
UNIT 1 AGRARIAN AND PASTORAL LIFE OF TRIBALS

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

- To know the human and tribal evolution from historical perspective
- To familiarize with agrarian and pastoral aspects of tribal life
- After having known the agrarian and pastoral aspects of tribal life, to see the tribal life and worldview in close association with nature, land and cattle.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The present day understanding about agrarian and pastoral life of tribals has not come out of a blue moon. It has been a gradual process of growth and development over the years. It is also a known fact that many of the traditional communities still hold on to the traditional ways of sustenance and agricultural practices. Many agrarian and pastoral communities live in modern India practicing a very ancient form of pastoral and agrarian ways. Thus tradition and modernity walk hand in hand as far as the agrarian and pastoral life of tribal communities are concerned.

Historical Evolutions

History is always a fusion of tradition and modernity (contemporary). In history one always finds a connection between the past and present. Therefore the study of tribal agrarian and pastoral life in present will invariably lead us to the historical developments of human and tribal life on earth.

Burton Stein in his 'History of India' states, human communities are thought to have inhabited the Indian subcontinent for 500,000 years, according to stone age sites found scattered between the far south of Kerala and Tamil Nadu and the Soan and Beas river valleys in northern Punjab, and from one coast to the other; estimates of dates for some of these range between 400,000 to 150,000 years ago. So - called 'middle Stone Age' societies appeared between 40,000 and 10,000 years ago, followed by those using microlithic tools, first found around 15,000 years ago. Some microlithic communities overlap the first neolithic communities by around 7000 BCE, and

both types of cultures continue to be found in most parts of the subcontinent along with hunting - gathering and nomadic pastoral economies; often their activities have been caught in rock art, such as the examples found at Bhimbetka, in Madhya Pradesh, a middle stone age as well as a microlithic site, and occupied in later times as well. Other late Stone Age sites have also been identified, half of them scattered around the continental portions of the subcontinent and the rest found in various parts of the peninsula, or southern extension.

Around 7,000 BCE neolithic communities began to be founded in the valleys draining the mountains which separated the Indian subcontinent from Afghanistan and continental Asia. Before 4000 BCE, hunter - gatherers had merged into more complex and advanced communities of farmers and artisanal specialists in settlements of circular mud - covered bamboo huts. The earliest known of these are found in Baluchistan, with similar communities appearing shortly after in the Gangetic plain and on the Deccan plateau. There, archaeologists have discovered neolithic assemblages: domesticated cattle, sheep, goats and plants, including rice. These Stone Age cultures merged into Iron Age communities by 1000 BCE, again divided between northern and southern India.

1.2 AGRARIAN AND PASTORAL SETTLEMENTS

Between 1000 and 500 BCE iron tools and weapons provided the technological foundations for the expansion of agricultural communities over the entire basin of the Ganges. One important consequence of the replacement of copper and bronze implements by stronger iron weapons and tools was the greater ease in removing the forest cover from the banks of the Ganges, so that these fertile lands could be planted. Much of the tree cover was also removed by burning.

The supersession of bronze by iron and pastoralism by sedentary agriculture laid the foundation for a new period of political consolidation beginning around 1000 BCE. Numerous small cities in the Gangetic valley reflect the twin processes of agricultural development and state formation.

The opening of the vast, fertile Gangetic plain to agrarian exploitation can be glimpsed in the post-Harappan archaeological record, to which has been added the rich documentation of human existence. From both come details of settlements by horsemen with iron weapons imposing their rule over other peoples, first in the Punjab and the western Gangetic plain and later over the whole of the plain to the Gangetic delta in Bengal. It has been a gradual change rather than the cataclysm implied by the oft-used term 'Aryan invasion'. Archaeology and the Vedic documents permit two simultaneous changes to be traced, one to a fully settled agrarian economy and the other from clans with a lineage - based society to the more complex social and political forms that have marked all subsequent developments in India and made it distinctive.

1.3 AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENTS

Later on came agriculture and human beings settled down along rivers to grow crops. An agrarian way of life is more congenial for individual ownership of wealth than in this context was land and cattle. And once the qualities of individual greed and self-seeking were born there was

no going back for them. In an agricultural society man's wealth grew phenomenally, as compared to what it was earlier, and along with the growth of settled agriculture were developed professions like plough-making, pottery, chariot-building, etc.

A significant and far-reaching shift in human subsistence and lifestyle was to be brought about in areas where crop farming and cultivation were first developed: the previous reliance on an essentially nomadic hunter-gatherer subsistence technique or pastoral transhumance was at first supplemented, and then increasingly replaced by, a reliance upon the foods produced from cultivated lands. These developments are also believed to have greatly encouraged the growth of settlements, since it may be supposed that the increased need to spend more time and labor in tending crop fields required more localized dwellings. This trend would continue into the Bronze Age, eventually giving rise to towns, and later cities and states whose larger populations could be sustained by the increased productivity from cultivated lands. One potential benefit of the development and increasing sophistication of farming technology was the possibility of producing surplus crop yields, in other words, food supplies in excess of the immediate needs of the community. Surpluses could be stored for later use, or possibly traded for other necessities or luxuries. Agricultural life afforded securities that pastoral life could not, and sedentary farming populations grew faster than nomadic communities.

However, early farmers were also adversely affected in times of famine, such as may be caused by drought or pests. In instances where agriculture had become the predominant way of life, the sensitivity to these shortages could be particularly acute; affecting agrarian populations to an extent that otherwise may not have been routinely experienced by prior hunter-gatherer communities. Nevertheless, agrarian communities generally proved successful, and their growth and the expansion of territory under cultivation continued.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is historical evolution of human communities in Indian subcontinent?

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2) How did the agrarian and pastoral communities evolved?

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1.4 PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Agricultural cycles, crops, celebrations and human life coincide with the nature and cycle of the seasons. The Tribals of Central India especially the Gonds, Santals, Hos, Uraons, Mundas, Kharias have similar type of socio-cultural practice that coincides with the agricultural and natural cycle. These feasts and festivals are the results of their long experience of relating with the land, water, forest and supernatural forces.

The agrarian tribal communities identified their existence in relation to land, forest and ecological ambience, for their meaningful living. They saw their life cycle coinciding with the agricultural cycle throughout the year. Thus they intuned their life, celebrations, meaning system and philosophy of life based on the natural phenomena.

Socio-cultural celebrations (Feasts and Festivals) of Adivasis in the agrarian communities

Feasts and celebrations in the tribal world are beautiful fusion of tribal work, worship and celebration. They involve the whole village community. These feasts are seasonal celebrations which are closely linked to agricultural operations and as such they reflect the harmony that exists between the tribe, nature and their religion. Celebration of these feasts help them to make a smooth transition at every stage in the annual cycle of its simple economic pursuits, such as food gathering, hunting, cattle tending and agriculture. These feasts are celebrated to share in life and prosperity in the perspective of the harmoniously ordered cosmological whole, with the cosmic elements and God. The main feasts celebrated chiefly by the *adivasis* of Chotanagpur tribal regions are-

(1) Phaggu/Phagua:- *Phagua* feast is celebrated on the full Moon day of *Phalgun* (February-March). *Phaggu* is related with hunting and food gathering. It is the New Year Day for the Uraons and a few other tribal communities in central India. 'Sikar Candi' (a deity for hunting) is propitiated for a good hunt. *Phaggu* is symbolic celebration of end of evil and the beginning of a new life. The heap of the thatched grass is set on fire and the *Pahan* cuts the branch, saying, "Let all sickness and suffering of the past year pass away like this severed branch." Only after celebrating *Phaggu* the *adivasis* of Chotanagpur can start gathering new leaves, flowers, fruits, roots and start ploughing and manuring their fields.

(2) Sarhul/Xaddi:- On the Full Moon day of *Cait* (March-April) *Sarhul* is Celebrated by the entire tribal groups of Chotanagpur (CNP) with the aim of securing good rain, good harvest and general well being of all. It is the greatest annual feast for the Uraons, Mundas, Kharias and Hos. It is also New Year Day for the Kharias, Hos and Santals. On this day all the spirits are propitiated at the *Sarna* (sacred grove). Another purpose of celebrating *Sarhul* is to secure favours from the spirits, malevolent or benevolent. *Sarhul* is the most important feast of the Chotanagpur tribals. This feast is celebrated when the *Sal/sarjom* (sorea robusta) tree is in full blossom. The *Sarhul* offering is made at *Sarna* which is considered as the dwelling place of *Chala Paccho* or *Sarna Budhia*. On this day special honour is given to the spirit *Chala Paccho* because according to some myth this spirit is the spirit of a widow at whose house *Dharmes* himself stayed when he came to destroy the *Asurs* (evil doers) in the form of a sore-filled boy. This feast is also observed as a marriage

between the sky and the earth. Only after marriage the earth is supposed to grow new vegetation. On this occasion special prayer is offered to the Supreme Being (Dharmes, Singbonga, Ponomosor, Chando Baba, Marang Buru) as the following, "Here below are the punches, Dharmes is above. O Father you are above we are below. You have eyes, we do not see. You know all, we are totally ignorant. Whether knowingly or unknowingly we have offended the spirits, restrain them. Overlook our mistakes."

(3) Dhanbuni (first sowing of the seeds): It is the symbolic inauguration of the sowing of the seeds when the people pray to their ancestors and Creator God to get abundant blessings on their forthcoming crops in the year. **(4) Hariari (Bangari/Batauli):** In the month of *Asar Pahan/Naigas/Kalo/Naeke* prays to the Creator God for blessings over green plants and for their protection from all harm. **(5) Kadleta/Kadlota:** On the 10th day of the Lunar Month of *Bhado* (Aug.-Sept), this feast is celebrated to ensure the protection of the crops not only from birds, beasts and insects but also from the 'evil mouth and evil eyes' of the wicked people. During this feast the village deities and Supreme Being are offered sacrifices in order that they may protect the standing crop from all harms. *Dandakatta* sacrifice is offered to the Creator God and His blessings are invoked upon the crops with the following prayer - "*May the crops ripe and come out well; and may we reap a full harvest and may nothing untoward happen.*" **(6) Karam:** Karam is celebrated on the 11th day of the Lunar Month of *Bhado* (Aug-Sept).- *Karam* is celebrated to ensure the protection of the standing crops in the fields, for the welfare of the offspring and for the young maidens who are preparing themselves for marriage in near future. This feast is very symbolic celebration of the young tribal maidens who grow to a marriageable age and are ready to bear children as the crop is ready to sprout. This feast shows another beautiful correlation between nature and human beings. Symbolizing productivity and fecundity the young maidens themselves stand for the good of the tribe as they always did in the past. **(7) Nayakhani/Tusgo/Jom Nawa/Neodem:** The celebration of *Nayakhani* starts from the New Moon Day onwards in the Lunar Month of *Kunwar* (September-October). On this day tribals take the first fruits of the year. They also venerate the ancestors for giving the gift of life, land and art of cultivation. This feast shows the living inter communion between the living members and the community of ancestors. **(8) Sohrai/Sohrae:** Sohrai is celebrated on the eve of the New Moon day in *Katik* (October-November). This feast is celebrated to show special respect and gratitude to the cattle. Cattle is a great help for ploughing and for many other agricultural activities. Thus cattle, crop and children are highly given priority in tribal life and world. *Gorea* spirit (cowshed spirit) is propitiated on this day. **(9) Khalihani:** (Lunar month of *Aghan*, Nov.-Dec). It is the last agricultural feast of the *adivasis*. Prayers and sacrifices are offered in thanksgiving to *Dharmes/Singbonga*, and the threshing of the crops begins. The village spirits are offered sacrifices for being favourable during the agricultural operations. Blood sacrifice is offered to the spirits and to the Supreme Being. **(10) Maghe:** Maghe is celebrated on the 4th day in the lunar month of *Magh* (January-February). This feast is celebrated to give honour to the house-servants who help the tribals in all sorts of agricultural operations throughout the year.

All these annual feasts of tribals are intimately linked with the annual agricultural cycle and are centered around 'the good of family, the good of the clan and the good of the tribe which is their highest good.' The details of celebrations and number of feasts may differ from community to community but the meaning system behind all the celebration is the same. Tribals commonly share

the same type of worldview with regard to Supreme Being, spirits, agricultural cycle, ancestors, human and nature.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What are the different feasts the agrarian tribal community celebrates round the year?

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2) What is the relationship between tribals, land, nature and celebrations?

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1.5 PASTORAL TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Pastoral tribal communities trace back their historical link to the days of Mehrgarh in Afghanistan. The human communities as they moved towards the Indian subcontinent, they bifurcated principally into two communities, one agrarian and another pastoral. However most of the anthropologists are of the opinion that human societies are most often organized according to their primary means of subsistence. They have identified hunter-gatherer societies, nomadic pastoral societies, horticulturalist or simple farming societies, and intensive agricultural societies. These are also called as civilizations.

Pastoralism is a slightly more efficient form of subsistence than the hunter-gatherer societies. Rather than searching for food on a daily basis, members of a pastoral society rely on domesticated herd animals to meet their food. Pastoralists live a nomadic life, moving their herds from one pasture to another. Because their food supply is far more reliable, pastoral societies can support larger populations. Since there are food surpluses, fewer people are needed to produce food.

Definition of Pastoralism

Pastoralism is a form of subsistence. In the pastoralism the 'Pastoral societies are' defined as 'those that have a disproportionate subsistence emphasis on herding domesticated livestock.' It is like many other forms of subsistence like- horticulture, agrarian or industrial. The most important defining criterion of pastoralism perhaps is the organization of community life around the needs of the herds. Typical herding societies are "nomadic." People live in portable tents or

temporary structures and move considerable distances from pasture to pasture according to the dictates of ecological circumstances and the needs of the beasts.

Pastoral societies are theoretically important because they exhibit non-progressive evolution. At the same time this society is capable of teaching other human communities how to adjust their life style according to the changing ecological circumstances. Pastoral societies played an important role during the agrarian era and illustrate some important ecological/evolutionary processes. Evolutionists of the progressivist (orthogenetic) type, who believe that evolution has some inevitable tendency in the direction of more complex and probably morally superior societies, are inclined to downplay pastoral societies because they tend to contradict with the inevitability of progress and change.

In India the pastoralists can be identified in the most arid parts of the Thar Desert on the Indo-Pakistan border and the sub-alpine and alpine zones above 3200 meters in the Himalayas, which can only be utilized seasonally by means of pastoral strategies. But in most parts of India, pastoral and agrarian land use strategies are spatially integrated and interdependent activities pursued within the same landscape. Besides breeding their own livestock, pastoralists also take care of the animals of other communities, fulfilling the role of village cowherd.

Geographically, nomadic pastoralism is most prevalent in the drylands of western India (Thar Desert) and on the Deccan Plateau, as well as in the mountainous regions of North India (Himalayas). Types of livestock kept in mobile pastoral systems include buffaloes, sheep, goats, camels, cattle, donkeys, yaks and even ducks are raised under transhumant conditions. But there are also more sedentary forms of pastoralism, represented, for instance, by the buffalo breeding of Todas in the Ghat region of Southern India.

Pastoralist communities in India

There are various types of pastoralist communities across India with a vast difference at times. The Himalayan pastoralists are different from their counterparts in the Southern and Western part of the country. Some of the main pastoralist communities in India are- Ahirs, Bhutia, Gujjar, Ghosi, Ranghar of North India, Baghelmainly, Muslim Gaddi, Gaderiain in UP and MP, Bakarwal found in Jammu and Kashmir, Bharwad, Maldhari, Charan, Rabari, Raika in Gujarat and Rajasthan, Bodla, Chisti, Wattu found in Pakistan and Punjab, Dhangar found in Maharashtra and MP, Gaddi, Kinnauras of Himachal Pradesh, Gvala in Bangladesh, Kuruba, Kurma, Todas found in South India, Sherpas in Nepal etc. The majority of them are connected with particular livestock species by their myth of origin, tracing their descent to an ancestor who was created by God for the purpose of taking care of these animals. For instance, the Raika/Rebari are linked to the camel, the Charan in Gujarat are associated with cattle, and the Bharwad keep mostly small stock. Based on this heritage, these pastoralists are endowed with a special sense of responsibility for the welfare of their livestock. Among the pastoral communities many communities fall under the Hindu caste structure.

Socio-economic Conditions of the Pastoralists

Pastoralists are viewed as poor people in the Indian context. In government records, publications and documents, pastoralists are regarded as marginalized, backward and poor populations. The dispersed population, remote habitations, cultural uniqueness, low literacy rates and migratory

lifestyles have contributed to this perception of the state. In the Himalayas, they are a low priority group and there has been no conscious attempt by the state or any other institution to assess their poverty status. There could be the following reasons for low priority-

- The socio-economic status of pastoralists in Himalayas is seriously under-documented.
- Their mobility and ownership of unconventional property assets, i.e. animals have made it difficult to assess their poverty status with the help of existing poverty indicators.
- The only method to assess poverty status of Himalayan pastoralists would be through physically culling out from the district census data and compare it with the existing poverty indicators.

In the Western dry lands the pastoralists are placed in a respectable position in comparison with the lower caste groups in the region. Thus they rank far above the untouchable castes. However, they are commonly believed to represent the most backward and conservative social group in the region.

1.6 PASTORALIST CONFOUND PROGRESSIVISM

In social evolutionary thinking, the nomadic lifestyle has traditionally been treated as less civilized, less productive and more degrading than a settled lifestyle. This cultural bias is clearly manifested in many of the colonial, historical and governmental documents and seems to have many policy level implications for the Himalayan pastoralists. Pastoralists continue to be treated as a problem for administrators in terms of collecting taxes or controlling the population or even to plan any developmental programmes. Due to the problem of their cultural stereotyping, small population and migratory lifestyle, the Himalayan pastoralists are ignored in the various policy-level decisions. Non-participation and ignorance of their due rights and status in the Indian state have seriously marginalized these communities. Their political marginalization is also visible across all the Himalayan states where most of the pastoral groups are not vocal about their concerns. Besides the above mentioned problems other major threats to livelihood faced by the pastoralist groups in Himalayas are- (a) reduced pastures and (b) disturbed migration routes.

In the Western Region too the pastoralists are facing serious threat to their livelihood. The pastures have considerably decreased and the forests are declared prohibited area from grazing. Thus shrinking of grazing area is the most serious threatening problem in the Western region. The pastoralists become the victim of agriculturally centered development strategies of the government. The expansion of irrigated agriculture, expansion of cultivation into former wastelands, land reservation for military base, Wild Life Sanctuaries, expansion of urbanization and industrialization are making the pastoral way of life more difficult. However, the secluded and nomadic society has something important to teach to the rest of the human community.

Environmentally specialized societies

Pastoralism was for a long time a very successful adaptation to grassland and desert. The existence of extensive tracts of temperate grassland, subtropical desert, or tropical savanna, combined with the technology of animal husbandry, lead to the development of pastoral societies that compete and very effectively with more “advanced” agrarian societies for these open country environments, despite being considerably more “primitive” in terms of complexity of social and political organization.

Pastoralists have shown themselves very resilient, they have intact social structures and mechanism for mutual sharing of resources and their livestock also represents an encashable asset. Although odds seem stacked against them there is some hope that with increasing international emphasis on the conservation of biodiversity, pastoralists might be able to benefit from recognition of their role in conserving livestock genetic diversity, valuable indigenous breeds and indigenous knowledge about coping mechanisms for environmental stresses like drought and floods. However based on their thorough understanding of their traditional production systems, indigenous knowledge, traditional strategies and practices, the concerned agencies could empower the pastoralists and maintain their capacity to produce food on marginal lands.

Technological Adaptations

The technology of pastoralism is largely just the animal husbandry component of the prevailing horticultural and agrarian technology, more or less thoroughly shorn of its plant cultivation component. On the level of subsistence, pastoralists are merely farmers who specialize in herding animals like sheep, goats, cattle, horses, llamas, yaks, and so forth. Normally, this specialization includes a good deal of specialized knowledge about animal husbandry, pasture, and land transportation technology, exceeding that of their farming neighbors, but not dramatically. Contrariwise, although many pastoralists also farm, they are generally not the experts as their neighbors are.

Few pastoral people subsist entirely on animal products. Most probably they derive half or more of their calories from plant products. These may derive from growing crops, from trade in animal products with settled agricultural foreigners, by extending services such as caravan operation for pay, by having agricultural slaves or clients, and by raid or threat of raids. The human diet is greatly enriched by eating relatively small amounts of meat and animal fats. Leather, horn, wool, and animals for traction are also valuable. Thus animal specialists are often motivated to trade much of their valuable animal production for grains, crafts and manufactures, luxuries and so forth. Settled peoples often pay tribute to pastoralists to avoid raids, or pay some pastoralists to protect them from other pastoralists. The role of pastoralists as traders best developed in those places and periods when caravan routes were important.

1.7 SOCIO-POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The Pastoral societies possess a close economic symbiosis with state level polities. Pastoralists though, are politically not very important but their contributions to the day today human needs are inevitable. The nomadic nature of pastoralism was made use of for transportation of goods and services to other parts of the country. Thus trade and commerce flourished in the remote and difficult places through the free movement of the pastoralists. In the past trade through the pastoralists became an avenue for ideas, and religions like Islam and Christianity to spread across the regions.

Though pastoralism is considered very traditional and outdated means of livelihood in today's competitive world, it has a lasting value and philosophy of life. There are threats of perceptions where pastoralism is considered as a non-sustainable economic process and a greater productive efficiency is assumed for capital and technology-intensive world. Such tendencies can

discourage pastoralists way of sustenance and nomadic pastoralism. In the Himalayan regions resources are scanty and pastoralism is seen as traditional and viable means of sustenance in the absence of any other alternative.

The new perspective on pastoral development looks at the relevance and effectiveness of western concepts which have been applied in developing countries. There is now an increased appreciation for the complexity and ecological economic efficacy of traditional pastoral systems. It provides hope that the vast indigenous knowledge herders possess will be better understood and used in designing new interventions. Greater awareness of the need to understand existing pastoral systems should also help ensure that the goals and needs of pastoralists are incorporated into new programmes and the local herders become active participants in the development process.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

Pastoralism is in crisis globally, both as a result of human-made and natural constraints, and internal and external influences. The existence and problems of pastoralists in India have barely filtered into the consciousness of the general public and policy makers. If there is any awareness at all, then pastoralism is regarded as a way of life that is backward and doomed. It is this attitude that requires change. Pastoralism needs to be given recognition and promoted as a land use strategy that is ecologically and economically appropriate in certain marginal areas and basically has the same value in some areas as cultivation and wildlife conservation in others, besides providing positive reinforcements to them.

Moreover, pastoralists make an important contribution to the conservation of biodiversity through their sustainable use of indigenous livestock germplasm. Making planners, policy makers and advisors recognize this situation would mean that a major part of the battle was won. This calls for a change in perspective of the people. The geographical and occupational differences keep them away from the ordinary hustle and bustle of city and people. The pastoralists essentially occupy different spheres that are very far apart and not at all interconnected. An attempt to reduce the gap and foster a systematic interaction with pastoralist community can create better atmosphere and human interaction where no one is deprived of the social, human and national development. Like the pastoralist community the agrarian states are typically very conservative compared to the modern technologically advanced states. But as far as sustainability and stability, ecological sensitivity and interdependence between human and nature is concerned the agrarian and the pastoralist communities have a lot to teach the rest of the human communities.

Agrarian and Pastoral life of tribal communities have a very long history to hold on. The origin and evolution of such communities can be traced back to the days of human civilizations of pre-Harrappan and Mohen-e-Jodaro era in and around Baluchistan and Mediterranean civilizations. The historical evidences prove that agrarian and pastoral tribal communities have gradually moved towards Indian sub continent of which they became the original inhabitants. Both the agrarian and Pastoralist communities have developed a life style and meaning system most suited to their daily needs and simple understanding. In the course of their symbiotic living with nature

the agrarian and pastoralist tribal communities followed the course of nature through land, forest, waters and ecological surroundings. They also saw the Creator and Supreme Being in relation to their experiences of the natural and supernatural forces. Thus both the communities have developed a more sustainable, stable and ecologically more sensitive human living which is based on interdependence between humans, nature and supernatural beings.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What are the positive contributions the pastoralist community can make?

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2) How politics is connected with the agrarian and pastoral communities?

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3) Why is the study of agrarian and tribal communities important?

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1.9 KEY WORDS

Sarna: *Sarna* means the sacred grove, usually a cluster of *saal* (*sorea robusta*) trees popularly found in the Chotanagpur regions. In every village there is supposed to be a *sarna*, a sacred grove where most of the village deities reside. *Sarna* is actually the dwelling place of the spirit "*Chala Pacchho/Sarna Budhia*" or just *Chala*. Once a year, during "*Sarhul*" celebration, all the spirits are propitiated at *Sarna*, many fowls are offered to different spirits and God the Dharmes is also offered a sacrifice of egg in a separate place. There is a popular belief among the people and according to Van Exem and others that when the tribals were first clearing the forests for

cultivation the spirits already residing there were not allowing people to clear the forests. Many people were dying in the mysterious enmity between the spirits and tribals. When they left a cluster of trees in each region the spirits did not trouble people. And they thought this sacred grove is like a safe residing place for the spirits. Thus the idea of *sarna* evolved in each village. Now *Sarna* has become a religious symbol for the tribals of these regions who are traditional worshippers according to their religio-cultural practice. They had no name for their religion and so now they have named their traditional way of worship as *sarna*. And thus the word *Sarna* is now also the name of their religion.

Dandakatta- *Dandakatta* sacrifice or ceremony is the central ritual of the Uraons. It is called by different names like- *Palkansan*, *Bhakh katna*, *Bhelwan Phari*, *Danda Rengtana* etc. The word's meanings slightly differ but the applied meaning is the same i.e. to cut the effects of malicious words and evil eyes caused either by spirits or by human beings. The seven corners or petals are made in a diagrammatic form with three layers of colours: white, grey and black. An egg is placed between a split branch of a poisonous wild cashew nut tree. Some unparched rice is also placed at the centre of the diagram. This diagram is also called the bow of Dharmes the Supreme Being with which he destroyed evil (nly. Sonu Gidh and the silk cotton tree).

Symbiotic/symbiosis:- It is an interdependent and interrelatedness between different bodies. Here it is meant interdependent and mutual drawing of life form each other between human beings, nature and the Supernatural Beings, where one is meaningless without the other.

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UNIT 2 DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION

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- 2.9 Further Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Displacement and migration are two major sociological phenomena. By the end of the chapter you are supposed to have an understanding of:

- displacement and its implications, primarily for the marginalized communities, who completely depend on their land for livelihood;
- the need of a comprehensive rehabilitation policy in the country;
- migration and its kinds; and
- relationship between displacement and migration.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Displacement is more than physical dislocation. It is being uprooted and dismemberment of the socio-economic webs of life with traumatic experiences. It results into a spiral of impoverishment. Displacement threatens the existence and identity of people. There is a process of dispossession in displacement. It is estimated that in the last 65 years after independence of India there are more than 60-70 million displaced persons in the country. According to a study, it

is also estimated that only about 24 per cent of the displaced are rehabilitated and more than 75 per cent are left in the lurch. There is an inter-relation between displacement and migration.

Migration is not a new phenomenon and it is not going to end in the near future. Ever since the existence of humanity, human beings have been and are still migrating. Existing anthropological and archaeological literature indicates that the early human beings migrated from one place to another for security, sustenance and stability. In various periods in the history of mankind, ranging from the Vedic period through the colonial period to the contemporary times, migrations in varying degrees have been taking place. In the contemporary world the phenomenon of migration has been quite common.

2.2. DISPLACEMENT

The history of Indian economic and industrial development is a never ending story of displacement of people. A few years ago, available reports indicated that more than 21 million people were internally displaced due to development projects in India. Although they only make up eight percent of the total population, more than 50 per cent of the displaced were tribal peoples (HRW, January 2006). Until 1990, about 85.39 lakhs tribals had reportedly been displaced due to industrialization and development projects like dams, power projects, nature conservation, etc., but their rehabilitation and resettlement always remained a neglected subject. For example, tribals constituted 8.2 per cent of the total population of India, according to the 2001 Census. But they also constituted 55.1 per cent of the total displaced persons as a result of so-called development projects (*ACHR Weekly Review*, December 2006). These figures must have gone much higher now which need to be updated.

“Development” according to the Constitution is “that process of governance which, while respecting human rights of all persons, secures to all Indians freedom from material impoverishment” (Baxi 1997:164). Baxi believes that in the planning process in India the spirit of the constitution has been betrayed – people are no partners in the process of decision making regarding the construction of dams, size, areas of submergence, environment impact, cost-benefit analysis, allocation of resources, designs including safety designing, epidemiological impact analysis, contracts for construction, flow of benefits to certain classes/sectors, displacement, rehabilitation, etc. All these are considered to be the domain of the administration. Development should have a more ‘representative’ character. There should be a people-orientate development (*Ibid.*, 164-67). Involuntary relocation of sites of community existence is always problematic as the consequent dislocation of human beings is much too high. Land Acquisition Act 1894 talks of “public purposes” and “compensation” for acquisition of land. “But when whole villages are submerged, people who have no land are also displaced” (*Ibid.*, 169). Money compensation is one component but not necessarily the most decisive one of “rehabilitation”.

The Affected People

It is important to ask ‘what’ and ‘how’ of displacement, but more important is the question ‘why’ and ‘whose’. Displacement is a process where poorer sections are ‘pushed’ out of their own habitat. It is a situation where the marginalized people have no other choice but move from their own village or place of origin to another place. The local inhabitants lose their command over the resources. Given the number of displacements, types of displacement and the plight suffered

by the displaced, many are now asking: whose nation is it? Whose good is being served? Is it for the planners, administrators, implementing agencies or upper middle class or marginalized sections of the society? (Fernandes 1997) Planners and administrators invariably capitalize on and manipulate the relatively weaker socio-economic and political position of the Displaced Persons (DPs). Their numbers are underestimated. They are treated indifferently and only minimal cash compensation, if at all, is paid to them. They are rarely granted security of tenure or alternative developed land. Often after a painful and traumatic period of establishing a new lifestyle, they are again informed, they must move again to make way for yet another project. Apart from the immediate economic loss, displacement also brings about social, cultural and psychological dislocation. The physical displacement of the people leads to their uprooting from their socio-cultural base which is no less pathetic than the dispossession of land. They lose their traditional mechanism of social control, and as a result social tensions increase among them (Fernandes, 1997).

The history of the tribals has been one of displacement without rehabilitation. If the history of Jharkhand is traced in the Muslim, British and post-colonial periods one is amazed as to how involuntary displacements have taken place down the centuries with no rehabilitation or without adequate rehabilitation. One of the excuses by various governments is that there is no policy on rehabilitation. Nevertheless, what is a matter of grave concern is the attitude of partisanship to a few haves at the cost of the have-nots. It is precisely this approach that is discriminatory against the weaker sections, especially the tribals.

The alienation of land was one of the main reasons of the many tribal uprisings all over the country. In 1793 the British passed the Permanent Settlement Act to get as much revenue from land as possible. This Act, common in Bengal, Awadh and Madras presidencies, gave zamindars absolute proprietary right on land. There were middlemen created to collect revenue from their respective areas. Therefore, water, land and forests, hitherto considered being community owned natural resources, became private property of individual owners. The new landed class was naturally happy with these new arrangements, since it enabled them to establish recorded rights over land (NCAS 2002:3). So far there was no ownership of the land but only the right of revenue collection “since, land ownership was considered to be private, the state could collect revenue from these lands but it could not take over the land as and when it desired” (*Ibid.*). On the other hand, there was an increasing need for land for railways, roads, other government projects, for forest produce to support British industries. It was to establish rights over the ownership of land that the British created the Land Acquisition Act 1894. This Act facilitated the British control by destroying local people’s rights over the country’s natural resources (*Ibid.* 4). The draconian Act of 1894 continued till as recently as 1984 when few amendments were made.

Land is sacred to the tribals because that is the only resource they have for their sustenance. About 70 per cent of India’s population, most of whom are tribals, primarily depends on land-related work and agricultural production. Thus, land for them is a means of livelihood and the basis of socio-economic relationship. Alienation from land and displacement have threatened the livelihood of millions. People are displaced without any consultation or participation in the development process. Furthermore, they are denied their rightful share in the gains of the development project that displaces them. A very large number of the displaced belong to the

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and women are the worst sufferers. Moreover, rehabilitation is still not an integral part of any displacement plan (*Ibid.:v*).

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is your understanding of displacement and migration?

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2) Why are the victims of displacement and forced migration often the marginalized sections of the society?

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2.3 DISPLACEMENT AND LIVELIHOOD

Victims of displacement are deprived of compensation for the loss of their land because they do not possess any documents to claim that the land indeed belongs to them. Moreover, even if the lost land does not belong to them, tribals' dependence on forests, land, river and other natural resources, sustain them. If they are expropriated their support system is also eroded. Hence, there is an adverse impact of displacement on tribals.

Negative impacts of globalization and industrialization through the corporate are affecting the tribal and other deprived communities across the country, especially those located in tribal areas. These communities are being threatened with massive mining, industrialization, hydro projects leading to large-scale displacement. These regions are also a homeland of large number of tribal and the so-called Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). The survival rights of these groups related to food and livelihood, and customary practices reflecting the community's identity, goes beyond the state administrative boundary. The recent development interventions have led to major setback for the existence of all these people threatening their very survival.

Displacement as a Norm

There is no national comprehensive rehabilitation and resettlement policy. It is still in the draft form and by the time this unit is printed, the new policy may or may not see the light of the day. Whatever be the case, the most disturbing part of the Rehabilitation Policy is its concept of displacement as a norm and not as an exception or the last resort. The Policy is meant only for the Project Affected Families (PAFs) and not for the affected without the project in question. The “Resettlement zone” for one group of people in fact is the “displacement zone” for another. The land required could be for any company, a body corporate, an institution, or any other organization for whom land is to be acquired either for its own use or “in public interest”.

The administrator’s responsibility is the acquisition of “adequate land” for the project and also for settling the PAFs. It implies that more and more land has to be acquired irrespective of the consequences. The Policy fails to address the problem of culture, religion, social organization and community life.

One of the important issues around Rehabilitation and Resettlement is the ‘development paradigm’ (Fernandes 1997: 22). Displacement is considered inevitable for development. Displacement is not taken as the last resort. Even in the cases where displacement is the last resort, rehabilitation is only secondary. This is basically a denial of people’s ownership to land and their right to live in dignity. Land is the only possession of the tribals. If that is taken away from them there is nothing left. The principle of terra nullius, viz. nobody’s land hence that of the State, is applied. Even the private property of the individual can be acquired any time by the State. This principle of ‘eminent domain’ is the guiding principle of land transactions (*Ibid.* 23). The policy does not seem to recognize the historical, customary and cultural rights of the tribal community in practice though it does mention them in letter. According to Fernandes any policy should recognize the historically established rights of the people over their livelihood, including land, natural resources and knowledge, etc. This entails recognition of their rights to land, livelihood and survival. Fernandes opines that the lands should be treated as a community resource. It implies therefore, that if the government or a company acquires such lands it must pay full compensation to the traditional residents, and rehabilitate them totally (*Ibid.*).

The policy is insensitive to the multiple displacements. There is no assurance that the PAFs from earlier projects will not be displaced again. The policy is insensitive to the disruption of traditional culture and ecological and environmental degradation. There is no assurance that the DPs persons from other projects in the region will be resettled and rehabilitated first before the newly displaced are rehabilitated. The Policy is not gender sensitive. It does not take into account the trouble the women go through in such situations without the rehabilitation first.

Inner Contradiction

The notion of ‘development’ by dispossessing tribals of their land is contradictory in terms. The Government is aware of the “traumatic psychological and socio-cultural consequences” besides deprivation and displacement of their lands, livelihoods and resource-base. The stress, however, seems to be on “compulsory acquisition of land for public purpose” and the inevitability of displacement. The policy talks of minimizing large scale displacement “to the extent possible” but does not say anything about efforts to ‘prevent’ displacement altogether. Though the Policy seeks to handle the issue of displacement with “utmost care” the text that follows hardly reflects any

desire to stop displacement. The Policy also acknowledges that “cash compensation” does not really enable the victims to obtain cultivable land, homestead and other resources which they “had to surrender to the State”. It is also aware that the landless agricultural workers, forest dwellers, tenants and artisans, etc., those dependent of the “acquired assets”, though severely affected, are not eligible for cash compensation, but offers mighty little for them.

No participation in the decision-making

At present people have no consent in the setting up of the project. The affected people are not even involved by the government in the discussion concerning the policy. Till now no project has recognized this right. Fernandes says, “Displacement is taken for granted. The assumption is that the people, most of them poor and powerless, should adjust themselves to the situation once a decision to displace them is taken” (1997: 24). This is the right of the displaced, potential victims and those who might accommodate them subsequently. They have the right to information in the regional and local languages regarding the project.

As per the ‘cost-benefit analysis’, due to displacement there is destruction of the livelihood of the poor. This happens because of the non-participatory decision-making. Though lots have been said about the socio-cultural aspects in the rehabilitation policy, it appears as if only the marketable commodities of the economy are taken into consideration. Fernandes (1997) suggests that while calculating/assessing the economic value of assets lost, for the purpose of compensation, the concept of “replacement value” of all quantifiable assets should be used in the place of “present depreciated value” of assets carrying ownership titles alone. He further says that the policy should recognize the social and psychological trauma caused by dislocation and displacement, and focus on mechanisms to compensate and relieve the distress thus caused. Efforts have to be made to prepare the oustees for a new life, economically, socially and psychologically. The policy should also include a mechanism for making the host population appreciate the problems of the oustees, and to accept them.

The policy does not say anything about a proportionate pre-determined share in its ownership as well as benefits with the DPs. The policy for rehabilitation does not give such participation in the benefits on a long term basis. No benefits come either in terms of long term jobs, share in the product, stock ownership, literacy programme, capacity building, etc. The policy does not look beyond compensation though it tries to give impression of being holistic. Fernandes (1997: 26) points out that displacement in the name of national development has become a mode of transferring CPRs from the communities to whom they are a life support system to the corporate sector to whom they are a source of profit or raw material to produce consumer goods for the middle class. “Thus a clear distinction exists between the class that gets the benefits and those who pay the price of “national development”, particularly the tribals and Dalits. This is a process of impoverishment of the CPR dependent and landless communities.

The Maharashtra experience of displacement and rehabilitation, according to Dhagamwar (1997:172-73), has been the non-participation of the victims who are mostly the poor, uneducated or even illiterate, and very frequently tribals. There is no information about the project, leave alone any consultation. They are not even informed about their displacement and resettlement in any satisfactory manner. The government does not exert itself to gather adequate

information on the population to be displaced. Inadequate compensation is paid tardily and grudgingly. Those paid are only a small class who own land. Others are not compensated for the loss of livelihood but only for the loss of houses. They are the landless labourers, artisans, women and other users of CPR, e.g. cowherds and nomads. Wherever alternate land is offered, the price is higher than the compensation paid. The oustees have to pay the difference between the two amounts. No compensation is given for CPR. The resettlement is at worst non-existent and at best unsatisfactory, unimaginative and unsympathetic. The oustees are not welcomed in the new places by the original population. No attention is paid to the emotional trauma caused by the upheaval. No efforts are made to give the people a life which is similar to the one from which they have been uprooted. The definition of displacement is narrowly restricted to actual physical transfer. Dhagamwar argues for a policy and institutional change regarding the attitude to displacement and rehabilitation.

Lack of Database

The absence of a database is one of the reasons for poor rehabilitation. The project needs accurate data on their number and type if it is to resettle them properly. Besides, the performance of the displacing agency that is put in charge of rehabilitation is judged not by its extent or quality but by the speed and economic efficiency with which it implements the project. Since most DPs are voiceless, they ignore their rehabilitation. Moreover, most of them are Common Property Resource (CPR) dependants or sustain themselves by rendering services to the village as a community (Dhagamwar 1989:172-173) but the *Land Acquisition Act, 1894* (LAQ) has an individual *patta* as the basis of compensation. Exceptionally the CPR dependants may be compensated but not the landless who depend on the village as a community. Even individual owners are given only monetary compensation. Often intermediaries appropriate it (Viegas 1992). The issue of compensation is contentious in the Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas where the customary law is given constitutional recognition. Their essence is community ownership.

Moreover, even if the financial aspect is attended to, the psychological consequences such as alienation from one's culture and community and insertion into a new work culture are ignored. As a result, many of those forced into a new work culture and economy, often outside their region, fall into bondage or become victims of absenteeism and alcoholism (Mankodi & Gangopadhyay 1983:81). However, most decision-makers view the project in isolation and make no long-term plan for the region. It often results in multiple displacements as it happened to the Rihand dam DPs of Madhya Pradesh (Ganguly Thukral 1989: 47-48), the Soliga tribals of Mysore (Cheria 1996) and the DPs of Orissa villages (Fernandes and Raj 1992: 25).

Problems around the Rehabilitation Policy

There is absence of an adequately comprehensive Rehabilitation Policy in India although a rehabilitation policy was promulgated in February 2004, and a second one on October 31, 2007. The Government of India is now working on a Rehabilitation Bill, but it is not sure as to when it will take the form of the law.

Until now, only Maharashtra has a rehabilitation law for all DPs, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have laws, MP and Rajasthan have policies for irrigation, Orissa has a comprehensive policy and Coal India and the National Thermal Power Corporation have their own policies. No North-eastern State has a rehabilitation policy. In Asom fewer than 10 projects rehabilitated their DPs 1947-2000 (Fernandes and Bharali 2006). Jharkhand does not have a Rehabilitation policy either despite rampant displacement taking place all over the state. The proposed study is meant to be a contribution to the formulation of a new policy not only for Jharkhand but also for the whole country.

Need of an Alternative Policy

The New Tribal policy is being revised and most changes it suggests are acceptable. Based on Art. 21 that recognizes the right of every Indian to a life with dignity, it considers rehabilitation a right of the DPs/PAPs and a duty of the requiring agency to rehabilitate them. It also accepts some other principles enunciated by the civil society during the process around the policy in the 1990s. One of them is prior informed consent and the other is that the lifestyle of the DPs/PAPs should improve after the project because they pay its price. It has provisions to ensure gender justice and has a focus on the tribals. It deals with many past shortcomings such as compensation, land for land, the definition of the DP/PAP and jobs. It suggests that it should apply to the DPs of ten years before its promulgation. Ways have to be found of identifying them.

The failure to evolve a just rehabilitation law or policy reinforces the view that the decision-makers ignore the DPs/PAPs because most of them belong to powerless groups. Besides, in the absence of a law, even those who understand the consequences of displacement without rehabilitation are unable to take many steps in favour of the DPs. Therefore, before undertaking any project, an extensive study has to be conducted on its viability taking into account its entire social, environmental and economic cost.

Cost-benefit Analysis

Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) estimates and totals up the equivalent value—financial, social, cultural, religious, environmental, psychological, and so on—of the costs and benefits of projects to establish whether they are worthwhile. These projects may be development projects, such as dams, highways, infrastructure, mining, industries, defence, and wild-life, or can be capacity building training programs, education programme, health care systems, employment schemes, and so on. The idea is to assess whether the amount allocated and spent on a project is worth the cost in terms of benefit to the groups or persons it is meant for. There are systematic methods for measuring such costs and benefits.

Collaboration is needed at the level of respect and dignity. Choice of the individual has to be respected. Communities have to enter into relationship of collaboration with one another and not of domination. Hence, there should rather be a demand of a 'Displacement Policy', viz. one which

asks for alternate ways of project planning that would minimize displacement or avoid it altogether. The new Policy, however, looks like a clear design for land acquisition and nothing else. A policy is policy all the same. Unless it is converted into a law there is no binding on the part of the government or of the enforcing authorities. Every community has the right to develop and grow – using the framework to enter into discovery, develop itself by making use of what is available.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is the relationship between displacement and livelihood?

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2) What are the problems of displacement and rehabilitation?

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2.4 DEFINING MIGRATION

According to M. S. Rao, Migration is a shift in the place of residence for some length of time. While it excludes short visits and tours, it includes different types of both voluntary and involuntary movements. Examples of involuntary movements are migration under such crisis as war, transfer of population, riots, floods, droughts and earthquakes. It also includes marriage migration, virilocal, uxorilocal or neolocal and transfer migration. There are other situations of migration where movement is part of people's earning a livelihood. These are nomads, shifting cultivators, itinerant traders and salesman, artisans and labourers. Transhumance is a special type of migration between two sets of settlements in different seasons (Rao, 1986: 19-20).

Internal migration is related to the international migration either overseas or overland. The latter creates imbalances in certain region in labour supply and internal migration comes as an answer. For instance, in Punjab continuous waves of overseas migration to England, United States, Canada, and now to Gulf countries have created shortage of labour and this gap is filled by migrants from Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Migrants from Jharkhand include significant

percentage of tribals. However, international migration needs to be studied in its own right. There are immigrants from Tibet who have been rehabilitated in different parts of India. There are also migrants from Nepal and Bangladesh - both legal and illegal, and they need to be studied from the point of view of adjustments. Another aspect of international migration is the question of return migration and repatriation of Indian overseas migrants. For instance, there were about 80,000 Tamil repatriates in Tamilnadu in 1986 (Rao 1986:25).

International migration is a part of global social system of 'flows' of communications, capital, resources, goods and services which have development consequences for both sending and receiving countries including social and economic conditions, population stocks and population flow (Van Arsdol, 1989: 391).

Rao observes that there are two aspects of migration. First, what happens to the migrants in the place of destination, how they adjust themselves and the kind of social consequences that follow? Second, what are the feedback effects of migration in the place of origin of the migrants? The continuing interaction process between the place of origin and place of destination is an essential aspect of migration study. In the view of Rao, a cultural interpretation is important in gaining deeper understanding of the process of migration. Of all the social scientists interested in migration, economists have been the foremost in advancing theories to explain migration flows. Migration is considered to be a function of labour reallocation in response to market demand so that the demand and supply of labour are always in equilibrium. Migration is also considered as an investment in human capital involving cost-benefit analysis at different levels. At the individual level, it is argued that migration is based on careful calculation involving money and non-money (psychological cost). While some economists do consider the importance of non-economic factors in explaining migration, others assume that the individual is a rational economic man interested in maximization of profit or utility. And it is the poor who move out attracted by higher wages. The limitation of this theory is that it does not explain why, among people placed in the same economic circumstances, some migrate and others do not. Secondly, it does not explain why people who are economically sound also move to other cities. So economic consideration does not wholly explain why people migrate. They provide only the necessary conditions for people to migrate, the sufficient conditions are provided by non-economic factors which explain how migrations occur (Rao, 1986: 29-30).

2.5 PATTERNS OF MIGRATION

The pattern of migration in India can be divided into various analytical categories on the basis of causal factors, which force migration, census figures and duration of migration. In this regard, Rao (1986: 20) has divided the pattern of migration into three categories:

(1) Involuntary migration: migration under crisis such as war, transfer of population, riots, floods, droughts, earthquakes, construction of the hydel projects. It also includes marriage migration, virilocal, uxolocal or neolocal and transfer migration.

(2) Voluntary migration: means people move out in search of livelihood. It includes nomads, shifting cultivators, traders and salesman, artisans and labourers.

(3) Transhumance migration: it is a special type of migration between two sets of settlements in different seasons.

Rao has constructed the category of migration on the basis of the causal factors, while Malavika Karlekar (Schenk-Sanbergen 1995:24) has constructed four migration streams on the basis of census figures, namely: (1) rural to rural, (2) rural to urban, (3) urban to rural, and (4) urban to urban. In turn, these four streams signify the direction of the flow of the people.

Irrespective of the direction of the flow of the people, Malavika Karlekar has categorized migration into four sections on the basis of time spent by the migrants outside their place of residence (Schenk- Sanbergen, Loes, 1995:25-26):

(1) Permanent migration: migrants move from the area of birth for a lifetime though some contact with the place of origin is maintained through visits on the occasion of marriage, death and other ritual occasions within the kin group. Some of them might send the remittances to the dependent family members.

(2) Temporary migration: migrants who remain out of their home for few months in a year come under this category.

(3) Seasonal or Circular migration: It relates to short term stay, normally under a year, outside the place of residence by those at the subsistence level and it is likely to be repeated in the coming years as well.

(4) Return migration or relay migration: Different members of the same family migrate in turn outside their place of residence to earn some money for the family. This feature is common among the Mexican peasant families.

Migration from the tribal areas

In the light of the above various categories of migration, the migration of tribals from the central and eastern India has been divided into three categories: (1) Seasonal migration (circular migration) to the nearby towns; (2) Yearly or permanent migration to large cities; and (3) Relay migration - family members going out in turns to earn the livelihood.

The migration of tribals from their regions or place of origins is not voluntary in India. In fact, they are forced out due to ecological degradation, landlessness and land alienation, unemployment and poverty. However, the propelling factor in such migrations is to ensure survival for himself/herself and the family.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What are the patterns of migration?

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2) What is specific about migration of tribals?

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2.6 CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF MIGRATION

Everett S. Lee has emphasized the role of pull factors or incentives associated with the destination areas, push factors or those associated with the areas of origin, intervening obstacles such as ethnic barriers, distance, cost and the personal factors to explain the migration of people from one area to another. The pull factor includes employment opportunities in the cities and the push factor includes labour surplus with low productivity in the rural areas, disguised unemployment and the exploitative relationships that exist in the villages. This theory has been utilized to explain the rural-urban migration in India (Premi, 1980: 10). But it has been criticized for over simplification of the migration analysis as push factor can also operate in the urban areas. So, a migrant looks at both, the positive and negative factors at the place of origin as well as the place of destination before finally decided to migrate.

Labour equilibration model by W.A. Lewis (1954) and J.C.H. Fei and G. Janis (1964) has also tried to provide an explanation for migration; the model works on the assumption of a dual economy that of labour attempting to move out from subsistence, low or zero productivity economy to the fast growth capitalist, urban sector with higher wages. However, the critics suggest that labour productivity is not zero in the rural areas; moreover, it is the structural factors relating to the mode of production, which lead to low production rather than little work in the villages (ISI, 1993: 14).

Harris and Todaro considered migration to be a function of labour allocation in response to the market demands, so that the demand and supply of labour are always in equilibrium. According to this theory, labour mobility occurs in direct response to the expected wage differential between rural and urban areas. The theory further elaborates that if wage differential between the rural and urban sectors is in excess of equilibrium, the inter-sectoral transfer will continue until there is equality. The theory goes on to say that given higher wages in the urban areas, people would be attracted from low-income underdeveloped regions in numbers much larger than the available employment opportunities on the chance of getting a job (Rao, 1997: 30). The assumption of this theory is that the individual is a rational economic person interested in the maximization of profit or utility and it is basically poor who migrate as attracted by the higher wages. The premise of this theory is on the economic factor while the non-economic factors have not been given adequate attention. This theory would fail to explain why, among the people placed in the same economic circumstances, some migrate and the others do not. In addition, there is a question as to why people who are well off also migrate to the cities.

Samuel A. Stouffer has developed the hypothesis of migration and intervening opportunities. He argued that degree of migration would be inversely related to the distance between the two places as also the extent of intervening opportunities but directly related to the opportunities in two places (Premi, 1980: 10). Premi has thus argued that source and the destination areas are both likely to have attractive and the repulsive elements, that these will be weighed differently by different individuals.

J. Clyde Mitchell has theorized the idea in a more comprehensive way. He has stated that a single factor explanation of migration is totally inadequate and that listing all possible motivations is also not very useful. He has seen the need to link together and has related the multiple causes in a logical framework and suggested a classification whose major headings are “the nexus of centrifugal tendencies” and “the nexus of centripetal tendencies” sub divided by social, psychological and economic factors (as cited in Premi, 1980: 11).

Premi has identified employment, income and rapid population growth, as the three key variables, which determine the extent and pattern of the migration flows. Migrants flow from areas where employment opportunities are stagnant, income is low and rate of population growth is high. Conversely, they are attracted to the areas of new industrial development, regions of higher per capita income and the areas where the disparity between birth and death rate is low (*Ibid.*).

Rao (1986: 31) has also pointed out that isolated variables cannot adequately explain the reason for migration. Hence, he has taken the multi-dimensional approach for the analysis of migration. In this way, Rao has identified the following key factors in the multi-dimensional approach: historical development of the region; wider economic and political conditions, which regulate and condition the nature of employment opportunities; economic and social conditions in the place of origin; at individual level: level of skills, family circumstances, process of socialization and the personality factors; and presence of the resource network such as social network, which acts as the most effective channel of communication that favours decision making in migration.

Consequences of Migration

The consequence of migration is no less important. The consequences of migration may be analyzed in the framework of changes at the place of destination and changes at the place of origin (Rao, 1986: 29). The impact of migration (Malavika Karlekar in Schenk-Sanbergen 1995: 51-64) on the people at the place of destination can be analyzed in the following dimensions, namely: (1) Wage discrimination and exploitation; (2) Sexual harassment; (3) Vulnerable migrant child: girls in particular; and (4) Destruction of culture, kin networks and social relations.

Croll (1986), while analyzing the migration of rural women to the urban centers in China, has argued that domestic workers are necessary as it releases the urban women from their domestic responsibilities to gain access to paid employment outside the home. Furthermore, domestic workers are required in China to allow other women to increase their contribution to production and the modernization programmes in the country. However, a study by Neeta Lodha (2003: 371) shows that tribal women who migrate to the urban centers for employment in the lean season face several problems. The tribal women mainly work on the construction sites on the basis of daily wages. Lodha's study has demonstrated that minimum wages for the tribal men and women are not uniform and tribal women are both sexually and economically exploited. Moreover, presence of infant children obstructs to the tribal women's economic participation.

As a result of shift to the urban areas, tribal women suffer from 'Cultural' as well as 'Knowledge' and are unable to adjust to the individualist life pattern in such areas. It may be added here that women enjoy relatively high social status in the tribal societies. The research by Lodha reveals that women are the main decision makers in the household work and partial decision makers in the activities related to the agriculture and livestock/poultry. However, the shift to the urban areas for employment reduces the status of women in the families as they lack awareness of the new working environment, credit facilities, market and savings (Lodha, 365-372). The illiteracy of the tribal women along with lack of any technical knowledge has completely removed women from the decision making process in the family and made them completely dependent on the men-folk. Women in such circumstances suffer from being uprooted from their traditional locale and milieu and face a sense of socio-psychological insecurity.

The impact of migration on the people at the place of origin can be analyzed on the following dimensions, namely (1) Effect of male migration: improvement in the socio-economic condition of the family, but increased burden on the women; and (2) Effect of female migration: improvement in the socio-economic condition of the family, position of women in the family and in the community.

Rao and Kumar (1997), while highlighting the impact of migration on the women folk, pointed out that male migration actually enhances both physical and financial burdens on the women in terms of overwork leading to poor health and indebtedness. In the absence of male, women have the sole responsibility to looking after the children, cattle and doing the household chores. Further, the cash remittances from the male members are irregular and the need to run the

household on a daily basis till such time as cash remittances arrive puts additional burden on women. As a result, women have to look for jobs as the wage labour in the surrounding villages, which puts her at the risk of physical and economic exploitation of the outsiders.

2.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit has attempted to highlight the characteristic features of displacement and migration and their inter-relationship. These are sociological phenomena, although some of them are voluntary and others involuntary. This unit highlights lacunae of the Government policies regarding rehabilitation and resettlement. There are inner contradictions in those policies. The victims do not have any participation in the decision making process. There is a close relationship between displacement and migration which can be derived from the unit. Displacement is one of the many factors responsible for forced migration. There are many patterns of migration, which has been dealt with briefly in the unit. Apart from the causes of migration the consequences of migration are also analyzed. These consequences have social, cultural, economic, social and psychological implications.

2.8 KEY WORDS

- Globalization** : Increasing unification of the world's economic order through reduction of barriers to international trade, such as tariffs and export fees.
- Industrialization** : The process of socio-economic transformation of a human group from an agrarian society to an industrial one.
- Rehabilitation** : The process of restoration of the earlier state of displaced/affected persons/families in a new habitation.

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UNIT 3 RESISTANCE AND REVOLUTIONS AGAINST FOREIGN POWERS

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
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3.0 OBJECTIVES

The unit tries to capture the historical account of tribal resistance and revolutions against the non-tribal foreign powers. The case of tribals of Chotanagpur and Santals are taken as a concrete expressions of such resistance and revolutions against such powers. It would be applied to other tribals in their own concrete specific situations.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The tribals of Chotanagpur and Santal Pargana in Jharkhand today have a long history of resistance and revolt against the British administration and its non-tribal collaborators, such as, jagirdars (service tenure holders), thikadars (permanent or temporary land lease holders), zamindars (persons recognized as possessing proprietary rights over land under the British Law), etc. This history of pre-Independence India (1947) is well documented and probably represents by far the best tribal resistance and revolutions against foreign powers that have taken place in different parts of the country in the past. Although Chotanagpur was ceded to the British East India Company (EIC) in 1765, the first entry of the British rulers into this region took place in 1772 when Dripnath Shahi was the ruler of the region. He was in the subordinate position under the EIC and consequently handed over the region into its hands in the same year. He agreed to pay the EIC an annual tribute of 12,000 rupees. For some years the administration of this territory was left in his hands but in 1817 it was handed over to a British magistrate at Ramgarh in the district of Hazaribag.

The British Rule in general and the introduction of the *zamindari* (landlordism) system in particular marked the beginning of tribal conflict and struggle in the above region. Rebellions of various tribal groups of the region against their rulers date from this point. They revolted against the social and administrative arrangements introduced by the foreign rulers. The rebellions were the last resort of the tribals driven to despair by the encroachment of non-tribal outsiders on the former's land, forest and other economic resources. Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, a British

anthropologist specializing in India's tribes had the following observation to make: "Anyone with first hand experience of conditions in areas where aboriginals are subjected to exploitation by more advanced populations must be surprised not by the occurrence of risings, but rather by the infrequency of violent action on the part of the aboriginals deprived of their ancestral lands and the freedom they enjoyed before their contact with populations superior in economic and political power" (Singh 1966: ix-x). In this light, following are some of the well known and important tribal resistance movements and revolutions against foreign powers:

3.2 PACIFICATION OF THE PAHARIAS

The *Maale* or *Sauria Paharias*, are a tribal group in the Rajmahal Hills of Santal Pargana. They had maintained a virtual independence before the British Rule came to India. The early history of this Rule in the Rajmahal area is mainly a record of the British attempt to pacify the *Paharias* (Hillmen). They grew very meagre crops of maize and lentils and had to supplement their diet by hunting. Consequently, in the days gone by they were notorious raiders of the plains and cattle lifters. Their raids rose to their highest during the famine of 1770 which proved very severe on the plains between the Ganges and the Rajmahal Hills. So widespread was the terror these raids occasioned that the plains around the Rajmahal Hills were soon deserted by their non-tribal cultivators. No boat dared to moor on the southern bank of the Ganges after dusk for fear of being plundered and even the Government mail-runners on the roads skirting the hills were often robbed and murdered.

Warren Hastings, realizing the need of putting an end to these raids and acting on the suggestion of General Baker, his military adviser, raised a special corps of about 800 strong in 1772 and placed it under the command of Captain Brooke. His orders were to subdue the *Paharias* and induce them to settle as peaceful cultivators. His kind treatment of the prisoners and their women and children won for Brooke the confidence of the *Paharias* and he was able to induce them to come down and settle on the arable land below the hills. Captain Browne was the next to be put in charge of the Rajmahal Hills from 1774 till 1778. He continued his predecessor's work. He is best remembered for the preparation of a scheme for the pacification and future administration of the *Paharias*, which was later elaborated and implemented by Augustus Cleveland, his successor.

Augustus Cleveland, Collector of the District of Bhagalpur and Rajmahal, appears to have been impressed with the simplicity and truthfulness of the *Paharias*. He accepted their claim of always having been independent of the lowland *rajas*. Thanks to his understanding approach, they showed themselves ready to submit to the Government and to renounce for good all unlawful practices of robbery, murder and pillage, if the government could provide them with some means of subsistence, the lack of which had hitherto driven them to marauding habits. He drafted a plan for enlisting the *Paharias* into a corps of archers under the command of their own leaders, all in the service and pay of the Government. Warren Hastings sanctioned the proposed scheme of Cleveland in 1782, agreeing on an allowance of Rs.10 a month to all the *Sardars* (leaders) and Rs.5 to their *Naibs* (deputies).

The enrolment of a corps of archers reached the strength of 1,300 men armed with bows and arrows. They were under the command of a certain Jaurah who had once been a notorious and dreaded bandit. He remained throughout life a bold, active and faithful servant of the EIC in

different enterprises against outlaws both in the Ramgarh hills and his own mountains. Sanction was also obtained to drill the corps and to arm like regular sepoys and to withdraw the offences of the hill people from the jurisdiction of ordinary courts and to have them tried by tribunal of chiefs presided over by Cleveland.

3.3 SANTAL REVOLT (1781-84)

There was a revolt against the British in Santal Pargana under the leadership of Tilka Majhi. He is said to have been a person of extraordinary physical and spiritual powers. Most of the time he moved in the hills around Sultanganj like a Robin Hood. Time to time he came down from the hills and attacked the boats of the East India Company moving along the Ganges, robbed and murdered *dak*-runners passing by the Teliagarhi pass and looted the British treasury. However, he shared the spoils with the poor. He organized guerilla warfare in which the Santal women also participated. Several encounters took place inside the jungles at many places in the *Jungle Tarai* region between Tilka Majhi and his followers with bows and arrows and the British soldiers with guns. In 1784, Tilka and his followers attacked Bhagalpur and it is said that Tilka shot an arrow which passed through the chest of Cleveland and he fell down from his horse and died on the spot on 13th January, 1784. The main reason for the revolt of the Santals under Tilka was the policy of exploitation, extortion, atrocities and harassment of tax collectors, police officers and the agents of the landlords of the British, Hindus and foreign rulers. The above all reason for the revolt was the suppression of the Santal's freedom by the non-tribal outsiders mentioned above.

Tamar Revolt (1798)

The leader of the Tamar revolt was Bholanath Singh of Tamar. This rebellion was very much due to the faulty and alien system of the Government that was thrust upon the freedom loving people of Tamar and its adjoining territories. In this struggle against the British, the discontented rich land owners were the leaders of the revolt. They were aided by the Munda tribals and their chiefs. The revolt was put down by an expedition led by Lt. Cooper.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What was the observation of Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, a British anthropologist specializing in India's tribes?

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2) How did the British authorities manage to win the confidence of the rebelling *Paharia* tribals.

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3) What was the main reason of the Santal Revolt in the leadership of Tilka Majhi?

Suppression of Ramgarh Collectorship (1800)

The collectorship of Ramgarh was abolished in 1800 and the collector of Bihar became the collector of what was formerly the Ramgarh Hill Tract. The offices of a judge and a magistrate of Ramgarh still continued. To secure better administration, a system of civil justice was introduced, police stations were established and maintained at government expense. In the year 1806, the *Maharaja* and *zamindars* too were encouraged to establish police stations and appoint police officers. This was a very serious mistake, for to have policemen under the control of those who were the enemies of the tribals, could not but lead to unfair treatment of the tribals. From this time the fight between the Hindus and tribals of Chotanagpur took another form, that of calling in the aid of the Police and Court of Law, an arena in which the Hindus soon became the masters of the field. The police were chiefly men of Bihar, the same province from where the *zamindars* originally had come.

The tribals had no title deeds to their land and so could not prove their ownership in the British Court of Law. The court language was Hindi and the tribals did not know how to speak that language and the court officials did not know the languages of the tribals. Hence, when any suit was brought against the tribals, the court officials had to take help of the interpreters who tried to translate the ideas of the tribals into Hindi. The preconceived notions and prejudices of the interpreters against the tribals made it very complicated to get justice from the cases of the tribals presented before the courts. Hopelessly misstated, the cases of the tribals came before the British officers and they found it impossible to rectify anything in this mass of conception and misunderstanding. In keeping with the British legal system, they required documents to prove ownership of land that the tribals did not have. This is the way the British officials favoured those foreigners who had some sort of documents like the ones the *jagirdars* and *thikadars* had. The tribals thus invariably lost their cases in court.

Worse than this oppression perhaps was the effect which the court cases had on judges and tribals. The judges who were all non-tribals, came to believe that the tribals were rascals trying to avoid paying their lawful dues. Their claims to their land were regarded as false and fictitious. Seeing that to tell the truth in court did not pay, tribals took to lying thus destroying their native honesty and truthfulness. In this context, Sir William Hunter had aptly observed, "In the void left

by ignorance, prejudice has taken up its seat and the calamity of the non-Aryan races is not merely that they are not understood, but that they are misrepresented. We have gathered our notions concerning them from their immemorial enemies. In this way, extravagant calumnies attained the dignity of State papers, and are copied from one report into another. Thus ignorance begets misrepresentation, and misrepresentation brings forth bitter political fruits" (1868: 2-6).

3.4 KOL INSURRECTION

The First Kol Insurrection under Rugdeo and Konta Mundas (1820)

The grievances of the Munda and Uraon tribals were directly concerned with the new class of alien landlords called *thikadars*. The Hindu, Muhammedan and Sikh merchants and adventurers from north Bihar and northern India were introduced by the *raja* as *thikadars* (lessees) over the heads of tribal village land owners. The *thikadars* obtained from the *Maharaja* temporary leases of the villages as payment for their goods. They took away land from the tribals and levied rents and other services from them. One of the services taken from the tribals was the *beth begari* or forced labour. In 1820, the ferment of unrest that had been so long seething all over the country burst forth in open revolt. It originated again from Tamar. The leaders of this revolt were Rugdeo Munda and Konta Munda. A war against the alien *thikadars* and *jagirdars* was proclaimed. Destruction of all these alien intruders was the avowed aim of the revolt which spread far and wide, and military operations of an extensive scale had to be resorted to for several months by Major Roughsedge with the Ramgarh Battalion in order to counter it.

The Ho Rebellion in Singhbhum (1820-21)

In Singhbhum, the Ho tribals carried out their tactics of irregular warfare and rose in rebellion several times to protect their freedom and check the exploitation by the British and the local *zamindars*. As these were splendid fighting people popularly known as *Larka Kols*, the local *rajas* made full use of them as tools in the game of power-politics in their quarrels with each other. On 1st February, 1820, Ghanshyam Singh, *raja* of Porahat, made an agreement with the British by accepting the protection of the EIC government. The main aims of the *raja* were: (i) to be recognised as lord over the chiefs of Kharsawan and Saraikela, (ii) to regain the family idol in possession of the Saraikela chief, (iii) to reduce the Hos to submission with the aid of the British.

This agreement had far reaching consequences for the Hos. The Company now launched an offensive against the Hos in collaboration with the *raja* of Porahat and the *zamindars* of Singhbhum on the pretext that the Hos were entirely destructive and had to be suppressed. Major Roughsedge marched into Singhbhum and camped at Chaibasa. The Hos attacked the British with bows and arrows. Forty or fifty of their men were killed in the encounter. Sometime in March 1820, the whole of the northern *pirs* (generally a *pir* comprised 12 villages) submitted to the British. Then the Major marched into the southern *pirs* and defeated the Hos there. The freedom loving Hos did not give up. They made a major attack and defeated the British at Pokeree and Chainpur. After this a strong British military expedition was sent against the Hos. By the end of May 1821, the Hos surrendered themselves to the British under the threat of total annihilation.

The Great Kol Insurrection (1831-32)

The horrors of the 1820 uprising were still fresh in the memory of the authorities when towards the end of the year 1831, another outbreak vastly more formidable in its magnitude shook the entire length and breadth of the county. Tribals' deep discontent manifested itself once again in the Kol Insurrection (1831-32). The *thikadars* or the lease holders had obtained from the young *Maharaja* temporary leases of villages as payment for their goods sold to him. They took away the land of the tribals and levied rents and other services from them. They demanded *beth begari* or forced labour from the tribals. The Munda and Uraon tribals were chiefly driven to desperation. Arrows of war were sent along all the countryside by them calling upon their neighbours to join the revolt. With the breaking out of the revolt, various tribal groups and their local non-tribal neighbours of Chotanagpur, such as, (a) the Mundas, Uraons, Hos, (b) the Bhogta and Ghasi of Tori, (c) the Chero, Kharwar and Poliar of Palamu; had all self-consciously joined the revolt in solidarity. Bindrai Manki, Kol leader, explained quite aptly why his people had taken to arms in 1832 as follows:

“The Pathans had taken our *hoormut* (honour) and the *Sing* our sisters and the *Koour* (scion), Harnath Sah had forcibly deprived us of our estates of twelve villages which he had given to the *Sing*. Our lives we considered of no value, and being of one caste and brethren, it was agreed upon that we should commence to cut, murder and eat....It is with this resolution that we have been murdering and plundering those who have deprived us of both honour and homes....”(Guha 1986: 282-83).

The selective violence of the rebellion measured up to the bitterness and anger of the above words. In villages where the tribal people and *dikus* (outside non-tribal exploiters) lived together, it was on the latter that the attack was concentrated. In many cases they were killed while their houses were burnt to the ground. The British authorities were entirely unprepared for an outbreak of such a magnitude. It was not till March 1832 that Captain Thomas Wilkinson with the collective help of all available forces, succeeded in bringing back order in the country. All the risings mentioned above were against the *dikus* who were the new class of middlemen, *zamindars*, moneylenders, government officials and the British colonists at large.

Budhu Bhagat and his Revolt (1832)

Budhu Bhagat of Silligaon was a famous religious leader among the Uraon tribals in the Churia region. He led the insurrection of 1832 in that area. Budhu's whole family and closest disciples fought with bows and arrows against the British. The old leader perished with all his sons and relatives and about a hundred and fifty of his disciples. They preferred to die rather than to submit to a life of subjection.

Ganga Narain Revolt in Manbhum and Singhbhum (1832-33)

While the Government had scarcely recovered from the Kol insurrection, the Bhumij Kols of Manbhum (Barabhum, Patkum, etc.), Singhbhum (Dhalbhum) also broke out in open arms under the leadership of Ganga Narain Singh, a scion of Barabhum raj family. Bindrai Manki, leader of the Kol Rebellion, also became a leader of this revolt. This revolt was against the British administration and for deliverance from rapacious landlords. The British suppressed this rebellion by sending a strong military force. Ganga Narain fled to Singhbhum where he sought the help of the Hos who were against the *Thakur* of Kharsawan, an ally of the British, against whom Ganga Narain waged war and fell fighting in February 1833.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Which were the negative consequences on the tribals with new administrative changes introduced by the British rulers?

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2) How did Bindrai Manki, Kol leader, explain why his people had taken to arms in 1832?

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3.5 BRITISH RULE (1834 ONWARDS) AND TRIBALS

The Kol Insurrection (1831-32) brought far reaching changes in the administrative machinery of this region by Regulation XIII of 1833. It was decided in 1834 to put an end to the indirect administration by the EIC in Chotanagpur and to introduce a new system of administration. Chotanagpur became a part of the South West Frontier Agency with headquarters at Kishunpur (Ranchi). This was done because the Government at last found the necessity of a closer administrative and more effective control of the country by the British officers on the spot. Chotanagpur thus came under the management of the Agent to the Governor General. Capt. Wilkinson was appointed the first Agent to the Governor General for Chotanagpur. He was assisted by other British officials who were called Principal Assistants. The Principal Assistants to the Agents came to be called Principal Assistant Commissioners from 1855.

After the Kol Rebellion, the ordinary *Regulations* which had hitherto been in force in the area were withdrawn from it. *Regulations* meant laws and judicial rules passed by the Government between 1793-1834. Chotanagpur and some of the surrounding territories were separated from the Ramgarh Hill Tract and formed into a *Non-Regulation Province*. Regulation XIII of 1833 exempted these areas from the regulations and placed them under special and new rules for the administration of civil and criminal justice and for the superintendence of police, land revenue, etc. The reason for the change was to provide the backward areas a more flexible form

of administration. The district of Lohardaga was constituted as a centre for dispensing justice over 12,500 square miles. At the same time, the new districts of Manbhum and Hazaribag were created. Similarly, the district of Singhbhum was created in 1837 and Kolhan was formed as a Government Estate.

Kolhan, the land of the *Larka* Hos, has the unique distinction of being the last area to come under the subjugation of the British imperialism. This area has the glorious past of remaining independent and isolated throughout history prior to the coming of the British. The comparatively late conquest of this area was due to the stubborn resistance of the *Lakra* Hos to any attempt by aliens to infiltrate into their territory and also due to the difficult terrain of their country. The British knew that it was against their interest to allow the Hos to remain independent for long. Capt. Wilkinson, therefore, sent an invitation to the chiefs of the *Larka* Hos to meet him at Chaibasa or Gumra. The chiefs responded to the invitation readily. They entered into solemn agreements to obey the orders of the British government and not of the *rajas* and other non-tribal chiefs to whom they had previously been required to submit.

Capt. Wilkinson gave his Assistant in Kohan certain simple and practical instructions for the administration of this area. The main features of the administrative set up proposed by Wilkinson were (a) preservation of the indigenous form of government, (b) direct contact between the Assistant and the people without the intervention of subordinate officials, (c) settlement of all disputes as far as possible through village *panchayats* (councils) on the spot, and (d) exclusion of *dikus* (foreigners) from the area. The general principles which were laid down by Capt. Wilkinson in his letter were subsequently embodied in a set of statutory rules which came to be known as 'Wilkinson Rules'. The administration of civil justice in the Kolhan area is still carried on under these rules.

Telanga Kharia and his Movement (1850-60)

Telanga Kharia hailed from the Murhu village of Sisai Police Station, Gumla District. He was a revolutionary and a fearless leader. His movement was against the exploitation of tribals by *zamindars* (landlords) and *mahajans* (moneylenders) during the British Rule. As middlemen for collecting revenue from the tribals to the British authorities, the *zamindars* captured the land of the tribals and made it their own when the latter refused to pay revenue to them. The *mahajans* also captured the land of the tribals when they were not able to pay back the loan taken from the former. To make things worse the British rulers gave their protection and support to the above mentioned exploiters. Due to this the tribals hated the British, *zamindars* and *mahajans* and were determined to fight against them in the leadership of Telanga Kharia.

Telanga's main occupation was agriculture but he was well known for giving training in the skills of archery and sword wielding to young people who visited him from all sides for their training at Sisai *maidan* (ground). It is said that one time he had 900-1500 men at his command to fight against the British and their agents. Oppression and exploitation of the tribals were at their peak during the year 1849-50. Telanga went about from village to village to make people aware of their exploitation and to unite and organise them to fight against their oppressors. In order to carry out his plan, he started to form major village federations which increased to 13 in number. In his leadership the tribals fought against the British, their native police force and their other agents during 1850-60.

When the British authorities came to know about Telanga's movement, they arrested him at the village of Kumhari in Basia and sent him to jail in Calcutta. He was released from there almost after 16 years and on 23 April 1880, second day of his return to his village, he was shot dead early in the morning by one of his non-tribal traitors. However, his inspiration continued among his followers and in their movement.

Establishment of Chotanagpur Division (1854)

As a result of Mr. Rickett's report (1854), the form of administration was changed by the Act XX of 1854. The South West Frontier Agency was replaced by a Commissionership for the Chutia Nagpur (Chotanagpur) Division, under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal as a Non-Regulation Province. It consisted of the districts of Lohardaga, Hazaribag, Manbhum and Singhbhum with the Tributary States of Jashpur, Udaipur, Surguja, Koreya, Chang-Bhakar, Gangpur and Banai, under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. Regular civil, criminal and revenue courts were established.

The Movement of Morgo Majhi and Bir Singh Majhi in Santal Pargana (1854)

During the middle of 19th century, the Santals began to settle in Santal Pargana. They came from Purulia, Bankura and Midnapur. Slowly, their exploiters – the Bengali *Mahajans* – also came among them. Because of the oppression and merciless exploitation by the money lenders, landlords and merchants, the Santals became desperate. A Santal by the name of Morgo Majhi unsuccessfully attempted to organise the Santals of the southern area into a separate kingdom. In the beginning of 1854, Bir Singh Majhi proclaimed that in a vision he had of *Chando bonga* (Supreme Being), he had received magical charms by means of which the Santals' exploiters would be punished. He had an enthusiastic following. They committed many robberies in the houses of the *dikus*.

The Great Santal Insurrection (Hul) (1855-57)

This rebellion was the outcome of a long course of oppression silently and patiently submitted to by the Santal tribals. There were four grievances which were chiefly responsible for the rebellion: (a) mean and greedy spirit of the money lenders in their transaction with the Santals, (b) increasing misery caused by their unjust system of allowing personal and hereditary bondage for debt, (c) unparalleled corruption and extortion by the police in aiding and supporting the *Mahajans*, (d) impossibility of obtaining redress from courts by the Santals.

The small traders could make good profits by buying rice or oilseeds from the Santals and selling them in plains. The Santals got their money for paying rent or for personal purposes like wedding from the money-lenders who kept false accounts and used false measures and weights. The rate of interest charged was sometimes to the extent of five hundred percent per year. As a result, many Santals ran deep into debt so much so that they became bonded labourers for life which was made hereditary. This was broadly the social setting in which the *Hul* or Santal Rebellion (1855-56) started in the Santal Pargana and later embraced the rural population across an extensive area inhabited by them.

The Santal peasants had become dependent on merchants for loans in kind or cash at high interest rates. Almost their entire harvest went to pay debts. The Santal peasant worked the creditor's land without pay and did not have time to cultivate his own. The system of loans

finally forced the Santals to pay their debts with the very lands they had opened to cultivation. These lands gradually passed into the *diku* hands. From the beginning of 1855, the Santal peasants sent petitions to the Collector, Commissioner and Government demanding that usury be stopped and all the *dikus* expelled from the Santal lands. These petitions remained unanswered or were considered too late when the Santals had already taken to armed struggle.

Four Santal brothers from the village of Bhagnadih were selected as leaders. Two of the brothers, Sidhu and Kanhu, emerged as the actual leaders of the movement. They had become landless peasants after their father had lost his lands to the *dikus*. The main goal of the movement was the elimination of merchants, moneylenders, colonial officials and alien landlords. The final objectives were to achieve Santal independence, land restoration and establishment of a Santal government.

On 30th June 1855, more than 30,000 Santals assembled at Bhagnadih. They were armed with bows and arrows to march to Calcutta and place their petition of grievances before the Governor General. A police inspector, instigated by some Hindu and Muslim money lenders tried to arrest the leaders but this enraged the mob so much that they hacked him and nine others to pieces. The cry *hul!hul!!* was now raised everywhere and the rebellion broke out in its full fury. The above march led on 7th July, 1855, to an open armed struggle. It was the last resort to obtain redress. After intermittent battles lasting over a year, the movement became openly anti-British. Consequently, the colonial power ruthlessly suppressed the rebellion. The Santal insurgents suffered heavy losses and the ring leaders were rounded up, summarily tried and hanged.

Creation of Santal Pargana (1855)

After the suppression of the Santal rebellion, an inquiry was made into the grievances of the Santals by Ashley Aden. Its outcome was the Act XXXVII of December 22, 1855 for forming the territory into a separate non-regulation district called Santal Pargana and placed it under the control of the Commissioner of Bhagalpur. A special system of administration was also introduced through which an attempt was made to use the Santal village organisation in administering the area.

Santal Revolt in Hazaribag (1855-56)

There was a fierce rising of the Santals in Hazaribag. Their leaders were Lubia Majhi and Bairu Majhi. The rising was widely spread in the Hazaribag district in April 1856. The jail at Hazaribag was stormed and set on fire. The rebellion was due to the same pattern of reasons which had led to the Santal *Hul* in Santal Pargana. Cruel measures were taken to put down the Santals.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Which were the main features of administrative set up in the 'Wilkinson Rule'?

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2) What were the grievances of Great Santal Insurrection (Hul) (1855-57)?

Government attempts a Record of Rights (1858)

In 1858, the Mundas rioted once more against the landlords but were put down by the British. Now the Government seriously discussed the question of registering the land tenures (rights over land) of Chotanagpur. Accordingly, on 15th April, 1858, the Government appointed Lal Loknath Sahi, a local landlord and sub-assistant commissioner, to prepare a register of all *bhuinari* lands belonging to original settlers of a village. The officer worked from August 1860 till his death in August 1862 without accomplishing much. The operations he had carried out extended only over 572 villages in the pargana of Lodhma, Khukhra, Udaipur, Sonapur, Doensa, Korambe and Basia. With his death, the investigations were discontinued.

The Chotanagpur Tenures Act (Act II of 1869) Bhuinhari Survey and Settlement

The Chotanagpur Tenures Act (Act II of 1869) was passed to ensure the settlement of the title to *bhuinari* (privileged) lands. Rakhal Das Haldar, a special Commissioner, was appointed to survey and demarcate the *bhuinari* lands of the tenants and the *majhihas* lands of the landlords. The Act is also called the *Bhuinari* Survey and Settlement or simply the *Bhuinari* Settlement. Unfortunately, the Act did not define the term *Bhuinari* land which was related to the *Bhuinars* or original settlers in a village of Chotanagpur. It was a term used in court language. The *Bhuinari* Settlement reveals the full extent of the appalling ruin brought on the tribals' economic and social sphere. It was found in 1869 that in the 35 *parganas* alone, to which the above Settlement extended, 2,482 villages had lost all their rights, privileges and the social and moral safeguards that the community had laid down in the immemorial customs regulating the life of the village community. Only a few scraps of land were left to them as ancestral property. The survey operations lasted till 1880. The Settlement of 1902 found that there were only 152 villages in the whole of the *Maharaja's* estate of Chotanagpur that still preserved the greater part of the ancient rights. This area was hardly more than one per cent of the *Maharaja's* estate.

High hopes entertained at the introduction of the Settlement Act (1869) were far from being fulfilled. The operations failed to restore confidence of the tribals in the Government. Neither did it succeed in its main aims to protect the people against the future attacks on their ancestral lands and to give back lands to those who had been wrongfully dispossessed during the previous 20 years. The reasons for this failure is not far to seek. First of all, the Act came too late. Secondly, the tribals had no more confidence in the Government. Only a few of the *bhuinari* relied on the good intentions of the Government and understood the purpose of the Act. A great many of them

looked with suspicion on the proceedings of the surveyors and the Special Commissioners. The landlords started a rumour that the officials intended to find out the exact number and size of *bhuinari* fields in order to charge a new and heavier tax for each plot. As a result of the suspicion of the people, helped on by the trickery of the landlords, several of the tribals declared no fields at all as their own and many more declared less than they really possessed. Their lands then were appropriated by the landlords.

3.6 TRIBAL MOVEMENTS

Bhagirath Majhi and Sapha Hor Movement among the Santals (1871)

The period following the Santal Insurrection (*Hul*) of 1855 was not entirely peaceful. The oppression by the *Mahajans* still continued in Santal Pargana. A spirit of resentment swept throughout the district brining the Santals once again to the point of mass upsurge. They felt that no good could be achieved unless a revitalization of their society was brought out. This realization was the beginning of a new consciousness which manifested itself in another social movement called the Kharwar movement. It was motivated by the desire to return to the Golden age of tribal indpendence and glory that is celebrated in the Santal myths.

The movement achieved prominence in 1871 when a charismatic leader called Bhagirath Majhi proclaimed himself the king of the Santals and representative of God. He announced that he would restore the golden age to the Santals if they returned to the worship of one God and cleanse themselves of their sins. His movement tried to raise the status of the Santals by emulating the Hindu socio-religious practices. When the movement began to turn political, the government arrested Bhagirath and imprisoned him. This movement spread also to Hazaribag where Dubia Gossain and his men preached on the lines of Bhagirath and they resisted the first census operation among the Santals in 1881. This movement too was suppressed but not before they convinced the people that their uplift lay in purifying themselves and regenerating themselves as *Sapha Hors* or pure men.

Sardar Movement (1858-95)

The term *sardar* meant leader. It was applied to the organisers of the movement in Chotanagpur. It was largely the struggle of the Christian tribals against the landlords. They were educated in the Lutheran mission which had come to Ranchi in 1845 and had opened schools in the surrounding areas. The movement was called the *Sardar Larai* or *Mulki Larai* (1858-95). It gained momentum after the failure of the Chotanagpur Tenures Act (1869) and the operations following it. The *sardars* had sent a petition to the Commissioner of Chotanagpur early in 1867 complaining against the oppression of the landlords.

Among the forms of oppression especially mentioned were the attempts of the landlords to eject the tenants from their land by taking it away from them and destroying their crops, houses, etc. They also complained about the collection of tax which was collected several times over, as the landlords refused to give receipts for the tax paid. A further complaint was that the landlords exacted more tax than they were entitled to receive. The petitioners asked the Commissioner for two remedies in order to stop these forms of oppression, (i) to take measures to mark out definitely and clearly the boundaries of the tax-free lands, (ii) the people be allowed to pay their taxes directly to the government. The Commissioner rejected their petition. The *sardars* then

appealed to the Lieutenant Governor in a petition dated September 21, 1867 but he too refused to listen to their requests. Following it, the *sardars* sent a petition again to the Chotanagpur Commissioner in Ranchi on 25th March, 1879, with the above requests but he too rejected their petition.

The memorialists then appealed to London. In addition to the claims which they had made to the Commissioner, they asked that they be allowed to form themselves into village communities directly under the government. They wished to be freed from the landlords. The Secretary of State for India, Lord Hartington, rejected the petition. The request of the Mundas to be directly under the Government was found to be extravagant and unreasonable. Besides, London agreed with the officials in Ranchi that the *Bhuinari* Survey mentioned above was the most that the Government could do for the people.

The *Sardar* Movement was characterised by a tone of forceful but reasonable argument with the government. The *sardars* said, 'We do not like to see the *Rajah* and *zemindars* reigning in *our country*. Our forefathers came into this country and cleared the jungle. Now the Hindus rob us of *our fields*....Every nation has its own Government, only we *Mundas* and *Uraons* have not' (Thapar & Siddiqi 1979: 49-50). The *sardars* were representing the tribals of Chotanagpur and their hopes and aspirations. They were expressing their resentment against the petty *rajas* who had established their political power base under the Chotanagpur *maharaja* and were lording over them.

Birsa Movement (1895-1900)

The *sardars* were in need of a leader who could lead the people to their liberation from bondage. This leader who emerged was young Birsa Munda of the village Chalkad in the Ranchi district. In the early monsoon of 1895, he presented himself as a new prophet to liberate his fellow tribesmen from the foreign dominion. He claimed to possess miraculous powers. In his youth educated by Christian missionaries and a *Vaishnava* monk, he instituted a new religion and forbade the veneration of deities and spirits. At the same time, he encouraged his disciples to defy the Government and disobey its officials. He soon found a large following and pilgrimages were started to him who had called himself the *Dharti Abba* (father of the earth). He prophesied a terrible catastrophe, a deluge, in which all his opponents would be drowned and his followers would survive.

Birsa's movement gradually began to assume a political character. He informed the people that the *raj* of the *Maharani* (Empress Victoria) was over and the Munda *raj* had begun. He passed an order that the *raiya*s (cultivators) were to pay no rents in the future. They were to hold their lands rent-free. Several times he planned an armed rising. In 1897, he was arrested on the eve of the rising and jailed. Pardoned in the jubilee year of the Queen Victoria, he planned another rising. The day fixed for the outbreak was Christmas of 1899. A large number of attacks occurred in various places in the police *thanas* (stations) at Khunti, Tamar, Basia and Ranchi. The Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi rushed with troops to the spot of rioting. On the Dumbari hill he encountered the main body of the Munda forces. In the encounter, many Mundas were killed. Birsa himself escaped for the moment but was captured later on 3rd February, 1900, in Singhbhum. He died of cholera on 9th June, 1900 in the Ranchi jail.

The Birsa movement was a manifestation of the socio-economic and religious unrest among the Mundas. They saw in him a prophet and saviour who would redeem them from the oppression of the *dikus* – the hated foreigners whether British or Indian and would establish for them a Munda *raj*. The movement was agrarian in its root, violent in its means and political in its end. Birsa in his speeches emphasised the agrarian factors and sought a political solution of the problems facing his people, that is, the establishment of the *Birsaite Raj* under the new king (himself)' (Singh 1966: 191). The movement had such a tremendous impact that the foundation of the British rule in Chotanagpur was shaken for sometime.

Survey and Settlement Operations (1902-1910)

An immediate result of Birsa's uprising was the authorities' awareness of the urgency of preparing a record of rights for the lands of discontented Mundas. The earlier *Bhuinari* Settlement (1869) did not extend over the Munda areas of Khunti, Tamar, Bundu and Sonahatu police stations. It was precisely in these areas that Birsa's movement centred. The new settlement operations began in these police stations. All praedial services (relating to land and its products) were changed to cash payments throughout the district. The praedial conditions (*abwabs* and *rakumats*) were also changed to cash payments. The *abwabs* were various kinds of taxes exacted by landlords and public officers from the cultivators while the *rakumats* were payments in kind. Both the *abwabs* and *rakumats* were the secondary cause of dispute in the region.

Passing of Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (1908)

This Act was of capital importance. It came into force in November 1908. Through the Act, the *khuntkattidar* and *Mundari khuntkattidar* tenancies were legally defined. The Settlement Operations of the Revenue Department restored to some Mundas their *khunkatti* and *bhuinari* rights as original clearers of the land. The Act safeguarded a number of points which the Mundas had claimed as a central part of their social system. According to this system, the land within the boundaries of the village is the common property of the village family. The members of this village family are the direct descendants of the original founder of the village. No individual can sell or divert his land. The Deputy Commissioner is empowered to eject forcibly any alien who may have acquired lands in a *khuntkattdar* village. There are restrictions on the sale and transfer of a Munda's lands. However, so far as the safeguard of *khuntkatti rights* was concerned, the Act came late because more than nine-tenths of the Mundas had meanwhile lost their *khuntkatti rights*.

Tana Bhagat Movement (1914-20)

This movement was initiated in 1914 by a young man named Jatra Uraon. He was about 25 years old, a resident of the Chingri village in the Gumla district. The movement was known as the *Tana Bhagat* movement. Jatra declared that *Dharmes* (Supreme Being) had told him in a dream to give up (a) ghost findings and exorcism and belief in spirits, (b) all animal sacrifices, animal food and liquor, (c) ploughing their fields which entailed cruelty to cows and oxen but failed to save the tribe from famine and poverty, and (d) working as coolies or labourers under men of other castes and tribes. He proclaimed that the Uraon *raj* was about to begin and that he would be its first king.

The Uraon *bhagats* (prophets) promised their followers safety and relief from the oppressive and unjust revenue system and exploitation by landlords, usurers and Government officials. In the leadership of young Jatra, his followers were determined to put an end to the system of *beth begari* or forced labour extracted from them by the *diku oppressors* without any payment. Jatra told his followers to (a) stop paying tax for lands which were theirs, (b) pray to one true God, and (c) throw out all spirits from their rituals and beliefs. Because of their refusal to work for the *zamindars* and Government, Jatra and his disciples were arrested and put in jail. However, other *bhagats* like Sibu Bhagat of Mandar in the Ranchi district; Balram Bhagat and the woman bhagat Deomania of the Batkuri village in the Gumla district took over from Jatra and continued the movement.

The Kisan Movement (1917)

The *Maharaja* of Surguja exacted excessive *beth begari* from the people. The oppression of the money lenders in the area was unbearable. The cattle of the *Ahirs* (cowherds) were wildly destroying crops. All these roused the Kisans (Nagesia tribals) to rise in revolt under the leadership of Labur Kisan. He was an ardent Tana Bhagat. The Uraon Tana Bhagats of the Palamu district partially backed him and his movement. Labur boasted that he could fly at will to Germany and back to Surguja in a secret flying machine. He also showed his followers a secret machine (a long and large glass tube) for the purpose of destroying his enemies at long range. Once the foreigners had been destroyed, Labur would be the king of the Kisans on the Jamira plateau in Surguja.

The Kisans revolted against their *Maharaja*. In the police station of Kusmi, they killed one of the *Maharaja's* native magistrates, some Hindu money lenders and the *Ahirs*. They stopped one of the Hindu collectors from coming to them. An armed police force was rushed in from the British territory to the troubled area. Similarly, a detachment of soldiers from the Central Provinces with the British Political Agent at their head marched to the area to suppress the rebels. Labur Kisan was caught, tried and hanged at Ambikapur, capital of the Surguja native state. His skeleton was displayed to the public view as a warning to other would be rebel leaders of Surguja.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

Encounter of tribal societies with outside incoming non-tribals resulted in acute institutional changes which gave rise to radical disruption of tribal organizational structures. This led to various tribal resistance movements and revolutions against foreign powers. It was mainly the revolutionary change in the land tenure system that brought about the disruption of the traditional way of life of the agricultural tribal societies. Freehold of lands and their crops formed not only the basis of their livelihood, but also of their status system, as well as of their administrative and economic organizations. After these institutional changes had taken place, the tribals rose in repeated armed rebellions but they were put down by the British arms. Next they tried a legal defence of their agrarian rights with the help of European education which had entered among them already towards the end of the first half of the 19th century. However, the existing legal system which was introduced by the British could not protect the agrarian rights of the tribals because the non-tribals had been cultivating their lands for a very long time. Thus, their ancestral lands had now passed into the hands of the non-tribals for ever. In this desperate situation, leaders like Bhagirath Majhi, Birsa Munda, Jatra Uraon, etc. attracting large number of their

followers rose against the prevailing foreign powers. Their resistance movements against these powers succeeded to some extent in drawing the British rulers' attention to their legitimate grievances and their solutions. Following this, the age old agrarian unrest among the tribals in central and eastern India has not surfaced in a wide spread manner during the 20th century. However, what they are fighting against now are the persistent forces of land grab by the corporate companies that are much worse than the anti-tribal forces working against them during the 18th and 19th centuries discussed above.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Which were the orders of Birsa Munda to his disciples? Highlight the main characteristics of his movement.

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2) How did Jatra Uraon and his disciples try to bring about liberation of their oppressed people through the Tana Bhagat Movement (1914 - 20)?

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3) Why was the passing of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (1908) of capital importance for the tribals?

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4) In the light of the past tribal resistance movements and revolutions, give your comments why the present day corporate model of development is highly disturbing among the tribals in India.

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UNIT 4 TRIBAL IDENTITY CRISIS AND SOLUTION

Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
 - 4.1 Introduction
 - 4.2 Definition of Identity
 - 4.3 Who are the Tribals?
 - 4.4 Factors that constitute Tribal Identity
 - 4.5 Crisis of Identity
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 - 4.7 Let Us Sum Up
 - 4.8 Key Words
 - 4.9 Further Readings and References
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4.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit attempts to define identity as a concept and also look at some of the characteristic features of identity in the context of tribals in India. At the end of the lesson the students are expected to have:

- a basic understanding of the what identity is about;
 - an understanding of the constituent elements of tribal identity;
 - some knowledge of the problems/threats to their identity; and
 - recommendations for solution to their problem of identity crisis.
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4.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of identity is perhaps the most misused concepts in the contemporary times. There has been a complex trajectory of the identity studies from psychology to anthropology, from individual to collective, and from self to communal. In common parlance and everyday life the term 'identity' is conveniently used without often being aware of its nuances and implications. Reflecting on the concept of identity Karina V. Korostelina agrees with the argument of Brubaker and Cooper's that the term identity "tends to mean too much (then understood in a strong sense), too little (then understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)". Our concern here is 'social identity', which is one of the most popular and controversial concepts in social sciences (Korostelina, 2007:15).

There are three important elements that need to be kept in mind in the identity discourse: formation of identity, agency of identity articulation, and dynamics of identity assertion. First, identity is relational. Identity is always organised around relationships. Identity is a question of perception as to how one group perceives itself and others in relation to oneself and others. It is through interactions between people that identity formation takes place. These are at the personal and social levels. The social aspects of identity include the social structures around which our identities are organized. Thus, there is a role of social structures, values and meaning systems in shaping of our identities.

Second, Woodward (2000:1) is of the opinion that “identity necessarily involves an interrelationship between the personal and the social which can also be expressed as a tension between structure and agency”. The structural changes take place in terms of socio-economic organization, religious organization, scientific and technological advancement, through migration, ethnic diversity, organization of domestic and gender roles. These structures shape, construct and reconstruct their own identities. The construction of identities is also in terms of influencing social structures and using them to create collective identities. Third, identities are fluid in many ways. In today’s changing times when the process of globalisation is impacting different spheres of life of different individuals and groups, nation-states are faced with diverse cultures, religions, and different forms of identities. Thus, diversity is created by the fluidity of the changing identities. With the coming of globalisation and breaking down of national, cultural and social barriers there is a danger of homogenisation and therefore, in the present scenario identity has become important.

4.2 DEFINITION OF IDENTITY

According to the Oxford Dictionary of English, the word “identity” originated in the late sixteenth century from the Latin word “idem” which means “same.” The term states the “fact of being who or what a person or thing is,” and it also stands for “a close similarity or affinity” (Sriratana, 2008).

Identity is a collective aspect of a set of characteristics that define a person or a thing. It is a term which is both inclusive and exclusive because on the basis of ones identity one can get included or excluded in a group. No one can have a singular identity because one gains various identities on the basis of ones nationality, gender, region, ethnicity, language, caste, class, etc. One can be identified on the basis of his political, social, economic and ideological beliefs, too. A person can have multiple identities depending on his association or affiliation with various groups.

Identity is changeable and fluid. One can project a particular identity of his at one time and another one at another time or a collective of identities depending on the factor(s) that might motivate one to do so or put him in advantageous position as compared to the others. Identity is a process, as Robbins said, that “have to do with those aspects of culture that directly relate to the formation and maintenance of identities” (Robbins, 1973: 1208).

Social Identity

Korostelina defines social identity as “a feeling of belonging to a social group, as a strong connection with social category, and as an important part of our mind that affects our social perceptions and behavior” (2007: 15). Korostelina views social identity as a space for protection of individuals from ‘solitude’, which it does by creating “boundaries and a sense of a common space within a group.” She views identity as a tool of social analysis with all its limitations and is aware of the findings of the researches which show social identity as “socially constructed and influenced by the processes of existing social structures” rather than being “primordially intrinsic and inherent” (*Ibid.*).

Korostelina is of the opinion that despite their changing nature “social identities can be characterized as relatively stable and fixed” (*ibid.*). This argument seems to be more convincing than that of those who do not recognize the attempts of boundary creation, preservation and

maintenance. These are the daily human actions and no mere imagination. It is a different matter whether we call these boundaries a mental construct or something else. Social identity, as Korostelina says, serves as “a link between an individual’s psychology and the structures and processes of large social groups” (*Ibid.*: 17).

The concept of identity is multi-disciplinary. Korostelina tries to show how various disciplines have their specific focus on the question of identity. The psychoanalytic studies, for instance, focus on the role of social identity in ethnic conflicts and cycles of violence as in Volkan (1997, 2004). Anthropological research shows the manifestation of social identity in culture, its meaning, and impact on group boundaries as in Barth (1969) and Cohen (1986). Social psychologists analyze social identity in terms of intergroup relations, prejudice, and group conflicts as in Tajfel and Turner (1986) and Turner *et al.* (1987). Moreover, sociologists evaluate identity to analyze the interrelations between personality and society as in Giddens (1991) and Jenkins (1996). Moreover, political scientists explore the role of identity in domestic and international conflicts as in Brubaker (1996), Fisher (1997), Gellner (1994), and Gurr (1970). These approaches analyze social identity as ‘a dynamic construct’ determining interrelations between individual behavior and social reality (as in Korostelina, 2007: 17-18).

Korostelina (2007:18-19) observes that identification is a process, which is determined by culture and social reality with two components—emotional and cognitive. The emotional component develops as a result of positive feelings. The cognitive component develops on emotional connections that lead to an acceptance of values, beliefs, attitudes and worldviews. She claims that there are two main functions of identification—first, a realization of the need of the individual’s belonging to a group for protection and confidence; and second, a person’s inclusion into a system of social relationships. She identifies some of the types of groups which serve as objects of identification as—primary groups (family, friends); primordial groups (ethnic, religious); socially constructed groups (nation, political, party); contact groups (colleagues, mates, associates); and symbolic groups (generation).

Korostelina (2007: 61) defines identity as “a system that involves core identities, short-term identities, and situational identities”. Core identities, she argues, are fairly stable and dominant and they exist for a relatively long time and change only in situations of considerable social shifting. She holds that some core identities remain through an individual’s entire lifetime. Short-term identities, she claims, are not constant and reflect temporary in-group and intergroup relations. Further, situational identities, she says, are connected with, and depend on, concrete situations.

Korostelina (2007: 75-76) is of the view that social identity contains the following components:

- (1) In-group traditions and values (culture): This component is a reflection of the specificity of interrelations within in-groups, cultural characteristics, values and beliefs, holidays and customs, ways of life, and worldviews.
- (2) In-group language: It connects the native language(s) of in-group, other common spoken languages, and the influence of worldview and perception on individuals and groups through specific grammatical orders and linguistic structures.

- (3) Characteristics of in-group members: This component includes in-group prototypes as well as stereotypes, valued individual features, and characteristics of the most prominent in-group members.
- (4) In-group history: This element contains historical events, names and situations that are important in-groups and that assist in defining their development, such as fairy tales, legends and heroes.
- (5) In-group ideology: This component reflects the main ideas, goals, aspirations and aims of an in-group.
- (6) Interrelations with out-groups: This element contains the norms and traditions of interconnections between in-groups and out-groups, such as the history of relationships, gains and losses resulting from the interrelations.
- (7) Reverberated identity: This refers to an in-group's identity resulting from comparisons with out-groups. It includes all in-group characteristics that develop in opposition to out-group characteristics.
- (8) Out-group image: This component reflects stereotypes, attitudes toward out-groups, and the perceived characteristics, culture, and history of out-groups that help define intergroup borders and stress differences between in-group and out-group.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is your understanding of identity?

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2) Why do you understand by social identity?

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4.3 WHO ARE THE TRIBALS?

The term 'Tribe' in Anthropology as defined by Wikipedia is a notional form of human social organization based on a set of smaller groups, having temporary or permanent political integration, and is defined by traditions of common descent, language, culture, and ideology. In different countries they are known by different names. In India the tribals are known as the *Adivasis*. The term *Adivasi* literally means 'original inhabitants'. It is an umbrella term for a

heterogeneous set of ethnic and tribal groups believed to be the aboriginal inhabitants of India, although terms such as *atavika* (a Sanskrit word for forest dwellers), *vanvasi* or *girijan* (hill people) are also used for the tribes of India. The term *adivasi* carries the specific meaning of being the original and autochthonous inhabitants of a given region, and was specifically coined for that purpose in the 1930s. The ILO convention 107 describes the tribals as those people “who are at a less advanced stage of development than those reached by the other sections of national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs and traditions” (Xaxa, 2008: 223-240).

Over a period of time, unlike the terms ‘aborigines’, ‘indigenous peoples’ or ‘tribes’, the word *adivasi* has also developed a connotation of past autonomy which was disrupted during the British colonial period in India and has not been restored ever since. Opposition to the usage of this term is varied, and it has been argued that the original inhabitant contention is based on dubious claims and that the adivasi-non adivasi divide that is created, is artificial (Xaxa, 2008: 223-240).

The adivasis comprise a substantial indigenous minority of the population of India. They are present in Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Mizoram and other north-eastern states, Paschim Banga, Andhra Pradesh, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. They are officially recognized by the Government of India as “Scheduled Tribes” in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India. There is a list of Scheduled Tribes recognized as tribal under the Constitution of India. Tribal people constitute 8.2 percent of the nation's total population, over 84 million people according to the 2001 census (Xaxa, 2008: 223-240). In India there are more than 400 officially recognized tribes in India (Xaxa, 2008: 223-240). Among the tribals:

‘All tribal communities are not alike, that they are products of different historical and social conditions and that they belong to four different language families and several different racial stocks and animistic moulds. Some of them belong to the primitive stock with a continuous cultural history, others have been pushed out of the mainstream and have been “drop-outs” of our main history, yet others are created by various legal and economic interventions in society.’ (Xaxa, 2008: 223-240).

Thus, each tribe is distinct from the other and can be identified on the basis of their practices, myths, culture, language, and so on.

In India, tribals are one of the most backward people. Even after decades of Independence and several government aids, the condition of the tribals has not changed much. As compared to them, the other backward groups have progressed, and to a certain extent, have overcome their backwardness. This is a daunting question as to why the tribals have remained where they were decades ago. The tribals have been exploited and subjugated ever since. Jaganath Pathy says that the tribals have been victims of conquest and colonization. As a result of which they lost control over customary territorial resources, faced cultural annihilation and turned powerless (Xaxa, 2008: 223-240). Virginius Xaxa says that the tribals in India faced *double colonization* (by ‘double colonization’ is meant that the tribals were colonized both by the Britishers and the dominant Indians). He further elaborates: “The colonialism in the context of tribes was external

(British) as well as internal (dominant Indian population). There was control by the colonial state as well as by the dominant Indian population. The dominant Indian population in collusion with the state embarked on alienating tribal people from their control over land, forest and other resources. In the course of this process there was also settler colonization of the regions inhabited by the tribal people. Colonization of tribal regions has gone on unabated in post-independent India” (Xaxa, 2008: 223-240).

Tribals faced suppression and oppression from various groups at various times in history. The extent and degree of colonization has been different for different regions and it has continued even after the independence of the country. In other words, the domination and the subjugation of the tribal people have resulted in the increased marginalization and pauperization of the tribal people (Xaxa, 2008: 223-240).

Owing to their primitiveness, they are seen as opposed to modernity and change. Such aversion to change or modernity is accounted for the pitiable state of the tribals perpetrated by others. The life-style and culture of the tribals demands the preservation of their surroundings as it is without affecting it. The tribals share a symbiotic life with forest, land and water. Take any one of it away from them and there will be a death knell for them. They do not depend on forest, land and water just to sustain themselves but their life revolves around them. Their life is intertwined with nature. Thus, a lot of their cultural activities are dependent on nature. If we separate them from nature, they will not die but their culture and the tradition revolving around the nature will die. Thus, their identities are intrinsically and symbiotically related to nature. All these constitute the identity of a tribal.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What do you understand by tribals?

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2) What are the issues of tribals?

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4.4 FACTORS THAT CONSTITUTE TRIBAL IDENTITY

There are various factors that constitute one’s identity; for example nationality, origin, gender, religion, culture, caste, class, and so on. These factors define the various categories that one can fall into. Among others, some tribal anthropologists and thinkers like Ram Dayal Munda, John Lakra, Agapit Tirkey, Boniface Tirkey, Virginius Xaxa, to name a few, have defined the identity

of Adivasis in different facts of their life. Here, we present a synthesis of those ideas and factors that define tribal identity:

First, geographical territory: this refers to the territorial and physical aspect of the tribal identity, which in common parlance is known in the slogan of *Jal-Jungle-Zamin* (water-forest-land) symbiosis. *Jal*, *Jungle* and *Zamin* are central to tribal identity. They are important factors in ascertaining and defining their identity. They are more than mere natural resources to them. Their whole existence and livelihood is centred on it. All the three are in one. One cannot be separated from the other. Of all the three 'land' is the most important because their whole life is centred on it. Their rituals and cultural practices are related to season, crops, plantation, trees and activities related to farming. Forest and water, too, are sources of livelihood for them. They do not see them as mere sources of sustenance but share a unique bond with it. In other terms, what sea is to a fisherman, land is to a tribal.

Second, social organization: the tribal social organization in general is characterized by egalitarianism. In the villages tribals are still governed by the *sahiyaro* and *madait* concept. These concepts mean 'friends' and 'help'. The villagers are friends of one another. They are in solidarity with one another and with the entire village in their joys and sorrows. In moments of need of one another, each family shows its solidarity with the other in terms of ploughing the fields, sowing seeds, transplanting and harvesting. There are many other economic and social activities in which they help out each other free of cost. This is an important aspect of tribal identity. Adivasis have a strong sense of community. Community is the centre of their life and activities. This sense of collectivity helps them rise above the narrow walls of individualism and have respect for diversity, in order to counter divisive tendencies, hatred and conflict. Community life is the foundation of their democratic system. According to S.M. Michael, "The tribal society is not organized along the hierarchical line of class. It is not based on the basis of occupation by birth. The tribal society is organized on kinship basis." (Michael, 1992: 23)

Third, economic organization: there is a tremendous collectivity in the economic organisation of the tribals which is not found in other communities. Rather than having individualistic approach in their economic enterprises, tribals have a sense of social responsibility and co-operation. Their orientation is towards mutual sharing rather than hoarding.

Fourth, collective history: the history of tribals is characterised by hospitality and accommodation even of outsiders. The identity of the tribals is incomplete without taking into account their collective memories, which are necessarily inclusive of their origin, struggles, happiness and glorious past. Their oral tales, songs, folk tales, idioms, rituals are the medium through which their collective history is stored. The collective history gives them a sense of belonging and be a part of their ancestral glory.

Fifth, political structure: Tribals have their own system of governance, which is characterised by self-rule and decentralisation of power. In this type of governance decision is taken by consensus and not by election or majority-minority votes. For instance, among the Oraons of Jharkhand, there is the system of traditional village Panchayat, which is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the village. It takes care of the disputes taking place in the village. The system of *Parha* (confederation of villages) comes into the picture when the nature of dispute is inter-

village. When there are disputes there are also socio-cultural mechanisms to resolve them. Often reconciliation takes place over a leaf-cup of rice beer. This is the traditional identity of the tribal community.

Sixth, religious organisation: tribal religion is characterised by harmony with nature. There is a symbiotic relationship of the tribals with nature, which is reflected in all their agricultural activities, hunting expeditions and rites and rituals. The Tribals have their own religion and follow their own religious practices. For example, the Oraons who are the indigenous people of Jharkhand have their own *pahan* (religious priest) and God addressed as *Dharmes*. Each tribe has their own God and has distinct practices which identifies or distinguishes them from other tribes. As a result of coming into contact with other cultural groups and due to the processes of Sanskritization and Hinduisation, the tribals have incorporated or adopted some of the practices of other cultural groups. Consequently, they are viewed by some as 'Hindus' which is wrong. Mere adoption of some of the alien cultural practices does not make them Hindus.

Seventh, Adivasi worldview: like any other cultural and religious groups tribals too, have their own philosophy of life which is distinct from those of the others. Their way of life, values and ethos are different. They have their own worldview about the origin of cosmos and human beings. They have their own notion about the present life and the life after death. They have their own view about the Supreme Being and other beings existent in this world. They have their own myth and other legends which form the basis of their faith system and worldview.

Eighth, art and literature: life for tribals is a celebration even if the things do not go the way they would have liked it to go. Literature, art and music are people's artistic expression of life which are characterised by collectivity, cooperation and participation. Their art is for arts sake which cannot be commodified. It is a different matter that things are now changing due to the processes of change. Literature and art also enforces ones identity because it not only showcases their artistic genius but also projects their culture.

Ninth, linguistic identity: language is one of the main identity markers. It clearly distinguishes one from the other because language is not just a means of communication but an important aspect of culture and identity. Through language and words stories of human values, practices, songs, idioms are stored or conveyed. Tribals are of the oral tradition unlike other cultural groups who follow the written tradition. So, language becomes very important for the tribals because it is the only means through which they pass on their traditional knowledge from one generation to another generation. If their language gets lost, it is not a mere loss of language but a loss of ones history, traditional thought-pattern, oral literature and rich indigenous knowledge which has been collected over the centuries. Loss of language can be a death knell for a community.

Tenth, Constitutional recognition: the constitutional recognition for the tribals as 'Scheduled tribes' under Article 342 of the Constitution, has a special significance. Before the independence of India they were identified or constructed during the colonial regime as 'tribes', but now they are given a Constitutional and legal status, which makes them eligible to benefit from certain provisions meant for their educational and economic empowerment. In absence of this status, the tribals would have no identity as a Scheduled Tribe, even if they considered themselves to be so. There are more than 600 Scheduled Tribes in India but only certain tribes have been included in

the Scheduled Tribes list in the Constitution of India. And the main criteria for including them in the scheduled tribes' list as given by Verma (1990:11) are: "Traditional occupation of a definite geographical area, (ii) distinctive culture which includes whole spectrum of tribal way of life, i.e., language, customs, traditional, religious beliefs, arts and crafts, etc., (iii) primitive traits depicting occupational pattern, economy, etc., and (iv) lack of educational and techno-economic development." Jaipal Singh Munda, in the Constituent Assembly debates, had preferred the use of the term Adivasi instead of Scheduled Tribe. It was, however, not acceptable to Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, who explained that "the word Adivasi is really a general term which has no specific legal *dejure* connotation". On the other hand, the term "Scheduled tribe" has a fixed meaning because it "enumerates the tribes". He further said that "in the event of the matter being taken to a court of law, there should be a precise definition as to who these Adivasis are." It was under these conditions that the adivasis are presently called "Scheduled Tribes" of India. (Verma, 1990:11).

The above points have tried to list and elaborate on some of the factors that constitute and define tribal identity.

4.5 CRISIS OF IDENTITY

A crisis in identity takes place when the projected identity fails to get one identified by the other or when multiple identities creates confusion and fails to project a coherent picture of a person. The expression 'identity struggles' was used by Wallace to state the tension created by those interactions which led to a discrepancy between an individual's claimed identity and the identity attributed to him by the others. The term "Identity diffusion" introduced by Eric Erikson is used to denote a splitting of the self into multiple images which leads to a loss of centre, or a dispersion of identity. Identity diffusion connotes a psychopathic state in which the individual suffers from a lack of identity confirmation and alienation. Both states are the processes of facilitating identity formation or change.

These definitions of identity crisis fit in very well in the context of the tribals. From the colonial times onwards we discover that rather than identifying tribes by their ethnic names, they have been given some other names. Thus, identity from outside has been imposed upon them. In this process they have gone through crisis. The imposed identity was quite different from what they thought themselves to be or derived from within.

The following are some of the factors that have threatened and are still threatening tribal identity:

1. A total breakdown of tribal social institutions during colonial period:

With the coming of the British, new and alien systems of governance and jurisprudence were introduced. Major structural changes took place. The *Khuntkatti/Bhuinhari* lands, which were sacred to the tribals and which could not be bought or sold, were introduced to the notion of private ownership. All this damaged the psyche of the tribal societies.

2. Developmental processes:

With globalisation and economic liberalisation came various changes in the economic policies of the country. To meet the needs of the nation and the need to increase the economic resources of the country, natural resources were and are still being tapped and exploited. Since, most of the mineral and natural resources are concentrated in the tribal areas. Their lands have been taken away for various developmental purposes because of which they have lost all their means of livelihood and the traditional way of living. The Constitution of India provides measures to protect the tribal rights, land and culture. Their areas have been designated as Fifth Scheduled Areas which enjoy certain special rights to protect the tribals from invasion of their land, culture and way of life. Unfortunately, those very rights are being violated and manipulated for economic gains by various forces.

3. Loss of cultural practices/ritual:

There is loss of tribal cultural practices. With the loss of land and its natural surroundings, there has been a breakdown in their traditional form of living and practices. As a result of which, some of their cultural practices are gradually getting lost; for example *jani shikar* (hunting by women), which is a cultural practice/ritual whereby the women folk dress up like men and go hunting in the forest. This is done by women once every twelve years in remembrance of Oraon woman, who along with other women fought with the Turks and chased them away from Rohtasgarh. These practices cannot be performed these days because most of the forest areas are restricted for public use and is no longer accessible to them. As a consequence, they are not able to perform those practices and hence, they are losing them gradually but speedily.

4. Breakdown of community and traditional form of governance in contemporary times:

There has been a breakdown of the traditional form of organisation of the tribal villages because their land has been taken away from them which were their main source of livelihood. As a result of which the villages are disintegrating as people are either moving out of the villages for better opportunities and survival purposes. The ones who are rehabilitated by the government, too, cannot setup the old system of community because the new surrounding may not have the same natural surrounding which is essential for organising and conducting it. Hence, there is a breakdown of the traditional community and organisation. Their traditional practices are thus getting lost and hence, rendering them as people with no culture (not cultureless or uncultured).

5. Impoverishment and unemployment:

Most of the developmental activities are taking place in the tribal areas but unfortunately the tribals have remained backward as compared to the other communities of India. Owing to the loss of lands, inaccessibility to forest and poor status of agriculture, and lack of access to modern technology of farming due to lack of financial assistance, they have been forced to work as bonded labourers or migrants in the mega cities of India. This condition of tribals is not a state of poverty; this is impoverishment because the once land-rich tribals have now become migrant labourers and rickshaw pullers due to the wrong model of development. Life is thus a constant struggle for survival.

6. Distortion of identity:

Tribals are a distinct category of people. They have their own ethnic identity. Still, some right wing people claim that Tribals are Hindus which is a distortion of their identity. It should be noted that tribes do not fall within the framework of the caste system of the Hindus. Tribals are sometimes equated with Dalits, which is also not correct, because Dalit is a caste category whereas Tribal is an ethnic category. The tribal converting to other religions is wrongly alleged to have lost his/her identity, but the fact of the matter is that in a religious conversion one adopts another religion and not another ethnic identity. Again, while they came to terms with the term 'tribe', which is basically a colonial construct, some forces in India tried to label them as 'Hindus'. This was another point of crisis in history.

7. No constitutional recognition for some tribes:

There are some tribes that have not been listed in the Scheduled Tribes' list notified by the President of India; for instance the Denotified tribes, also known as criminal tribes. Similarly, the tribals who have moved away from their states of origin to other states for economic reasons are considered as non-tribals. For instance, some tribes who have migrated more than 150 years ago to the Assam tea gardens or to the Andaman islands, are not recognised by the State as Scheduled Tribes. The same is the case with those tribals who have migrated to cities like Delhi for better prospects. In their new destinations they are not recognised as Scheduled Tribes as a result of which they lose all the benefits and facilities that to which a Scheduled Tribe is entitled. Hence, some of the protective measures adopted by the government to uplift the Scheduled Tribes are failing because of this crisis.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What are the constituent elements of tribal identity?

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2) What have you learnt about the crisis of tribal identity?

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The solution to Tribal identity crisis lies in the understanding of the worldview of the tribals and respecting their cultural difference. Since, land is central to their identity steps should be taken so that their land remains with them and the scheduled area laws and other tribal rights laws are seriously implemented. Care should be taken so that their languages are promoted and measures be adopted to create opportunities for them.

One of the ways in which development and empowerment of the tribal areas and scheduled areas can take place is to give leadership of development in the hands of the tribals themselves. In fact, as Nirmal Minz (2007) says, “The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, No. 40 of 1996 (24th Dec. 1996), makes space for tribals’ participation in governance. This Act which is also known as PESA 1996, provides for the extension of the provisions of part IX of the constitution relating to the Panchayats to the Scheduled Areas”. Further, No. 4 Exceptions and modification to part IX of the Constitution is the main body of this Act that provides Gram Sabha as key place. (a) Every village shall have a Gram Sabha consisting of persons whose names are included in the electoral rolls of the Panchayat at the village level. (b) Every Gram Sabha shall be empowered to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and customary laws of dispute resolution. (c) Gives the detailed power and functions of the Gram Sabha. It is hoped that self-rule alone will preserve and promote their identities through Gram Sabha, a constitutional instrument in future. The Adivasi identity across the country will be preserved in future. For Minz, this is the ray of hope for the Adivasis.

Tribal communities are going through a process of crisis due to various economic and historical processes. However, due to the indiscreet and rampant exploitation of resources not only the tribals but the entire universe is in danger of extinction. Hence, tribals have some important lesson for the world. Minz (1994) portrays this very well in his paper. He observes that industries and mining are necessary, but they cannot go on for 24 hours a day without any rest for this earth. Balance in industry and mining is necessary if humans are to live on this earth. The greed of the modern industrialists and miners will ultimately bring self destruction of the earth and all that is in it, including the human beings.

Minz further observes that this earth, the environment and eco-system have been misunderstood as a machine, which functions by itself. That Man could manoeuvre it as he liked. He claims that now we have accepted the Organismic view of the earth and the nature. That, there is a living organic relationship between human beings, trees, animals, insects, water, air, sun shine and the soil of this earth. The Adivasi have been holding these views from time immemorial and they have understood human beings as an integral part of this macro-organism. It is precisely this value of the tribals that is pro-life and pro-humanity. This is the contribution the tribal culture and spirituality make to the humanity at large. This is the only solution to the survival of the tribals and also the world.

4.7 LET US SUM UP

This Unit has tried to understand the complex concept of identity. There has been a rich trajectory of the identity studies from psychology to anthropology, from individual to collective, and from self to communal. The identity concept has been understood not as rigid but as fluid and porous. While some aspects of identity seem to be flexible, the core values are relatively more stable than the others. Identity is shaped around relationships and interactions. It is a process and not an end product. In the context of tribals the concept of identity becomes extremely engaging as they have been going through a process of crisis ever since the advent of the British who were instrumental in the break down of their social institutions. Even after the independence, the tribals continue going through this crisis as their land, which is central to their identity, is being alienated rampantly. Identity of the 'tribe' was imposed on them from outside. Once they are comfortable with that identity, there is a threat even to that identity. Ironically, the term tribe which was once looked down upon has now become a symbol of identity assertion. Self-rule or participation in the decision making process is the only solution to safeguard tribal identity and culture. In fact, tribal societies have a larger contribution to make to the survival not only of their societies but also of the entire universe. Their worldview of symbiosis with nature teaches other cultures and faiths and especially the modern industrialists to make use of all that is created in so far as it facilitates a peaceful co-existence.

4.8 KEY WORDS

Adivasis : Original inhabitants; living from ancient times
 Identity : Characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others.
 Social identity : A feeling of belonging to a social group
 Sanskritization : the process of social change in India by which lower castes seek upward mobility by emulating the rituals and practices of the upper or the dominant caste.

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