ago; the story is the same in other hamlets inside the sanctuary in the Western Ghats. The produce collected by tribals was sold through multi-purpose societies in BRT, Chamarajanagar, and Hanur to the highest bidder. There are some 16,000 people in the sanctuary’s core area who depend on selling forest produce and subsistence agriculture. They are migrating on a large scale (Kaur, 2008). Migration, apart from depicting the economic plight of the concerned group, has severely impacted the socio-cultural aspects of the Adivasi community. Migration also affects the socio-linguistic and cultural fabric of the community. The migrating populations are getting alienated from their traditions and customs and are adopting the practices of the new locality (Toppo et al., 2012).

Biligiri Ranganatha Temple Tiger reserve

In 2004, pursuant to the Supreme Court order, the State government prohibited the collection of NTFP for sale. The ban order was put into effect in BRTS in 2006. The proverbial last straw was when the State government notified it as a tiger reserve in January 2011, ignoring the protests of the Soligas and civil society groups and without obtaining the final approval from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (Kothari et al., 2012). Now again, life is about to change dramatically for at least 1,500 Soliga who will have to make way for a “critical tiger habitat” or “inviolate zone” as prescribed by the National Tiger Conservation Authority. In mid-November, the Forest Department chalked out a proposal earmarking a 373 sq km zone in the heart of the forest as a critical tiger habitat. Eight Podus (hamlets) that fall within this radius now face imminent relocation to a village outside the forest (Gandhi, 2010). Also, the 61 Podus that have been living since time immemorial inside the core and on the periphery of the tiger reserve and whose major livelihood is earned through the forest, will be displaced and will lose their rights, livelihood, and culture in the name of the tiger conservation.
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The following are some of the forest policies especially the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 that played a major role in the life of the Soligas. In 1974, the Biligiri Rangaswamy Forest Reserve was declared the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary at a time when the Soligas were practiced shifting cultivation. The Forest Department put an immediate stop to this and displaced the Soligas without providing adequate rehabilitation. Some lands were allocated records and the Forest Department allowed the collection of NTFPs through LAMPS. The NTFPs collection was banned in 2004 under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, but the forest officials allowed the collection till 2006, after which it was totally banned. The Government failed to provide any alternative employment. The Soligas used to earn nearly 60 per cent of their income from the NTFPs. On 24th January 2011, the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary was declared the Biligiri Ranganatha Tiger Reserve and the Soligas again face displacement. There are 22 Podus inside and 39 Podus on the periphery of the forests, and all of them depend on the forest for their livelihood.

The Development of Soligas by Government and Non–Government organisations in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary

The socio-cultural and economic conditions of the tribals vary considerably. Though the Central and State governments have been trying their best for the all round development of the tribals, it has not achieved the desired results. The tribals have been victims of colonial-feudal domination, ethnic prejudices, illiteracy, poverty and isolation (Saran, 1997). Majority of the tribal areas have remained isolated and backward, and the tribals areas are characterised by the socio-economic exploitation by the non-tribals. One significant indicator provided by the working group on the development of the Scheduled Tribes during the Seventh Plan deserves mention. According to it, in spite of all the strategies effected through all these years 85 per cent of the tribal families remain below the poverty line compared to the national average of about 38 per cent (Burman, 1997). The upliftment of the socio-economic condition, health, hygiene, education, etc. of any tribal society and the opening of communication systems in any area are certainly part of the overall concept of development for which some sort of immediate change or change in the near future is expected (Raha et al., 1997).
The government has allotted generous grants for specific purposes since the First Five Years Plan, but the achievements do not match the expectations. The Government and non-government agencies, which try to usher in change in the name of development, seldom pay much heed to the consequences. As a matter of fact, the so-called development has brought about drastic changes in the traditional culture (Ghosh and Johnson, 1997). Tribals remain mostly outside the folds of various development packages that are aimed at upliftinging them. Such facilities are availed by the well-to-do tribal families. Most of the officials engaged in the developmental programmes are untrained personnel. Hence they fail to create a rapport with these tribals so as to win their confidence and co-operation. It leads to a failure of the development programmes (Haldar, 1997).

A majority of the tribals receive no benefits and continue to live in poverty and ignorance. The existing policies and schemes of the government have succeeded in perpetuating the inequality syndrome. So far, the development schemes have only benefited the elite. They have taken maximum advantage of the protective safeguards. The elite and the bureaucrats control the power structure and exploit the tribals. The present tribal development approach lays emphasis on the development of agriculture, land reclamation and land development, group demonstration and input assistance. Development projects like digging of wells, promotion of left irrigation, animal husbandry, and poultry farming are important in the Tribal Sub-Plan (Mallick, 2011). The development activities undertaken by the government has not solved many of the problems. The NGOs have been successful in creating awareness among them (Parthasarathy, 1997).

Tribal elders meet occasionally and conduct deliberations. Associations at the village and taluk level have been formed recently at the initiative of a voluntary agency. The function of these associations is to look after the welfare of the community. The Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra, at the Biligiri Rangana Hills, under the leadership of Dr. Sudarshan, is doing great service to the Soliga tribals, in matters of health, education, and other welfare aspects (Morab, 2003). VGKK has done commendable work in the field of education, health, and community organisation. It has evolved programmes for the all-round development of the Soligas. A notable contribution of VGKK is in the organisation of the Soligas as local groups
to fight against exploitative forces (Bhat, 1997). Providing Amenities in Rural Areas (PUR
A) envisages provision of physical connectivity, electronic connectivity, and knowledge connectivity leading to economic connectivity. Knowledge connectivity and economic connectivity to a certain extent is already being provided by the VGKK to the tribal population. All that is needed is to provide physical connectivity and electronic connectivity to the region in partnership with State Government and certain socially minded institutions. This will enable to bring into focus skills in cottage industry, dry land agriculture, production of honey, handicrafts, and processed foods for which core competence already exists among the tribal citizens. Thus, PURA will be able to create market avenues for the products (Kalam, 2006).

Many of the voluntary and Government agencies begin their development programmes with abortive concepts of ‘civilizing’, ‘modernizing’, and ‘reforming’ without giving much thought to the tribal culture. Development workers in tribal land, who gain the confidence of tribals and function like catalysts should be cautious as not to destroy the tribal culture, Although the process of acculturation is inevitable, the evolutionary direction of the culture should be guided by intrinsic factors of the given culture and not be prompted by an external agency. A development which improves the socio-economic conditions and strengthens the values of the tribal people should be the aim of the development agencies (Jayadeva et al., 1990). Development strategies, which are ignorant of their inbuilt economic models, cultural and economic biases, and power structures of subjugation, are harmful to indigenous peoples (Viitanen, 2010). Development agencies have rooted themselves by pumping in foreign finance in the name of tribal development and relief. All that the Soligas have today is poverty (Rajan, 1989).

The NGOs of VGKK and ATREE working for Soliga development in the field of health, education, community organisation, vocational training, sustainable harvesting of NTFPs, tribal rights, biodiversity conservation, agriculture and horticulture developments in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary. Community based organisations like the Taluk Soligas Abhivudhhi Sangha (TSAS) and the Zilla Budakattu Girijana Abhivudhhi Sangha (ZBGAS) also work for the implementation of various Government programmes, tribal rights, education, health, culture and related issues. The Government has implemented several social welfare, social security, and
basic facilities schemes. Some of the Soligas have received housing, drinking water, electricity, roads, public distribution system facilities, but still they are facing lack of basic facilities. Some Podus use stream and pit water inside the forest areas because the Forest Department has not permitted the other departments to provide drinking water and housing construction. They have to walk miles to get medical treatment even today because of the lack of health and education facilities in the tribal areas.

The development programmes helped the Soligas receive the benefits of housing, drinking water, public distribution cards for food, different types of pensions, and to some extent health facilities from the NGOs and Government. Slowly their socio-cultural and economic life style is changing and they are now participating in the Panchayathi Raj system and some have even become members of the Grama Panchyathi, Taluk Panchyathi, and Zilla Panchaythi. Even still they are facing reservation problem because some of forward communities include in the Scheduled tribals categories so there need for sub reservation for forest based tribes. The Forest policy affected the tribal livelihood and they faced displacement and the NTFPs ban and with the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary being declared as a Tiger Reserve, they will again face displacement and it will affect their tribal culture and life style. Considering the above facts and findings the lacuna in each level/stage an attempt is made to study the life style of Soliga tribe.
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