CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction
1.2 Objectives
1.3 Hypotheses
1.4 Scope of the Study
1.5 Study Plan
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

The decade of the seventies heralded a new era in the field of 'development economics' throughout the world by making a departure from the age old belief that 'growth' is synonymous with 'development'. Development came to be viewed as an improvement in the 'quality of life' of all sections of people whereas 'growth' was understood as an index of aggregate performance of the economy measured through the G.N.P. apparatus. The idea that growth does not necessarily lead to 'development' virtually resulted in the disenchantment with pursuits of 'growth' and a revival of interest in 'development'. It was believed that rural poverty in the third world countries was the manifestation of the 'growth centred strategy' pursued so far.¹ The dualistic picture of the Indian rural economy with the proliferation of rural poverty, inequality and unemployment on the one hand and the emergence of a dominant group of rural oligarchy on the other, was also considered to be the eventual outcome of the strategy of growth.²

Due to this realization, attempts were made to make 'rural development' a part of development planning. But in doing so, development programmes attempted to treat poverty as an addendum to growth strategy without making
any structural changes in the growth itself, which could bring people at lower functional levels into the main productive stream. The theoretical model determining the growth strategy continued to be lukewarm to treat poverty as an outcome of the character of growth itself. However, a plethora of literature appeared on issues relating to rural poverty and its eradication. Sophisticated models and techniques were also developed to foster rural development. But all this was done under the assumption that 'poverty' was the static reality of rural areas which could be combated by a package of adequate resources, appropriate technology and political will. It was believed that such a strategy could ensure the participation of a large bulk of people in value adding process.

Unfortunately, this thinking was based on a wrong diagnosis of poverty. Poverty was viewed from symptomatic standpoints and articulated in terms of nutritional and consumption norms. Symptoms of poverty were considered as basic factors giving rise to it to the utter negligence of basic functional causes. Therefore, no attempt was made to change the functional basis which breeds and perpetuates poverty. Rather, all attempts at eradication of poverty were directed at symptoms of inadequate nutritional manifestations of poverty instead of altering functional basis. Special target oriented schemes such as N.Y.V. programme, H.F.A.L. Development programme, S.F.D.A.
programmes, T.D.A. programme, I.T.D.A. programme etc. were launched during different periods to deliver a package of benefits to different sections of the rural population, caught in the backwash effects of growth strategy itself. However, such programmes could not upgrade their production base and their functional basis remained unaltered. Another major limitation of such a strategy was its lack of spatial focus. Poverty was generalised only on the national space. Sub-national and local variations were neither cared nor the anatomy of poverty brought into sharp focus by empirical articulation. Therefore, all those schemes, though introduced some changes in the rural economy by increasing production and income, did not usher in a new era of development for the rural poor by raising their productivity through the improvement of their status as agents of production. These schemes were devoid of spatial components and the local realities were missing. Environment, people and the production-interaction system were rarely brought into sharp focus. Therefore economic dualism was manifested as integral part of the growth process in the context of unequal structural character of the economy.

The experiences indicate that a mere substitution of 'growth' by 'development' as the objective of planning is not sufficient for the eradication of poverty. The fact that 300 million people in India out of a total of 689 million are below the 'poverty line' as defined by the
Therefore, what is necessary to-day is a correct understanding of the genesis of poverty and a sustained effort to change its functional basis. Moreover, it is now being realized that economic backwardness and poverty cannot be generalized along national and State norms as they do not truly reveal the actual poverty scenarios and their anatomy. Sometimes a rural sector is so much embedded with historical legacy, tradition and environment, that any generalisation can have little explanatory value. Therefore, an aggregative approach to the problem of poverty does not lead to its articulation. Poverty scenario is often related to geographic characteristic, climatic condition, socio-economic environment, flow pattern, production system and relationship. Therefore, any study on rural poverty must enquire into causes of the failure of the rural sector to contribute its maximum to national economic growth for creating conditions under which the national and its rural economy can grow together without revealing too much of divergence in productivity, income, employment and level and pattern of living in a unique national and sub-national situation. This calls for a careful anatomical dissection of the poverty scenarios in much more disaggregative framework at lower spatial levels for understanding the functional basis of poverty and articulating the dynamics of change. Such enquiries are likely to bring into focus the manner in which the flow of income has been distributed in the past among
the different participants of the economy and reveal the functional mechanism operating in the rural economy consequent upon the development efforts of the past. Understanding of this dynamics can help the formulation of regional plans which can promote more harmonious development over space, carefully eliminating the undesirable flows that 'have generated growth and affluence for the few and poverty and insecurity for many'.

The present study is an attempt to reveal the anatomy of rural poverty in a backward tribal district like Keonjhar and to articulate the dynamics of change. This is attempted for formulating the future development strategy for small spatial units such as blocks which can ensure spatial and functional integration of activities at the grass root level and cater to the needs of the village communities operating in different agro-climatic situations. 

Keonjhar, with its heavy concentration of tribal population, inhospitable climate, physiographic constraints and the legacy of a princely administration, was a backward region when it merged with Orissa in 1948. But in the course of economic planning for the last three decades, several organised attempts have been made to bring this area and its population to the national mainstream. These efforts have initiated some changes in the traditional
society by conditioning the economic behaviour of its population by a new set of institutions and attitudes. The C.D. programme, the T.D.A. and I.T.D.P. programmes, the I.R.D. and I.R.P.R. schemes have been implemented in different parts of the district in different periods of time to ameliorate the condition of the population. Two out of the three sub-divisions of the district, comprising 35.4 percent of its total land area, have been declared as 'scheduled areas' because of its heavy tribal concentration and the State 'Sub-plan' for the development of this area and its population has been launched. The Juang Development Agency, a micro-project for the development of the Juangs, the most primitive tribe found in the State, has been in operation in twenty Juang villages of the district. Many laws have been enacted to protect the interests of the tribal people and free them from the clutches of money lenders, traders and businessmen. But, in spite of all this, today Keonjhar is still backward among the thirteen districts of the State occupying the tenth position in the composite development index. The deterioration of the position of the district vis-à-vis the other districts of the State between 1972-73 and 1979-80 in the socio-economic ladder not only provides enough cause for concern, but also raises serious doubts about the efficacy of planning in this backward tribal region. The gravity of the problem of backwardness of the district in the broad national spectrum is further
heightened when we discover that Orissa occupies the twelfth position in the development rankings among seventeen States of the Indian Union. 14

All this calls for a thorough probe into the poverty scenario and identification of the functional system which tends to keep the people of the district tied to the 'functional base which breeds and perpetuates poverty'. 15 It will also be revealing to bring into limelight the 'laws of motion' which have been operating in the rural tribal society of Keonjhar during the last several years consequent upon the development process. The inferences drawn from such an enquiry can help the formulation of a realistic strategy for the development of the region in harmony with the development scenario of the national space which is aimed at by the national plan.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

Against this backdrop, the broad objectives of the study are :-

(i) To make an anatomical study of the rural economy of the tribal region of Keonjhar district to identify the functional base which not only hinders the harmonious development of the region but also breeds and perpetuates poverty.

(ii) To study the institutional structure and process of development in the tribal region
in order to reveal the dynamics of chango
i.o. to examine to what extent the socio-
-economic and administrative system operating
in the tribal area is in harmony with the
interests of the rural poor.

(iii) In the light of the past development experience,
   to articulate a more appropriate spatial
development strategy capable of inducing a
change in the functional base which breeds and
sustains poverty.

1.3 HYPOTHESES

For the sake of convenience, the above mentioned
objectives are presented in the form of the following
hypotheses. The hypotheses proposed to be tested are :-

(i) The rural and tribal development programmes
    and policies so far implemented have not
    changed the functional basis of the people of
    the district which breeds and perpetuates
    poverty.

(ii) The prevailing scenario of poverty in the
district is an outcome of the present strategy
of rural development.

(iii) The mechanics of rural development programming
in the district have conferred differential
impact on different sections of the rural
society which are detrimental to the interests of the rural poor.

(iv) Rural problems of Keonjhar district have regional identity. Those problems need to be articulated in a regional frame-work with the help of spatial planning techniques.

(v) Functional designs of development, if fitted into spatial frame-work, would generate dynamic forces for changing the functional base of poverty.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is not limited to a mere evaluation of the tribal and rural development programmes implemented in the district. On the other hand here an attempt is made to tear open the body economy of the district in order to locate the functional basis which breeds and sustains poverty. Under this backdrop, an attempt is also made to analyse the impact of various development programmes on the different strata of rural society in a smaller geographical area in terms of changes in the levels of income and asset position and study the adaptability of different groups to different modern development practices. In other words, it is a reconnaissance of the process of economic development in the context of tribal and rural development programmes in order to identify the forces which govern the flow and
distribution pattern of the benefits of development among the rural population. Apart from this diagnostic analysis, the scope of the study also extends to the evolution of a suitable methodology for the assessment of the development levels of smaller regions such as blocks, which can form the basis of the 'district plan' and the evolution of a suitable strategy for the correction of internal distortions and intra-region imbalances within the district. Another dimension of the study relates to the evolution of a suitable technique to provide a scientific spatial framework of planning at the grassroots level and its fusion with the functional design of development in order to reactivate the physical and human resources and sustain and generate economic development in the area.

1.5 STUDY PLAN

On the basis of the objectives and hypotheses, the study has been divided into ten chapters. The first chapter, apart from giving an introduction, states the objectives, hypotheses, scope and structure of the study.

The second chapter spells out the materials and methods used in the study. This chapter not only describes the significance of the study, but also states the basis of selection of the district, makes a review of the past studies in the field, states the sampling design, indicates the variables of the study and instruments of data collection apart from indicating the reference period
and the definitions of some of the important terms and concepts used in the study. The third and fourth chapters provide the backdrop to the study by giving the socio-economic profile of the district, the sample blocks, the sample villages and households. The fifth chapter presents a resume of the rural and tribal development policies and programmes followed by the government until the Sixth Five Year Plan. The sixth chapter makes an anatomical study of the body economy of Keonjhar district in order to diagnose the functional basis of rural poverty in this tribal district. Chapter seven makes a study of the institutional structure in the tribal society of the district. It makes an assessment of the pattern of accrual of benefits of development programmes among the different sections of the rural hierarchy in order to bring into limelight the process of development that the structure generates. Chapter eight is devoted to the discussion of the methodology and its application for the measurement of interblock variations in the levels of development in Keonjhar district and draw inferences therefrom for the development of the region. Chapter nine provides the new spatial design for Sansapal, a tribal block of the district incorporating the functional development strategy. This exercise can be the basis of the modified strategy of planning and development for the rural economy of the district. The last chapter, being the concluding chapter, presents the summary and conclusions of the study.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


Keonjhar was one of the feudatory States of Orissa under the Eastern States Agencies and administered by the ruling chief called 'Raja'. Balabhadra Narayan Bhanja was the last Raja of Keonjhar, during whose rule it merged with Orissa on January 1, 1948 and constituted a district of the State.

'Schedule Areas' are constituted in the State of Orissa in accordance with the order of the President of India issued under paragraph 6 of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

The 'Sub-Plan' areas of Orissa are coterminous with the 'Scheduled Areas' of the State. The Sub-Plan is a plan within the State Plan which envisages the total development effort in the Sub-Plan areas.

'Juangs' are a primitive tribe mainly found in the district of Keonjhar. In the 'Juang' language, which has no script, the word 'Juang' means 'the Man'. The 'Juangs' claim to be the first human beings on earth. They were considered as most undeveloped by the 'Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission' of 1961 and were specified as 'backward' by the 'Study team on Tribal Development' of 1969. The Government of India have declared them as 'A' category primitive tribes on the basis of the yardsticks fixed by the Ministry of Home Affairs. 'The Juang Development Agency' is one of the nine 'micro-projects' in operation in Orissa for the development of the primitive tribal communities.


Ibid., p.3.
