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that the dimension of peoples' culture should always be kept in mind. Development and change will be successful when they are compatible with culture.

25. There are works of theoretical significance dealing with issues like the concept of tribe, its relationship with caste society, the significance of the category of 'indigenous people', etc. (Harsh 1999; Roy Burman 1994c, 1997a; Xaxa 1999a, b), Jawaharlal Nehru's contribution to tribes is also well documented (K.S. Singh, 1988a, 1989; Mann and Mann 1989a; Shashi 1990; Sachchidananda 1999). Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf's contribution to the development of tribes has been reviewed (Venkata Rao 1996; also see Fürer-Haimendorf and Fürer-Haimendorf 1991), and a biography of varrier Elwin has also been published (Ramachandra Guha 1999). Tanka B. Subba (1994) has compared the views of Elwin, Fürer-Haimendorf, and Rustomji on the development of Arunachal Pradesh. The models generally used in anthropology have been critically examined against data from tribal societies (Channa 1988, 1990; R.S. Mann 1988).

A distinguishing feature of this period is that there is a tremendous increase in the number of tribal scholars and anthropologists carrying out studies on their own respective societies. The tradition of studying one's own society—or, what has come to be termed 'native anthropology', 'auto-ethnography', or 'anthropology at home'—is quite old, but it was largely confined to literate communities whose scholars wrote on their respective peoples. Being preliterate, it was unexpected that the tribespersons would write about their own society and culture; and anthropology was defined as the study of 'other cultures' carried out by 'non-tribal outsiders', mostly 'white men'. At that time, in the formative stages of anthropology, no one imagined that a time would come when 'tribesmen' would not only write about their societies and cultures, but also critically examine studies done by 'outsiders', finding erroneous interpretations and appalling mistakes in their writings, and, at the same time, defending some of their traditional practices (see Ruivah 1993 and its review by Vinay Kumar Srivastava 1995 and 1996; Munda 2000). Some communities, generally not listed as scheduled tribes, have also founded their own 'anthropological societies' to take up their respective cases and provide 'internally generated' information about their own community (see Mate 1997). Some concerned people have started a journal titled *Naga Journal of Indigenous Affairs*, the first issue of which was released in 2002. Another group launched a Hindi periodical, *Dalit Adivasi Samvad*, in 2003. All this has important implications for the 'we' and 'they' distinction in anthropology.

Secondly, the present survey shows that the areas purported to be of applied value, have received larger attention than those supposed to be essentially of theoretical importance. Thus studies on kinship and religion are significantly far fewer than studies of issues of demography, health and illness, or environment. Because of the concerted research efforts of different institutions (such as universities, the Anthropological Survey of India, and other research institutions), almost all tribal areas in India have been explored. One of the achievements of 'native anthropology' is that those communities, especially in north-east India (such as Anal Naga, Mate, Maring Naga), that until now had remained unstudied are being researched. Certain tribal areas—especially in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan—are going to be the favourite spots for study in the future as fieldwork becomes increasingly difficult in those tribal regions that have come under the grip of the insurgent and Naxalite movements.

Concept of Tribe

While scanning writings on tribes, one will come across authors who are not concerned with 'what one means by tribe'. Here, it is relevant to quote Atal's observation made as far back as 1963:

> Despite [social anthropology's] primary concern with tribal societies, it has not been able to develop a universally applicable definition of the term 'tribe'.

An issue emerging clearly in the present survey of writings on tribes (from 1988 to 2002) is the concern of anthropologists with the definition and concept of tribe. Anthropologists make a distinction between the concepts of 'tribe' and 'scheduled tribe'.

While tribe is an anthropological concept referring to a particular type of society, in contrast to societies known as 'caste', 'peasant', and 'urban', scheduled tribe is an administrative and political concept (Verma 1990; Sachchidananda 1992). The concept of scheduled tribe applied is not only to individual communities but also to whole territories (such as Kinnaur, Jaunsar-Bawar, and Pangwal) where all people irrespective of their status have been declared as tribes. A similar situation is found in Ladakh where all the other communities, except one, have the status of scheduled tribe. It is well known that the Constitution of India does not define the term scheduled tribe; Article 366 (25) refers to scheduled tribes as those communities that are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution (K.S. Singh 1985). Many authors have noted the scramble among many non-tribes to be included in the list of scheduled tribes (see K.S. Singh 1993a:12). Besides the advantages that come with scheduling, the label 'tribe', by comparison to scheduled caste, does not carry any stigma. Because of such inclusions, the population of scheduled tribes has steadily increased, especially in the decade 1971–81. However, it should be noted that seven tribes (Malaiarayan and Palliyan of Kerala; Bharwad of Gujarat; Naga of Meghalaya; Noatia of Tripura; Onge of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands; and Kathodi of Dadar and Nagar Haveli) have shown a continuous decline in their population. This decline has resulted from the operation of a number of factors, such as high mortality, poor health standards, and also the migration of people to other areas where they are not scheduled. The

process of exclusion may work theoretically, reducing the number of people in a tribal group, but the cases of inclusion far outnumber those of exclusion.

However, little disagreement exists with respect to the meaning of the term scheduled tribe, which is a constitutional term. There exists an all-India list of these communities who are entitled to a set of privileges under the policy of compensatory discrimination. In its People of India Project, the Anthropological Survey of India prepared an initial list of 6,748 communities in India and investigated and described 4,635 of them. Of these, 461 were tribal having 172 segments (K.S Singh, 1993a:12) and comprising 8.1 per cent of the total population of the country. Many of these segments are 'as good as discrete categories' (K.S. Singh 1997:2). The total number of tribes, their groups and segments including territorial units, that the Peoples of India Project studied was 635 (K.S. Singh 1993b).

But different sources give different numbers of communities classified as scheduled tribe. The revised version of Nirmal Kumar Bose's *Tribal Life in India*, published in 1971, list 300 communities, while the Draft of the National Policy on Tribals, issued in February 2004, records 698 scheduled tribes. The second Draft of The National Tribal Policy, circulated in July 2006, while not committing itself to a particular number, notes that there are 'nearly seven hundred State-specific Scheduled Tribes'. More confusion is created when two different sources give different sets of the number of tribes in a state: one source counts sub-tribes as tribes, whereas the other lists only tribes. For instance, according to the Annual Report (2002–03) of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, Arunachal Pradesh has 16 tribes, whereas the Anthropological Survey of India's *India: An Illustrated Atlas of Tribal World* (December 2002) gives a list of 97 tribes in that state.

For those unconcerned with the definition of tribe, debates on the concept of tribe are perennial if not entirely futile. These investigators call the communities they study 'tribes' if they are designated as scheduled tribes in a government notification, or if the scheduled tribes are referred to as 'tribes', whether or not they have the characteristics attributed to a tribe (Mahapatra 2006:1). Thus, a study of the Gujars and Bakarwals (of Jammu and Kashmir) done prior to 1991 was not conceived as a study of tribal communities; later, however there communities were given the status of scheduled tribe, and so the study of the Gujars and Bakarwals has become a tribal study. The problem arises when one studies the Rabari, who are a scheduled tribe in Gujarat and the Other Backward Class (OBC) in Rajasthan (Vinay Kumar Srivastava 1991a). Roy Burman (1994c) has given many examples of such communities which are 'tribe' in one state and 'caste' in another. Because of these confusions, many authors begin not with 'tribe' but 'scheduled tribe', and when they use the word 'tribe', they do not imply an anthropological appellation but an administrative designation of a community. Virginius Xaxa (1999b:3589) also notes that Indian academicians and administrators have been more concerned with the 'identification of tribes than with their definition'.

In comparison to those who do not go into the labyrinth of definitions, there are others who define a tribe before they proceed with their specific study. Buddhadeb Chaudhuri (1992: vii), who edited a set of five volumes comprising 143 articles, titled *Tribal Transformation in India*, defined tribe in his introduction in the following words:

> Anthropologically, a tribe is a social group, the members of which live in a common territory, have a common dialect, uniform social organization and possess cultural homogeneity having a common ancestor, political organization and religious pattern.

Paul Hockings (1993: 355) has offered the following definition:

> ...a tribe is a system of social organization which embraces a number of local groups or settlements, which occupies a territory, and normally carries its own distinctive culture, its own name, and its own language.

In another influential publication on ethnicity, J. Milton Yinger (1997: 22) has formulated the following definition of tribe:

> ...it is small, usually preliterate and preindustrial, relatively isolated, endogamous (with exogamous sub-tribal divisions), united mainly by kinship and culture, but in many places also by territorial boundaries, and strongly ethnocentric ('We are the people').

S.C. Dube (1998: 4–5) has given a set of six characteristics which can serve the useful purpose of developing a concept of tribe:

1. The community's habitation of a particular territory dates back to an early period. They may be the original dwellers of a habitat, but in case they are not, they are among the oldest inhabitants of the land.

2. Generally they dwell in the isolated hills and forests.

3. Their sense of history is shallow. The remembered history gets merged with mythology. Some tribes have their own genealogists who have records of interesting anecdotes and the past.

4. The level of techno-economic development among them is low.

5. They are distinct from other societies in terms of their cultural ethos, language, institutions, beliefs, world view, and customs.

6. They are generally non-hierarchic and undifferentiated, although there may be some exceptions of societies that have landed aristocracies or the class of gentry.

All these authors have placed emphasis on the cultural uniformity of a tribe, which becomes the raison d'etre of its identity and ethno-political movement, if it materializes in future. A tribe is able to maintain its 'homogeneity' not only because of its concerted efforts, in a system of opposition, against the outsiders, but also because of its relative *isolation* from other communities and the wider world. However, these authors (and many others who have tried to define tribe) also think that one will not come across a community labelled as 'tribe' (or 'scheduled tribe') having all the characteristics that are delineated for defining a tribe. Basically, what we wish to highlight is the hiatus between the definition of tribe, given in theoretical terms, and the empirical reality of the communities which are classified as tribes or scheduled tribes. The definition an author proposes may apply to the tribespersons he or she studies, but it may not have a larger coverage. To put it in other way: in most cases, the definition emerges from one's study, against the background of the society one has studied, but its cross-cultural validity may always be doubted.

André Béteille (1992) has made one of the important contributions to the concept of tribe. Earlier, in his articles published in 1960 and 1980, he had argued in favour of a historical approach which would help in understanding the transformation of tribes as a result of which they came to deviate substantially from their 'ideal type' definitions. According to him the concept of tribe will be different where tribes and civilizations coexist. In such situations, when anthropologists speak of tribes, they mean communities of people who have remained outside of the state and civilization, whether out of choice or of necessity. That was the reason, it is supposed, for calling them 'non-civilized', but certainly not 'uncivilized'. In India, 'they all stood more or less outside of Hindu civilization' (Béteille, 1992: 76).

In anthropology, the concept of civilization has been understood in terms of first, the 'practice of reading and writing' (as in the work of Lewis Henry Morgan 1977), and second, the presence of a 'great tradition' (as defined by Robert Redfield 1947). By definition, tribes have their own localized 'conventionalized ways of behaviour', i.e. the 'little tradition', and lack the 'practice of reading and writing'. That is why they have been called 'preliterate'. So, if tribes are defined as 'non-civilized', it is because they are preliterate and have their own localized tradition, which has varying relations and connections with the tradition of the outside world. Béteille (ibid.) suggests the 'permeability of boundary between tribe and non-tribe', the implication of which is that one should 'adopt a flexible rather than a rigid attitude towards the definition of tribe.'

Tribes in Transition

Some authors have examined the communities they have studied from the perspective of the definition of tribe in currency at that time in anthropological literature. For example, after conducting an intensive study of the Toda of the

Niligiri Hills for several years, the conclusion that Anthony Walker (1998) arrived at about them is worth considering. He accepts them as a scheduled tribe, since the Government of India has classified them thus for receiving benefits and privileges under the policy of compensatory discrimination. But grave confusions prevails when the Toda are designated as a 'tribe' in the sense in which this term has been used in anthropological and sociological literature. In comparison to 'tribe', Walker (ibid., 150) finds that the term 'caste' has a 'considerable value', for it helps in placing them in the context of the south Indian cultural matrix, to which they actually belong.

In his work on the Badaga of the Nilgiri Hills, Hockings (1993) says that instead of focusing on a unit and labelling it, one must look at the entire system of which the unit is part. It is important to keep this in mind because the Badaga have been called 'tribe', 'caste', and 'Hindu race' in the literature on them starting from 1922. Since 1990 they have been demanding the status of a scheduled tribe, which so far has not been accorded to them (Hockings 1999: 29). Migrating to the Niligiri Hills from the plains to the north, the Badaga are an example of a society which was a caste group before its peregrinations and which then adopted a tribal model and began its regular interaction with the Toda, the Kurumba, and the Kota, the scheduled tribes of the Nilgiri Hills. The interactions between them have often been described in ethnographic literature as being modelled after the caste system. Following this, Hockings (1993: 361) treats the Nilgiri peoples as a 'case of a caste society' comprising 'several distinct indigenous cultures' who have their 'respective origins in pre-caste social formations'. The important point is that individually these 'indigenous cultures' cannot be described as castes, so the toda, Kota, Kurumba, and Badaga interact like castes, but in themselves none of them is a caste. Hockings (ibid.) thinks that the 'difference between the Niligiris and other caste societies lies in the *content* of the culture rather than the *structure* of the society.'

What one learns from Hockings (1989, 1993) is that the question of classifying a society as 'tribe' (or 'non-tribe') distracts one from studying the dynamism of society, where none of the societies in the contemporary world are 'isolated' but are involved in a field of ceaseless interactions and exchanges with other peoples, building up their identity and self-perception. Far from being like 'rocks', communities are ever dynamic. Lying at the interfaces of several cultures, the elements of which they gradually imbibe and make their own by changing their morphology, they may defy a straightjacket classificatory scheme. The concern with taxonomy (whether 'tribe' or 'non-tribe') rather than the processes that connect different communities will lead to the 'old, 'butterfly-collecting' tradition', the weaknesses of which Edmund R. Leach (1961) had already exposed.

These ideas reverberate in a study by Subhadra Mitra Channa (1998, 2002a) on the Jad of Harsil (a community included within the generic category of Bhotiya, one of the five scheduled tribes of Uttarakhand). She notes that the term outsiders (including the government officials) use for them is *jan-jātia* (meaning the 'kind

of people')—a Hindi term supposed to be the equivalent of 'tribe'—because, for them, they are a 'Bhotiya *jan-jāti*'. However, many Jad, especially the women, are not even aware that this term is used for them in the administrative discourse. They do not subscribe to any clearly bounded social category—for example, Hindu or Buddhist—as will be presumed when one describes a tribe as a 'closed cultural group' (or what has been termed 'cultural isolate'). Rather, the Jad situate themselves betwixt and between the categories of Hindu and Buddhist.

The life of the Jad is centred in pastoral activities. Not only do they have to consider their own adaptation to the environment as human beings but also of their animals. They shift from one location to another as an adaptive strategy to the eco-logical cycle. The points between which the Jad movement takes place are fixed within the space of which they collectively make all kinds of adjustments. Against this background Channa (ibid. 136) asserts that the Jad is a 'mode of adaptation', a way of life rather than a bounded unit as a tribe is understood. It is imperative then that people are defined, designated, and understood in ways that are different from those that the conventional scholarship has so far adopted.

Against the background of changes that have occurred, these communities, which at one time could be comfortably labelled as 'tribes', may now be called 'tribes in transition', a phrase that Desai (1969) originally coined, which is now accepted in many writings (see Chaudhuri 1992; Dube 1997). Another sugges-tion is that the label 'tribe' (and also caste) should be avoided as far as possible, since they have been used too loosely in India (for a discussion, see Hockings 1993: 353; Vinay Kumar Srivastava 1990, 1994a). Or, they may simply be called 'communities' (*samuddya*), as proposed to by the director of the People of India Project (1985–93) of the Anthropological Survey of India, with this word suffixed to their name (for instance, 'Santal community', 'Birhor community', 'Seharia community') (Béteille 2000b:169). The word 'community' may also be used for caste people or urban neighbourhoods.

Many anthropologists say that in contemporary times, the term 'tribe' has become as pejorative as were the terms like 'primitive', 'savage', 'rude', 'non-civilized', and several others of the same type, in the mid-twentieth century, which subsequently went out of currency. Today, when these terms are used, it is always within quote marks, for they are value-loaded, indicating the special meaning that was once attributed to them, a meaning for which contemporary scholars hold no sympathy (Jaganath Pathy 1989). However, some anthropologists continue to describe contemporary tribal societies in the same image, as was the practice of classical evolutionists who thought that these communities were the 'social fossils' or 'remnants of the antiquity', a study of which would illuminate the earlier stages of human existence. For an example, one may refer to the following excerpt from an article on the Onge of the Andaman Islands: 'The Onge are paedomorphic not only in physical appearance but also in their behaviour' (Shrivastava 1993: 347).

Therefore, there are debates on whether one should continue to use the word 'tribe' or think in terms of alternatives to this, such as 'community'. Some

think that one of the best alternatives is the term 'ethnic group' (see Buddhadab Chaudhuri 1992), which, defined after Fredrik Barth (1969, 1981) means a largely self-perpetuating group in biological terms, sharing the same descent, real or puta-tive, which has a set of similar fundamental values realized in cultural forms. The members of an ethnic group usually have the same field of communication and interaction, speaking the same (or similar) language and understanding its cultural nuances. They also have a discernible sense of identity by which they distinguish themselves from other categories of the same order. Jaganath Pathy (1988, 1989: 356), however, prefers the term 'ethnic minority' because tribes are always sub-ordinated to the majority. They have always sought to restructure the 'relations of domination and discrimination' and bring to an end the system of exploitation. In doing so, tribes have endeavoured to preserve their distinct cultural features and survival resources (Jaganath Pathy 1999a). Moreover, it may also be noted that the term 'ethnic group' has also been used as a generic category for castes as well as 'religious communities' (see Gupta 1997; Varshney 2002).

Other terms suggested for tribes are 'autochthones' and 'indigenes', the dis-cussion of which will be taken up later. However, none of these alternative terms could attain the same level of popularity and acceptance as did the term 'tribe', which, notwithstanding the polemics surrounding it, is still the most widely used social category to describe certain types of societies. Today, when anthropolo-gists use the word 'tribe', they mean (1) the communities included in the list of the scheduled tribes; (2) the communities that were relatively isolated at one time and later had their integration with the outside world, but have continued to call themselves tribe because of their vested interests; and (3) the communities that still dwell in remotely situated forests and hills and are backward in terms of the indices of development, although they may not have yet found a place in the list of the scheduled tribes.

Tribe–Caste Distinction and Relationship

One of the main areas of interest in tribal studies in the past, which was adequate-ly covered in the earlier surveys of research in sociology and social anthropology of the ICSSR, was the relation between tribes and castes. That tribes in many parts of India where they had relations of give-and-take with multi-caste villages were getting transformed into castes was an important finding of the empirical studies. It obviously implied that there were salient differences between the tribe and the caste, which authors in the past had carefully tried to delineate (see, for instance, Atal 1963; Surajit Sinha 1965; Mandelbaum 1970; Soni 1993; Unnithan-Kumar 2001). In these studies, tribe and caste were viewed not only as ideal types but also as polar categories, the two ends of a continuum; the model thus obtained was meant to aid one's understanding of an ethnographic situation, where both these types were unremittingly in a state of interaction and exchange. As a consequence,

tribes were gradually, and more frequently, taking up the characteristics of castes because, as the studies showed, of the advantages associated with the superior form of economic production and division of labour that caste system provided (Nirmal Kumar Bose 1953, 1975; Dumont, 1980). However, the opposite movement—from caste to tribe—also took place, but not many examples are available to substantiate this; one oft-cited example is of the Badaga of the Niligiri Hills.

The problem with respect to the tribe-caste distinction at the empirical level surfaces because there is no indigenous term for tribe. The social and cultural continuities between tribes and castes are so great that it becomes virtually impossible to distinguish one from the other. The situation in India is different from what one finds in the USA, New Zealand, and Australia, where marked differences exist between the White colonizers and the 'indigenous tribal populations'. In this context, S.C. Dube (1998: 4–5) notes: 'Their [Tribals'] position, however, cannot be compared to that of Australian aborigines, American Indians or native Africans.'

Denis Vidal (1997:113) writes: 'In Sirohi [Rajasthan]...the same generic term (jati) was often used to refer indiscriminately [to] the castes or tribes.' The Hindi and Sanskrit terms (such as jana, adimjati, adivasi, vanvasi, vanyajati, janajati) or Persian terms (such as qabila, qabilewale) in vogue for tribes have been used for them by outsiders; none of them are indigenous (Vinay Kumar Srivastava 1994b). David Hardiman (1987, 1998) notes that in Gujarat, terms like jangli-jati (the 'kind of forest dwellers') and kaliparaj (the 'black people') were used for tribes. Since the tribes found these terms 'hardly flattering', the Gandhian social workers coined equivalent terms like raniparaj, vanyajati, and girijan, all implying tribes as the 'noble denizens of the forest' (p. 14). Contrary to the terms that the outsiders have improvised for them, tribes refer to themselves by their respective names (like Baiga, Seharia, Gaddi), or by the generic term jati, or the hybrid term 'Adivasi jati' (Vinay Kumar Srivastava 1994a). The word jati should be defined as meaning 'kind or type' rather than 'caste', because it is used in a variety of other contexts such as humankind (manushya jati), gods and demons (devta jati, danav jati), gender (the 'caste of women', stri jati), the 'category' of animals or plants (pashu jati, vanaspati jati), and also for foreigners (like the 'caste of English people', Angrez jati). In some cases, the names by which the tribes in an area are known to the outside world are in fact not the indigenous names by which they know themselves and by which they would like to be known. M. Sreenathan (1996) has substantiated this with the tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

For this reason some authors think that the term 'tribe' is a colonial construct, in the sense that the British administrators improvised and used it for distinguishing between the different populations in India. K.S. Singh (1998a; 8) writes:

> The tribe is a colonial concept, an Anglo-Saxon word, defined for the first time in the Census of 1901, in contradistinction to caste. The notion of tribe has evolved over the censuses, from a hill and

forest tribe, to a primitive tribe, to a backward tribe, and finally, to the scheduled tribe.

Susana B.C. Devalle (1992) made an important work in this context. Focusing on Jharkhand, the author concluded that 'tribe is essentially a construct', and is a 'colonial category'. There were no tribes in Jharkhand until the European understanding of the Indian reality constructed them, and the categories thus devised later received administrative sanction. The characteristics attributed to tribes (such as 'egalitarianism', 'subsistence economy', 'little or no external control', 'autonomy and isolation of such a unit'), Devalle argued, are not found among Jharkhand's people, known as adivasi, nor were they found in the past.

According to Devalle, the 'myth of the tribe' was a colonial invention with the explicit aim to serve certain specific imperial interests. The category of tribe (in opposition to caste) operated as a device to catalogue the conquered population, thus sowing the seeds of divisiveness and fissiparity. The tribes were also perceived as an undifferentiated mass from which labour and revenue could be extracted. Moreover, the identification of tribes would lead to the colonial efforts of 'civilizing them', since many of their cultural traits, the administrators felt, needed to be eradicated once and for ever, like shifting cultivation (because it destroyed forests), marriage by capture (because it amounted to abduction), drinking (because it vegetated peoples' existence), etc. In a nutshell, the concept of tribe does not have a reality of its own; it attained its reality because of the force of the colonial legitimizing ideology.

The view that the concept of tribe is colonial has come under critical scrutiny in several writings. One of the major submissions is that when the colonial administrators used the term 'tribe' they did not give it the same meaning as do many anthropologists now. Also, the colonial state did not have a fixed meaning for tribe. That there were economic and political motivations behind creating the concept of tribe may not be a tenable argument (B.B. Chaudhuri 1997). It is against the background of the contemporary understanding of the colonial state that we think it is. It may not have been what the colonial powers had in mind when they catalogued Indian society into castes and tribes. To put it differently, the current 'orientalist discourse' has considerably influenced the idea of the 'myth of the tribe'.

An important publication on the issue of tribe and caste, an outcome of a seminar, was From Tribe to Caste (1997), edited by Dev Nathan. Many authors in Nathan's edited volume submit that although a specific term for tribe—an iron-clad, clear term, one that anthropologists would ideally like to look for—may not be found, but definitely there are ideas about tribes in earlier Indological writings. There are definite accounts of people who were not part of the caste system, and they looked quizzically at Hindu pilgrims on their way to shrines located in far-off places as they travelled through their territories (Vinay Kumar Srivastava 1990). About the Jad, Subhadra Mitra Channa (2002b: 67) writes:

[They] were a mountain people who had only marginal contact with
the mainstream populations of the plains of India. 'Sitting on the
roadside to watch the pilgrims go by' is a graphic description of the
nature of interaction at that time with the Hindu majority. The Jads,
however, derived a large part of their income from the pilgrims by
providing them with transport by way of the animals they raised and
also, by acting as guides and porters.

These people, 'outside the caste system', were treated with both reverence as
well as contempt. In many situations they were employed to guard the troves
of princes and emperors (as was the case with the Mina of Rajasthan) because
they were regarded as incredibly honest, strong, loyal, and committed (Mann and
Mann 1989b; Smith 1991; Vinay Kumar Srivastava 1994c). They were (and are)
considered as the storehouses of knowledge pertaining to the supernatural and
herbal healing, and they also supplied forest products, honey, shellac and wood,
even elephants, to multi-caste villages.

Studies document that the habits of tribespersons, their non-observance of
the mores of purity and impurity, laxity in sexual behaviour, and their rituals
involving sacrifices and liquor-oblations, have often raised the eyebrows of Hindu
communities as an outcome of which they were assigned a low status. Many tribal
communities adopted a way of life akin to that of the high castes, because they
were 'claiming equality of status with high caste Hindus' (Hardiman 1994:214).

Several movements came up in tribal areas, some of which were initiated by
Hindu leaders, which strictly emphasized adherence to the values of purity. For
instance, a Gandhian, a person of the Oswal Vaisya caste, named Motilal Tejawat
of Udaipur, started a movement among the Bhil to adopt violent means to fight
for their agrarian demands, at the same time exhorting to them to lead a pious
life. When visiting Tejawat, the tribal people made him offerings of coconuts and
rupees, quite like the venerative behaviour of people in temples or in the courts of
local princes and chiefs (C.S.K. Singh 1995). Another example is of a Rajput called
Anup Das, who founded an association called the Anup Mandal with the intention
of fighting the exploiters of lower castes and tribes—the Vaishya (Baniya). He
also began to dress as a religious renouncer. His most vocal and ardent support-
ers hailed from artisan communities (notably *Suthar*, the carpenters), who often
cultivated small plots of land besides carrying on their trade; but many tribesmen
from the community of Girasia also joined him (Laidlaw 1995; Hardiman, 1996).
These examples show the enduring relations between tribes and castes, even when
each continued to maintain its respective identity and boundaries.

An important approach to tribe-caste relations may be located in Vidal's
work (1997). He writes that the examples of societies from western India and the
Himalayas, with which he is familiar, suggest that tribes cannot be understood as
separated *from* caste, but should be analysed in terms of how they have been able
to maintain their autonomy *within* the wider society that includes castes as well.

Tribesmen controlled the borders between kingdoms and also the areas that could
be termed as 'no-man's-land'. They played a key role in the dynamics of politi-
cal authority, and each contending party (the nobles and rulers) tried to mobilize
support. This would explain the support the leaders of the two movements from
Rajasthan, Tejawat and Anup Das, enjoyed from the tribal people.

In contemporary India the process of transforming tribes into castes has
almost stopped, although tribal communities living in close contact with caste vil-
lages may be consciously or unconsciously adopting some Hindu customs, ideas
of cosmology, practices, and lifestyles (Buddhadeb Chaudhuri 1992: vol. 5), but
this in no way changes their perception and expression of tribal identity. In other
words, adopting (and adapting to) another religion does not conflict with their
tribal individuality (Chakravarty 1996). Tribes which had adopted a caste identity
in the past are concertedly giving it up, steely reinforcing their own 'tribal image
and distinctiveness'-(Xaxa 1999a). This explains the decline in the studies of the
tribe-caste continuum and the increase in the studies of tribal ethnicity in the last
15 years (see Bhadra and Mondal 1991; Sharma 1996).

In addition, some other researchers have also studied the tribe-caste interac-
tion. In their survey of 22 major temples spread over 11 districts of Karnataka,
B.B. Goswami and S.G. Morab (1988) found that their functionaries hailed from
both tribal and caste communities: for example, the men of Koraga tribe are
temple-musicians. Relations similar to *jajmani* (patron-client), which have been
described as an important trait of multi-caste villages, have been found to exist in
tribal areas as well: for example, D.B. Negi (1990) describes this system, locally
known as *binanang*, in Kinnaur where the tribal communities are broadly divid-
ed into two categories. The 'upper castes', called Khosia, consist of Rajputs (or
Kanets) and Jads, while the 'lower' known as Beru, meaning 'outsider', compris-
ing the Domang, Ores and Chamang are generally regarded as the 'Harijans of the
area'. It is between these communities that the *binanang* ties obtain. As Brahmin
priests never settled here, the Buddhist priests (called *lama*) perform religious
functions for them.

There have been many examples of tribal deities accepted in Hindu villages.
Chitrasen Pasayat (1995) describes the case of one such deity called Bhim, whose
worship has been admitted into the local Hindu village of Gainpura (Sambalpur,
Orissa), without bringing about any significant change in either the tribal or the
caste Hindu society. Other studies have also arrived at a similar conclusion (K.S.
Singh 1988b). For example, Hardiman (1995) shows that even when the 'egali-
tarian society' of Bhils was interacting with the 'hierarchical society of the Jain
merchants' (*shahukars*), the internal organization of neither underwent a funda-
mental change.

In Gainpura, the important fact is that the tribal deity was initially accepted
without any drastic changes in its core elements (Pasayat 1995). Later, the caste
folk gave a Hindu status to the deity, changing its ceremonial process according

to S... Hinduism and creating a myth for its position in the existing society. Pasc... considers this a process of the *Tribalization* (of the Hindu village) followed by *Sanskritization* (of the deity). This case can also be treated as an example of what Marriott (1955) has called, in the context of his study of Kishāngarhi village of Uttar Pradesh, the process of *Universalization*.

Changes in tribes resulting from their long-term interaction with peasants (who in many cases are caste Hindus) have been the theme of many studies, which are also concerned with the processes of *de-tribalization* (see S.N. Mishra 1998). These works lend support to the point that tribal economy and culture are becoming integrated with the non-tribal population. This process has been taking place from time immemorial, although its speed has increased since the latter half of the twentieth century. Roy Burman's view (1994a) is that tribes in India were never isolated from the outside world, as was generally imagined. They have always been in contact with the outside world, including the communities described in anthropological literature as typical examples of isolated tribal existence. For instance, the Jarawa's use of iron in the last century shows their enduring relations with other people (Ujjwal Mishra 2002:19). On the contrary, B.K. Roy Burman (1994c) says that their isolation increased because of the oppressive British Empire and its diabolical policy to colonize their territories and bring their traditional resources and life-support systems under their control. Tribespersons fled to un-surveyed territories to escape the tyrannous rule. It was perhaps because of the process of integrating tribes with non-tribes (who were predominantly Hindu), and of tribes taking on the characteristics of caste, that Ghurye— whom Elwin called an 'anthropological quisling'—described tribes as 'backward Hindus' (K.S. Singh, quoted in Momin 1994: 298; K.S. Singh 1996).

Tribes as Indigenous People

An extremely important aspect of tribal studies conducted in the last 15 years has been the debate around the concept of 'indigenous people'. It was thought that the use of this term rather than tribe would certainly be better, but it created more confusion, with some arguing in favour of Indian tribes as indigenous people, while others opposed it (see Xaxa 1999b for a review of both the points). A notion similar to 'indigenous people' has always been present in India, conveyed by the respectable concept of *adivasi* ('pristine' or 'original' settlers). However, it was never a moot issue and perhaps anthropologists never thought of ascertaining the claim of tribes as 'autochthones' of the country. Generally it was in the context of B.S. Guha's classification of Indian races that one encountered the idea of Negrito as the autochthonous people of India (Bhattacharya and Sarkar 1996).

That India was not an ethnic vacuum was an oft-repeated statement, but who the original settlers were was a vexatious question on which there was no easy consensus. Ethnologists, principally from the background of physical anthropology, did concern themselves with the issues of autochthones in India

(see Kaila 1994), but for social anthropologists, almost overtaken by the tide of structural-functionalism in the latter half of the twentieth century dealing with societies 'here-and-now' rather than with what they were in the past, the questions of origin, though important, could not be answered since suitable evidence did not exist. The paradox was that though social anthropologists were conducting synchronic studies of tribal societies, they did not object to their being called *adivasi* in governmental, anthropological, and popular literature.

The term 'indigenous population' came about in 1957 when the ILO (International Labour Organisation) adopted the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Conventions (no.107) (Roy Burman 1994a, 1995a, 1997b, 2003). The convention first spoke of tribal and semi-tribal populations, and then of 'indigenous population' as a 'population of special category analogous to the tribal and semi-tribal populations'. The aim of the original convention was to protect and integrate indigenous and other tribal and semi-tribal populations in independent countries. However, notwithstanding the many positive stipulations, the ILO convention of 1957 was criticized for its 'ethnocentric bias and patronizing attitude' (Roy Burman 1995a: 7). Accordingly, the ILO adopted a revised Convention 169, where the concept of indigenous has been overtly de-linked from the concept of tribe, though by implication they have been treated as analogous (Roy Burman 1997a). Tribes were defined in this convention as those people whose 'social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community' and who regulate them 'wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws and regulations' (Roy Burman 1995b: 7). The 'indigenous people' are described as those who have descended from the populations that inhabited the country (or the geographical area to which the country belongs) at the time of conquest, or colonization, or the establishment of the present political boundaries. In addition, they live according to their own social, economic, and political institutions.

In other words, tribes and semi-tribes (those who are fast-changing, almost on the verge of losing their identity) are analogous to indigenous people, although different from them because they constitute a distinct international category (Xaxa 1999b: 3590). Indigenous people are the descendants of those who lived in the country to which they now belong before colonization or conquest by people outside the country or the geographical region. Once under colonial rule, these people were marginalized, exploited, oppressed, and in some cases deliberately exterminated or used for experimental purposes. In spite of their interaction with the colonizers, or those who enjoyed their patronage, the indigenous people have been able to retain their culture and its institutions, and it is according to them that they principally live.

Although taken up at the level of the international institutions, the discourse on indigenous people was almost non-existent in the Indian academic as well as political world before 1993 when the United Nations declared that year as the 'International Year of the Indigenous People'. Once this issue was

'Internationalized', the category of 'indigenous' came to be critically examined. Arguments for considering tribes in India as indigenous people have come up with the same degree of intensity as did the arguments against it. Many of those who defended the term 'indigenous' for tribes happened to be activists. The slogan—'The *adivasi* of the world unite'—acquired popularity as it was printed on the cover of the booklets that the Indian Conference of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples brought out in 1993 on the occasion of the UN Year of the Indigenous Peoples of the World (see Bose Mullick et al. 1993; Fernandes 1993b). Another important publication on this issue which the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Copenhagen jointly published with Zed Books Limited was *The Indigenous Voice, Visions and Realities* (Moody 1988).

The argument in favour of indigenous was not so much in terms of tribes being the original settlers, since the protagonists of this view knew full well that the facts of original settlement could not be easily established since historical (and archaeological) evidence was scarce. Their defence was more on the grounds of tribes as being the worst victims of conquest and colonization. Because of acculturation, which is always asymmetrical, they suffered the loss of control over resources, leading to a penurious existence and becoming serfs in their own lands. They became powerless; their institutions were undermined; their customs and practices were ridiculed; and the outcome of all these deprivations and humiliations was that they lost the desire to live.

In their ethnographic works, anthropologists have shown that the tribe people claim association with their habitats which stretches back into antiquity. They have no legal documents, no decrees of purchase, or registered birth certificates to prove their aboriginal status. What they have instead is a body of sacred truths, which they have inherited from their ancestors. What the outsider regards as 'myths', they see as 'history'—a string of true happenings. If they claim, as they generally do, that their ancestors were the first human couple to be created by the gods to walk on the earth, then this is what they believe *actually* happened. They nurture no scepticism about their origin; what their ancestors proudly narrated is held in reverence. The evidence for such truths is all around—preserved in stones, animals, and the floral world. There is no reason to doubt the omnipotence of their gods and spirits; nor do they show any shame in the belief that an incestuous union gave birth to their people.

The point is that the tribal world should be understood in the context of its cosmology and the thoughts of the people, rather than historical and archaeological facts which are not only limited but also shattered and partial. André Béteille's observation (2000b:184) deserves to be remembered at this juncture:

> Where historical records are scarce and historical memory is short, the idea of 'indigenous people' provides abundant scope for the proliferation of myths relating to blood and soil.

Many anthropologists have recorded the fact that although the tribes may think that they were the first ones to be created after a deluge or catastrophe, they also talk of their collective movements from one physical space to the other, in search of fertile pastures and secure habitats. On the basis of the findings of the People of India Project, K.S. Singh (1997: 7) writes:

> Four hundred and nine tribes (64.3 per cent) claim to be migrants to their present habitat. In fact all our tribal people have been migrants. Their migration is recorded in oral tradition and historical accounts. About eight per cent of the tribes record their migration in recent years.

S.C. Dube (1998: 5) notes:

> The Kol and Kirda of India have had long association with later immigrants. Mythology and history bear testimony to their [tribals'] encounters and intermingling.

In other words, the claims of autochthonous (or 'native') status are political devices which in the end create divisiveness in society. Far more important are the historical facts pertaining to the impact of colonialism on tribes. Although colonial rule has been liquidated, the exploitation of tribes continues unabated. This was noted in studies conducted on tribes immediately after the India's independence and later (see Fürer-Haimendorf 1967). The exploitation can be checked; tribespersons would be able to live with dignity if their interests were taken care of and they got their rightful share. To make this happen, there is no need to begin with the polemical idea of Indian tribes as the indigenous people.

Economic Problems of Tribes

One of the points that contemporary studies of tribes unexceptionally share is that the condition of tribal societies needs to be examined in the context of national and international social and economic systems (Miri 1993; Roy Burman 1995b). Whenever a poor and debt ridden country is in the grip of a severe economic crisis, it tries to overcome its problems by selling its precious natural resources of which an important one is its forest wealth. Tribal communities, dwelling for millennia in and eking out their subsistence from forests, have been the worst sufferers in this context (see the *Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 1987–89*; Fernandes 1993a; *Seminar* issue of August 2005). These are the people thronging the streets of Ranchi as rickshaw-pullers, begging for tobacco in middle and south Andaman, working in middle and upper class households in Delhi as servants and maids, and serving with contractors as labour for paltry sums. Studies on migration point out that both landless as well as landed

people from poverty-stricken areas migrate to towns as well as cities, but their implications are different. The landless move from 'severe to moderate poverty', whereas the landed, move from a 'moderate to non-poor' status (Sah 2002).

The incidence of poverty among tribes was 44 per cent in 1999–2000, while among the non-tribals it was 16 per cent. Many reasons have been given for why an overwhelming percentage of the population of Indian villages, mostly belonging to the lower castes and tribal groups, reels under the miserable state of poverty and deprivation. An important reason for the vast disparity in the levels of income and wealth is the age-old practice of bonded labour, which though legally abolished continues to survive in some parts of the country. A close relationship exists between land-alienation, indebtedness, and bonded labour. The equivalent of slavery in the contemporary world is the institution of debt-bondage. At one time it was thought that bonded labourers were confined to villages, but time and again various surveys have shown the existence of this institution in towns and cities as well (A.R.N. Srivastava 1988).

Known by different terms in different parts of the country, the institution of debt-bondage has certain typical characteristics, on the basis of which its model can be constructed:

1. A poor person (landless labourer, peasant, artisan, craftsperson) takes a loan (of a few hundred or thousand rupees) from whosoever is in a capacity to advance loans (may be a rich farmer, moneylender, or liquor vendor).

2. The loan is generally taken to meet a contingent expenditure, unanticipated and sometimes uncalled for (such as to organize a death feast, or replace a bull during the peak agricultural season, or pay a fine as levied by the caste council), or to perform certain expensive rituals (the marriage of a daughter), or for bare minimal survival (such as buying food).

3. The loan is advanced at an exorbitant rate of interest, certainly not less than 2 per cent per month (i.e. 24 per cent per annum). In some cases it is frighteningly high 5 per cent per month. Often, in addition, property or jewellery, or whatever assets the person has, is mortgaged.

4. The economy of the debtor is non-surplus-producing. It even falls considerably short of fulfilling the basic survival needs of the debtor and his family. In other words, the debtor will never have surplus money to settle his debt, or even pay off the full interest.

5. Such a terrible state of the debtor produces optimum conditions for bondage. The person and his family members work for their 'master', the one who has advanced them the loans. Their wages are supposed to be adjusted against the loans, but does not this happen. In always fact, in most cases, the wages are not adjusted and the person continues to suffer under bondage for his entire life.

6. But the wages are so ridiculously low that even of they are paid, the debtor could never succeed in paying off the interest, leave alone the capital. The loans then multiply exponentially, making it impossible for the debtor to ever settle them. As a consequence, he and his family remain indebted forever, and bonded forever.

7. The debts are not tied to the individual; rather, they are tied to the family. After the demise of the debtor, his son or grandson inherits the debts. For a loan of a measly sum, the family remains in the vicious circle of debt-bondage forever.

8. The loans would never be repaid unless some external, powerful agency, such as the government, intervenes dissolving the loans and freeing the debtors from the cage of bonded labour.

Many studies have pointed out that in contemporary India, a majority of tribal respondents know what debt-bondage is (Buddhadeb Chaudhuri 1992). They may not know how it actually results, but they know full well that it is 'eternal', 'inherited' in the same manner as other biological and cultural characteristics are acquired. The most vulnerable to bonded labour are those working in brick-kilns, followed by those who are agricultural workers. After them are domestic servants in the houses of the landlords (zamindar). There are fewer chances of factory workers becoming bonded labourers because factories are not feudal enterprises. The chances of one entering the system of debt-bondage are greater in feudalism than in other system of production. Incidentally, the caste system, which is the system of stratification prevailing in Indian villages, has the characteristics of a feudal system of production. One of the most significant characteristics of feudalism is the quality of relations between the employer and the employee. These relations are described as paternalistic, in which the employer looks after his employees by advancing them loans to meet contingent situations and also provides them with other benefits.

Ethnographers have pointed out that tribes and lower castes are so dependent on the zamindars for their basic survival that it is unthinkable that they would ever annoy their patrons by providing details about a system against which legal prohibition exist, that is, if they even know the details. The result is that cases of bonded labour can rarely be identified details about bonded labourers and their patrons given. When people are tight-lipped about a practice, that is its indirect confirmation.

Many suggestions have been given for combating the system of debt-bondage. However, two significant aspects emerge. First, though people may know this, it still needs to be explained to them clearly and with emphasis that one of the most important reasons for their bondage is the customary practice of giving feasts on ritual occasions. If the community collectively resolves to discontinue or drastically reduce these feasts the people will be less constrained to take loans beyond their ability to repay. Second, people know how oppressive and exploitative the

system of debt-bondage is and they certainly want to emerge out of it, yet they cannot do so because the system at least ensures their survival. There does not exist an alternative economic arrangement for them, they are hesitant to leave it. Hence, it is extremely important that all agencies—governmental and non-governmental—think seriously in terms of the economic alternatives wherein the 'liberated bonded labourers' could be honourably rehabilitated (Bhandari and Bhattacharya 1996). In fact, B.D. Sharma, in his letter to the prime minister on 31 March 1990, had stated that land alienation was one of the most important issues to be taken up. *The Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1987–89)* made it clear that the 'tribal people are being denied due protection of constitutional safeguards on a vital issue which concerns their very survival as a community'.

Impact of Development Programmes

A number of works deal with the poverty that the development programmes cause (Chaudhury 1992, 1998b). Why the scheduled tribes lag behind the scheduled castes has also been explored (Xaxa 2001). From the success stories of some individuals of a few tribal communities (such as the Mina of Rajasthan, Christian tribespersons from central and north-east India, the families of tribal leaders who have acquired power in the democratic system) one should not infer that the policy of compensatory discrimination and rapid development has elevated the economic status of a majority of them. On the contrary, a perpetual conflict exists between the national programmes of development on the one hand, and the interests of tribes on the other, with the result that many tribal communities have become the 'victims of development', pushed to the brink of a dehumanized existence, while many non-tribal societies, located in towns and cities, have become affluent (Sachchidananda 1997).

The national development programmes have included the setting up of large-scale industries, construction of dams for irrigation, systematic and intensive extraction of forest and mineral resources, and power projects for generating electricity, acquiring land on the outskirts of towns (generally inhabited by tribal people) for private housing projects, and also reserving forests for regeneration (K.S. Singh 1993a; Patnaik 1996; Saksena et al. 1998; Rath and Rath 2002). These development projects are undertaken in tribal-inhabited regions because they are rich in minerals and forest resources.

At one time it was thought that the programmes of development would facilitate the integration of tribal communities with what has come to be known as the 'mainstream of Indian society'. The basic difference between the tribal situation in India and in many other parts of the world has been in terms of the 'mainstream'; the Indian tribes are presumed to have one, whilst tribes in other parts of the world do not. So the question of integrating tribes with the 'mainstream' has

been of pivotal concern in India, and in this context, national development has been viewed as a cardinal step in bringing tribes into the national polity.

But what has resulted is quite the opposite of what the national planners had thought, i.e. the impoverishment and pauperization of the tribes, the consequences of which for the psyche and self-esteem of the tribal people have been disastrous (Vidyut Joshi 1998b; Saksena and Sen 1999). Vidyut Joshi (1998a: 14) writes:

> Our tribal development policies and programmes assumed that all the tribes will develop and will 'integrate' themselves with the so-called 'mainstream'. This has happened only in a symbolic way. Most of our researchers agree on this point that as a result of the planned tribal development, stratification on secular lines has taken place among tribals and only a small section has been able to take advantages of our tribal development programmes.

The impact of the policy of national development has been catastrophic for the basic resources of tribal societies—viz. water, land, and forest—on which the people have had usufructuary rights from time immemorial, bestowed on them by their traditions, their myths of origin, for which they did not need bureaucratic sanction. The relationship of tribespersons with their ecological system was one of 'profound respectful dependence'. They used only as much of the resources and only the quantity they needed for their bare survival. The notion of what is now called 'sustainable development' was in fact indigenously woven into the matrix of tribal culture. They did not need to be reminded of posterity, the fact that they should cultivate an ideology of conservation—the conserver ethic—towards their ecosystem, so that their future generations could live well with dignity. For them, the forest was not a commercial proposition, an 'uneven mishmash of trees that could be sold to the greedy world for revenue'; rather it was their 'way of life', an 'abode of their deities and ancestors', and the meaning of life for them was to live in 'harmony with nature' and 'venerate her for blessing people with all that they need for their existence' (Fernandes 1993a).

Development has led to a breakdown of this 'respectful' relationship between tribes and nature. All over the world, tribe persons have witnessed the transformation of their nature from a 'way of life' to a 'commercial proposition'. Their ecosystems were overexploited, which they could neither stop from being destroyed nor register strong protests. And when they raised their voice against the pillaging of their resources, their life-support system, the exploiters silenced it. Against this background, many tribal communities had no option but to flee to those areas where they could have a minimal level of freedom to live the way they would like. In fact, as submitted earlier, the isolation of tribes, which is usually regarded in anthropological literature as an important defining trait of tribes, resulted as a consequence of the experiences of exploitation and oppression that they underwent (Roy Burman 1994c).

e entry of 'outsiders'—government officials, surveyors, landlords, money-lenders, liquor vendors, etc.—to tribal territories began a long time back, with the advent of the British rule (Fürer-Haimendorf 1967). British policy in India was not one of non-interference with tribal existence, as was the case with the pre-British rulers. The British were keen to survey the tribal area and learn about its material wealth, which could eventually be siphoned off to build industries back home. They were also interested in studying tribal peoples and their institutions, not only to make academic contributions to the understanding of the 'other', but also for administering these societies better to ensure peace among them and keep them subservient to colonial rule. The role of anthropology in tribal administration is well known. The colonial interests were couched in the idiom of 'civilizing people'. Tribe persons were described as being in a state of barbarism and wildness and should be phenomenally changed (and 'domesticated') so that they could become like the rest in the 'mainstream', which actually meant the 'mass of British subjects'. Tribes started losing their customary rights over land, forests, and water rule, their resources being alienated to non-tribes, the exploiters, who had thronged tribal territories in search of newer mines of wealth. The process that the colonial rule started of 'civilizing' people by forcing them—or 'forcibly persuading' them—to accept the packages the state offered them has continued uninterrupted with the development programmes of Independent India (see Miri 1993).

The number of people displaced (or uprooted) from their traditional habitats (or 'ancestral homes') because of development programmes is estimated to be over 16 million, of which about 40 per cent belong to tribal societies (Fernandes 1993a). The area under forest cover has also declined abysmally; from 40 per cent of the country's territory in 1854 to just 10 per cent in the 1980s. As a large number of tribal people are forest-dwellers, they have suffered the most. With the British forest policy came state control over forest resources and the rights and privileges of tribes over forests were curtailed. Although the forest policy of Independent India has enlarged the rights and privileges the forest-based tribal communities enjoy, and the local communities in many parts of India are actively involved in the programmes of Joint Forest Management (Roy Burman 1995b), there is no doubt that as a number of tribal studies and articles point out, the condition of the people in 'forest villages' has not shown any qualitative improvement (Prasad and Jahagirdar 1993; Jahagirdar 1994). On the contrary, it has worsened and the exploitation of people, particularly women, by forest officials has increased considerably.

Development programmes have not only displaced people from their traditional habitats, but also, brought a large number of 'outsiders', of different social strata, from moneylenders to government officials, into tribal territories (Chaudhury 1991, 1992). Because of their links and networks among themselves and with the bureaucracy, which they use to their advantage, they have been able to control trade and commerce, siphoning off the local resources in the same way

as the British did before India's independence. As many observers have reported time and again, the outsiders have also ridicule tribal practices and customs, thereby making the people suspicious of their own institutions, with which they have lived from time immemorial (Alam 1993; Sarkar and Chakravorty 2003). Tribal culture, in some cases, has become a liability and embarrassment to its bearers because of the sort of treatment it has received from outsiders.

In the wake of industrialization came urban influences. Tribal areas, rich in mineral and forest resources, as was noted earlier, were chosen for setting up industries, and around them emerged towns. Contrary to what was thought at one time about the positive and integrative effects of industrialization and urbanization, these processes have added to the woes of tribes. Besides the despoliation of their habitats, the gains of development have not been dispersed to them. They do not have access to either the schools or the hospitals; and a large number of their villages are yet to receive the benefits of electrification or irrigation. Development has been lopsided for tribal communities, and the rich 'outsiders' have monopolized the gains, which in fact should have reached tribal areas. Development has created a class of what sociologists call 'surplus labour' (or 'underclass') from among the tribal people, who are largely unskilled and have no option but to migrate to towns and cities in search of jobs for basic survival, although such jobs are not easily available. This has often resulted in these 'underclass' tribes persons taking up crime as a way of life, thus being stigmatized forever (Bhowmick 2001; Radhakrishna 2001; Bokil 2002). Against this background, some anthropologists think that tribal communities constitute the 'fourth world', the most undeveloped of the undeveloped and underdeveloped world (Xaxa 2003). And such a state of affairs culminates in the rise of ethnicity, which in the apt words of S.C. Dube (quoted in Sachchidananda 1997: 234) is 'part sentiment, part ideology and part agenda'.

The condition of tribes differs widely from one geographical region to the other, and also, there are differences between the same geographical regions as well. This abundantly supports the idea, which anthropologists have often submitted: the 'context-specific' and 'ethno-local' model of development. People's viewpoint can be understood and fully appreciated when they are involved in every development and welfare project right from its inception. In this regard, Pingle and von Fürer-Haimendorf (1998: 163–64) write:

> After fifty years of Independence and many government failures, the realization that the only way left for government to succeed in its efforts to reduce poverty in rural areas is to include the wide participation of the bottom third of the poor in their own development

People will be empowered when they not only determine the course of development but also develop their own measures and technology to evaluate its respective impacts on different components of their society, i.e. people of different gender, age, and strata, and also if the impact of development programmes is

studied objectively using anthropological methods (Chaudhury 1992: 151–52). Then these two evaluations are compared to determine whether the people subjectively feel that their lifestyles have really improved as a result of development programmes. In addition, the state should guarantee the rights of tribal people over their land and resources and ensure their share in the power structure so that they exercise control over their land and resources for their own benefits. Perhaps this idea can be best expressed in the following maxim: 'The state should help people to help themselves.'

Tribal Policy

An important statement issued in February 2004 was the Draft of the National Policy on Tribals. It was the first time in the history of tribal India that the government formulated a National Policy on Scheduled Tribes, for none had existed in colonial times. What did exist at that time were the 'approaches' that aimed to provide a solution to the 'tribal problem'. These 'approaches' were generally grouped into three categories: isolation, assimilation, and integration. In July 2006, a much-improved version of the Draft of the National Tribal Policy was circulated.

A 'national policy' on tribes is definitely a further reinforcement of the idea that notwithstanding a myriad of measures which the government has taken after independence, the quality of life of many tribes, especially the primitive tribes, has not shown any improvement. On the contrary, as stated earlier, the development programmes, which were undertaken to facilitate the process of the integration tribes with the mainstream of Indian society, have destroyed the life-support systems of many of these communities, weakened their social and cultural fabric, and forced the people to seek 'refuge' in their own land. Fernandes (1993a: 20) has called these people 'internal refugees'. The entry of non-tribal outsiders into tribal areas has continued unabated, bringing in its wake a grave exploitation of tribespersons, their illegal and forceful ousting from their own land, and their existence in a state of perpetual penury, fear, misery, and destitution. Against this background, it is imperative that a National Policy on Tribals comes into existence even though the scheduled tribes are well covered under the Constitution of India. Such a policy will guide all the thoughts and actions (of the governments and the NGOs as well as of independent social activists and advocates) that are held and carried out in collaboration with the people for the amelioration of their condition.

The aim of the policy is defined at the outset: 'to bring [the] Scheduled Tribes into the mainstream of society through a multi-pronged approach for their all-round development without disturbing their distinct culture.' By this, one instantly understands that the approach the policy puts forth is to 'integrate' tribes with rest of the society. Here, it is extremely important that the policy discusses in clear

and comprehensive terms what it means by the concept of 'mainstream', for it is well known that what north Indians understand by 'mainstream' is different from the meaning that south Indians attribute to it. Similarly, the 'mainstream' for the Nagas is different from that of the Assamese plains-dwellers.

Like many other concepts in social anthropology and sociology, 'mainstream' is also a plural-concept, in the sense that it has many meanings. The meaning of the concepts of 'mainstream' and 'integration' the policy intends to put forward must be clarified, because, for reasons not given, its Draft of February 2004 ended with the subtitle of 'Assimilation', which, in the context of tribal studies, as is well known, refers to the approach of social workers according to which the problems of tribal societies were the result of their continued isolation, and it was believed that the more they came in contact with the outside world, the better it would be for their upliftment. The solution to tribal problems, according to the 'assimilationists', lies in 'assimilating' tribes with the outsiders, largely Hindu, and imposing upon them the values they deemed proper (such as prohibition of liquor, dressing like caste Hindus) (see Hardiman 1987, 1998). As critics have said, assimilation is utopian, undemocratic, unethical, and unjust. Moreover, it is ethnocentric, an imposition, for, as J.D. Mehra (1987: 40) writes, tribes 'may or may not agree to what appears to those encouraging ...assimilation as a logical and more effective way of doing things, and they may prefer their own old ways.' Assimilation is a contrapuntal ideal type of integration. If assimilation symbolizes the 'melting' of tribal cultures into the culture of outsiders, integration stands for the 'respect' that tribes and their cultures receive from outsiders. If assimilation favours homogenization of cultures, integration subscribes to the Chinese maxim: 'Let the hundred flowers blossom, let the hundred schools of thought flourish'. Integration is a celebration of the principle of diversity and a denunciation of any variety of cultural imperialism.

In the last 50 years, anthropologists have started studying societies, both urban and industrial, using their traditional field methods which generally they did not do earlier, although they have always defined their subject as a study of the entire human society in time and space. Theoretically too, anthropology has critically examined the perspectives and methodologies that had their origins in other disciplines (such as philosophy, sociology) or in the writings of some later twentieth-century thinkers (such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida), against the background of their empirical studies in a variety of contexts. Anthropology, therefore, has neither remained conservative nor lagged behind.

But in spite of moving into newer territories with time-tested methods, anthropology has never given up the study of tribal communities. On the contrary, more and more anthropologists insist that even when they study other social formations, their first and foremost commitment is to the study of tribes. The argument that the destiny of anthropology is incumbent upon the presence of 'pre-literate tribes' in the world, or that it is tagged to structural-functionalism, is, to say the least, 'substance-less'.

it is now well known that when anthropologists put forth the idea of providing certain tribes, precariously placed in economic and social terms, with their 'reserves' or 'national parks', as Elwin (1939) suggested for the Baiga, it certainly was not because their subject was endangered and could have only survived with a 'museumification' (or 'zoofication') of tribal communities (see Bhasin and Srivastava 1990, and comments on this article, 1991). Rather, it was to save the tribes—simple, credulous, gullible, powerless, and the most vulnerable to exploitation—from the nefarious designs and stratagems of outsiders (merchants, moneylenders, liquor vendors, colonizers of land, etc.), whose interests lay in seizing control of natural resources, seeking cheap and free labour, ousting the tribals from their original habitats, and also sexually exploit tribal women. Anthropologists exposed these motives of the outsiders, trying to place before the world the 'tribal viewpoint'. Thus the anthropologists have emerged as the 'spokespersons' of tribal communities, and because of this, there is a strong likelihood of their taking up the tasks of advocacy and activism. In fact, Elwin's letter to *Vanyajati* (1952: 2 [2], cited in *The Eastern Anthropologist*, 1953–4 [7: 3 & 4]: 128–9) puts this idea across clearly:

> I have frequently made it clear that my views on the tribal problem are entirely different now to what they were during the days of the British Raj. The coming of *our* own government has completely altered the position, and it is as I venture to think, a little unfair to use statements which applied to a different situation to discredit me today. I am ... vehemently in favour of opening communications in the tribal areas. But I think that such a road should be made in the interests of the tribals and not for the benefit of those who would exploit them from the plains.

Emerging Concerns

Our survey shows that we have been able to collect basic information on almost all the tribes of India. Material on north-east India is now substantial (see Bhupinder Singh 1998; Bhadra and Mondal 1991; Samanta 1994; Das and Barua 1996) as it is for other zones of the country. In this regard, the Anthropological Survey of India has carried out exemplary work under the People of India Project. The reports of this project have also been published. In the last 15 years, ethnographic accounts of certain tribal societies have been published (see, for instance, Bhanu 1989; Suseela Devi 1990; Maitra 2002; Nayak 1989; Parkin 1992; Parthasarathy 1988b; R. K. Sinha 1995; Sudhakar Rao 2002).

But it will not be wrong to say that we still lack good ethnographies, comparable to those published in the first half of twentieth century, and which are still consulted for their details, if not always for their theoretical perspectives. One of the reasons for this state of affairs is an abysmal decline, especially among the

students of Indian origin, in the tradition of long, intensive fieldwork of not less than one year. With the rise of 'auto-anthropology', many investigators return to their homelands, sometimes to their own villages, neighbourhoods, and families, for fieldwork. This practice is the opposite of what anthropologists in the past had adopted, when they set out to study a culture different from their own, as a consequence of which anthropology came to be conceptualized as the study of 'other' cultures'. Today, the study of one's own society has become a legitimate practice, but the danger is that one may begin with the assumption that by virtue of being a native, one knows one's customs and practices well, for one has inherited them, therefore, one need not make enquiries. An assumption of this sort signals the end of the ethnographic tradition. Whether one studies one's own or a different society, one is advised to begin with a *tabula rasa* mind, that is, one should not have any preconceptions about one's study; one should not be a victim of one's stereotypes, prejudices, or biases. In other words, one should begin with an open mind. In the study of one's own people, one should de-familiarize oneself with the customs and practices one has inherited, treating them as strange as are those of other cultures. It requires considerable effort, constantly reminding oneself to make an objective investigation of all types of facts, notwithstanding one's level of familiarity with them.

On many primitive tribes (for example, Parangiperja of Orissa, Kolgha of Gujarat, Koraga of Karnataka and Kerala, Maria Gond of Maharashtra, Buxas of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal, and others), apart from short notes and brief scattered communications, there are no full-length accounts. Such communities need to be studied with a sense of priority, before their lifestyles change (Ajit K. Danda 1996: 34). Anthropologists do intend to study these communities before they change because they wish to keep detailed records of different types of living patterns and adaptive strategies. Similarly, there are 'de-populating' communities, those declining in number, which both physical and social anthropologists and medical practitioners need to study so that culturally relevant and medically suitable programmes of development can be chalked out for them. Further, those tribal communities on which extensive studies have not been conducted in the last 50 years should also be studied.

At this juncture, an important question is of how to motivate research scholars to choose communities which deserve to be studied. Perhaps grant-giving agencies (such as the ICSSR, ICMR, Anthropological Survey of India, UGC, etc.) could announce fellowships for the study of these hitherto unstudied and less studied communities. To identify these communities a committee should be set up which also prioritizes the areas of study.

Several studies have pointed out the migration of tribal people to urban and industrial areas. Many of these migrants are permanent for they have no stake in their native places; their land has been usurped, bought, or acquired in the national interest, and the meagre compensation they received was spent heedlessly or, as in most cases, taken away by moneylenders towards the settlement of accounts. The

net result was that the tribespersons were left to fend for themselves. Not many studies have been done on these migrants—what happens to them, whether they are absorbed in the tertiary sectors of economy, or whether they remain without gainful employment or are intermittently employed or become beggars, lumpen-proletariats, and criminals. In this case, the study of tribal women and children should have priority over all other studies.

It was noted earlier in the chapter that anthropologists (and historians) have carried out studies of tribal movements; but these are not enough. There is an urgent need to give an impetus to the studies of tribal assertions and protests. Detailed studies of the rise of insurgency and the steps that the state and Central governments have taken to combat it are also required. For instance, priority must be given to the study of Naxalism in central India, and the political response of the local populace in the form of Salwa Judum. Given the grotesquely inflammable situation in the area, it may not be possible for anthropologists to conduct a long term, first-hand empirical study using the standard technique of participant observation. However, a beginning can be made with an analysis of whatever material is available in the form of reports. In this regard, recently (2006–07), S. Narayan and his team carried out a study of violence in Bastar, interviewing almost one hundred respondents, both Naxalite leaders and their sympathizers, and the supporters of Salwa Judum, and circulated a report for further deliberation.

Even when holistic studies were carried out, certain areas of tribal living did not receive the attention they deserved; for example, material culture, music, dance, folklore, and other aspects of expressive institutions. This was noted in the early surveys also (Sachchidananda 1985: 103; Ajit K. Danda 1996: 33). These neglected areas require immediate study. Some of them, for instance, music, may need the expertise of specialists such as musicians or folklorists for proper documentation, and hence, these projects have to be multidisciplinary in nature. In addition, the changing tribal worldview requires documentation.

Further, not many anthropologists, save a few (such as Roy Burman 1997b), have commented on the constitutional provisions for tribes, and their impact on society. It appears that these areas of legal anthropology have been glossed over. Against the background of the importance of judiciary in contemporary India, it is imperative that anthropologists undertake detailed studies of the constitutional safeguards and their impact, along with the study of the cases pertaining to tribal societies that have been decided by the honourable courts.

Separate studies should be carried out on the analysis of auto-ethnographic writings and their comparison with the writings of outsiders on the same communities. Other areas that deserve immediate attention are the history of tribal areas and their colonial administration; the ethno-medical and ethno-pharmacological knowledge of tribes and its interaction with the established systems of medicine; tribal leaders and spokespersons; the emerging patterns of social stratification among tribal societies; the differential effects of the policy of compensatory discrimination on tribes; the destruction of tribal ecological systems as a consequence

of the commercial and economic motives of the outsiders and the state; and the assessment of poverty in tribal communities.

The present survey shows that a variety of approaches have been used for the study of tribes in comparison to what was done earlier. For instance, Vidyarthi (1972: 101) wrote in the first survey that the tribal studies were functional or empirical in orientation. Of all the approaches that have found place in tribal studies the most popular is the interpretive approach. Some sociologists have also used the Marxian approach, especially in the context of the tribal mode of production. Against this backdrop, we need researches comparing the outcome of different approaches to the study of tribal societies.

With reference to publications, in the first survey report Vidyarthi (ibid., 104) had observed that an 'adequate machinery should be created for the publication of doctoral and master's degree theses.' We have gone through a number of good dissertations, with valuable data, submitted for the award of research (M.Phil. and Ph.D.) and Master's degrees, which have not been published. The fact is that if the awardees of these degrees get into non-teaching and independent research jobs, including working for a project, the benefits of which are enjoyed by its director, they generally do not undertake the onerous task of converting their theses into books (or research papers). After the passage of some years, the researchers lose interest in their work, with the result that good manuscripts gather dust on closed library shelves and are unavailable to the academic community at large. It is imperative, therefore, that research-funding organizations devise methods to ensure these works are published.

Some organizations have taken on the task of publishing reports on the traditions of knowledge of various communities. One such example is of the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage Series' that the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (Museum of Mankind), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), has started, in which it has so far published two monographs on the indigenous knowledge of the tribes of Orissa (by Biyotkesh Tripathy 2005) and Konda Reddi (by Kamal K. Misra 2005), and three are in print. Some more ethnographic accounts are likely to be published soon in this series. In addition, the museum has also published a number of books on areas such as rock art, family systems, tribal identity, etc. The Museum of Mankind also needs to be complimented for its collection of exhibits from different tribal areas and the short write-ups on them. Other museums of anthropology need to emulate this example.

In his survey report, Vidyarthi (1972: 104) was concerned about the duplication of researches in the sense that different scholars from different organizations in the region tend to study the same communities while a number of other communities remain unstudied and unreported. Sachchidananda (1985: 102) also noted that 'There have been a number of replicative studies. These do not promise any innovative thinking.' It has been noticed that those states that which do not have anthropology departments lag behind in tribal studies, whereas those that do tend to study the same communities again and again. There is no harm in focussing

upon certain communities provided the problem to be investigated differs from one study to the other, but the grant-giving agencies should keep in mind that all societies need to be studied with equal vigour. Coordination between different research organizations can help in checking the duplication of researches.

Note

1. J.H. Hutton referred to him as the 'father of Indian ethnology'.

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globalization, privatization and marketisation and the forces unleashed through them.'

It is a well-known fact that the Constitution made special provisions for tribals because it was felt that they are not in a position to compete with much better equipped rest of India. Now they are being pushed into a far uneven competition where they are pitted against rest of the world.

It is, therefore, high time that anthropologists get up from their long slumber or they will have to opt from "get up" and "get lost".

You may be disappointed if you fail, *but you are doomed if you don't try.*

— Beverly Sills

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Essays in Contemporary Anthropology

Delhi : Paleka Prakashan (2004).

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7.   A seminar was held recently at Agra, with the caption Anthropology : Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. I was the last speaker on third and the final day. There I read a smaller version of this present paper. I started with the comments (though these were not the part of my original manuscript) :

    Yesterday : The king is alive; long live the king
    Today : The king is dying; long live the king
    Tomorrow : The king is dead, still long live the king.

    I had initially clarified that *the king* represents anthropology in third world in general, in India in particular. It was not out of place, rather it summarised the whole issue I wanted to emphasize.

ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY AMONG TRIBES :
A CASE OF KONDHS OF ORISSA

SUKANT K. CHAUDHURY

ETHNICITY as a process has become a worldwide phenomenon particularly after the 1980s. Mostly it has taken a negative connotation, i.e. a cultural group or community having narrow goals and loyalty. It is said that ethnic groups pose problems for the national government and are a hindrance to the nation building process. By regarding their culture and history as unique, they wish to have autonomy and are not interested to be ruled by others. Several examples can be cited here: Bodo Land, Gorkha Land, Mizoram, Nagaland, Assam, Khalistan, Uattaranchal, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, etc. The Bodo Land Movement was started by Bodo-Kachari tribes of Darrang, Goalpara and Kamrup district of Assam. Some formal organizations like the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and Bodo Students' Association were involved in it. Initially they demanded for the

introduction of Bodo language as an optional subject along with Sanskrit and Pali in the schools of Assam. The demand was conceded for primary schools in 1963, and for secondary schools in 1968. Then came the demand for a separate script in 1975, culminating in the demand for a separate state. The movement still continues (Danda, 1994). Similarly, the Naga Movement started long ago with the establishment of the Naga Club at Kohima and Mokokchung in 1918. Christianity has been a major force for making people aware of their unique history and culture. The formation of Lotha Council in 1923 and Ao Council in 1928, subsequently the Naga Hills District Tribal Council in 1945 reinforced the Naga Movement. Finally, it led to the creation of Nagaland in 1963 (Danda, 1994). The creation of Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand in 2000 is a recent success story of ethnic movements. In this manner, the ethnic movement may cause headache for the governments but it definitely helps in maintaining the identity of the people.

The term ethnicity was coined by Vanden Berghe to characterize an ethnic group that is a collection of culturally related people living within a designated ethnic boundary (cited from Popeau, 1998). As a concept, it is the construct of European and American sociologists and social anthropologists. They used the concept to denote certain processes found in non-European and non-American (U.S.A.) countries. At the outset, race relations and the nuances of culture provided impetus to the process of ethnicity. The word ethnic is derived from the Greek Word 'ethnos' (in turn derived from 'ethnikos'). It was used for indicating a community. The ancient city of Athens in the golden age consisted of twelve major ethic groups. An ethnos was a 'consanguine group', and in civilizational terms, it was not less developed (Gupt, 1997).

Barth (1997) says that an ethnic group refers to that population which (a) is largely biologically self-perpetuating; (b) shares fundamental cultural values realized in overt unity in cultural forms; (c) makes up a field of communication and interaction; and (d) has a membership which identifies itself and is identified by others as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order. While race is a biological concept, culture purely is social in nature. Their combination is arbitrary in nature; hence such a combination gives rise to a problematic process called ethnicity. For instance, people belonging to the same racial category residing in a well-defined geographical territory claim to have unique history and culture. Hence they do not want to be ruled over (or hegemonized) by other communities, which they call the 'dominant ones'. Sociologists point out that multi-ethnic countries

are distinct from the unitary European societies and the unitary nature of Western developed societies, and have the characteristics of a "melting pot". The melting pot theory says that cultural diversity is melted away to provide a unitary society but apartheid, racial tension, black-Muslim protest in the U.S.A., tensions from Ireland for the U.K., virtually demolished the theory. Hence came the concept of cultural mosaic, which meant various cultures co-exist and depict a structured portrait. Broadly, there are five approaches to ethnicity: (a) Primordialist, (b) Modernisation and Development, (c) Marxist and neo-Marxist, (d) Weberian, and (e) Pluralist (Phadnis, 1989; and Jain, 1995).

(a) Primordialist approach : This approach was mainly given by Clifford Geertz and others for whom ethnicity is a natural bond between people which is immutable or primordial in nature. The attachment of people to their own cultural sphere as a part of personality formation and development continues throughout life: Consciously or unconsciously, such affiliations provide the impetus and impulses for social and political mobilization. Primordial ties are treated as particularistic in nature and are perceived as hindrances in the process of national cohesion. Further, it argues that ethnic attachments pertain to the non-rational domain of human personality. They lead to social turbulence and violence, and thereby tend to be dysfunctional in the development process of civil society.

(b) Modernization and development approach : Both modernization and development have created differential impact and consequently resulted in ethnicity. Long back, Malinowski analyzed the situation in Africa. Due to the European impact, certain 'common factors' emerged, and therefore, he said that social change was functional in nature. But when 'negative common factors' like land shortage, soil erosion, restriction on freedom of movement, labour problem, deprivation of civil liberties, etc, came in, it produced a maladjustment state and ethnic process was revitalized. Further, the development theorist postulated that with the differentiation of division of labour and extension of the capitalist market, ethnic attachments would be undermined, diffused and dissolved. But this never happened, rather the situation worsened in the U.S.A., U.K., Canada and U.S.S.R. due to different conflicting tendencies. Phadnis (1990) says that the processes of modernization and development are caught up in the dialectics of their own dynamics; combating ethnic loyalty on the one hand and stimulating ethnic consciousness on the other. Consequently, whatever the level of the development of the states, ethnic conflicts need to be viewed as part of an ongoing process which has to be coped with and managed, but cannot be

resolved once and for all, except through the total assimilation or elimination of a particular group. While the former has been a large-scale success as evidenced historically, the latter can only be genocidal, and therefore an affront to human values and dignity.

(c) Marxist and neo-Marxist approach : For them, ethnic conflict emerges at two levels : (i) at a general level in which ethnicity is viewed as a device detracting from the consciousness of class interests; and (ii) in a situation when there has been a 'cultural division of labour', when members of an ethnic group are placed in a subordinate position within a given state (internal colonialism) or. in the global context (the international division of labour). For them, ethnic relations are antithetical to the development of class solidarity. Mobilization on an ethnic basis evokes false consciousness. It weakens class solidarity.

(d) Weberian approach : For Weber, ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. For him, common political experience (past or present) is an important element in a sociological definition of ethnicity. Further, he says that ethnicity as a factor may lead to 'community closure' on the pretext of such differences as language, religious belief, style of life, or custom for the monopolization of economic, political and social advantages. Due to this, 'negatively privileged' status groups emerge which are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy esteem.

(e) Pluralist approach : The developing and ex-colonial societies are analyzed under plural society theory. Furnivall says that there is a fundamental difference in plural society. Here people mix but they do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, culture and language, ideas and ways. As individuals, they meet only in the market in buying and selling, living side by side but separately within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines. Therefore, the conflict is of a racial character in these societies. According to pluralism theory, given by M.G. Smith, there are three types of institutions found in the human society : compulsory, alternative and exclusive, based on the mode of sharing the institutions. Smith distinguishes three types of societies : (i) homogeneous society in which the same set of three types of institutions are shared by all the groups within the same political boundaries; (ii) heterogeneous society in which groups within a political unit share the same system of basic institutions, but at the same time participate in different systems of alternative and exclusive institutions; and (iii) plural society in which all the groups within a political unit share different systems of compulsory institutions. In these societies, incorporation is regarded
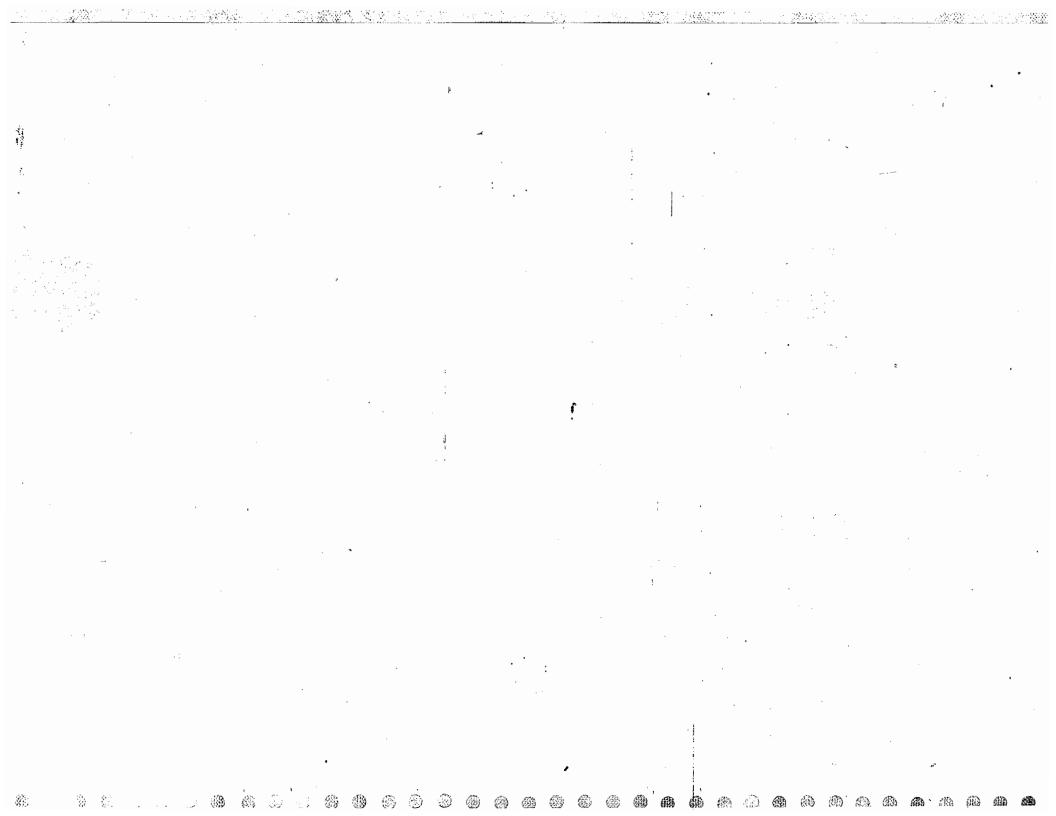
basically as a political act. The concept of plural society is applied to explain the multi-ethnic phenomenon of Indian society.

From the above discussion, a few common characteristics can be formulated on ethnicity as a process, particularly with reference to an autochthonous group - that, they have a unique history and culture, they belong to the same racial and linguistic category and that they wish to get rid of the oppressive and hegemonic rule by outsider. Phadnis (1990) summarizes ethnicity under five components: (a) a subjective belief in real or assumed historical antecedents; (b) a symbolic or real geographical centre; (c) shared cultural emblems, such as race, language, religion, dress and diet, or a combination of some of them which, though variegated and flexible, provide the overt basis of ethnic identity; (d) self-ascribed awareness of distinctiveness and belongingness to the group; and (e) recognition by others of the group differentiation. It is thus a self-defined and 'other-recognized' status. Against this backdrop, the paper will examine the case of Kondh tribe's rising ethnicity.

The Kondh of Orissa is the seventh largest tribe of the country, having nearly 2 million people, living mainly in Phulbani, Koraput and Kalahandi districts of Orissa. They are infamous for their traditional practice of human sacrifice (*meriah* sacrifice). Pana is an erstwhile untouchable community, living with the Kondhs since the sixteenth century. Kondh is a patrilineal and patriarchal tribe. The Kondh and Pana conflict assumed significance in the 1990s. Their conflict relationship exists since long. The Pana community was always looked down upon by the Kondhs. In fact, the Pana served the Kondh in matters like cattle herding, supplying human beings for the meriah sacrifice, supplying animals for sacrifice, serving at the cremation ground, beating drums, working as messengers, etc. However, the Panas always tried to exploit the Kondhs. After independence, the Panas, who were untouchable, were enlisted in the Scheduled Caste category. The Phulbani constituency of the Parliament was declared as a reserved constituency for the Scheduled Caste. It led to tremendous discontent among the Kondhs. Recently in 1994, a conflict of serious proportion occurred which led to killing of many persons in the area.

According to an official report, the immediate cause for the Kondh-Pana conflict was the entry of a Pana youth in a Shiva temple in the village of Khudutentuli on January 14, 1994 (Chaudhury 2004). The Kondhs took an exception to this action and organized their own people to purify the temple. The Panas, according to the same report, adopted an aggressive posture which enraged the Konds. Two days later, the Kondhs retaliated by attacking and damaging the houses of the Panas in the same village. A week later, another

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4

UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL INTEGRATION FROM ANTHROPOLOGY

The essential theme in nation-building is that different groups having diverse cultures are integrated in a common body. Being a consciously carried out phenomenon, integration must be central to the planning processes, constitutional provisions, and the work attempted by various governmental and voluntary associations. For the purposes of nation-building the policy of exclusion or partial exclusion of groups cannot be accepted.

The separatist movement devised by the British was a diabolical policy to create cleavages between the tribals and the non-tribals. Emerging from the concept of 'excluded' and/or 'partially excluded areas', it thwarted the development of natural relationships between the tribals and the non-tribals. The British policy was colonial and political ; it was destined to cause fissiparous tendencies in the Indian divisions over which the British exercised the colonial rule. Not only were the tribes excluded, other castes and communities received the same treatment. The Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, though manifestly dealing with the anti-social activities indulged in by tribal communities,

...... provided nutritive maintenance to the policy of exclusion. Bhowmick (1980 : 118) writes : "Thus, 'Criminal Tribe' has been a label, a strait-jacket to mark a few groups as 'habitual', rather 'natural' offenders." With the Indian independence, the policy concerning the tribes changed from colonial to that of welfare ; it changed from isolation to integration, and the focus came to dwell around national integration. A. V. Thakkar has rightly observed : "separation and isolation are dangerous theories, and strike at the root of national solidarity. Safety lies in 'union' and not in "isolation." (quoted in *Philosophy for NEFA*, by Verrier Elwin, p. 29)

Discussing the issue of unity in diversity, Srinivas (1969 : 1-2) says that Indian unity is on the one hand politico-geographic, on the other it is cultural. It is politico-geographic as there is a marked territory that falls under the jurisdiction of the Indian Government ; there is one Constitution and one Parliament. Although "it was only during British rule that India became for the first time a single political entity" (Srinivas, 1969 : 2), the idea of unity was definitely present in the traditional concepts of *Chakravarti Raja* and *Ashwamedhyajna* (horse-sacrifice *yajna*).

Further, in addition to politico-geographic unity, unity has also been fostered by the cultural dimension, despite the fact that in India there is a multiplicity and heterogenity of cultures. Srinivas (1969 : 2) writes : "The concept of the unity of

India is inherent in Hinduism." Following Srinivas, one may say that caste and religion provide unity to Indian society. Though caste has been the structural principle of Hinduism (Srinivas, 1952), it has equally embraced other religious and sectarian movements that emerged and thrived on the Indian soil (Ahmad, 1978 ; Leach, 1960 ; Mandelbaum, 1970 ; Singh, 1977). The pilgrims often travelled to different directions in India as religious places of chief importance were dispersed in all parts. In times when the modern modes of transport and media of communication had not emerged, pilgrimage required a travel of several days, even months from the devotees. Visiting a religious shrine before one left for heavenly abode was pan-Indic, and expected an assiduous following.

Such travels brought people, originating from diverse contexts, in a number of open networks. Singularity of goal in these pilgrim movements was the binding element : it was not only that people of one culture were acquainted with that of the other, but they also internalized the idea of vastness of their country, and often developed respect for the others. Besides affecting the organisational base of other religious and sectarian communities, the caste system has equally influenced the communities in the border and fringe areas, and also some of the tribal societies interacted like the Hindu model of social organisation. The famous case of the tribes of Nilgiri hills can be cited here (Mandelbaum, 1956). Such interactions between

tribes have also been reported from the Himalayas and Assam (L. K. Mahapatra, 1971). It is not uncommon to see a large number of tribal societies calling themselves *adivasi jati* (see for example the Sahariya case, Joshi, 1987); the distinction between tribe and caste collapses in such contexts, and seems to be an academic distinction *per se*.

Cultural exchanges between the groups have contributed to the emergence of unity. It is interesting to note that even when the groups subscribed to an egalitarian ideology, they unhesitatingly entered into the caste system, and were treated *jati*-wise. Thus the gap between the Hindus and other religious communities was narrowed. The inclusion of modern mass media for disseminating information has gone further in spreading the Sanskritic values. Such a spread has fostered the emergence of cultural unity in India. It is true that some tribal societies—like the Muslim tribes of the North-West, the Nagas, the Mizos, and the tribes of Khasi and Jaintia hills—have remained relatively unaffected by caste ideology and Sanskritic values. In other parts of India, the twin relationship between caste ideology and religion has played a crucial role in producing cultural unity.

The reform movements that emerged in the orbit of Hinduism endeavoured to disentangle religion from the overall cultural monopoly of the upper castes, and advised the culturally unprivileged sections to take up the Sanskritic values. These movements also facilitated the mobility of lower sections in the Hindu caste hierarchy. The Arya Samaj, for example, helped the backward classes, especially the Scheduled Castes, to have an equal access to the religious scriptures, which hitherto were the repository of the upper castes. Several other local movements also believed that for elevating the lower castes and tribals, the best way was to help them in emulating Sanskritic values. Thus consciously as well as unconsciously the religious stream of Hinduism has contributed to the cultural integration of India.

II

THIS brings us to a discussion of two significant questions, that is, (a) what groups are to be integrated ? and (b) what is the 'mainstream' to which the diverse groups and communities are to be knitted ? There is an element of truth in the proposition that Caste and Hinduism have contributed to India's cultural unity, but to equate Hinduism with the 'mainstream' of Indian society is not only fraught with danger but is also antithetical to the secular premises of the Indian state. The Indian Constitution and political processes envisage a casteless and classless society and a secular state: inequality is to be abolished and secularism is to be practiced.

Transcending the category of Hinduism, Bose (1972: 504, 505) thinks that the Gandhian values and ideas constitute the 'mainstream' of Indian society.

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To quote him: "...Gandhiji was in favour of a State which promoted religious neutrality...(The) principal purpose (of the state) was to liberate the 'masses' from their subservience to the 'classes'— with this secularism as the foundation of our political life, the Hindu has to be a better Hindu, the Muslim a better Muslim, the Christian a better Christian in his personal life, while all of us shall work together so that India becomes the happy home of a liberated and cultured people, who share one another's labour in a modernized equalitarian economy." The viability of Gandhian ideas in national integration (Roy Burman, 1988 : 81-22) and a developmental model that emerges from it (Srivastava and van Willigen, 1988), has been emphasised recently.

It has also been said that the 'mainstream' of Indian society consists of common productive organisation, Parliamentary democracy, socialism anp secularism (Ray, 1972 : 584 5). Changes occurring in the ecological set up and industrialisation affect all communities equally, and therefore a planned economy meeting with all the socio-economic challenges is indispensable for national integration. In pursuance of this view, it may be said that lop-sided development coupled with regional imbalance will slaken the process of national integration.

In terms of diversity, Indian society has different levels : besides the diversity of cultures, there are diversities of ethnic groups, religions, languages and regions. But one need not be 'unduly frightened' (Srinivas, 1962 : 110) about the existence of diversity as it is a result of various vicissitudes of history and operation of the forces of segregation, which have gone hand-in-hand with that of unification. The problem of nation-building and of integrating diverse units is also not unique to India, as a large number of new nations (see Geertz, 1962) have faced the monstrous problem of carving out a nation from plentifulness of diversities and separate, often conflicting, interests. The role of charismatic leadership in nation-building has also been emphasised (see Apter, 1963). In nation-building, the essential principle is unity in diversity where (i) uniqueness of each group is to be kept alive ; (ii) the groups must be healthily knitted to the mainstream ; and (iii) the forces which disrupt unity need to be curbed.

Therefore, the concept of unity does not necessarily presume the existence of a monolithic structure. Unity can always result from the diversities existing in a nation. And this model of diversity further tells that every Indian is also a member of a caste, village, linguistic group, state, religion, region, ethnic group, etc. Loyalty to each of these segments is instilled in the processes of upbringing. These cross-cutting ties of loyalty to various segments, which stand in 'balanced opposition' to others of 'structural equivalence' (see Evans-Pritchard, 1940), have led some to believe that "we are all minorities in India, and are all in the fringe in one way or another"

(Uberoi, 1972 : 581). Cutting across all these minority statuses, national unity is a higher level of integration. Every Indian is integrated to his nation, and at the same time he is loyal to differential groups in which membership is held. It is unnatural and impossible to eliminate differential loyalties of people. A higher level of loyalty—loyalty to nation—expects that lower levels of loyalty exist.

Since the lower levels of loyalty exist, there is a perennial fear that loyalties based on any one of them can always make their appearance in political terms. From ethnic groups, the feeling of ethnicity may always crystallise ; from regional loyalties, regionalism can precipitate ; from sharing the same language, linguism or the language question may come up, and from religious adherence, ideological conflict can always emerge giving rise to communal violence and politics. The threats to integration are contained in the very notion of diversity. Loyalties substantiated on any basis may demand a separate region for them, a state, a better deal, or they may show concern for a fission of the country.

Then what is the 'mainstream' of Indian society? Do Hinduism and the caste system constitute the 'mainstream'? Do democratic processes, productive organisations and secularism collectively make up the 'mainstream'? Is Gandhism, or more appropriately Gandhian values, form the 'mainstream' ? We have intuitively imagined that there is the 'mainstream' in which all

diversities should (and must) melt, and in this 'taken-for-granted' concept, we have reluctantly embarked on its clear and precise definition. Notwithstanding the influence of Hinduism and the caste system on other religious communities in India, both Hinduism and the caste system cannot be regarded as comprising the 'mainstream' of India.

'Mainstream' can be defined as that culture of a society where all the diversities melt, where the notion of segregation is not held, and a group is united with the other transcending individual cultural and ideational differences. In India such a mainstream undoubtedly consists of a set of modern values, like equality, democracy, modern productive processes, and secular ethics. But these values need to be translated in the specific context of Indian reality. For instance, the modern productive processes should not alienate the rural masses by concentrating all its gains in the urban milieu. Equality should not be confined to the individual and the sex, but must encompass groups and institutions. For planning processes, all types of groups like pastoralists, hunter-food gatherers, shifting cultivators, peasants, workers, etc. must have equal weightage and depending upon the gravity of the problems of each group, specific allocations may be made.

In other words, the central theme of Indian unity is equality; in theoretical as well as pragmatic terms. One language, one religion, one culture, may apparently seem axiomatic of homogeneity,

and thus unity. But in India the problem is to carve out unity from the existing diversities. Destruction of diversity is an impossible proposition and India without diversity cannot be conceptualised. The mainstream, conceived as a cultural milieu, has to result from a set of values adapted and synchronised to the historic-specific conditions of Indian society.

III

IN the case of tribal societies, the problem of ethnicity and region has surfaced in certain areas. Numerically big tribal groups have taken up their cause, demanding a better deal from the government. In these cases, the tribal societies have passed from an isolated folk living to becoming an ethnic group in relation to the tribals of their neighbourhood, and have finally demanded a separate region for themselves. Let us illustrate this process with an example.

According to the Census of India, 1971, there are fifteen tribal groups included in the category called Naga in Nagaland. However, unofficial reports put their number around thirty or more. Each Naga tribe has its own distinctive identity, territorial distribution, and speaks a different language. Now quite a few Naga languages have acquired a Roman script thanks to the work of the Christian missions in different parts of Nagaland. Each tribe generally practices endogamy, and at one time inter-tribal marriages were almost negligible. Because of hilly terrains with less

avenues of communication, the Naga villages were widely dispersed. Each village was divided into smaller units called *khels* (after an Assamese term) and in past, each *khel* could be conceptualised as a self-sufficient village with its own barricades, stockades, walls, and gates that were protective mechanisms against extraneous threats. Relations between different *khels* were organised in terms of democratic lines (Furer-Haimendorf, 1976: 13; Ramasubban, 1978: 393-412; Marwah and Srivastava, 1987: 67-70).

With the advent of the British in the Naga hills, the structural relations between different *khels* started changing. The term 'Naga' was used for all these inhabitants by the plain Assamese. Hill dwellers, differentiated into various autonomous categories, were also clubbed together in the term 'Naga' (for the origin of this term, see Hutton, 1969 : 5). Initially this term was used non-politically to refer to people alien to the plain Assamese, but gradually against the backdrop of British domination, the identity of all the hill inhabitants started crystallising under the canopy term, the 'Naga'. The opening of the Naga hills also facilitated inter-tribal interactions. Against the external domination, different, and at one time hostile to one another, groups found a bulwark to their struggle in the Naga ethnic groups. For intertribal communication, a pidgin languages called 'Nagamese', a hybrid of the Naga languages and Assamese, came into existence. Once the Naga ethnic identity came to characterise these

people they demanded a separate state for themselves to be carved out from Assam.

Ethnicity, therefore, results from extraneous situations. It definitely has a relationship with lopsided development programmes. Once the group experiences exploitation at the hands of the outsiders, it—if it has a sizeable number and infrastructure that can sustain its movement —develops political consciousness for securing better treatment from the political machinery. For instance, ethnicity in the Gondwana region of Adilabad district (Andhra Pradesh) was an effect of the exploitation perpetrated by the outsiders (Furer-Haimendorf, 1979). As a protest against land alienation and indebtedness, the Gonds formed the Gond Sabha. With an accentuation of exploitation, the feeling of separateness and regionalism came to settle.

The incident of 1981 (Furer-Haimendorf, 1982: 323-326) which culminated in firing was a further reinforcement of Gond identity and their feeling of regionalism. On April 20, 1981, the Gonds had planned to protest against land alienation and indebtedness. The local government fearing some problems from it imposed Section 144 Cr. P. C. The Gonds were ignorant of it, and moreover that particular day happened to be the *hat* day. The Gonds assembled in large number and started protesting. The police opened fire and according to an official estimate, 13 Gonds were killed (see Furer-Haimendorf, 1982 : 324).

Incidents of this type to which the tribe may be subjected are enough for strengthening 'emotional integration, of people to their group. The loyalty of the people to their group already exists and it is cemented against the backdrop of outside threats. Surely India has been a melting pot of races and cultures but neither racial discrimination nor cultural unification has reached a level where all primordial loyalties of a group are mitigated. Therefore, there is every likelihood that an ethnic group becomes a pressure group, and the demand of a region is a natural outcome of such sentiments and solidarity.

A region, having vertical solidarity, is a dynamic category. Its boundaries are flexibly defined, but its identification is dependent on the concentration of a population having common cultural and linguistic characteristics. There have been various cases where a region was demanded by the tribal communities. The Gonds and the Bhils, for instance, demanded a separate state at the beginning of the Second World War, but such a demand was turned down (see Singh, 1985: 269). Nevertheless these demands have come up with renewed vigour. In 1941, a Gond called Kumra Bhimu in Adilabad demanded the formation of a separate state for the Gonds—the Gond Raj (Furer-Haimendorf, 1945: 208-217). The Raj Gond leader, Raja Naresh Singh, submitted a proposal for forming an Adivasi region out of the tribal areas of Chattisgarh and Rewa, before the State Reorganisation Committee. In the late 1950s, a

movement of the Gonds of lower strata developed under the stewardship of a Gond, Hira Singh. An organisation called Adivasi Kalyan Samiti was founded to safeguard the interests of the Gonds. In the 1960s, the movement reached its peak. The objectives of the movement were to promote development programmes for the tribals and aid their efficacious implementation, encourage cultivation among those Gonds who were more dependent on forest products, and revive Gond culture. The confrontation of the movement with the local government began when Hira Singh advocated that the Gonds should pay tax to his *sarkar* (government). Although the movement gained considerable following, it began petering out in the 1960s after the leaders were arrested for violating various laws (see Singh, 1985 : 269-270).

Similarly the Udayachal movment started as a socio-cultural and economic movement amongst the Bodo-Kachari tribe, concentrated in the northern parts of Gopalpara, Kamrup and Darrang districts of Assam (Mukherjee and Mukherjee, 1982: 253-280). Starting with the goal of ameliorating cultural, economic and political status of the Bodo, it has developed into a socio-political movement for a separate state within the Indian Union. Initially the movement had a literary bent : the Bodo Sahitya Sabha aimed at uniting the Bodo on the language issue and to work towards developing the Bodo language. It also demanded introduction of the Bodo language in schools existing in the Bodo-dominated areas.

In the latter part, the leaders of the movement believed that for protecting the Bodo language and culture, and for the upliftment of their people, an autonomous state was imperative.

The most powerful movement which also gained representation in state and central legislature was the Jharkhand movement. It can be used as a good example to understand transition from ethnicity to regionalism (see Singh, 1985: 197-241, 271-275). In 1918, the educated Christian tribals organised the Chotanagpur Improvement Society. In the period from 1938 to 1947, the movement grew militant under the name of Adivasi Mahasabha. In 1949, the Mahasabha was merged with a regional party, the Jharkhand party. It was believed that political action would be an alternative to social reforms. It is a clear case where it was believed that Sanskritisation or evangelisation would not succeed in raising the status of the tribals. The consolidation of the Jharkhand party began under the leadership of Jaipal Singh, a Munda who had graduated from Oxford and the party demanded a tribal state called Jharkhand to be carved out of 20 districts in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. It was stated in their manifesto that tribal problems would be solved when the tribal state was formed. In the period from 1952 to 1957 the Jharkhand party did very well in the general elections and emerged as a major party in the Chhotanagpur-Santhal Pargana region. In the second general elections, its influence was noticed in Orissa.

also. But by 1960s, the decline of Jharkhand party began mainly because of three reasons:

a. the enthusiasts lost interest in the party because the demand of a separate state was not realised ;

b. the growing impact of development programmes was felt in Chhotanagpur and some other areas, and there was an improvement in the condition of the tribals ; and.

c. a split took place in the party because of several cultural and religious differences, especially between the Christians and the non-Christians. The Christians were more advanced compared to the non-Christians, and the latter sought the support of the Jan Sangh and the Congress for their problems.

By 1967, the Jharkhand movement lost its popularity. Its ranks were absorbed by the Congress while the militant sections joined the Naxalbari movement where they got opportunity to adopt a radical path for the realization of their demands. In 1973, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha was formed and it demanded a separate Jharkhand state, a change in agrarian, relations, recovery of land from the landlords and cultural revivalism. Its militant phase began from October, 1977, especially after Jaya Prakash Narayan's advice for the formation of smaller States and the statement of the then Home Minister, Charan Singh, about reorganization of the States. In 1980, the Morcha entered the States politics with a renewal of their

demand. Today the Jharkhand movement is emerging as a strong force in the industrial and mining belt of Chhotanagpur. Now it conceptualises a Jharkhandi not only as a producer but also as a member of the working class. The feeling of ethnicity has been further reinforced because of urbanisation and the spread of modernity.

It is not only that the regions have been politicised, but also that the dichotomy of 'native' and 'migrant' has acquired monstrous proportions in some parts of India. These movements—often called 'sons of the soil' movements—engineered by the natives have led to several regional parties which are supposed to look after the native interests as well as remove the alien from the native land. Srinivas (1962 : 98-111) suggests that 'natural regions' must be formed to solve the problem of regionalism. These 'natural regions' must be based on scientific criteria, rather than language or any other identity. The help of geographers, geologists and ethnographers should be sought for demarcating these regions. Each region should be administered by a council responsible for its development on the basis of scientific criteria.

The crux of regionalism lies in imbalances between regions created by economic development. In all regional movements the protest is against inequality because all regions have not benefited equally from development and modernisation. The promises of modernisation have not reached

all : on the contrary, development has deepened the already existing crises. The problem can be handled by distributing gains equally to all parts of the society. Evaluatory schemes need to be strengthened to see whether the gains are reaching properly. It has been seen from all these cases that when there is a spurt in developmental activities and benefits come to the people, there is a decline in their demands of a state or region. Moreover there is a need to spread national consciousness to various regions through several agencies.

Srinivas (1976 : 32) suggests that for neutralizing the regional movements, various positive measures —of both short-and long-term—need to be taken. He thinks that for certain categories of jobs, especially semi-skilled and unskilled, the local people should be allocated preference. There must be training courses for inculcating skills in the local people and preparing them for various jobs. Posts requiring special qualifications should be filled on merit and on all-India basis. In this way the principles of proportional as well as compensatory equality can be combined.

IV

THERE is an overlapping between the demand of a region and its association with language. The concept of region is based on vertical solidarity ; nonetheless language becomes the unifying aspect. In other words, the demand of a region is tacitly tied to linguistic affinity.

Various linguistic surveys recognise the existence of almost 200 languages and 600 dialects in India. The languages are divided in to four groups, that is, Kirata, Nisada, Dravida and Aryan. Indo-Aryan languages have the maximum speakers, followed by Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Sino-Tibetan. Each of these linguistic families has further been divided according to the distribution of its speakers. The Eighth Schedule has recognised 15 languages, in which there is no representation either of Sino-Tibetan or Austro-Asiatic. Out of these 15 languages, four are of Dravidian origin. Twelve States have been carved out linguistically ; Sanskrit and Sindhi do not have any State affiliation. Hindi and Urdu, irrespective of their different scripts, have been clustered together.

Alongwith this the Constitution permits the continuation of various languages and the right to preserve them has been given under Article 29 (see Tripathi, 1980 :72). Jawaharlal Nehru (Vidyarthi, 1984 sec. ed.: 97-98) said that tribal languages should be helped in acquiring a script of their own. He was considerably influenced by "Lenin and others who won the goodwill of the tribal people of the Soviet Republic by encouraging their languages, by going out of their way in helping hundreds of dialects, by preparing dictionaries and vocabularies and even by evolving new scripts where there were none" (Vidyarthi, op. cit.: 97-98). In those areas where Christian missions were active, the tribal languages acquired the Roman script. The biggest barrier in learning a

language is its script and once a script is understood by all, learning of language becomes an easy affair.

For conserving the identity of a culture its language has to be preserved. The first step in the assimilation of the tribals with the wider world is the adoption of bilingual approach. For instance, the Santhals speak Santhali, and at the same time they speak and understand Bengali ; the Mundas belong to the Mundari branch of Austro-Asiatic language but also understand Hindi. The need for interaction with the wider world has gradually reduced the dependence of a tribal community on its language. It is happening more in case of small and minor tribes where the language of their advanced neighbours is getting firmly entrenched. If on the one hand, the languages of the outsiders are replacing the tribal languages, there is, in some cases, a revival of the tribal script on the other. It is true that the process of acquiring script for a tribal language is essential for preserving its culture, but such a process becomes disadvantageous when it poses a threat to national integration.

Some of the tribals have regarded the language of outsiders as superior to theirs. For instance, the Koyas of Telengana speak Gondi, but when they converse with their neighbours they speak Telugu. The Bondo of Orissa speak Mundari, but they interact in Oriya with the outsiders. The Oriya words and terms have percolated in their language structure, and they think that

their prayers and magical formulae when addressed in Oriya would please the gods (Furer-Haimendorf 1982 : 316). There is another level when imposition of the outsider's language poses several problems. For instance, in the Ashram schools of Koraput the language of instruction was Oriya and the local tribals found it problematic to adjust with it. L. K. Mahapatra (1984 sec. ed., 376) reported a case where "even after ten years of schooling a child could not pass the primary school leaving examination". Furer-Haimendorf (1982 : 316-17) observed the same situation with the Gonds. He says : "...politicians and officials alike regard their (tribal languages') ultimate disappearance as inevitable and even desirable in the interests of the integration of the tribes with the majority communities." The assumption is that nurturing different languages and formation of linguistic states poses a problem for national integration.

For preserving their languages, several tribal movements have come up, which have demanded primary education in the local language. In some cases, they have also demanded that higher examinations like those of university, civil service, etc. should be conducted in local language. Further, some of the tribal languages have acquired their own script. For instance, Raghunath Murmu improvised a script called 'Ol' for the Santhals. S. Mahapatra (1986 : 7) writes : "...they (adoption of a separate script, non-participation in Hindu festivals, reinterpretation of myth and tradition, etc.) are the main landmarks in the search for a

new sense of identity when the tribe is faced with the challenge of modernization and confrontation with the world outside". This new script 'Ol' (or 'Ol Chiki') is derived from Oriya, Bengali, Hindi, English, and Urdu. The script symbolises a return to the great tradition of the past. In March, 1981, the script was recognised by the Government of West Bengal and arrangements were made to impart primary education in the local language in Santhal dominated areas. Similarly the tribals of Tripura have insisted that the local language called 'Kak Barak' should be recognised by the State (Dubey, 1982 : 19). Further, they want that the script should be changed from Bengali to Roman and this demand has been supported by other tribes of the North-East (Singh, 1985 : 286-287). There is also an attempt to discard many of the Indo-Aryan scripts, thereby reviving the 'original script' that fell in oblivion because of some unknown historical (or 'mythical') reasons (Das, 1982 : 115-123). The Deoris of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Dibrugarh have been using the Assamese script, but now they are attempting to evolve their own independent script (Mini Bhattacharya, 1988, personal communication).

The basic idea of forming linguistic States was to foster and preserve cultural homogenity. And moreover, the formation of linguistic States provided the most suitable environment for the development of a language. Several conflicts between states centre around the language issue. For instance, the language dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka around the area of Belgaum brought to light the language issues in marginal areas. Although the linguistic divisions did welcome the issue of diversity, it could always acquire a colossal force of separatism. It is well known that the southern parts of India have vehemently protested against the imposition of Hindi on them. But it should not be forgotten that within the southern states there are disputes between different Dravidian languages.

With the advent of the British, English was adopted as a language cutting across all barriers in a plural society. Under it flourished bi-or tri-linguism. Once English was implanted, the idea that local languages would flourish in their own right and set-up achieved credence. But inculcation of English as a unifying language was possible in metropolitan centres and big towns. It did not reach—and it is true even now—the grass-root levels. Therefore, the argument that English can serve as a unifying language is not supported by empirical details. It is confined to the 'elite sections' rather than having mass appeal.

Srinivas (1962 : 102-103) suggests that diverse languages should have a common script to foster national integration. He thinks that once a common script is accepted, learning a different language will become easy. To quote him (1976 : 28): "The adoption of the Roman script would... open the door to better communication between various Indian languages. The Nagari script is no doubt phoenetically precise and the use of the Roman, even with diacritical marks, might lead to

the loss of some phoenetic values, but then scholars and other purists will always be free to use the original script. It is indeed a small price to pay for the modernisation of Indian languages, and for national integrates." It has also been seen that the linguistic problem is faced by administrators, educationists, and students in alien contexts; and once the common script is accepted they will all be at home in learning and adapting to a different language.

But such a proposal may not be acceptable at the level of linguistic States because each may believe that it is in the script that the identity a language seems to rest. And further, the identity problem of a language may inspire a purist movement in it. Srinivas (1976: 28) wrote: "Thus Tamil rid itself of Sanskrit words, and some Tamil musicians even refused to sing Thyagraja's songs, while Hindi became highly Sanskritised shedding Urdu and Persian words. Any living language borrows words and phrases from other languages and purism is unnatural as it is elitist." The proposal to start a Department of Hindustani at the University of Delhi is a step towards freeing the language of puritanism (*The Hindustan Times,* May 31, 1988).

There are two views regarding the imposition of Hindi as a national language in the so-called non-Hindi areas. An extreme view is that Hindi should be imposed forcibly and let the order come out of chaos. The other school says that Hindi should be introduced gradually. The first view

does not enjoy any support because of its extreme character. Following the second view, we can say that the people in the non-Hindi areas know Hindi but are not adamant about it. Coupled with this, the national media with its emphasis on 'network programmes' and the Hindi films perform an implicit function of spreading Hindi to the non-Hindi regions.

In the three language formula, Hindi and English are compulsorily taught along with one regional or some other language. One suggestion is that when Hindi is being taught in southern States, a southern language should be taught in the northern States. But the moot issue is: which southern language should be taught in the north? And if a southern language is taught in the north why should a north-eastern or north-western language not also be taught?

Looking from the perspective of the tribals, the big tribal groups have demanded the inclusion of their language (with their script) along with other languages of their State. The Khasi language, for instance, has been recognised by the University of Guwahati. As mentioned earlier, 'Ol Chiki' has been recognised by the Government of West Bengal.

The language problem is in a state of animated suspension. It has been politicised primarily because of the vested interests of various groups. A group may adopt a language for census enumeration which might not be its mother tongue. For instance, in Punjab the Hindus have preferred to

be enumerated as Hindi speakers, contrary to the fact that they speak Punjabi. Unless the politicisation of language is broken the language issue will assume serious proportions. It is equally disheartening that concrete and empirically sound solutions regarding the language issue are largely missing ; particularly when it is well-known that people in the non-Hindi areas know Hindi and some of them can effectively communicate in that language. It is equally disheartening to note that politics in India is always based on one or the other kind of primordial tie, that is, caste, religion, language, region and ethnicity. An attempt to break the unholy alliance between language and politics is essential in order to bury the language issue forever.

V

India is characterised by religious pluralism. The Census of India, 1981 has classified Indian population under seven religious groups : Hindus (82.64 per cent). Muslims (11.35 per cent), Christians (2.43 per cent), Sikhs (1.96 per cent), Buddhists (0.71 per cent), Jains (0.48 per cent), other Religions and Persuasions (0.42 per cent). There are religions introduced extraneously which flourished on the Indian soil ; a sectarian movement emerging as protest group against the caste system and its inequality has finally ended up becoming a religion in itself or by being absorbed in one or the other major religious category.

In interactional terms, Jainism, for example, is very close to Hinduism, although it keeps its own religious identity. It is often seen that in a Jain family, some members may subscribe assiduously to the Jain codes and rituals, while some others may be more tolerant to Hindu gods and goddesses. Moreover, the Jains regard themselves as closer to the Vaishya *varna*, and often marital alliances are established inter-religiously between the Jains and the Vaishyas (Sangve, 1959). The weakening of a sectarian movement is the result of laxity in inter-personal relations. When inter-religious marriages are permitted, there are chances that cultural exchange would take place, thus reducing the gap between different communities.

But this is not the situation with other religions. In a plural society, resting on diverse ideologies, tolerance has to be the fundamental principle for keeping religious amity alive. And alongwith this, the state has to be neutral in religious affairs : it should neither patronise a religion nor interfere in religious matters. Juxtaposed to this what has happened in reality is that religion has provided one of the strongest primordial ties for reinforcing the solidarity of a group. Following the anthropological theory of functionalism, religion is indubitably a potent force of social solidarity, but when this solidarity, embedded in the fact that people adhere to a common faith, turns into open hostilities culminating in sporadic cases of violence, religion turns into a dysfunctional consequence for the integration of a plural society. What is born is the witch of communalism.

Communalism is an ugly face ; it is the

antithesis of happiness that dwells in the phrase 'communal living'. In contemporary political terminology, terms and phrases like 'communal politics', 'communal oratory', 'communal violence,' etc., have come to stay. Communalism may be defined as the resultant of those forces which on the one hand cause 'communal living' in a religious community and on the other, they antagonistically orient it vis-a-vis the other such communities. As an 'individual' everyone vociferously denounces the nefarious designs of communalism, but as a member of a religious community, the same 'individual' is transformed into a 'communal actor'.

Anthropological theories dealing with religion and social integration have asserted that religion contributes to social integration when there is a singularity of religion in society. Geertz (1960) in the study of religion of Java says that when there is religious pluralism, the ideological conflicts are bound to occur. In Java, there are conflicts between the Abangan (followers of the traditional animistic religion), Santri (Muslims) and Prijaji (the followers of the Hindu-Buddhist system). These ideological conflicts are intimately tied to the respective economic and political achievements of various communities. In Modjokuto, the Javanese town he studied, the factors which tend to exacerbate conflict are balanced by those which tend to moderate it. According to Geertz (1960 : 356) the factors tending to embitter conflict in Modjokuto are the following :

(a) Intrinsic ideological conflicts resting on deep-felt dislike for the values of other groups.

(b) The changing system of social stratification and increased status mobility which tends to enforce contact between individuals and groups formerly more or less socially segregated.

(c) The sharply increased struggle for political power to fill the vacuum left by the departure of the colonial government, which tends to embue religious differences with political significance.

(d) The need for scapegoats upon whom to focus tensions generated by a rapidly changing social system.

It is clear from the above stated delineation that several factors working cumulatively provoke conflict between different religious communities. Although ideological, economic, stratificational, political and psychological (escapism) factors reinforce one another, some are more important than the others. Communalism has a definite relationship with differential economic positions the communities occupy in the system of production. Economic inequality is highly vulnerable to the politicisation of a community.

Coupled with the economic factor, the essential nature of a religion also affects its organisational basis. In these terms a congregational religion, generally adhering to monotheism, can be compared to a non-congregational religion with a polytheistic framework. Congregationalism, monotheism,

singularity of religious text, rituals and symbols, are likely to give rise to more integration amongst the adherents to its faith. And a religion of this type may be less tolerent to diverse faiths and deviance from the main body of beliefs and practices. A non-congregational, polytheistic religion is by its very nature a composite of multiple religious texts, rituals and symbols. It may be divided within, with its cleavages producing differential levels of integration. The solidarity of such a religion, often leading to militancy, is not a natural outcome of its organisational characteristics, and may be even hard to achieve notwithstanding the concerted efforts undertaken by politicised religious functionaries.

In the Indian situation, Hinduism offers a fine example of a non-congregational and pluralistic religion. It does not have the idiom of conversion in its ideology. The concept of *shuddhi*, espoused by a sectarian movement, Arya Samaj, is inequitable with that of conversion. Hinduism is pluralistic, tolerant and syncretic, and has been able to adapt to a variety of situations (Srinivas. 1952 ; Srinivas and Shah, 1968 : 358-366). Alien communities entering the portals of Hinduism by taking up *jati* characteristics, have gradually taken up the Hindu idols, modes of worship, and styles of living. Often they have combined their non-Hindu religious characteristics with that of the Hindu without necessarily finding a contradiction between the two. The caste Hindus have not objected to the coexistence of the non-Hindu and

Hindu rituals but have ranked communities on the basis of the degree of Sanskritisation and occupation. Compared to the Hindu mode of organisation, Islam is a congregational religion ; it is monotheistic and has the largest following after the Hindus.

Surely Islam has been able to adapt itself to the local situations. In its existential level (of social organisation', contrary to the normative principles, it has permitted the ramification of caste system. Thus, caste system has been found to exist amongst the Muslims (Ahmad, 1965 : 1093-1096). Communities of the converts to Islam have retained some of their pre-Islamic rituals and features. It is not uncommon, for instance, to come across a Meo named Inder Khan, a name combining Hindu and Muslim names together (K S Marwah, 1987, personal communication). Further the movements around Muslim saints (*sufis*) provided a meeting ground of the Hindus and the Muslims, and on the Indian soil, the *sufi silsila* found the most congenial environment for its development (Rizvi, 1978). It is also well known that these *sufis* are worshipped equally by the Hindus and the Muslims, In plural situations, movements having elements of various religions perform the task of' furthering integration, and from this perspective Sufism brought the communities, especially of the Hindus and the Muslims, together.

Communalism is not a problem of Indian villages. Dube in the study of Shamirpet (1955)

says that the rules of purity and pollution are equally extended to the Muslims, and in fact they are regarded a *jati*. Despite religious differences, there are certain village cults followed by both the communities. The Muslims in this village of Hyderabad "are active and enthusiastic in planning measures to ward off evil spirits, ghosts, and epidemics in cooperation with their Hindu and tribal neighbours" (Dube, 1955 : 189-190). Hence there is neither ideological conflict nor violence. In Mool Dwarka, contiguous to the boundary of Dwarkanath (Krsna) temple, there is an array of five graves. Muslims regard these graves as of 'five saints' (*panch pir*) while the Hindus consider them of the 'five warriors' (*panch bir*). Both the Muslims and Hindus offer *chadar* (shawl) to these graves, but its colour differs : the Muslims offer green shawl, while the Hindu *chadar* is yellow in colour. There are some local deities—apotheosised in Muslim terms—like Saiyed Baba, Pir Faqir, etc. which are revered by the Hindus as well. In Old Delhi, several Hindu houses and lanes predominantly occupied by the Hindus, have the seat of Saiyed Baba (locally called *Saiyed Baba ka aala*) which is worshipped through simple rituals, like lighting a lamp and a couple of incense sticks, every Thursday. Quite a few miracles are attributed to the grace of Saiyed Baba (for one such case from a Jain family, see Gururani, 1988), and this knowledge is shared by both the communities. And certain Hindu communities, for instance the Kayastha, are believed to be very close to the Muslims. About the Kayasthas, it is generally

said that they are half-Muslim (*Kayastha to aadhe Musalman hote hain*), because of their cultural practices and the historic contribution they have made to Urdu as scribes. It is also common to see a number of Muslim spiritual practitioners combining the Hindu modes of divination. For instance, a Muslim diviner of Shakurpur in Delhi calls himself Tantric, and in his advertisement he claims to prepare horoscopes (*Janampatri* and *teva*) also. In other words, at the local level the communities—which may be communally oriented at some point of their interaction—appreciate the differences they have with one another and these differences are respected. The day-to-day interaction that goes on between different religious communities produces a composite culture and Old Delhi is a good example of such a cultural integration.

Historians have traced the origin of communal politics to the British times and the demand of a separate Muslim country further consolidated the differences between the communities (see Ranadive, 1986: 81-126). The process of unification was subdued to the process of segregation. The dastardly and cruel experiences of the Partition further increased the cleavages between different communities and the spirit of tolerance that had characterised various communities gradually waned. The purist movements came up in different religions. Aggarwal (1966) reports the case of the Meos of Rajasthan who were converted to Islam in the fifteenth century and for almost four

centuries they have continued to practice a combination of Hindu and Muslim rituals and values in the same framework. But in the last forty years, the process of Islamisation has begun in them.

Aggarwal (1966: 159-160) writes : "It is not at all an exaggeration to say that the Meos have adopted more Muslim practices in the last seventeen years than they had in the previous four hundred fifty years." The solution to the identity crisis is to revive the identity in a puritan form : it may be Hindu or Muslim. The need to have a full fledged revival of religious identity is impressed upon the people by taking recourse to the 'politics of threat'—a 'threat' rationalised in terms of number, population, characteristics, obnoxious desires, etc. is assumed to exist before a community.

The elite, who were hitherto indifferent to religious matters, take an active part in politicising religion and wooing the religious sentiments of people for political gains, which are short-term. A recent study conducted by Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (Chandigarh) points out that communal stirring have started precipitating in the Jaipur district which hitherto has been an example of communal harmony. "Increasing religiosity, communication issues, like the Urdu language and the upcoming Arabic Institute, competition for jobs and the near-absence of Muslims from the non-household industries may provide sufficient conditions for communal riots in Jaipur, the report cautions" (*The Times of India*, June 17, 1988).

If on the one hand, politicisation of religion is acutely reflected in revivalist movements, on the other it reveals itself in the cases of conversion. It is known that some lower castes have *en masse* embraced a different religion to escape the scourge of untouchability and inequality tied to the caste system. Under the guardianship of Dr B. R. Ambedkar, 70,000 Mahars became Buddhists in 1956. Another caste of leather workers, the Jatavs, of Agra, followed them. By being converted to Buddhism (or neo-Buddhism), these communities have not only separated themselves from the caste Hindus, but have allied themselves with other religious groups which are antagonistically oriented to the Hindus as a result of communal politics. For instance, Lynch (1969) writes that in one of the elections (1962) the slogan allegedly adopted by the Republican Party was : *Jatav-Muslim bhai bhai* : *Hindu qaum kahan se aaye* (Jatavs and Muslims are brothers ; From where has the Hindu nation come ?)

The political overtones of religious conversions were clearly precipitated in the conversions of Meenakshipuram. In South India, according to the figures of 1982, more than 2000 people got themselves converted to Islam between February 1981 and January 1982. In Meenakshipuram alone out of 180 households, 110 embraced Islam, thus denouncing the lower caste status. According to a report of January 1984, in Ramanathapuram 950 families, belonging to ten villages, had decided to embrace Islam (see *Muslim India*, January 1984: 15).

It was also claimed at that time that such conversions could be for getting jobs in the Gulf countries. It could have been a concomitant factor, but the causes of these conversions lie in socio-political reasons.

These conversions were clinched politically. The militant Hindu associations, which are fast mushrooming as a result of communal politics, worked in South India to bring the people back to the Hindu fold. It is equally well known that food was served to the lower castes by the Brahmin priests in some temples. The same report which talked about the proposed conversion in Ramanathapuram before the ensuing Pongal festival (January 14, 1984) also noted the response of a local teacher who said that "there is a change of heart among the high-caste Hindus, many of whom are treating Harijans as equals, but even a single case of ill treatment, and harassment sets at naught all the good works done earlier".

Communal violence is triggered off by trivial happenings. An exchange of heated arguments between persons of different communities may lead to a riot. The rationality of the rioters disappears in the irrationality of violence. Frequent occurrences of riots not only has dysfunctional consequences for the psychology of people, but also constrains them to live in areas predominantly inhabited by members of their community only. Industrial urbanisation works towards the desegregation of population.

Nevertheless, as a result of communalism there is a segregation of communities. This also obstructs the mobility of people over time: in spite of opportunities available elsewhere, the people may not prefer to leave old neighbourhoods for fear of insecurity. Communal violence leaves the communities wounded, inter-personal relations strained, economic development thwarted and political stability is perennially in peril. Irrationality touches its peak, and informational levels of society are charged with irrational judgements and misgivings. In Ahmedabad, for instance, "there was a feeling of jubilation amongst some Hindus on their 'victory over Muslims'. Others thought that they had avenged Prithviraj Chauhan's defeat against Mahmood Ghazanivi after seven hundred years" (Shakir, 1980: 92-93).

It is true that the state is secular, but secularisation (the decrease in the hold of religion on society) has not occurred with the same pace. The ideology of secularism remains confined to theory. Several studies have isolated economic reasons as crucial for communal violence. It is true that the level of entrepreneurship may not be high in some religious groups, and thus there are differences in economic achievements between different communities. These differences are ignited by political, ideological and segregational factors. Some psychologists also feel that the minority status of a community and the resulting psychological implications may be fuelling communal tensions.

14

For combating communalism a number of suggestions are given. Some of them are:

a. Raising the level of education ;

b. Institutionalisation of friendship between people of different religious communities ;

c. Inter-religious marriages ;

d. Removing the religious content from the text books ;

e. Reservation for various policies of upliftment to be made strictly on economic factors;

f. Launching voluntary organisations to work with minorities;

g. Emergence of leadership for and across the community ;

h. Spreading the evils of communal violence through mass media ;

i. Banning of all communal-based organisations and parties ;

j. Working towards a removal of the stereotypes tied to various communities ;

k. Declaration of controversial religious places as archaeological monuments ; and

l. Non indulgence of political leaders in matters of religious worth, inauguration of religious meetings, temples, etc.

VI

PHILIP' Mason (1967 in his famous symposium titled *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity*, isolated five areas of diversity. that is, religion, language, region, caste and tribe, and the relationship between the elites and masses He believed that in spite of these diversities 'the many-strandedness of relationship and consciousness of other communities may well contribute to the ease with which Indian thought understands the idea of unity in diversity of an organic relationship between part and whole" (p. 27). With this, he thought that the Indian polity and Hinduism have refused to accept 'either horn of a dilemma', and have accepted whatever is found to be fitting in a particular context (p. 27-28). Further notwithstanding these contradictions, which can always precipitate, India has 'strong stable elements'. But the stability of these elements can be tested in times of crisis, and Mason stated that the crises emerging from food and population would pose threats before national integration.

The Malthusian problem of food and population needs to be seen in the perspective of development. Communities are highly susceptible to politicisation if the processes of development alienate the people by not providing them the basic amenities of life. Communities not receiving their rightful share are marginalised, and cohesiveness between people is strongly fostered as a reaction to the outsiders. Development has remained concentrated in urban areas with its benefits being monopolised by a minority, while a majority has continued to struggle for survival. As said earlier, politicisation makes its impact when there are already existing disparities and politics enters as a bulwark for the deprived against the others. It is in this light various separatist and anti integration forces can

be analysed. Analysing the Punjab problem, a recent issue of *Seminar* observed : "The impact of the Green Revolution has left its own stresses and strains on the social fabric by widening the divide between a largely rural Sikh majority and the largely Hindu urban majority. The Sikh farmers experienced sudden profits by adopting new technologies in agriculture. Then, with rising costs and diminishing returns of farming based on expensive chemical inputs, they paid a heavy price for their earlier success, with the urban economic environment continuing to be the preserve of the Hindus. This experience in Punjab of disparate growth created strong lobbies based on sectional interests which exploded into economic movements with a fundamentalist extremist face" (May, 1988 : 12).

The state has failed at various junctures in implementing those policies and programmes which have integrative outcome. Regional imbalance and differential placement of communities in economic structure show that the state has not been able to wipe out inequalities at the existential level. Indubitably, at the normative level, the aim of equality is cherished. In the absence of effective results, the communities and groups are constrained to take up the task of their own integration with national integration subjected to a secondary level. The reasoning here is that when the state fails to deliver the results, the groups and communities, deprived in various ways, come together cohesively to look after their interests. Sectional loyalties and cleavages emerge out of it. Something that should agglomerate in one cohesive unit is internally segmented and is juxtaposed antagonistically. Development programmes with the positive spirit embedded in it often fail either because of problems in their execution, or an endemic shortage of resources, or the entailments of a 'soft state'. The net result is that the gains from development programmes are unequally distributed. All this is coupled with an inadequate informational link between the micro and macro-levels. Information about the development of respective communities is not either available and the evaluatory schemes are unsatisfactory.

VII

NATIONAL integration results from a balanced economic development with an equal dispersal of gains to different quarters, secularisation of every sphere of society, mass media churning out secular information rather than reviving the religious glory of a particular community, and political modernisation achieved on the basis of differential mobilisation of people rather than on a revitalisation of their primordial ties. For developmental purposes, indigenous models of development need to be identified and developed. Development should not remain a prerogative of urban concentrated economic growth. Informational levels of society which are required for directed and planned changes must not give any credence

to religious information: secular programmes and informations that cut across the primordiality of communities are to be identified and evolved.

Use of any of the primordial grounds like, caste, religion, region, language, ethnicity, etc. for electoral purposes is to be curbed with strict laws. Organisations and associations that breed communalism are to be banned. Let all the primordial grounds remain a personal matter of the individual or his community, rather than interfering in inter-personal relations. When a secular set of knowledge links economy, polity, society and culture, one may hope for the achievement of national integration in the true sense.

The duty of the state is paramount in achieving integration. Once the state looks after all, the latter will not individually search avenues for their welfare. To take a rough analogy : When the state transport system is inadequate, the individuals go ahead with their own conveyances; or when the water distribution system has its flaws, the individuals look forward to drilling their own hand-pumps.

The state and also the voluntary agencies have another responsibility, they must generate 'emotional integration' of people with the nation. But such a superstructural entity will follow the changes in socio-economic and political spheres.

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After Niyamgiri

Our tribal policy is a mass of contradictions

BIBEK DEBROY

WHAT does it mean to say that tribal voices will be heard in Delhi only now? "Regular elections to panchayat bodies will be ensured and the amended act in respect of the Fifth and Sixth Schedule Areas will be implemented... The UPA government will immediately review the overall strategy and programmes for the development of tribal areas to plug loopholes and to work out more viable livelihood strategies. In addition, more effective systems of relief and rehabilitation will be put in place for tribal and other groups displaced by development projects. Tribal people alienated from land will be rehabilitated." That quote is from National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of May 2004, and Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas refer to the Constitution.

The Fifth Schedule talks about a Tribes Advisory Council and confers comprehensive powers on the governor. For instance (and this is just one example): "Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution the governor may by public notification direct that any particular act of Parliament or of the legislature of the state shall not apply to a scheduled area or any part thereof in the state or shall apply to a scheduled area or any part thereof in the state." And: "In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such regulations may... prohibit or restrict the transfer of land by or among members of the Scheduled Tribes in such area." The Sixth Schedule is specific to tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

We cannot keep ducking the core issue indefinitely. Articles 244(1) and 244(2) of the Constitution provide separate governance and administration of tribal areas. There is an inherent conflict with Article 243 and the 73rd Amendment. Yes, after the Bhuria Committee, we have PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act) of 1996 and it provides for gram sabhas, but these need not be elected. While there are systems of community ownership and practice and, occasionally, tribal mechanisms of governance too, tribes aren't homogeneous. Even if they were, does the existence of such traditional systems warrant a completely different form of governance and administration? Principles of governance and administration ought to be the same, whether it is a scheduled area or not. It is one thing to argue there should be decentralised planning in the way one treats development, land, forestry and other natural resource issues. Literacy is only one indicator of development or deprivation. In the 2001 census, female literacy among STs was 15.54 per cent in Bihar. On the literacy indicator, the Northeast is different. But in bulk of the Fifth Schedule areas (Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, MP, Orissa, Rajasthan

Let us be clear. ST populations do not live in a tribal Arcadia, to which they will return, once Posco and Vedanta are out of the way. The subsistence-level standard of living isn't one worth returning to.

and even Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra), assorted government programmes haven't delivered much and this is starker if one uses non-literacy indicators.

We didn't need a Posco or a Vedanta to tell us this. Therefore, why wasn't a tribal voice heard in Delhi earlier? Even if one doesn't delve into history, there was an Eleventh Five Year Plan document, authored after UPA-I came into power. The first of its three volumes was titled "Social Justice" and it had an extensive section on STs. This first listed out constitutional safeguards and assorted government initiatives and then told us the following: "Since most of the tribal habitations are located in isolated villages and hamlets in undulating plateau lands coinciding with forest areas, they have limited access to critical infrastructure facilities such as roads, communication, health, education, electricity, drinking water, and so on. This widens the gap between the quality of their life and the people in the country."

There are 2,474 distant forest villages in the country, 893 in MP, 499 in Assam, 425 in Chhattisgarh, and the rest are scattered. The Plan document also tells us: "Though the majority of the tribals are settled cultivators, their farming activity is generally uneconomical and non-viable due to the lack of access to necessary agricultural inputs, specially assured irrigation." Hence, let us be clear. ST populations do not live in a tribal Arcadia, to which they will return, once Posco and Vedanta are out of the way. The subsistence-level standard of living isn't one worth returning to.

The core issue should be flagged differently. Why is the average condition of SCs superior to the average condition of STs? Because SCs are geographically integrated and STs aren't. Lack of integration means lack of connectivity, especially transport connectivity. Without roads and electricity, remaining elements of physical and social infrastructure don't follow either. Development comes through mainstreaming, not through segregation in enclaves. That's the lesson everywhere in the world and there is no reason why India should be different. In other words, if implemented properly, Article 243 can lead to decentralised planning and consultation of stakeholders and local communities. It is a separate matter that the gov-

ernment doesn't want to do this. But Article 244 is a bad idea. With integration, some of those isolated villages and hamlets will also disappear as a result of development. That's inevitable and desirable. Providing social and physical infrastructure there is simply not viable, even if it is done by the public sector.

Since tribal regions are rich in minerals, one should also mention the Supreme Court's 1997 Samata judgment. The bullet points of that judgment are the following. A gram sabha has powers to prevent alienation of land in scheduled areas and restore unlawful alienation. Minerals must be exploited by tribals themselves (individually or collectively). Ideally, there should be prohibition on exploitation of minerals (through leases) by non-tribals. In the absence of complete prohibition, 20 per cent of net profits must be earmarked for developmental expenditure, reforestation and ecology. The Supreme Court, or any other court, interprets the law of the land. Whether that law furthers the cause of tribal development is a broader question, outside the purview of courts. Are these Supreme Court guidelines implementable? In scheduled areas, they will bar all private mining and tribals do not possess the wherewithal to exploit minerals individually or collectively. With Avatar analogy being used so much, that is Unobtanium.

But right at the end, the Supreme Court did add a further guideline: "Conference of all chief ministers, ministers holding the ministry concerned and prime minister, and Central ministers concerned should take a policy decision for a consistent scheme throughout the country in respect of tribal lands." What we need is more than a conference. We need to take stock of our entire attitude towards tribal development and principles of segregation, vis-a-vis mainstreaming. The answer won't be found in Lanjigarh or Niyamgiri. It has to be found in Delhi.

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Tribal Neglect and Limitations of Budget-Centric Approach to Development

N C Saxena

In addition to spending budgets, we need to give equal importance to non-monetary issues such as institutions, laws, and policies

IT IS well established that the central region of India, despite being resource rich, inhabits the poorest people who have not benefited from social and economic development to the same extent as people in other regions have, and in many cases have actually been harmed from displacement that growth entails. From the viewpoint of policy, it is important to understand that tribal communities are vulnerable not only because they are poor, assetless and illiterate compared to the general population; often their distinct vulnerability arises from their inability to negotiate and cope with the consequences of their forced integration with the mainstream economy, society, cultural and political system, from which they were historically protected as the result of their relative isolation. Post-independence, the requirements of planned development brought with them the spectre of dams, mines, industries and roads on tribal lands. With these came the concomitant processes of displacement, both literal and metaphorical — as tribal institutions and practices were forced into uneasy existence with or gave way to market or formal state institutions (most significantly, in the legal sphere), tribal peoples found themselves at a profound disadvantage with respect to the influx of better-equipped outsiders into tribal areas. The repercussions for the already fragile socio-economic livelihood base of the tribals were devastating — ranging from loss of livelihoods, land alienation on a vast scale, to hereditary bondage.

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As tribal people in India perilously, sometimes hopelessly, grapple with these tragic consequences, the small clutch of bureaucratic programmes have done little to assist the precipitous pauperisation, exploitation and disintegration of these communities. Tribal people respond occasionally with anger and assertion, but often also in anomie and despair, because the following persistent problems have by and large remained unattended to:

- Land alienation
- Indebtedness
- Relation with forests, and government monopoly over MFPs, and non-implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006
- Ineffective implementation of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996 (PESA, 1996) for Schedule V areas
- Involuntary displacement due to development projects and lack of proper rehabilitation
- Shifting Cultivation, such as podu
- Poor utilisation of government funds, and
- Poor delivery of government programmes

These issues needing urgent attention are under the jurisdiction of Ministries of Environment & Forests, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, etc., where they do not get adequate attention. The present approach of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MOTA) is to confine its attention to its own budget and the schemes that are under its control, such as grants to NGOs, scholarships. It is unfortunate that MOTA does not put any pressure on other Ministries, who have been vested with the responsibility to ensure that basic justice and development reaches them. MOTA does not even monitor whether the basic services in education, health, or nutrition are reaching the tribal hamlets.

This paper argues that a systemic change is needed in the way MOTA and state tribal departments function; their approach must change from simply spending their own budget through narrow departmental schemes to knowledge based advocacy with other concerned Ministries/departments. MOTA must highlight the failure of governance that deprives the poor tribals from accessing elementary services, and put pressure on the concerned Ministries and state governments to ensure better policies and delivery in tribal regions.

Unspent budgetary balances

On the other hand, MOTA is not able to spend even the limited budget allotted to it. Table below shows the Budget Estimate, Revised Estimate and Actual Plan Expenditure for the previous years along with the Budget Estimate for 2010-11.

There has been large surrender of funds by the Ministry every year in the last 5 years, especially in 2009-10. Because of the poor expenditure by MOTA in 2009-10, there has been little increase in the BE for the Ministry in 2010-11. Non-receipt of adequate number of complete proposals in accordance with the scheme guidelines from the State Governments, non receipt of Utilization Certificates and lack of physical progress by State Governments, non-filling of vacant posts, austerity measures, non-receipts of bills from the suppliers etc. have been cited by the Ministry as the reasons for the surrender of

Plan expenditure against budget provision for the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (In crore Rs.)				
Year	Budget Estimates (BE)	Revised Estimates (RE)	Expenditure	% age of expenditure over BE
2006-07	1656.90	1652.68	1647.37	99.42
2007-08	1791.71	1719.71	1524.32	88.63
2008-09	2121.00	1970.00	1805.91	85.17
2009-10	3205.50	2000	1996.79	62.35
2010-11	3206.50			

funds. MOTA should improve its monitoring capabilities over timely expenditure of its budget.

Poor governance

Apart from poor utilisation of funds, tribals have also suffered because of the poor quality of governance. Programme delivery has deteriorated everywhere in India, but more so in tribal areas, where government servants are reluctant to work, and are mostly absent from their official duties. Government seems to have surrendered to political pressures from the staff, as many of their posts have now been officially transferred from tribal regions to non-tribal regions, where they can draw their salaries without doing any work! It is a pity that massive vacancies exist in tribal regions in the face of acute educated unemployment in the country. In a study by Unicef of Jharkhand it was revealed that one of the main constraints that NRHM in the state faces is lack of skilled manpower. In the two districts visited, Sahibganj has less than 50% positions in place, while in East Singbhum, with its better infrastructure, it is just around 54%. Other major reasons as identified during this study for low utilisation appeared more due to lack of systemic controls, such as lack of monitoring, and lack of understanding among the staff on implementation of rules.

MOTA was asked to oversee the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), but a recent study (available on *fracommittee.icfre.org*) shows that the Ministry has failed to get FRA implemented faithfully. Despite the fact that the main intention of FRA was to promote community participation and management, the study shows that community rights over MFP etc have been recognized in negligible cases.

MOTA's record on other tribal issues is equally dismal. MOTA has still not been able to finalise the National Tribal Policy, the draft of which was announced some six years back with a great deal of fanfare. Law pertaining to involuntary displacement has been discussed since 1998, but it has still not seen light of the day, though it is well established that tribals suffer most when new projects lead to involuntary displacement. MOTA takes no interest in pushing the states to change their state laws in conformity with PESA. There is no white paper from the Ministry relating to pathetic condition of governance in forest dependent villages, including huge vacancies and absenteeism of staff. The Ministry has no meaningful partnerships with advocacy organisations that could produce credible and evidence based reports with a view to put

pressure on other Ministries that ignore tribal interests.

A systemic change is needed

It is unfortunate that MOTA does not give sufficient attention to the important problems of the tribals on the plea that many of these subjects, such as land alienation, displacement, and PESA, have not been allotted to it. Even then the Ministry should play a more activist role in addressing these issues by pursuing with the concerned Ministries, where these subjects get a low importance, as the Ministries' excuse is that they are concerned with 'bigger' and more 'general' issues. At least, MOTA can set up a monitoring mechanism to bring out the dismal picture of tribal areas that would put pressure on the sectoral Ministries and the states to improve their policies and implementation. MOTA would be taken seriously by other Ministries only if it does evidence based advocacy by analysing why delivery in the forest regions is not improving. Government could also set up a Group of Ministers to review the implementation of suggestions given in this paper.

When a new Ministry is set up to help the marginalized people, it is expected that it would take a holistic view of their problems, and coordinate the activities of all other Ministries that deal with the subjects impinging on the work of the newly created Ministry. It would develop systems that

inform GoI how and why tribals are denied justice. On the other hand, it has been observed that the new Ministry takes a minimalist view of its responsibility, and reduces itself to dealing with only such schemes (such as distribution of scholarships and grants to NGOs) that are totally outside the purview of the existing Ministries. Such ostrich like attitude defeats the purpose for which the Ministry is created.

It is rather sad that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is more concerned with spending its budget (through NGOs that create opportunities for clientelism and patronage), and less with the impact of overall policies of other Ministries on tribals. It is surrounded by reportedly manipulative NGOs who hog the entire attention and time of the senior officers, leaving little time with them for the real pressing tribal distress. This attitude results in continuing neglect of tribal issues. It also under-plays the role of non-monetary policies (such as displacement) and the impact they have on the lives of the people.

For instance, MFP policies in the states are often dictated by the desire to maximise state revenues, and not maximise welfare of gatherers, who are often women. The revenue interest of Orissa can be judged by the fact that during the period 1989–2001, the State Government earned revenues of Rs 7.52 billion from kendu leaves (KL). The total wages earned by KL pluckers during the same period was only Rs 3.87 billion. The high incidence of royalties on KL needs to be contrasted with the royalties collected on a major mineral, where labour is organised, e.g. royalties are Rs 30 per tonne on bauxite, but a whopping Rs 12,000/tonne on KL!

Even the Planning Commission does not monitor regularly the impact of existing policies on the tribal population and pull up the concerned sectoral Ministries.

There seems to be an obsession in Government of India with financial budget and not with the impact that policies (or the lack of it) have on the marginalised peoples. Policies and budgetary provisions, despite the rhetoric, have not been integrated so far. Changes in policy or laws, are not seen as an integral part of the development process because these have no direct financial implications. One lesser known reason for this isolation is that development and planning in India are associated with spending of money. That Planning *means* Expenditure, *and this will lead to* Development is the mindset behind such beliefs. The Indian planner unfortunately has still to understand the difference between planning and budgeting. This is where a systemic change is needed in India. In addition to spending budgets, we need to give equal importance to non-monetary issues such as institutions, laws, and policies.   ❑

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PLAN STRATEGIES AND DISTRIBUTION OF PLAN BENEFITS AMONG THE TRIBES IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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The Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India are highly heterogeneous in location, distribution, social structure, cultural characteristics, utilization of natural resources, income and utilization of development benefits being provided by the government. Government of India is taking much interest and priority in the development of various tribes since its planned development from 1951. During the last five decades various special plans and programmes were started and implemented for the development of tribes in India. However, there is no satisfactory growth and development among the tribal groups due to low literacy, lack of awareness, lack of identification of genuine beneficiaries, exploitation of non-tribals, better developed local tribals and Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs), lack of commitment among the PIAs, lack of proper planning in implementing the programmes at grass root level.

The Tribal Research Institutes established at State level are not working properly as they are neglected and most of their personnel are interested in execution of programmes than in research, planning and monitoring. Therefore, they are not providing proper feedback to the planning and development agencies at State and Central levels including Planning Commission.

The present paper is mainly aimed to review the plan strategies and distribution of plan benefits among the tribes in India. The specific objectives of the paper are: i). to give an overview of the strategies and benefits in various plan periods of the Government of India; ii). to highlight the details of the plan strategies and benefits under the X th Five Year Plan, iii). to examine the sectoral distribution of plan benefits in

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the implementation of Tribal Development programmes in India, and iv) to analyze how the different plans succeed and in achieving equitable distribution of plan benefits among the tribes in India. The data for the study were collected from secondary sources and personal interviews with officials and non-officials at different levels.

Planning Strategies over the years

The commitments of the Constitution prompted the Policy-Makers and the Planners to accord high priority to the welfare and development of STs right from the beginning of the country's developmental planning, launched in 1951. The First Five Year Plan (1951-56) clearly laid down the principle that the general development programmes should be designed to cater adequately to the Backward Classes and special provisions should be used for securing additional and more intensified development.

The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) envisaged that the benefits of economic development should accrue more and more to the relatively less privileged classes of society in order to reduce inequalities. Welfare programmes for STs were based in respect of understanding of their culture and traditions and an appreciation of the social, psychological and economic problems with which they are faced. This was in tune with "Panchsheel" – the Five Principles of Tribal Development - enunciated by the first Prime Minister, Pt. JawarharLal Nehru. An important landmark during the Second Plan was the creation of 43 Special Multi-purpose Tribal Blocks (SMPTBs) later called Tribal Developemnt Blocks (TDBs). Each was planned for about 25,000 people as against 65,000 in a normal Block. An amount of Rs. 15 lakh per SMPTB was contributed by the Central Government. The Committee on SMPTBs set- up under the Chairmanship of Verrier Elwin (1959) found that they were providing very useful services.

The Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) advocated the principle to establish greater 'equity of opportunity' and to bring about reduction in disparities in income and wealth and a more even distribution of economic power. While appraising the programmes of the Third Plan the Shilu Ao Study Team remarked that 'if progress is to be judged by what remains to be done to bring the tribals on par with the rest of the populations, the leeway is still considerable'

The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) proclaimed that the 'basic goal was to realize rapid increase' in the standard of living of the people through measures which also promote equality and social justice'. An important step was setting up of six Pilot projects in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa in 1971-72 as Central Sector Scheme