CHAPTER I

Introduction

As a nine year old when I reached Wayanad from the southern part of Kerala in 1974, I was very happy to see a set of women wearing colourful *chelas* (single strip of unstitched cloth, used by Adivasi women folk to cover their bodies), hands full of bangles and layers of *malai* (chain) on their neck. I interacted with them when they came to our fields to transplant paddy. While transplanting, they sang songs and chatted with each other in their language and I used to stand on the *Varambu* (small bund to separate plots of paddy fields) and watch them work. Even though I did not understand their language, I could enjoy their company and they invited me to work with them. I had an intense desire to plant the paddy with them, but at home children were not encouraged to do such work. The Adivasi children were trying their lot by observing their mothers planting. Standard VIII, I was sent to boarding school and since the school reopened before paddy cultivation, I waited till my degree college holidays to try my hand at planting paddy saplings. With great enthusiasm I went to work, my Adivasi friends encouraged me and completed my row when I lagged behind. By afternoon, I came to know the pain….understood the back breaking nature of the work and could not continue. However, the image of an Adivasi woman has remained with me, colourful, lively and hard working.

During my holidays, I used to visit the paddy fields near my house that extended from our garden and stretched towards the river for about one and half miles. During each yearly visit, especially after the 1990s, I witnessed the quick conversion of paddy to banana, ginger and arecanut plantations. I saw the ‘development’ of the area and the people… concrete houses came in place of small thatched or tiled houses… every patch of land was occupied by people…the gardens which were filled with trees and multi crops were changed to mono culture plantations like rubber, pepper and coffee.

Majority of the non-Adivasis had stopped paddy cultivation since it was not profitable. The Kurichias said that they continued because it was part of their culture which kept their community spirit alive. They said that they had not saved money for ten generations, but saved the soil without poisoning it and destroying it for the future generations. Their *tharavad* (Kurichia joint family) land extended as huge tracts (even
though technically partitioned among members) devoid of barbed wire fencing unlike the state forests and non-Adivasi property. To me they proclaimed a different world view through their customs and every day practices while experiencing the brunt, loss and pain of modern development. The Paniyas who were experts in paddy cultivation still did not own a piece of paddy field after the much acclaimed land reforms and the widely known Kerala model of development and its political mobilisation. They pay rent for cultivating another’s paddy field and have no chance to cultivate paddy themselves.

I entered the field with my multiple identities of a migrant, a teacher, a woman who worked among the Adivasis in Madhya Pradesh and a student doing research on Adivasis in Mumbai city. With the people I closely interacted, I shared my identity as a religious nun, who was disenchanted with the rigid rules and blind obedience in choosing one’s mission, and the consequent decision to quit. When I saw the Adivasis during my field work, they were not healthy, lively and cheerful like those etched in my childhood memory. The paradox is that in my childhood, they were bonded labourers (even though slavery was banned, the transition was very slow) and now they are free! The sound of the *thudi* (small drum of Paniyas) echoing from their huts was not frequent like it was before. One empathiser of the Paniyas told me they would be extinct within a few decades due to malnutrition and ill health. At the same time, there were common comments by non-Adivasis such as, ‘the government heaps huge amounts of money for their ‘development’, ‘they are becoming lazy and not even coming for our work nowadays’, ‘they go for wage labour only to those who provide liquor as part of the wages’, ‘sometimes they promise their labour and escape to their colonies without the notice of the employer’. These comments were not limited to the land owners. While I was working in Wayanad as a teacher, some of my colleagues used to say that the Adivasis are not ‘cultured’ and we used to debate on the meaning of ‘culture’. The loving and sharing attitude among the Adivasis, their eco-friendly lifestyle, their satisfaction with the bare minimum was not considered ‘cultured behaviour’. Again Adivasi gods were depicted as lifeless gods and their belief system as superstition. In contrast, I experienced that their rituals and religious festivals are the simplest and liveliest ones and they celebrate it through dance and music or lively rituals with spontaneity. Many of them go into a trance and ecstasy during the rituals; we cannot deny the bad effects of alcoholism
and the trends of imitating Hindu rituals, which partially spoil the spirit of celebrating the meeting point of gods and human beings at times.

The philosophy of Adivasis living for the present moment without accumulating wealth really challenged me. I felt Adivasis pose the most effective challenge to capitalist development by living for the day and by living an eco-friendly life, using minimum resources from the earth and saving it for future generations. My work experience with the Adivasis in Madhya Pradesh and Wayanad affirmed the same. However, I realised that their subsistence economy in the midst of a profit oriented economy is withering away without enough support. While working in Kerala, I came to realise that the general situation of Adivasis is no better in Kerala despite the fact that Kerala is a state which has received international acclaim for its socio-political development. I also noticed important differences in the land ownership, education and health status among different Adivasi groups in Kerala. These experiences triggered interest in me for further inquiry into their everyday life, the government initiated development programmes and their perceptions and experiences of development. How do they experience development in their everyday encounters with the State, its policies and institutions? How different are the experiences of different Adivasi groups? How does the context of Kerala, a highly literate and politically conscious population, and decentralised governance, influence the Adivasi experience?

Against a colonial backdrop, the Adivasis are still seen as ‘backward’ by the dominant Kerala culture and modern development discourses and the huge administrative machinery set up in the name of ‘developing’ Adivasis. Development has strong colonial roots and some scholars argue that the transition from colonialism to the concept of ‘development’ is a shift in emphasis rather than changing from one project to the other (Gordon and Sylvester 2004). The colonial culture still persists in our education system, health system and land laws and it affects the Adivasis more as they hold on to their world views and traditional systems. Although the renaissance and the enlightenment movement formed the ground for modernity, the concept of modernity came to be defined as the process of change towards western types of economic, social and political systems which believe in the superiority of rational and scientific control of the physical and social environment and the application of technology for development.
Development perceived as national economic growth and modernisation is a post second world war phenomena and western industrialisation became the core of development as tradition was perceived as an obstacle to development and the third world countries were encouraged to abandon their traditional lifestyle. After the Second World War and the decolonisation process, the direct responsibility of maintaining colonial administrations was changed to aid programmes and policies and programmes for international cooperation. When both economic and political interests were at risk due to decolonisation, development aid was arranged as a means in the struggle for world hegemony by the western powers. From early 1970s, however, several theorists had turned to the dependency theory and the world system theory to challenge the modern development paradigm and its western hegemonic interventions (Frank 1979, Amin 1997, Wallerstein 1979).

In the move towards modernity, tradition and cultures of colonial societies were equated with underdevelopment. As Marglin (1990) argues, tradition is actively constructed and is dynamic and seeing it as backward and attributing underdevelopment to traditionalism is a historical and political mistake. Many Indian scholars such as Nandy, Alvares, Viswanathan, Shiva, Das and Kothari and Mehta explore the link between science and violence and the mediatory role played by the modern nation state to project scientific knowledge as superior and traditional knowledge as inferior. Nandy (1988) points out the cultural mobilisation around modern science which extends to state power and legitimises scientific knowledge to remain outside the democratic process and indulge in institutionalised as well as personal face to face violence to dehumanise traditional knowledge. Alvares (1988) shows how power and knowledge intersect and explores the connection between science, colonialism and violence. Shiva (1988) criticises the monopoly and the reductionist view of science as ‘epistemological violence’ and the root cause of the ecological crisis. Visvanathan (1988) shows how world views and epistemologies and practices of tribal and peasant life are ignored in modern scientific knowledge and the violence associated with modern science. He points out that imperialism is not only the logic of capitalism but also of science. He criticises modernity and its empire which believes in uniform and homogenous space and a single law of temporality. He argues that in modern rationality, progress is a linear movement as described in the evolutionary approach and thus tribal cultures become the past, which the
west has already lived out and thus confront the violence inherent in anthropological
notions of the ‘tribal ancestor’ and how they become the objects of experiment of the
programme called modernisation.

The homogenisation process in the approach of development depicts the ‘other’ as
inferior and deficient and in need of assistance. As a result, communities with distinct
histories and diverse cultures became homogenised masses seeking assistance to develop
and the discourse on development became a discourse on knowledge and power. Thus, to
understand the marginalisation of the Adivasis and the attribution of backwardness to
their culture, it is important to understand how local knowledge is challenged and
discarded in the dominant development discourse. The superiority assigned to Western
scientific and technological notions based on progress attribute backwardness to Adivasi
communities and their local knowledge systems and indigenous development initiatives.
The modern discourse on development misrepresents Adivasis and thus the subjectivity
of the people is central to represent their response to modern, top down, exclusive
development policies and programmes. Thus, this study gives importance to Adivasi
voices, their self development concepts and their indigenous knowledge systems and
delineates their specific subjective experiences of development/lack of development in
the areas of education, health, land, employment and livelihood.

**Theoretical Explorations**

Studies shows that the Adivasis’ subjective experience is shaped by the dominant
development discourses and the material condition produced by these discourses. At the
same time, they do assert their identity and subjectivity in their daily experiences through
their individual and collective struggles. How do the development discourses construct
their subjectivity and how do Adivasis conceive and assert their identities and
subjectivities are central themes in this study. These are explored through the way
government institutions engage or disengage with Adivasis and the various ways in which
Adivasis respond to these situations in their everyday interactions in these insti-
tutions. The Adivasi reality today may be conceptualised as that of material deprivation and
cultural marginalisation. Further, their marginality is socially and culturally reproduced
through societal and state institutions. However, even in their subordination they are
found to resist individually and collectively. Since no single theoretical framework can
capture the multiple structures and processes that dominate their knowledge and world views, their material resources and their subjectivities, theoretical discussion on four thematic areas are explored to form a conceptual grid to understand the subjective experiences and perceptions of development of the Adivasis: material deprivation and cultural marginalisation, social and cultural reproduction of marginality, subordination and resistance, and agency and social movement.

Material Deprivation and Cultural Marginalisation

These two conditions in the context of modern development have been theorised by several Marxist and neo Marxist scholars. Marx’s materialist conception of history and the critique of capitalist development highlight alienation of labour and oppression of subordinate classes in the process of surplus extraction. While highlighting Marx’s materialist conception of history, Morrison (2006) highlights Marx’s division of history into three main economic stages characterised in the form of ancient, feudal and capitalist societies and the central tendencies of class domination, conferring of privileges to the dominant classes, perpetuation of economic political and social inequality and the support extended to unequal class relations by religious, legal and political institutions during each of these economic stages of history. By examining Marx’s concepts of forces of production and relations of production, Morrison (2006) observes that when one class in society has the monopoly of the means of production, they develop authority over the non-possession or working class and subordinate them through certain restrictions and as a result, a dominant dependent relationship is established.

Marx (1992) talks about subjectivity while discussing the concept of alienation of the individual from the external world. According to him, alienation arises only under specific social conditions and it brings one’s human essence into conflict with one’s existence. Marx’s theory of alienation was based mainly on the externalising process during labouring activity. According to Marx, alienation which is founded on capitalism has four main aspects. Man experiences - alienation from the products of his labouring activity as it belongs to the capitalist; alienation from his productive activity itself as it is not an affirmation but a negation of his essential nature; alienation from his own essential nature, his humanity; and alienation from other man, from his community (Marx, 1992). And in order to overcome this alienation he suggests abolishing the basic economic
relation that creates it. Marx thus stresses on the primacy of economic relations over other aspects of social structure. In the Adivasi world view, nature and culture are not separate entities as asserted by authors such as Baviskar (1995), Pathy (1998), Xaxa (2003), Fernandes (2004) and Roy Burman (2010). Alienation and exclusion from forests and lands are the everyday reality of Adivasis till date. Thus, as far as Adivasis are concerned, alienation was not limited to economic relations or labour activity.

According to Baviskar (1997), India’s development policies had failed because they had not changed the patterns of control over the means of production. The concentration of means of production is in the hands of the industrial elite, the rich peasants and the state bureaucracy. They determine the technological choices, production decisions and income distribution. The impoverishment of the environment caused by this development leads to the impoverishment of the tribal people. The ecological crisis and the struggle of tribal people result out of the inequities of control over industry, land and other productive resources such as water, forests and pastures (Baviskar 1997). The Marxian theorisation of capitalist society is limited by class analysis and a scope for subsistence production practices, and a critique to technology is missing as his vision on post capitalist society is based on the existence of material abundance realised through technology, industrialisation and exploitation of natural resources.

The Marxist approach perceives tribal agriculture as primitive and backward and believes in the power of science and technology to produce surplus and emancipate the tribal people from the clutches of feudalism (Prasad 2004). The reality is that tribal communities are marginalised within the oppressed groups and science and technology have become tools of exploitation and cultural alienation. Appadurai (1990) opposes any technical knowledge for welfare which operates on criteria that are wholly external to the moral and cultural values of the community whose future is at risk. He looks into particular technological changes in agriculture and the erosion of social embeddedness and core cultural values. He criticizes the transformation of practical knowledge into agronomy and the process of commercialisation. He notes that through different discourses, a gap is created between the official agronomic knowledge and the traditional knowledge of farmers and the farmers’ knowledge is simply absorbed into a larger and more rationalised discourse without giving due credit to them. Without essentialising
indigenous knowledge, he stresses that their wisdom also has to be made historical, made known to the entire world and incorporated wherever possible.

O’Connor (1998) points out that Marxist theorists view human history and natural history as 'dialectically interconnected' and believes that Marx's analysis of materialist conception of history is central to the structural understanding of the current environmental crisis. O’Connor (1998) argues that Marx had a vision of society in which humankind ceases to be alienated from nature and appropriation of nature should not be based on capitalist accumulation but on individual and social need. He highlights that Marx failed to problematise capitalist productive forces believing that it has the potential to free humanity from the bondage of nature. By critically examining Marxism, O’Connor (1998) points out that the earth-centered ethics, the survival of the indigenous people and the peasantry of the south which are central concerns of political ecology are missing in Marxist theory and practice. O’Connor (1998) thus incorporates in his theories the ways in which capitalist production relations degrade or destroy the conditions of production including the environment which is an asset for subsistent producers and introduces the modern crisis in capitalist societies. According to Wielenga, (1999:131), ‘any vision of an alternative socialist society has to address not only the question of the exploitation and exclusion of workers, but also that of the ecological and social conditions under which the satisfaction of human needs can be achieved in a just way’. In this regard, Eric Darier (1998) observes that ecological rationality is not something fixed by natural science, independent of human society. It depends on the social and economic relationship of people to each other and to the earth. O’Connor (1998) notes that in Marxist terms, the statement that land and labour are commodified means that they are treated as if they are a product of labour and can be exchanged by fixing an abstract value. And in this process, man under the name of labour and nature under the name of land were made available for sale and it lead to alienation of social values and exploitation of nature. Thus, with the early development of capitalism the concept of nature as an organic whole changed into the concept of a combination of things or a mechanistic structure that can be taken apart and rebuilt again. It is noted that the original accumulation – seizure of common lands by the rich as the beginning of this separation of human and non human nature. Thus, the primitive accumulation and later the competitive
accumulation removed traditional socio-economic and cultural restrictions on land and promoted an ecologically destructive production method (O’Connor 1998).

Even though O’Connor (1998) agrees that Marx had a latent ecological socialist vision, he notes that the conventional Marxist theorisation however does not take into account the ecological question in development. The Ecological Marxist perspective incorporates the ecological crisis and destruction of subsistence oriented economies in the context of modern capitalist development. Ecological Marxist theory introduces the contradiction between unending capitalist accumulation by appropriation of nature and the ‘diminishing natural environment-the conditions of production’ as the second contradiction in capitalism. According to O’Connor, the forces of production and relations of production are together facing the challenge of conditions of production and to meet the crisis, he suggests ecologically viable projects. Within the Marxist tradition, O’Connor (1998), Foster (1999) and Weilenga (1999) are unique in their critique of the capitalist mode of production that treats nature as a free good to be appropriated and manipulated for human progress. Formerly, nature was treated as an exploitable commodity for profit but in this new vision, it is redefined as a stock of capital. So the reproduction of capital becomes synonymous with saving nature and accumulation gives way to self management and conservation (Foster 2003). With an Ecological Marxist perspective, organising local resources to meet local needs and self governance to take decisions regarding their day to day life issues and development policies and programmes is promising. Further, control and management of their resources by themselves will lead to genuine participation and development that emerges from within tribal communities (Wielenga 1999). Even though O’ Connor includes natural and cultural environmental factors in his conceptualisation of forces of production and relations of production, he does not engage with the cultural critique of superiority assigned to modern development. He sees development mainly as material prosperity and sustainability of nature compared to the progress of human values and quality of life.

Before the age of primitive accumulation, the economy was embedded in the rest of society through values of reciprocity, redistribution and symmetry (Polanyi 1964). Primitive accumulation through enclosures of common lands and common property by the well to do was followed by the competitive accumulation in the capitalist factories
and the subordination of society itself to the laws of market. Polanyi’s analysis of the development of capitalism and the cultural roots of disembeddedness or instrumentality in the modern meaning of work which he attributes to the separation of economic from social, political and moral contexts. According to him, the impersonal self regulating market destroyed human beings, their natural environment and cultural institutions. Polanyi (1964) criticises the modern concept of seeing land and labour as commodities and the erosion of social relations behind it when it is bought and sold in the market. He points out that land and labour were turned into fictitious commodities by the market conception and ‘disembedded’ (or the social relations behind it is getting covered up) from the broader social context. According to Polanyi, land and labour are not produced as commodities in accordance with market forces or the law of value.

Thus, although mainstream Marxism has not taken up the ecological question in development, a re-reading and re-thinking in the light of eco-crisis is taking place today that offers a new vision to tribal mobilisation. The resistance of people’s movement in the early phases of industrialisation aims at the defence of ‘pre-modern’ ways of life and the demand for adequate compensation. In the neo-colonial phase of individualism, commodification and rationalisation, tribal movements preferably take an eco-Marxist approach and by addressing the cultural issues, move beyond it (Baviskar, 1995). Instead of romanticising the Adivasi struggle, as Baviskar suggests, it is advisable to give priority for a need based economy for re-orienting natural resource management. Eco feminists like Vandana Shiva, Mies and Agarwal support this need based economy by pointing out that nature’s resources are not limitless to satisfy the greed of a few by exploiting it. However, Baviskar (1995) criticises the eco-feminist stand of seeing Adivasis as environmentalists with an unquenchable reverence for nature and points out that their present resource use can be called sustainable only if we compare it with the vastly more destructive practices of the State and the market. She argues that it is necessary to take alternate measures to deal with the degradation of land and forest with the support of financial, technical and organisational resources and encourages the collaboration among local communities, activists and intellectuals instead of totally abandoning capitalism and sticking to the traditional ways. She sees that Adivasi history – their being and ideology as evolving in connection with their consciousness and everyday life and argues with Marx that people make their own history, not of their free will but under circumstances
with which they are confronted. The people who lived a life of self sufficiency and cultural richness are now pushed to the margins due to the degradation and loss of vast areas of forest and other productive land resources. However, as ecological Marxism suggests, the deprived can also be critical agents of change. The various tribal movements and other struggles of the marginalised people contribute to the ecological Marxist stream of thought. Challenging the capitalist notion, they are prioritising the use value of natural resources for survival over the exchange value. Baviskar (1995) suggests that a search for alternatives and a critical analysis of the impact of capitalism by the Marxists can merge and form a green-red alliance to answer the livelihood issues of tribal people.

Ecological Marxism however fails to take into account the alienation from culture and nature and the adverse gender effects due to the processes of environmental degradation and appropriation of natural resources by a few and the erosion of both the livelihood system and the knowledge system of tribal women. The contribution of tribal women to the subsistence economy and the challenges they face today due to modern science and technology and its superior rationality projected by the patriarchal state and its bureaucratic development policies are highlighted in feminist environmentalist and structural feminist frameworks (Mies 1981, Agarwal 1994). These feminist theoretical articulations may be useful to understand the feminisation of poverty and the deterioration of women’s status due to environmental deterioration among tribal people. Women are the worst victims of ecological degradation. Their traditional skills and occupations have been affected adversely by new agricultural technology and their struggle for survival has increased due to the scarcity of water, fuel and fodder (Shiva1988). However, the eco feminist analysis remains a critique without threat to the established order as it fails to confront the political economy issues (Agarwal 1992). The introduction of private ownership of land by the colonial state had far reaching implications in gender relations especially in tribal societies. As Agarwal (1994) argues, in a tribal situation, the social and cultural understanding of deprivation and marginalisation is strongly connected to the deprivation of material resources. Agarwal (1992) traces the causes of environmental degradation in rural India, its class and gender implications and responses from the grassroots level. Further, she maps out an alternate transformational approach to development in which the gender relations and the relation
between people and the non-human world are conceptualised and concretely dealt with in terms of distribution of property, power and knowledge and the formulation of development policies and programmes. For instance, she proposes a broad based democratic participation of women and marginalised sections in decision making instead of a top down approach and also a widening of the definition of scientific approaches to include plural sources of knowledge and innovations of the people, rather than the knowledge generated in universities. In forestry, a shift from monocultural and commercial tree species to mixed species, critical for local subsistence is suggested. Such transformational shifts in approaches and practices are similar to the perceptions of development of tribal people, especially their women folk.

Historically, the idea of development has been couched mostly in materialistic terms but today there is an emerging paradigm shift which emphasises that the development issues of tribal communities need to address the cultural aspects besides the material gains and losses and the wider connection between power and knowledge in the field of development. The critique of development put forward by Escobar (1995), Banuri (1990), Marglin (1990) Fernandes (2004) and Xaxa (2003) converges when they argue for a cultural ‘space’ for the marginalised people and describe culture as a political tool to marginalise them by describing them as backward, uncivilised and underdeveloped. These authors affirm tribal assertion movements and their alternate value systems as the path of tribal development. They criticise the superiority attached to the modern development discourse and practices and highlight traditional people’s autonomous constructions of their own development and value systems and alternate ways of living as a valid model. In the above theories on material and cultural deprivation, the affected people are not treated adequately as subjects of their own history. Though, ecological Marxism explains the material and cultural deprivations, the subjective experiences of the people are not given due importance. On the contrary, the reproduction theories attempt to understand the relationship between subjective experience and objective reality and the production and reproduction to which it contributes, and attempt to develop a sociology that can transcend the subjective objective dichotomy.
**Social and Cultural Reproduction of Marginality**

The theories of social and cultural reproduction provide a conceptual ground for examining the themes of power, domination and inequality, and they challenge the dominant structural functionalist approaches and the development paradigms. The development discourse sees education as offering the most legitimate and decisive means of social mobility in order to transcend structural inequalities. Placing emphasis on equal educational opportunities and individual motivation, the human capital theory has been the driving force behind a series of educational reforms. The social reproduction theories in education, however, refute these assumptions with the argument that educational institutions and processes reproduce social inequalities in society. They point out that cultural and social factors serve to reproduce the ruling relationships, and legitimise the ideologies of power and control through educational practices. While Althusser (1971) provides a sketch of how school is the most effective ideological apparatus that reproduces capitalist relations of production, Bourdieu elaborates the social and cultural processes of schooling that transmit dominant culture and ideologies through a series of interrelated concepts such as cultural and social capital, habitus and symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).

Bourdieu’s analysis of the forms of capital, namely, economic, cultural and social capital and their transformation into symbolic capital helps understand how conversion of capital results in hierarchy in social class, status, privilege and domination. According to Bourdieu (1997), cultural capital can exist in three forms: first in the embodied state (that is, in the form of long standing dispositions of the mind and body), second in the objectified state (in the form of cultural goods such as pictures, books and monuments), and third in the institutionalised state (in the form of academic qualification or legitimate knowledge of one kind or the other). To locate the relationship between schooling and the larger cultural setting, Bourdieu (1977: 95) uses the concept of ‘habitus’ which is ‘an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted’. Habitus engenders all the thoughts, perceptions and actions consistent with those conditions, and they are socially constructed in the school sites. Social capital mainly refers to the various kinds of valued relations with significant others and symbolic capital refers to prestige and social honour (Bourdieu 1997). Further,
Bourdieu argues that violence is exerted on social groups through the imposition of cultural and social symbolism in everyday life to shape their social worlds in such a way that it is experienced as legitimate and normal. Every pedagogic action is objectively symbolic violence as the dominant culture is imposed by an arbitrary power (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Arnowitz and Giroux (1986) however criticise Bourdieu’s view of power and domination as mechanistic, neglecting reflexivity and critical self consciousness of the agents. As they argue Bourdieu’s negation of critical self consciousness of the agents, independent of the historical continuity of their objective reality, reduces possibilities of resistance and social change and therefore results in the mechanical reproduction of social inequalities.

Analysing the role of content of the texts and methodologies of teaching practices in social reproduction, Apple (1979) explains how the de-politicisation of schooling processes works to produce social differentiation in the guise of neutrality. He scrutinises not only the prevailing practices of education for unequal achievement, unequal returns and selective curricular incorporation, but the very social arrangement of political, social, ethical and economic interests and commitments that are uncritically accepted in the day to day life of educators. He criticises the notion of knowledge as neutral and views knowledge as power, and explains how social interests are embodied in the curriculum that generates inequality. However, for understanding how larger discourses shape the context of learners, teachers and the schooling processes, these theories do not detail out the everyday, subjective experience of the learners in the context of the historical exploitation and social subjugation experienced by their families and communities. Some of these concepts and frameworks are employed to understand the ability and inability of different tribal groups to participate in the state sponsored development programmes. However, the educational system is viewed as recreating the relationships of domination by legitimising the ideologies of power and control over tribal people and thereby perpetuating the historical violence against them. Further, the social and cultural factors which are interwoven in the day to day lived experience of the people is important in analysing the development experiences of tribal people and educational and health care experiences offers specific context to explore the subjective experiences of the tribal people.
Freire (1972) unravels the contradiction between the oppressors and oppressed and points out the importance of awakening critical consciousness to overcome oppression. He challenges the ‘banking concept’ of education in which teacher deposits knowledge in students who are considered as passive listeners and objects of learning. According to him in a liberating classroom, teacher and student pose questions and become participants in solving the problems faced by the students in their daily life and other social issues. Instead of transferring information from teacher to students, he proposes the ‘problem posing’ concept of education which enable the students to think critically and understand marginalisation, cultural alienation and the process of its reproduction in the field of tribal education. Arnowitz and Giroux (1986) point out the reflexivity and critical self consciousness of the agents and how it helps them to resist or accommodate and change gradually. They stress that culture is both a structuring and transforming process. According to Giroux (2001), notions of critique and conflict must be at the centre of pedagogic practice to break through the structures of inequality which is reproduced through the hidden curriculum. He stresses the role of human agency leading to cultural intervention and social action instead of overemphasising the mechanical reproduction of culture. Thus, according to him, school has to become an important site of counter hegemonic practices. However, the critical pedagogy introduced by Freire and Giroux is not only confined to school but seen as a cultural and political process that takes place in all cultural spheres and opens up spaces for negotiation of subjectivity and resistance.

Subordination and Resistance

Along with a critical understanding of social structures as well as their ideological reproduction through different institutions, understanding the subjective experience of subordination and marginalisation is very important to explain differential development among tribal communities. The refusal of subjective experience and the meaning creation of subordinate classes in the Marxist theories are criticised by theorists such as Scott (1985). According to Scott (1985) social agents are not passive bearers of ideology but active appropriators who reproduce existing structures. He gives due credit to the weak and subordinate class and their ideological weapons of every day resistance, to penetrate, neutralise and negate the hegemony. He criticises the concept of ‘false consciousness’ of
the subordinate classes and the ideological consensus secured by dominant groups and its legitimisation using culture as an instrument of power. According to him, the subordinate classes are more radical at the level of ideology than behaviour, where they are more effectively constrained by the daily exercise of power. Penetrating the superfluous conception of the existing structures as inevitable and just, he identifies the presence of hidden scripts and the subcultures alive among the weak where their consciousness is in continuous conflict with the dominant capitalist culture. He criticises the objective structural determinations which find little echo in the consciousness and meaningful activity of flesh and blood human beings and their apprehension of these structures. According to Scott, any hegemonic ideology provides within itself the raw material for contradictions and conflict as the hegemonic social order fails to fulfil its promises. He points out that capitalist development continuously requires the violation of the previous social relations, which in most cases it had earlier helped to create and sustain. So the demystification of an existing hegemony is thus accomplished by the inevitable disregard for customs inherent in capitalism by the subordinate classes themselves.

However, systematic violence can cripple the individual’s and community’s ability to resist power. Das et al (2001) explore how violence shapes subjectivity and affects the capacity to engage in everyday life and argue that collective experience of violence can alter individual subjectivity and patterns of sociality. The subjectivities are formed differently according to the degree of violence they are faced with and the degree of resilience they hold as communities or as individuals in their situated lived realities and the reactions to this violence varies tremendously. They also highlight the heterogeneity of these local structures of feeling and the potential for different stance towards violence contained in them. Das et al (2001) highlight the experience of communities contesting the history of exclusion and violence using the sensory memory of individuals to challenge the official memory created through official records. They criticise the structured violence of the State through its policies and programmes as well as the collective violence and its shadows and reverberations years later in the communities and explain how everyday life becomes the site of many buried memories and experiences and affects their subjectivities. Thus, any understanding of contemporary tribal reality must take into consideration the question of subjective experience of systematic violence of extreme situations as well as subtle forms of symbolic violence and their responses to
it in their day to day life. Even though, violence affects the Adivasis’ capacity for resistance, their agency makes an attempt to break violence and marginalisation through the rare voices of dissent and resistance emerging from their reflexivity as well as through collective struggle and social movements.

**Agency and Social Movements**

The present model of development which does not take into consideration, indigenous knowledge, wisdom and technology leads to deprivation for the majority. As today’s capitalist model of development has not succeeded either in providing sustenance or in ensuring sustainability, ecological Marxists suggest that the affected people become critical agents of change. They affirm that the Adivasis need to confront political economy issues through resistance and look for alternative decentralised plans for development like watershed programs, organic farming, developing common property resources, alternative energy policies and so on. According to them, the alternate model can embrace a new ecological rationality and a new ideal for social progress, integrating tribal’s knowledge and practises in protecting and preserving nature’s resources. Baviskar (1995) points out that new social movements challenge the ideology of development centered around the political economy of profit and reshape people’s ideas about what is good and desirable. Instead of denying the heritage of traditional skills and life sustaining values, there is a need for cultural reappropriation and renewal of values and skills oriented towards the production and sustenance of life, which is still alive among tribal communities.

In a similar line, Escobar (1992) points out that the new social movement provides an interesting rethinking of collective agency. He focuses on social movements as cultural struggles, not only as political struggles for material gain. Critically analysing the categorisation of material vs. culture, Escobar (1995) argues that there is no materiality that is not mediated by discourse, as there is no discourse that is unrelated to materialities. For him, the making of food and labour and the making of narratives about them must be seen in the same light. The attempt at articulating a political economy of food and health must start with the construction of objects such as nature, peasants, food and the body as an epistemological, cultural and political process and move to criticising the unequal power relations in the production of discourses (ibid). So their cultural struggles are not
only for goods and services but also for the very definitions of life, economy, nature and society and its legitimacy in the ‘colonial’ modern world. Thus, emerges the need for a reconceptualisation of development which provides space for alternatives, which make visible the local frameworks of production of cultures and identities, and their economic, political and ecological practices (ibid).

Tribal people cannot be viewed as mechanical agents of history, ignoring the critique and resistance they offer through their collective and individual responses to the dominant forces. Karlsson (2000) in his study on indigenous people’s struggle for forest and identity in Sub Himalayan Bengal discusses the question of agency and the extent to which they are producers, at least partly conscious agents of forming their identities. According to Karlsson, the modern welfare state forces people to construct fixed ethnic or national identities in order to achieve political recognition but while discussing the Rabhas of West Bengal, the author affirms that their identity is not fixed but change according to different constructions in different contexts. Also Karlsson challenges the positions that identity construction is for material gain or for the political gain of elite in their own tribal communities and give more importance to the process which leads to ethnic mobilisation. The author asserts that for the Rabhas, their assertion of identity was related to their struggle for survival in the forest when they face the threat of losing their forest or depletion of forest or the establishment of protected areas where their entry is restricted. According to the author, the Adivasis’ assertion of identity in most cases is directly related to their survival or struggle for land, forest or other basic resources. The author maintains that the process of identity construction has to be understood in the context of domination, subordination and resistance and discusses the construction of identity in the invisible networks of everyday life as well as the formation of a collective agency through social movements.

Similarly, there are feminists’ articulations that stress the need for social movements and alternate development models. According to Dietrich (1992), social movements are vital for an alternate development which assures the quality of life and production of life and its maintenance as supreme goals. She suggests developing a mode of production which is in harmony with nature and ensures the survival of all humanity. The development model which is neo-colonial, capitalist and patriarchal, attack the base for
human material and spiritual survival, destructive of both nature and culture lead to fragmentation and disintegration (ibid). The participation of Adivasis, Dalits and women in the movement to build a counter culture is suggested as historically they all hold an ecologically viable development concept that negates the production of profit but involves the production and sustenance of life. As some of the feminist scholars point out, the feminist standpoint epistemologies help to see the reality from the side of the subjugated. According to standpoint theorists, the subjugated are in a better position to analyze their reality as they undergo the experience of subjugation.

Smith (2005) points out the significance of indigenous perspectives and their agency for their development and describes how knowledge was used to discipline the colonised, and highlights that the most obvious forms of discipline were through exclusion, marginalisation and denial. She challenges the current research tendencies of excluding indigenous ways of knowing and problematising indigenous individual or community rather than the social and structural issues underlying the marginalisation process. The indigenous communities are blamed for the problem of their poor health and under achievement in education among them and further conveyed that these communities have no solution to their problems. Smith further argues that the spaces of marginalisation have become the spaces of resistance and hope (ibid). For instance, Smith notes that the Australian aborigines have consistently challenged the colonial notion of *terra nullius* which is used to deny their claims to their territory. Thus, to understand the Adivasi reality, we have to employ the ‘decolonising methodologies’ explored by Smith (2005).

**Thesis Layout**

Chapter II reviews the literature in the area of tribal development and states the rationale and the objectives of the study. Exploration of the concepts of tribe, development and tribal development is attempted considering the broader context of development and Adivasi situated realities in their specific contexts. Review of the concepts relevant to the specific areas of investigation is delineated to formulate and systematise their experiences on development/lack of development.

Chapter III discusses the methodology and the various methods used to understand the epistemological positions, and the process of ‘development’ among Kurichias and
Paniyas. The research sites, processes of data collection, field work experience and data analysis are also described in detail.

Chapter IV introduces the historical context and the two communities, the Paniyas and Kurichias in Wayanad, Kerala selected for the study. The socio-cultural and political context of Paniyas and Kurichias and the development initiatives by the state and Adivasi response to these state initiated programmes are delineated in this chapter which prepares the background for the discussions and analysis in the subsequent chapters based on field data.

Chapter V discusses how schooling reproduces social inequalities and cultural asymmetries by examining the experiences of Paniyas and Kurichias. The first section of this chapter briefly discusses the educational scenario in Wayanad and the State’s commitment to Adivasi education. The second section elaborately explores the differential educational experiences of Paniyas and Kurichias and the social exclusion and marginalisation they experience in the structure and culture of schooling and through the curriculum and pedagogy that constructs their world views and epistemologies as illegitimate and inferior.

Chapter VI explores the perceptions of Paniyas and Kurichias on health and illness and their experiences of traditional as well as modern health care services. The chapter focuses on how the Adivasi conceptualisations and practices are different from the biomedical development notions of health and illnesses and how the health system marginalises them. Their critique of the biomedical approach and their pluriform approach in health practices are also discussed.

Chapter VII explores the wage labour, employment opportunities and livelihood issues of Paniyas and Kurichias. This chapter analyzes the present forms of bondage and new tools such as advance money, debt, dependence, religion, alcohol etc. to perpetuate the socio cultural, economic and political bondedness of the Adivasis. The material and cultural alienation faced by Paniyas and Kurichias are also delineated. This chapter also analyzes how subsistence agriculture has given Kurichias a better position and comparatively a better chance to accrue state benefits and to respond to state initiated development programmes.
Chapter VIII aims to understand the land holding patterns and land relations of Adivasis, how state policies and programmes neglect the land question of Adivasis and how landlessness leads to denial of their material and symbolic worlds. It also discusses the gap between Adivasi perceptions and state perceptions of land and the epistemic violence in negating Adivasi world views by not seeing the relationship between landlessness and lack of development of the Adivasis.

Chapter IX provides the summary and conclusion of the research study and stresses the importance of incorporating Adivasi epistemologies in development policies and practices for their well being. It underlines the importance of understanding their marginalisation in the light of not only the historical injustice of plundering their resource base, but also by addressing the cognitive violence and subjugation of their knowledge and epistemologies.