

to Elwin's *A Philosophy for NEFA*, which was proclaimed as the guide for tribal development, were no more than an enunciation of the principles underlying the constitutional provisions. The principles as enunciated by Nehru were:

- (1) People should develop along the lines of their own genius, and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.
- (2) Tribal rights in land and forest should be respected.
- (3) We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. We should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.
- (4) We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions.
- (5) We should judge results not by statistics of the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved (Elwin 1960a).

These principles have been the guidelines of tribal development more for the north-eastern region than for mainland India, where the reality has been a situation characterized more by assimilation than by integration.

The State Agenda for Tribals

The Constitution confers fundamental rights on all citizens irrespective of their caste, class, language, and creed. In constitutional and legal terms, tribes have also been given the same status as other citizens. This is an important step in building an inclusive society. In addition to the fundamental rights, the Constitution contains many special provisions for tribal people. These include provisions for their statutory recognition (Article 342); for their proportional representation in Parliament and the state legislatures (Articles 330 and 332); restrictions on the right of ordinary citizens to move and settle in tribal areas or to acquire property there (Article 19(5)); the protection of tribal language, dialect, and culture (Article 29); and for reservation in general (Article 14(4)) and in jobs and appointments in favour of tribal communities in particular (Article 16(4)). The Directive Principles of State Policy suggest that the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of society, including tribes, be especially promoted (Article 46). In addition, the Constitution empowers the state to bring the areas inhabited predominantly by tribes under special treatment for administrative purposes. Tribes have thus not only been endowed with citizenship rights but also with certain special rights. It is against this backdrop that the state's agenda for tribes has to be understood. The different measures taken for their upliftment can be divided broadly into three categories, namely protective, mobilizational, and developmental.

Protective Safeguards

The Constitution aims to protect and safeguard the interests of tribal people. Keeping this in mind, laws have been enacted in almost all the states with tribal populations to prevent alienation of land from tribes to non-tribes. In some parts, such acts have been in existence since the British period. In the post-independence period, various laws were adopted for the restoration of tribal land. Protection is also provided in the form of special administration of tribal areas. In administrative parlance, such areas are referred to as the Fifth and Sixth Schedule

areas (Articles 244 and 244[a]). The Fifth Schedule provides for special legislative powers for the governor, the governor's report, and, most importantly, the tribal advisory council. The Sixth Schedule provides for autonomous district councils, thus offering scope for tribal self-governance. The Sixth Schedule in general covers the north-eastern region; the Fifth Schedule is in operation in other regions where tribes form a majority in a district or districts.

Mobilizational Strategies

Mobilizational strategies refers to the reservation extended to tribals in fields such as education, employment, and politics. In each of these spheres, a certain percentage of seats are earmarked for the scheduled tribes. The quota was fixed keeping in mind the size of the scheduled tribe population when the measure was introduced. Accordingly, 7.5 per cent of seats were reserved for tribes in all these spheres. The size so fixed has remained the same until today even though the size of the population has changed. The provision of reservation in politics meant reservation of seats in Parliament and the state legislatures, meant to be in force for a period of 10 years. However it has been renewed at the expiry of every 10-year period. It is important to note that such a time limit, contrary to general belief, was not fixed in the areas of government service and educational institutions. There were no reservation in the institutions of local self-governance until the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution.

Developmental Measures

Developmental measures include programmes and activities meant for the uplift and progress of tribal people. Efforts in this direction began with community development programmes, with the block as the main administrative unit. This was replaced by the tribal sub-plan approach under the Fifth Plan (1974–79). The approach has proved to be relatively effective in ensuring the flow of population-proportionate funds for tribals from the general development sector. Provisions have also been made for special central assistance to state tribal subplans. Poverty-alleviation programmes were launched under the Sixth Plan (1980–85). Under the Seventh Plan (1986–1990), two national-level institutions were set up, namely the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) and the National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC). The aim of TRIFED is to pay remunerative prices for the forest and agricultural produce of tribes. The aim of NSFDC is to provide credit support for employment generation.

Despite the constitutional provisions and the special policies and programmes adopted by the state for the welfare and benefit of tribal people, the condition of the tribals continues to be deplorable. Land, the life-support system of tribals, continues to be passed from tribes to non-tribes through such means as fraudulent transfer, forcible eviction, mortgages, leases, and encroachments despite legislation restricting the alienation of lands from tribes to non-tribes. As per the information available with the Ministry of Rural Development in January 1999, 465,000 cases of alienation of tribal land, covering an area of 917,000 acres, were registered in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Tripura (Planning Commission 2001: 39). Displacement is the other important factor accounting for the loss of control and ownership over land and forest by the tribals. Displacement has occurred primarily because of large-scale projects like industries, irrigation and hydraulic projects, and mining. Projects such as these resulted in the displacement of a total of 21.3 million people in the period 1951–90 in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar,