PREFACE

When I was introduced to the tradition of research, the first lesson told to me was what research is. It is a conventional understanding of research in a common parlance. I was told that research is "to know more of the less". Obviously, I was introduced to the idea of "specialisation" in "disciplinary" tradition of research.

Contrary to it my anthropological training taught me a holistic understanding of a phenomenon, its analysis in a cultural perspective. Though a discipline, anthropology addresses the issues which also constitute the subject matter of other disciplines. That is why ecological anthropology, economic anthropology political anthropology have emerged as distinct branches of anthropology where anthropological approach is applied to study the subject matter of conventional disciplines. It is in this sense anthropology has been evolving as an "inter-disciplinary discipline".

A realisation came to me that research is also an academic pursuit of knowing about something "more," for inter-disciplinary studies and anthropological approaches are liberal in this regard. In anthropological approach economics is not studied in isolation of other aspects of social life; all the aspects in the culture are integrated and institutionalised processes.

Obviously, the latter understanding of interdisciplinary nature of research has become the nature of selecting the topic "A Study of Indigenous Knowledge System in Development Policies and Programmes with Special Reference to Resource Management by the Galo of Arunachal Pradesh" for my Ph.D assignment. Of course, contemporary development perspectives having bearing on tribal development has been another guiding factor of selection of research theme. IKS, particularly in the area of resource management has been emphasised as a strategy in contemporary development discourse. It is in tribal areas in the world where people still follow their traditional way of resource management. The tribal people live in
localities which are immensely rich in biodiversity. It is estimated that between 300-500 million of them are living in the globe. They embody and nurture 80 per cent of the world’s cultural and biological diversity, and occupy 20 per cent of the world’s land surface. They have spread over Asia, Central and South America, Australia, Europe, New Zealand, Africa, and Soviet Union. These people have played a vital role in conservation of environmental management and development process as they possess traditional knowledge which has been useful in Eco-restoration. It has been noticed that these people know how to live with harmony in nature under the shield of their culture. At the same time there is a negative aspect to the tribal way of life. These people continue to face serious threats to their basic existence due to systematic government policies which apparently are designed to benefit them.

Needless to say, IKS and resource management directly have bearing on traditional people in general and tribal people in particular. Since the study of IKS in resource management is linked to development perspective, therein lies the significance of policy options, for development interventions are policy-guided. Apparently, three inter-related thematic issues of tribal development in general development perspective as backdrop have been taken into consideration while formulating the research problem of the topic I have selected for my Ph.D work.

To handle three different thematic perspectives in itself is a challenge. Perhaps this is the weakness in the research and at the same time the strength to enter into an emerging area of study. The area is a contemporary academic pursuit in tribal studies to which various disciplines like economics, political science, law, sociology, life sciences, etc. have been contributing unlike the earlier tradition where tribal studies was an exclusive domain of social anthropology.

To try with an emerging area of research one has to be more cautious. There are many issues which need to be considered for an objective presentation of the findings. The first and foremost consideration is perhaps the researcher’s interdisciplinary perspective which generally does not occur in the rigid boundary of the
study of a discipline. In this regard I was little fortunate as I had studied botany at graduation and anthropology at post graduation level. In addition to this I am actively involved in NGO activities which essentially focus contemporary issues precisely relating to the development discourse.

With this strength and the challenge of handling diverse issues to arrive at an objective analysis I have taken up the present research topic for my Ph.D degree. There are shortcomings, and may be more will surface which I am not aware of yet, but the strength is stepping into an emerging research area, a small step towards a giant leap of further investigation. The present research is essentially a process of self education in the field of interdisciplinary inquiry.

30th March, 2011

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