Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITRATURE

Tribal studies have been traditionally pioneered by anthropologists over the last hundred years. However, the purpose of the studies were different in those times than what they are conceived now. European Scholars studied the tribes for understanding the evolution of human institutions which were imagined to have originated in the primitive cultures of the tribes. Some of the Westerners were interested in spreading the gospel of their religion. From the methodological point of view, it has been easier to study simpler tribal cultures as compared to the urban complex cultures. The British and Indian civil – servants – turned – anthropologists studied castes and tribes were not meant to be scientific ethnographic studies of tribes but were meant to provide the basic information of Indian cultural groups to facilitate administration by indirect rule.

However, the situation has changed after Independence. The tribes were designated as Scheduled Tribes with a view to bring them on par with the main stream citizens by providing them with facilities and schemes for educational, economic and political development, by encouraging them to share power and administration. The political forces and the complexities of geographical, historical, economic and other pressures have prompted several non-tribal groups to successfully claim the Scheduled Tribe status thereby increasing their population beyond the normal growth rate. This has created all round problems for the development administration and the real tribal. The genuine concern of the policy planners about development of the tribal is foiled by the problem of pseudo-tribal, who appropriate the facilities meant for the genuine tribal groups.
Beteille (1992) argued that when anthropologists speak of tribes, they mean communities of people who have remained outside of the state and civilization, whether out of choice or necessity, which was the reason of calling them ‘non-civilized,’ but not uncivilized. In India, ‘they all stood more or less outside of Hindu civilization.

Fernandes (1995) writes in his article that the tribes are called Adivasi in Sanskrit and Hindi which literally means the original settlers. The fact that most of them were still live in rural, forest and mountain areas proves that they have been living here from the beginning or from very ancient times. The Government of India, however, do not recognize the tribals as “Indigenous People” and have not signed the ILO Convention 169 of 1989 which restricts the displacement of the tribals, demands adequate rehabilitation and safeguards for the tribal’s culture. Several Indian scholars have expressed disagreement with the UN definition of the “Indigenous People”

Singh K.S. (1995) has given a detailed account in his work on Tribalism and Sanskritazation phenomena. Due to long association with the tribal people, the minority non-tribal communities also adopted many social customs and traditions of tribal culture which clearly had distinct advantage over their own tradition and social customs e.g., cross cousins marriage of tribal tradition has been adopted by the non-tribal castes to win over the dowry problems. Tribalism of larger society is the function of upper hand of tribal culture.

Singh A.K. (1997) explains in his article on concept of tribe. He is of view that the colonial period witnessed the transformation of forest dwellers into tribes and the process of transformation of tribes into castes. All the ethnographers earlier described communities as tribe. But the distinction between tribe and caste did not fully emerge until the census of 1901. D. Hobetson in Punjab was aware of all pervasiveness of caste
structures and caste values. And make a distinction between caste and tribe. Occupation was the primary basis of castes, reinforced by status and caste values. A tribe was bound by the notions of ‘Common origin, common habitat, common customs and modes of thought’. A tribe particularly a clan was strongly linked with territory. The tribes successively were described in the censuses and ethnographic literature as hill tribes, forest tribes, primitive tribes and backward tribes. It was under the government of India Act of 1935 and the constitution of India that the nomenclature of the Scheduled Tribes fully emerged. Soon after Independence the tribes were somewhat differently defined for administrative reasons. It should be noted that primitiveness and backwardness were the tests applied in preparing the list of Scheduled Tribes in 1950 and 1956. In revising the list in 1965 other criteria looked for were indications of primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with communities at large and backwardness. In different language area the tribes started defining themselves locally and nationally as adimjati, adivasi, janajati, etc. Globalization paradoxically has highlighted identity of all groups particularly tribes and galvanized their resistance and consolidation. The basic problem today is to guarantee the rights of tribal people over their resources and to create an apparatus that will ensure their own benefit.

Srivastava (2006) in his article ‘A note on the Tribal Situation in India’ reveals that the all tribal societies were pre-literate scantily dressed, relatively out off from other societies of the wider world, had few personal effects, lived in similar types of habitations and the values of accumulation, investment, gain, profit and surplus were largely alien to them. Consensus does not exist on the number of communities in India that could actually classified as ‘tribal’ because of the changes that have
occurred (and are occurring) among them, are line of argument is that Indian tribes do not subscribe to their textbook definitions.

Aphale and Bairagi (1984) observed that there is high percentage of disparity among the tribals and the general population due to their backwardness, ignorance and poverty. The yields of the tribals are poor because they continue to cultivate land in their traditional primitive manner. Fragmentation of land is another problem in this area. Much of the land is situated on slopes which results in the erosion of soil. Lack of improved seeds, lack of manure and chemical fertilizers, lack of cash resources on easy terms, lack of working livestock, lack of innovation in the methods of cultivation and lack of other supporting enterprises like dairying and transfer of lands from the tribal to non-tribal have disarranged the entire life of the tribal persons. Agriculture is among the most crucial activities of the tribal. Several years ago the tribal people owned most of the land is areas where they predominantly lived and cultivated it. But several factors such as poor economic conditions, poor fertility of land, and increase in population let the tribal people fall the prey to indebtedness. The most convenient way to be relieved of this situation appeared to the tribal people in the form of alienating their lands. The process of alienation started several decades back and it remained unimpeded till very recent times. It needs to be mentioned that despite the healthy enactments with regard to the land restoration referred to above, there have been reported instances of land grabbing by non-tribal. Land alienation over the years has been the single biggest cause of the acute backwardness of the tribal economy. This problem will have to be tackled more deep from all concerns to protect the interests of the tribal.
Approaches and Policies of Government and Constitutional Safeguards for Scheduled Tribes

Verrier Elwin (1959) says that keeping the sketchy general background of the tribes in mind we may now pass on to the tribal policies of the colonial Government and the present Independent Government, the exposition of which would automatically justify the usefulness of assigning safeguards to the Scheduled Tribes by the National Government. The approaches of these two administrative machineries show a striking difference in terms of deep motivational principles while the approach adopted by the British Government was fundamentally political being purely guided by their colonial interest, the present Government’s attitude prompted by a desire of welfare and an uncompromising concern for the socio-economic upliftment of our tribal folk. This basic difference in attitudes is, thus, an important point to note which should not be lost sight of while assessing the nature of their respective policies towards our tribal brethren.

Sahay (1968) write about their general policy of isolation characterized by non-intervention or limited intervention under dire political need was their often covert and sometimes direct encouragement to the Christian missionary activities, in the tribal areas. It is of course, an undeniable fact that the Christian missionaries had done something for the wellbeing of the tribes, the scope of which was wide. That was an activity of high spirited social service and reforms as a result of which many of the tribal areas had schools, hospitals, etc. The missionaries, therefore, must be deemed as the pioneers who initiated the process of socio-economic transformation in the hitherto stagnant tribal life. Although the “service for the suffering humanity, is considered to be a duty for the Christian missionaries but at the same time it is coupled with the right of conversion”.
Shrinivas M. N. (1944) stated that the large-scale conversion of many tribal groups, especially of the States in Eastern India, which had far-reaching implications. With the passage of time it became more and more apparent to the people here that the primary goal of the missionaries was conversion and “the opening of schools, hospitals and either welfare agencies (were) only bait in the trap of conversion”. Instances are not lacking about their resorting to unfair means of all sorts including material inducement, political favor, etc., for conversion. A careful analysis of the missionary activities thus leads to the conclusion that under the garb of humanitarianism, the obnoxious political motives of the colonial rulers were rampant. It was a sort of intellectual and moral aggression on Indian life strongly patronized by the British Government which aimed gradually, to alienate a chunk of the population from the main national stream by generating a kind of “sentimental and emotional detachment with the rest of the people – a process which could be effectively carried out under the auspices of the policy of Isolation.

**Indian Attitudes to the Tribals in Early Post-Independence India**

Dube (1982) writes that one can very well understand in the context as to why the British Government’s creating the “excluded” and partially excluded” areas and giving separate political representation to the tribes had invited criticism of the Nationalists who “viewed both these measure as part of a diabolic conspiracy to create a new separatist minority”. However, with the independence of the country, this policy had undergone a qualitative change. Contrasted with the British policy, the present Government of India’s foremost concern which molded its policy was securing the welfare and socio-economic upliftment of the tribal people. The polity imbued with a high sense of respect for the tribal cultures and traditions is stoutly opposed to any kind of interference by outside agencies.
which are likely to contribute to the destruction of the tribal art, culture and so on. This has amply been demonstrated in the five fundamental principles of the tribal development evolved.

Singh K.S. (1995) writes that the tribal’s in India were not treated with the cruelty and harshness they were subjected to in the USA and Australia. The tribals were exterminated in the New World and Australia destroying their civilization and culture. There were no bloody encounters in India with the exception of Aberden in the Andaman Islands where 5000 tribals were mown down by British gun in 1858. India also did not have the social isolation policy of reservations for the tribals as was the case in America where the tribals (Red Indians) were restricted to the reserved areas.

**The Tribals are Deeply Attached to Their Lands and Forests**

Nehru’s Panchsheel for the tribal included respect for the tribal rights on land and forests, But the Government of India and the State Governments have not honored this commitment. On the contrary they have pursued an anti-tribal policy despite their hypocritical sympathetic pronouncements. The Forest Policy is an illustration of this. The 1894 Forest Policy of the Colonial Government was the first onslaught on the rights of tribals on their forests. The rights were converted into concessions. The tribals were allowed forest lands for cultivation. There was no State control over the private forests of the tribals.

Behura (1995) reported that there was no restriction on free-grazing in the forests. The 1952 Forest Policy of Government of India withdrew the concessions given to the tribals by the 1894 policy. The 1988 National Forest Policy prohibited the Jhum or shifting cultivation because of its alleged adverse effects on forest environment and land productivity. Several scholars have argued that Jhum cultivation with a 18-20 year cycle
is environment friendly. Jhum (shifting) cultivation was practiced by at least 109 tribes in 233 blocks of 62 districts spread over 16 States affecting 1 million hectares.

Fernandes (1995) noticed that together with Jhum the Minor Forest Products (MEP) contributed 50% or more of the food of the forest dwellers.

Chopra K (1989) wrote that the alienation and destruction of the tribal lands and forests have disrupted the very basis of tribal life. The Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes in 1961 Report had complained that more and more rights of the tribals were being taken away. The Government did not pay any attention to this.

**Tribal’s Accustomed to Informal Economy**

Fernandes (1995) writes that the tribes in every part of India share the belief that common lands, wastelands, forests, ponds and gardens are common property resources. “The individual had only useful actuary rights over them.” Individual ownership is an alien concept to the tribals. It has been superimposed on them by the non-tribals.

Sharma (1995) writes that the collective ownership of land prevents its alienation. “The land alienation is a possible consequence only if ownership is individual”.

Gare (1982) has written in his article about some realities of tribal life. He found that the phenomenon of land alienation, exploitation against indebtedness, bounded labour practice continue till today. The developmental measures promoted by State Government through Education, Agricultural Development, Public works, and Co-operative Labour Organization didn’t bring satisfactory improvement in Tribal life till the end of fourth five-year plan. The problem of welfare measures faced by the tribals in India varies from one region to another. Hence, the
Government decided to implement a new strategy, i.e., ‘Tribal Sub Plan’ during the Fifth Five Year Plan to concentrate on their needs in tribal regions.

Gare (1983) writes in research study, the exploitation of tribal in land and forest is major cause of tribal’s economic underdevelopment and improvement. The majority of tribal hold small and limited agriculture lands and cultivate through traditional seeds method without irrigation. The tribal’s forest wealth has been ruined due to excessive cutting of timber by the forest labour co-operative societies. Hence, the tribes today survive on agriculture land and farm labour practices. The tribal’s economic problems are related with unproductive agriculture and hunger.

Gaikwad (1990), in his study on ‘Role of Minor Forest Produce in Tribal Economy,’ noted that the tribal communities in India largely occupy forested regions that for a long period in their history. They lived in isolation but in harmony with the nature. The forests not only provide them food, material to build houses, fuel for cooking, light and warmth, fodder for their cattle, but also satisfy their deep-rooted sentiments. ‘Tribal life is connected in a way or the other with forests right from birth to death. Forests occupy the central position in tribal economy. Tribal life is profoundly affected by whatever happens to the forest. Forest is for them a whole way of life, and hence the development cannot make much headway without the contribution of forestry sector. Minor Forest Produce (MFP) includes all items of forest produce except timber. Collection and sale of (MFP) forms the major economic activity of livelihood for majority of the tribes. Various items of MFP possess the potential of an economic revolution among the tribal. Tribal’s collect many items of daily use as well as Minor Food Products items from the forests traditionally, which are necessary for their day-to-day sustenance. During drought and adverse conditions, the tribal households live only on edible products collected
from forests. MFP items have a vital role and a viable potential of an economic revolution among the tribes residing in forests. A special drive is necessary for the collection, processing, preservation, storage and marketing of the MFP and their derivatives.

The article written by Gare (1983) found that the Tribal backwardness in the field of Education, Social and Economical life was responsible for continuous exploitation of tribal in various areas. He found that the enrolment rate of Tribal students has risen to 2 percent from 1 – 2 percent through educational program. In last 30 years. Anthropological literature of the last two decades has sensitively documented the stories of the victims of development. Their hopes were belied when development programmes, instead of ameliorating their condition, displace them to barren lands, jeopardizing their life support systems and making them perpetually dependent upon the state for doles. In some cases, on their lands, from which they were evicted under the name of development projects, stand multistoried housing complexes for middle and upper classes. During the second half of the twentieth century, poverty among tribal people has multiplied several folds and their oppression has continued unabated.

Belshaw (1972) writes that though a lot has been done for their social and economic betterment, yet a great deal remains to be done. Before analyzing the strategies of tribal development programmes it seems imperative to comment on the background of policy makers, planners and administrators. Anthropologists everywhere have been acknowledged as doctors specializing in tribal and their problems. Unfortunately, our government could not, in the initial stages, utilize their specialized knowledge due to some pre-conceived notions cultivated and promoted by some vested interests that successfully influenced the thinking of our early leaders and administrators. This situation led us to a stage where important
decisions, often involving vital policy issues about tribal, their problems and developments, were taken without taking any advice from anthropologists or considering their views. Such a State of affairs continued till a decade back or so when government realized its folly and started involving anthropologists in various committees and commissions, though on a very modest scale. But the damage had been done.

**Satisfaction of Minimum Needs**

Broadly, the minimum needs in the tribal areas include food, work in the lean season, potable water, health and sanitation, housing fodder, fuel communication and primary and non-formal education, The most important strategic questioning the matter of satisfaction of minimum needs is whether it should be done as a welfare measure or by rescheduling the productive activities. Generally the approach has been to satisfy the minimum needs as a welfare measure. This tends to destroy the self-reliance of the tribals and makes them dependent on bureaucratic management. Also this leads to a distortion in the utilization of the productive resources at the disposal of the tribal communities. A complete reversal of the approach is called for. In other words, as far as possible, the minimum needs of the tribes are to be satisfied through harnessing the forces of production and orienting the social relations of production in conformity with the tribal ethos of self-management and national objective of building up a socialistic pattern of society.

The observations made by Aphale and Bairagi (1984) on realities of Tribal Sub Plans states that in spite of the budget provisions, some schemes were not implemented and funds of individual benefits were diverted. The observations about educational improvement revealed slight increase in tribal literacy rate, low student enrollment rate, low quality of education, less number of secondary schools with temporary arrangement
and poor hostel facilities. It has been observed that the health facilities are neither efficient nor sufficient for tribal due to non-availability of staff, medical facilities, vehicles, etc. There have been facilities like drinking water, roads and communication means, which were useless due to poor maintenance.

Haimendorf (1982) has discussed the pattern and causes of disintegration of the traditional tribal system, failure of welfare programmes by taking the example of two tribes, Apa Tanis of Arunachal Pradesh and Gonds of Andhra Pradesh. He found that the two tribes stood at opposite ends of a spectrum today. While Apa Tanis was clearly set on upward path, the Gonds were threatened by an apparently irreversible decline in their fortunes. He claims that Apa-Tani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh numbered about 15000, achieved development and integration without losing its identity because of protection given by the Government of India.

Heredia Rudolfe (1995) reveals his view that "if the developmental dilemma that confronts our tribals is to be successfully addressed, tribal integration will require their mobilization not just to preserve their cultural autonomy but to redress their minority status as welt. So, they can participate in their own development. For this, tribal education will have to play a major role.

Deogaonkar S.G. (1982) traces the origin and growth of the efforts for the development of tribal population in India. Apart from examining various approaches to tribal development, it enumerates the administrative structures and organizational strategies adopted during the last many years of planning, the outlay on tribal development during the plans and the priorities adopted have also been indicated. The Tribal Sub-Plan strategy and its implementation have been examined elaborately. The personal policy adopted in tribal development finds a special and critical treatment.
The article written by Deshmukh (2003) found that the existing welfare strategies did not overcome the tribal from inferiority and atrocities on them. It is now recognized that the welfare needs of tribal consists of purposive efforts by tribal, self motivation and self-determination course of action which will enable the tribal to achieve the quality of lifestyle they aspire.

Mehta (2000) presents an overall review of the tribal development measures adopted during the 20th century. According to him the government failed to provide them basic minimum needs for their subsistence. The first halves of the century were administered by the British government and the local rulers. They were not bothered about their needs and welfare. Hence, during the first half of century they were exploited by the then rulers.

Pandey (1997) presents an important correction to the tendency of western researchers and conservative scholars. He has successfully tried to investigate the problem of underdevelopment, the culture of powerlessness and culture of poverty among tribals vis-a-vis the Indian society.

**Tribal’s are in Different Levels of Development.**

According to Singh (1997), “The Tribal in India is the most adversely affected ethnic group due to development in post-Independence India. The new economic policy is likely to worsen their conditions. The efforts can be made to salvage and improve their socio-economic conditions within the possibilities and constraints of their existential realities which inter alia, include rural, illiteracy, poverty, ill-health and unproductive agriculture.” In general, there has been a situation, where the government’s efforts of tribal welfare with protective and Developmental measures do not make any remarkable impact on tribal development. The tribal development has been a challenge for government in the area of
Economic, Education, Social, Political and human backwardness and exploitation of tribal. Hence, the present study intends to find impact of welfare measures on tribal backwardness, exploitations and underdevelopment.

Sharma (1995) wrote the span between the most “primitive” and most “modern” is about ten thousand years. Thus, the profile of an average tribal person is characterized by:

1) Rural residence,
2) Engaged in agriculture and agriculture-forest related occupations,
3) Poverty,
4) Illiteracy,
5) Ill-health and malnourishment,
6) Accustomed to an Informal Economy, and
7) Deeply attached to land and forest.

Behura (1995) wrote that the tribal groups differ greatly in their present level of development. They are Hunters and Gatherers as in pockets of South and Central India and in the Andaman’s. They are settled agriculturists on par with other peasant communities in many parts of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and other States. And, they are urban industrial workers. On one extreme are people like Jarawas with almost no contact with the outside world. On the other, there are workers in the industrial cities of Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Bokaro, Rourkela and Bhilai.

Singh and Jabbi (1996) write about Empirical studies in different parts of India have demonstrated that the health, education and employment status of the tribals in India is very low, lower than other
social groups, including the Scheduled Castes. They claim that tribal of singbhum were being attacked and killed by money-lenders, forest contractors, government officials and other agents of development in the same way as Abhimanyu was killed by the seven great warriors in the epic Mahabharata. The tribal in India, like Abhimanyu, is fighting an unequal war. The teenage Abhimanyu had entered the chakraviyuh knowingly and willingly. But the tribal has been trapped in the developmental chakraviyuh unwillingly. Similarly several papers in the book entitled Tribals in India: Development, Deprivation and discontent, they have documented the large-scale developmental deprivation. A substantial literature on this topic is now available. We will briefly highlight a few major aspects.

**Development and Displacement**

Fernandes (1991) writes that the tribal constitute only about 8 percent of the total Indian population but about 40 percent of the displaced due to the big modern developmental projects. Truly, they are the victims and refugees of development. The international human conscience is justifiably disturbed by the victims and refugees of war. But ironically the international and national conscience is not disturbed at all by the refugees of development. It has been estimated that about at least 185 lakh persons have been displaced by the developmental projects between 1951 and 1990. This is about 2 percent of total Indian population. Only 30 percent were resettled till 1970.

Sharma (1995) reported that about 20 percent of the tribal population has been uprooted and displaced in less than fifty years.

Singh A.K.(1994) wrote, According to a Government of India estimate, between 1981-85 the coal mine alone had displaced 1,80,000 persons and had provided one job per family to only 36 percent. In Jharkhand the tribal land alienation and displacement have been going on
from 1907 with the establishment of Tata Iron Steel Company. The magnitude of land and number of displaced persons has been increasing since then.

Haimendrof (1982) noted the pro lateralization of displaced tribes, who received ridiculously low compensations and little was done to rehabilitate them and train them for work in the new industries and institutions.

**Development and Genocide of the Tribal in India**

Chaudhuri N.C. (1965) writes on his article about the blast furnaces of the TISCO as the gigantic funeral pyres of the primitive and had predicted the inevitability of destruction of the tribes. In an industrialized India, the destruction of the aboriginal’s life is as inevitable as the submergence of the Egyptian temples caused by the dams of the Nile.

Sirsalkar (1985) has given some suggestions based on his study ‘Evaluation of Ashram Schools in Maharashtra State’. The scheme of Ashram schools complex is being implemented in this state from the year 1971-72. It has been envisaged that the scheme will result in the social and educational advancement of tribal people. This study has revealed various lacunas in implementing this scheme in true spirit. Various suggestions like building and library, common room for teachers, separate urinals and bathroom for boys and girls, availability of electricity, provision of annual maintenance to overcome infrastructure problems, arrangement of parent meetings, medical and physical checking organisation of educational tour, competitions of folk songs and folk dances, availability of play grounds and sports material, special coaching, debates, periodicals and lectures etc. has to be arranged to improve existing conditions.

Devalle (1992) has described the process of gradual genocide of the tribals in India caused by development and modernization. The land of the
tribal is taken away for the developmental projects. From a farmer he becomes a wage-earner. The entire family was engaged in cultivation. Now only one member gets an unskilled job in lieu of the land. The other members of the family become unemployed. The new jobs in the big development projects require skills which the tribals don’t have. So they are redundant for the modern sectors, and are unwanted labour force, expelled back to the villages. Thus, the village communities which were reserve of labour have become the graveyards of unwanted tribal workers.

In Jharkhand region, before the development era, the tribals constituted the labour pool for the tea plantations of West Bengal and Assam. When development came to Jharkhand in the shape of modern industries, the unskilled tribal labour was not suited for the jobs, which were grabbed by the outsiders. The gradual genocide is not the result of any official policy but of working out of social and economic forces and of administrative negligence. Gradual genocide for the adivasis takes place by means of starvation and illnesses arising from growing pauperization caused by the decline in land production due to the effects of industrial waste, the neglect of irrigation, and curtailment of alternative sources of subsistence like forests.

Singh, et al (1996) writes in an article on Health status of trials in India, the popular image of the tribals in India being healthy and happy has been formed on the basis of disinformation spread by anthropological studies glorifying and romanticizing the Nobel savage image of the tribals and their way of life permeated with singing, dancing and drinking. But the empirical studies on the health of the tribals have reported high prevalence of disease and malnutrition. A review of the studies on the on the health of the tribals, including those done by Jabalpur ICMR Regional Medical Research Centre, Nutrition Foundation of India, and Post-Graduate Department of Psychology, Ranchi University, has concluded that tribal
population has a very low health-nutrition status which is due to their rural, illiteracy and poverty. Eleven surveys, covering a total sample of 6051 cases, collected in Chota Nagpur and Santal Paragana region of Jharkhand, Bihar have reported very low level of knowledge, attitudes and practice in relation to physical and mental health, diet and nutrition, family planning and child care, health habits, and physical conditions of living.

Singh A.K.(1997) reported the grim of health statistics and Myth of the Healthy Tribal from two rural tribal blocks of Ranchi district, It reported that only 8% of the children were immunized, two-thirds of the under-65 children were malnourished, 40% having severe malnutrition, and 71% took Khaini made of raw tobacco leaves. A comprehensive review of the health status of the tribals has reported higher IMR in the tribals, lower life expectancy and higher fertility rate than the national average.

Basu (1985) writes that the tribes also had low nutritional status and high incidence of Sickle cell disease (HBs) and Glucose-to-Phosphate Enzyme Deficiency.

**The New Economic Policy and the Tribal in India**

Sharma (1995) writes that most big developmental projects in post-Independence India have been located in the tribal areas because of their mineral, forest and water resources. The New Economic Policy will attract more projects in these areas resulting in (i) absorption of national resources, (ii) exploitation of plentiful manpower, and (iii) creation of a captive market for its merchandise. The New Economic Policy is the last phase of an open assault on the tribes in India There has been a virtual rejection of the tribal sub-system which was promised by Nehru in his Panchasheel for the tribes. The habitat and the community concepts have been finally spurred. The concept of individual right have been
superimposed on the tribals who believed in community ownership of property. The new modern developmental activities will take away the residual support the tribals still have for their forest, land and water resources. The support from the forest resource has already become very small. The forests will be commercially exploited by the Forest Development Corporation or even by the multinationals. The “Degraded Forests and Wastelands” will be the first to be commercially exploited with a readymade rationale. The tribals have already lost a great deal of their agricultural irrigated lands. The tribals cannot afford the modern methods of agriculture with costly inputs of fertilizers. As it is, agriculture has become non-viable. The agricultural income is less than from the salaried jobs. The rush from low profit agriculture to wage-employment has already begun. The tribal still have hardly any choice between non-profitable agriculture and attractive wage employment. Resource-less and landless the tribals will join “the crowd of casual wage-earner”.

Singh A K (1997) in his article Endangered tribal’s of India: Booby trap of development writes: the tribes in India are the most adversely affected ethnic group due to development in post-Independence India. The new economic policy is likely to worsen their conditions. The efforts can be made to salvage and improve their socio-economic condition within the possibilities and constraints of their existential realities which inter-alia, include rural, illiteracy, poverty, ill-health and unproductive agriculture.

**Improving the Status of the Tribals**

The existential realities of the tribals provide constraints as well as possibilities for the improvement of the status of the tribals. It has been noted that the tribals are rural, illiterate, unhealthy and poor, attached to land and forest, engaged in agriculture and forest-related occupation and are all different levels of development.
The malaise of the tribal situation is now fully understood. The motives and forces behind tribal exploitation are also clearly identified the resolution logically lies in removing the causes. It is also clear that such removal is not easy because of the powerful vested interests backed by national and international support. Yet, there is no alternative than to continue the battle for the human rights of the tribals. The resolution of the crisis essentially demands, on common sense basis, two-pronged Action Plan, both taken simultaneously (i) Political and (ii) HRD. The Action Plan has to have a strategy suited to the realities of the tribal situation.

**Political Empowerment of the Tribal by Legislation**

Sharma (1995) says that the tribes have lost their rights because of their political powerlessness. Their authority over their resources needs to be restored. These will include:

**Social Change:**

1) Revision of the Fifth Schedule.
2) Introduction of Panchayat system.
3) Prevention of tribal land and forest alienation.
4) Restoration of tribal customary rights on community resources.

51 percent share to the tribals in the industries established on their lands. Rehabilitation of the entire family displaced by developmental projects, and not only of one or two members.

**HRD in the Tribal**

Gare (1983) writes that the status of the tribals, or any other social group, cannot be improved with illiteracy, ill-health and poverty. The extremely low levels of literacy-education and health-nutrition status of the tribals put a constraint on improving their economic status. Agriculture in
the tribal areas is mostly unproductive and is incapable of providing adequate employment.

**Strategies for the Empowerment of the Tribal**

A report of Women and Child Development Department (1995) discloses the successful experiments of participation of trials. In Bankura (West Bengal) about 2000 tribal women procured 450 areas of wasteland from the men of their community and raised one million Arjun and Asan trees to rear Tasar silk cocoons. They have earned assured income of about five six months. Their Nari Bikash Sangha is a Federation which interacts with the Government functionaries and has ties with women Panchayat members.

Singh P.K. (1995) writes on article, In Gujarat, the Lift Irrigation Co-operative mobilized the tribals, and gave them technical know-how. The production increased from 4/5 quintal/acre to 15/18 Quintle acre (Baril, 1991). In Mizoram Mulling Collective Farming Society organized landless tribal labourers and trained them in improved agricultural practices. They now own asset worth about rupees five lakhs in land, livestock, agricultural implements etc. In Udaipur, Rajasthan, the Watershed Resource Society aided by technical know-how has increased by per capita income from Rupees 598 to Rupees 1735.

**Role of NGOs**

The Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have emerged as friends of the tribals and the dalits in India. The Government of India has also acknowledged the important role of the NGOs. But, the Government wants the NGOs as their agents and not as their critics. In fact the State and Central governments have been patronizing the sarkari and darbari NGOs
and are hostile to independent free thinking NGOs. The voice of dissent is being suppressed with unashamed barbarism.

Dr. B.D. Sharma, a former Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and a former Vice-Chancellor of NEHU was stripped and paraded in the streets of Jagdalpur because he was protesting against the establishment of a steel factory on tribal lands which he thought was against the interests of the tribals. An elderly internationally respected environmentalist Sunderlal Bahugana was forcibly taken away from Tehri where he was on fast against the building of a Dam which he considered harmful to the local people. He could obtain his freedom only on the intervention of Allahabad High Court. Ms. Medha Patkar, the leader of Narmada Bachao Andolan, has been arrested several times, has been removed to the hospital for force-feeding and treated without respect and courtesy due to her. These are only a few examples. If such treatment is given to Sharma, Bahugana and Patkar, one can imagine the treatment received by the workers of such protest movements. The voluntary organizations have done more than the Government. For example, in Jharkhand area the Christian Missions and Ramakrishna Ashram have done more than the State or the Central Governments.

Panigrahi (1993) writes In addition to Christian Missions and Ramakrishana Missions, several voluntary organisations have been doing dedicated service in the tribal areas, such as, Adim Jati Seva Mandal, Bhartiya Adimajati Sevak Sangh, and Nagaland Gandhi Ashram.

Prasad (1987) writes that the efforts of voluntary agencies are more economical than government departments and they involve greater people participation. Despite aberrations India is committed to human democratic values. The political elite in post-Independence India have abandoned the ideals and values enshrined in the Constitution of India. However, a voice of protest and dissent has emerged and is gaining strength. This gives the
hope that about 68 million tribals cannot be sacrificed at the altar of God named ‘Development’ that has failed. Not they can be allowed to become the pawn in the electoral politics as is being done in Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.

Beteille (1992) argued that Tribes are far away from their traditional occupations, though anthropologists and others who study them might likely to see them conforming to their image of primitiveness. Contemporary tribal societies differ so widely in their habitats, social organisations, modes of production and cultural practices, that to nurture a definition of tribe may turn to be disappointing. These days, tribal societies are on the road to modernity and development. For instance, a comparative study of the lists released for the last some years of the successful candidates under the reserved category for the Civil Service examinations will reveal that over years the post for the Scheduled Tribes go to a handful of their communities because the latter have done exceptionally well under the policy of positive discrimination and the other development programmes meant for tribes. The level of modernization and education is very high among tribal communities of the northeastern part of India.
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