

VAID

Anthropology

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SCHEDULED CASTES : SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISABILITIES

THE Scheduled Castes form the lowest division of the Hindu social organisation. They are 'Scheduled' because of the special status assigned to them in the Schedule of GOI. These are the castes who have been traditionally the weakest, without any meaningful privileges accorded to them by the traditional Hindu society. Consequently they are the weakest, the poorest and often humiliated ones forming the bulk of country's population below poverty line. The following discussion tries to highlight the main disabilities faced by the Scheduled Castes, with more severe implications for the 'untouchable' castes and less so for the 'artisan' castes.

Caste Away

- Total number of Scheduled Castes (2001 Census) : 16.7 cr
- Percentage of total population : 16.2%
- Total number of untouchables : 7,70338
- Number of scavengers rehabilitated : 6,42,466
(Source : Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment)

Social Disabilities

- (i) **Lowest Status in the Society:** SHUDHA and untouchable castes are placed lowest in caste hierarchy whereby they are not allowed to interact with the higher caste individuals and groups. They are considered impure and their touch can induce impurity in the objects and persons they touch. Consequently, the SCs are kept away from all matters concerning the whole society.
- (ii) **Educational Disabilities :** ACCORDING to Hindu tradition the members of the SCs are not allowed to study of the sacred knowledge. All attempts by them to get formal education are opposed by the traditional higher castes who want them to remain in menial jobs.
- (iii) **Prohibition from use of Public Places:** AS THE touch of a Scheduled Caste can defiles the object they are not allowed to enter the public places (e.g. temples, wells, public parks, restaurants, etc). Often their houses are located on the outskirts of the locality and at places not generally frequented by the higher castes. Further, they are not allowed to imitate the higher castes in matters of dress, purity, rituals etc.

Economic Disabilities

- (i) **No Property Rights :** TRADITIONALLY, the SCs were not allowed the property ownership. No SC member could purchase land even if he had the capacity to do so. As a result the poor SCs' members had no way but to work as landless labour in the fields of higher castes' subjects. Most often the shrewd higher castes, through their claims of long pending loans, forced these landless to work as bonded labourers. Besides, as labourers too, they were paid the bare minimum to keep them alive so that the higher castes could exploit them.
- (ii) **Restriction on Occupation Choice :** ATTEMPTS by the SCs to change their traditional occupations are vehemently opposed by the higher castes. This lack of occupational mobility is probably the most important cause of poverty of the SCs.

Political Disabilities

SCs HAD no role to play in the traditional Hindu society in matters related to administration and politics; however, the decisions of the administrative authority were binding on them. Lack of representation of their interests in the societal matters always put them at a disadvantage.

ECONOMIC and political disabilities of SCs are the result of social disabilities faced by them. In traditional Hindu society the SCs faced all these disabilities as if ordained by the God. As a result, SCs remained alienated from the Hindu society in general. Many of them embraced Islam, Christianity or Buddhism. Higher castes always looked them down and change of religion gave them a higher status outside the caste society. These disabilities also resulted in the poverty for the Scheduled Castes and disunity for the nation as a whole.

STEPS TAKEN AGAINST DISABILITIES

FOR the steps taken against the disabilities, the members are advised to refer to the 'Constitutional Safeguards' and 'Decline of Caste System'.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

THE steps taken so far have been successful in removing the disabilities of Scheduled Castes but only to a limited extent and that too mostly in the urban centres of the country. At the present stage it may take several decades more to attain the goal. Some more rigorous steps are necessitated to hasten the process so that these poor sons of the soil can live a life of equality. Following suggestions, if implemented, can help Scheduled Castes to attain their age-old inferiority and poverty.

Creating Awareness : CREATION of awareness through formal and informal education regarding untouchability of all kinds and its consequences can help a great deal in improving the lot of the unprivileged. Education of the higher castes in this regard is much more important. All kinds of media, by highlighting the futility of untouchability and the harm it has done to the society, can help in the creation of an atmosphere of mutual trust between the higher and the lower castes.

Abolition of Surnames : THE identity of a person is recognized by surnames. Their abolition can result in the removal of psychological barriers. Ironically, the use of surnames has been encouraged and propagated by the government. Application forms for various jobs contain the column of surnames. The members of the interview boards are generally biased against the candidates from the lower castes and this can result in loss of jobs for them.

Economic and Technical Support : AS THE lower castes are poor economically too, they must be provided with economic support to help establish themselves in their economic ventures. Besides, all technical help must also be rendered. In the interest of the lower castes, special cell, to provide assistance, can be created.

Change in Government Policy : IT HAS been seen that most of the economic benefits meant for scheduled castes are cornered by the affluent among the scheduled castes. The Constitution must be amended in this regard so that the genuinely needy ones can avail themselves of such provisions as contained in the Constitution. A scheduled caste person, if he achieves a certain socio-economic level, should be debarred from such benefits. This way, each of the lower castes' member can expect to get the advantage through the governmental measures. Another way out is free and compulsory education for all citizens of the country. Through this measure every Indian can attain same caliber

and proficiency.

End of Reservations : FINALLY, when the scheduled castes achieve a particular socio-economic level, the system of reservations be done away with. Without ending the reservation system, the feelings of higher castes towards the lower castes will not show a desired change.

THE OUTLOOK ABOUT UNTOUCHABILITY

THE problem of untouchability is so acute that it requires the official and non-official organisations to take keener interest at the implementation level. The gap between precept and practice at the level of the individual finds its social echo in the gap between law and enforcement. When America passed the historic legislation abolishing slavery, a raging and tearing campaign was carried on against it and the government had to adopt stern measures to suppress it. But when untouchability was abolished by our Constitution and legislation to give effect to this provision was passed, not a ripple was noticed in the country. Why? Because even the most orthodox among the Hindus presumed that it was a paper legislation. And perhaps they were right. The act remained generally on the Statute Book with only half-hearted enforcement.

IN ADDITION to the 20 Point Economic Programme of the Prime Minister and the other measures under the Emergency, it is essential to launch a multi-pronged national movement for the abolition of untouchability and amelioration of the socio-economic condition of the weakest sections on a war footing. The co-operation of *Sawarnas*, Scheduled Castes, youth and women have to be fully enlisted for achieving concrete results. In this crucial task social and educational organisations as well as governmental agencies at the Central and State levels must play a dynamic and decisive role with a sense of mission. The existing laws against the practice of untouchability ought to be tightened up and made more rigorous. Since untouchability tends to disintegrate Indian society and endanger its solidarity, atrocities on the Scheduled Castes should attract the provisions of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act.

IT IS A matter of concern that in many parts of the country, public wells and places of worship are still not open to Scheduled Castes, although legally they have been conferred the necessary rights. Basically, the mentality behind untouchability has its roots in religious sentiments. It has been dinned into the ears of the high caste Hindus from their very childhood that touching a person belonging to the Scheduled Castes would land them into hell after death. As a result, these traditional ideas persist in their minds despite the fear of punitive measures by the government. The newspapers continue to report about the harassment of the Scheduled Castes and various kinds of atrocities perpetuated on them in different States. This is highly deplorable and all such anti-social elements ought to be punished with a firm hand.

THE emergency powers must be used for dealing with these elements in a stringent manner so that atrocities on the Scheduled Castes become a thing of the past.

IN a democratic, secular and socialist India, the Scheduled Castes must be able to live as equals with their fellow countrymen in an atmosphere of security and responsibility. THE educational institutions have a special responsibility to discharge in rooting out untouchability. School and college text-books should carry suitable lessons for promoting an atmosphere of casteless society in which untouchability should have no place in any form, whatsoever.

THERE is no doubt that education basically means an enlightenment of mind. It contributes in the widening of mental horizons and nothing can be more effective for breaking the hold of orthodoxy and fanaticism. By education man comes nearer to man and traditional divisions are blurred. When in an educational institution a *Harijan* and a *Brahmin* boy sit side by side, they automatically get equipped to work side by side in later life.

ASK any school boy who has had some elementary lessons

in Anthropology and Biology and he will tell you that there is no difference between the anthropo-morphic features of different groups of mankind. From Darwin to Khurana, nobody has told us that evolutionary and genetic make up of a *Harijan* is different from a *Sawarna*. There may be different groups of blood but they are found among individuals of all the castes. Similarly the difference of skin or colour may be seen in individuals of different as well as the same groups. God has not made any distinction between a *Harijan* and a *Brahmin*. He has given the same senses, same instincts and the same needs to all. All are equal in 'His' eyes and inequality, if any, is man made; and since it is man made it can be abolished by man. By the spread of education, these ideas also are spreading among various sections of Indians and as the literacy rate increases new generations to come will be surprised to know and would hardly believe that their ancestors had once-perpetuated and recognised distinctions between man and man.

ANOTHER factor which can and has contributed towards the dilution of orthodoxy is the spread of the new industrial culture. After independence, industries, big and small, have sprung up in all parts of the country and have absorbed large masses of workers. These workers have been converging on the industrial centres from all parts of the country and from all communities. There they work side by side on the same machines, face the same problems and share each other's joys and sorrows. Since they first come together as strangers, they start with a clean slate and judge each person on the basis of his personal attitude rather than his birth. In industrial townships no distinction is made between castes while allotting residential accommodation and a *Harijan* may well be a neighbour of a *Brahmin* on one side and a *Vaishya* on the other. During lunch time they sit and eat together in the same canteen. This has been a major factor in integrating the people as well as the Hindus among them. The stronghold of untouchability still exists in the villages. The large scale migration of the working classes from the villages to the towns has broken their traditional behavioural patterns. After they are settled in the cities, when they again go back to the villages, they are all different men. A similar contribution has been made by our armed forces and their services. In these, no communal distinctions are recognised and all work, and sometimes lay their lives, in the defence of the motherland side by side. When after retirement or even during their annual leave periods they go back to the villages they carry their cosmopolitan outlook with them and of course their children are brought up in a different atmosphere and when they grow up there will be a different kind of community.

In the present-day world the hard fact of life is the interdependence in the fulfilment of economic needs of a community. None of us can produce all the goods which we need. If a person grows crops, he may not be able to make shoes and if he makes shoes, he will have to ask somebody for cloth and so on. In this sense we all rely on each other and supplement each other's resources and help meet each other's needs. In the complex existence of today there is no running away from this mutual dependence. Though to some extent this has always been so but with the growth of mobility and development of communications, this is all the more true today. We need each other much more now than ever before and since we need each other, we also accept each other.

ALL these factors have collectively affected our attitude towards religion. Most of us are now aware of the faiths of our neighbours and with our traditions of tolerance we respect their susceptibilities. Orthodoxy is being gradually eroded and most of us now believe that there is one God and all of us, whether we are Muslims or Christians or Brahmins or *Harijans*, are His creation. Even among the Hindus where monotheism is not a universally accepted doctrine, it is recognised that our common source of creation, preservation and destruction - *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva* are the same to all and no one community is dearer to the

Supreme Being than others. This philosophy of commonness of being, is being accepted more and more and with that common attitudes are developing.

A WORD to the members of the Scheduled Castes also is necessary here. While it is true that they have suffered much on the hands of the higher caste people, nevertheless they owe something to themselves also for their own betterment. They must give up the social evils that may have come up in them. They must send their children to schools and to give a better deal to their children, should adopt family planning. They should never adopt a vested interest in the concessions which the government has allowed to them. They should use these concessions to come up to the level of other sections of society and from then they should prefer to be on their own. They should try to stand on their own feet.

THE financial and other aids given by the Government to the Scheduled Castes have, to a certain extent, led to some internal tensions among the Scheduled Castes themselves. As in other strata of society, there are stronger and weaker sections even among themselves. The members of the Scheduled Castes, who happen to be in a stronger position, must see to it that they do not grab everything for themselves and not leave anything for their less fortunate kith and kin. There should be a harmonious development of all. WHAT is thus required is a change in attitudes all along. Now when in the country untouchability is illegal and a cognizable offence, what is needed is just a little push by way of changed attitudes and this monster will be pushed into the sea, never to raise its head again. In the words of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, "It should be our endeavour, our duty, to see that feelings of untouchability are wiped out from the minds of Indian citizens. Only then we can see that all the Indian people are able to enjoy the rights and privileges which freedom has given."

MANUAL SCAVENGING CONTINUES

The government ordered on Jan. 26, 2011, to undertake a fresh survey of manual scavengers and dry latrines across the country, besides revising to amend existing laws to root out the menace by 2012. It will also determine their gender breakup, considering women are more affected.

The move comes 10 years after India prohibited manual scavenging and construction of dry latrines and the government spent Rs. 1,000/- crore to establish those affected. In March 2010, the government had envisaged for the fifth time, the last date for abolition of manual scavenging.

By March 2010, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, the rural ministry for implementation of Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993, which outlaws scavenging, had spent Rs. 2,368 crore under the Integrated Low Cost Sanitation Scheme to convert 5,000 villages in 23 states and 911 towns across the country into open defecation sites.

Under the Act, which prescribes a punishment up to one year and a fine of Rs. 2,000 for anyone employing a scavenger, no conviction has happened in 10 years. In fact, matter the National Advisory Council (NAC), which had concern in its December 23, 2010 meeting, while adopting a resolution to urge the Centre to survey the remaining dry toilets and scavengers, amend existing law and make them stringent by revising the definition of manual scavenging and formulating a 100% Centrally-funded scheme to rehabilitate the affected.

Centre would finish the survey exercise by the end of the 11th Plan, as required by the NAC.

So far, under the Social Justice Ministry's Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers introduced in 2007, over Rs. 800 crore has been allocated. But only 16 states and two UTs (Delhi and Puducherry), have sought these funds. In these UT/states, 1.18 lakh scavengers exist. The highest numbers are in Odisha (17,533) followed by MP (15,213), Tamil Nadu (11,896), Maharashtra (11,227) and UP (9,548). Haryana and Punjab haven't drawn funds under

this scheme though they house manual scavengers.

Himachal and Rajasthan despite the persistence of this problem (in Rajasthan, scavengers are known to get stale bread in return for work), have not adopted the central Act, citing their own laws. Only Andhra, Goa, Maharashtra, Tripura, West Bengal and all UTs notified the 1993 Act in its early stages. Madhya Pradesh notified it in 2002, Bihar in 2003 and Arunachal and Nagaland in 2008. So far, only Mizoram and Manipur have claimed to be dry latrine and manual scavenger-free.

The *Safai Karamchari Andolan* recently submitted to the Centre names of 4,833 unlisted scavengers. The Centre, as of 2006, had claimed to have rehabilitated 3.42 lakh scavengers out of the 7.7 lakh that existed then. Uttar Pradesh led the list with 2.13 lakh scavengers followed by MP (81,3307), Rajasthan (57,736), Maharashtra (64,785), Haryana (36,362) and Punjab (2,988).

Recent Changes in the situation of SCs

A recent study conducted by a group of economists and Dalit intellectuals in Uttar Pradesh has studied the changes in the condition of Dalits from 1990 to 2007 in two blocks, one in Azamgarh district of Eastern UP & another in Bulandshahar in Western UP. The survey has shown major changes in both material well-being and social well-being accompanied by better eating and grooming habits. There has been a marked erosion in the discriminatory process - caste-based casteism. Compared to 1990, there is a much higher level of asset ownership especially of basic consumer durables. Ownership of bicycles, fans, TVs & mobile phones has increased by 33 to 50% of the households in 2007 compared to 1990. Pucca housing ownership increased from 18 to 64% in eastern UP. In Bulandshahar the general housing ownership has gone up from 38% in 1990 to 94% in 2007.

Another study by Surendra Joshi of Indian Institute of Dalit Studies has shown Dalits' shift towards self-employed entrepreneurial activities in and around places like Panipat, Karnal and Saharanpur. The study quantified 1,000 dalit entrepreneurs in these small towns, running shops and providing other forms of self-based services particularly in construction business. The bulk of these self-employed entrepreneurs have come up in the last 15 years. According to Joshi, Dalits have developed the capacity to diversify into occupations other than those they were traditionally employed in. The results have been helping other dalits in entering these sectors.

Dalits marching ahead in U. P.

A recent paper, "Rethinking inequality : Dalits in UP in the Market Reforms Era" by Devendra Singh, CB Prasad, Lant Pritchett and Dr. Savitri Babu reveals a visible dalit revolution after 1990 in Uttar Pradesh.

The survey covered 4,000 households in two blocks in UP, one in the relatively progressive west (Khurja) and one in the backward east (Bilariya) between 1990 and 2008.

The dalit proportion with pucca houses rose from 18.1% to 64.4% in the east and from 38.4% to 94.6% in the west. TV ownership improved from basically zero to 22.2% and 45% respectively. Telephone access up increased from almost nothing to 36.3% and 61.4% respectively.

Bicycle ownership curbed by electricity shortages, rose to 36.7% and 61.4% respectively. Bicycle ownership has become ubiquitous, up from 46.6% to 84.1% in east and from 37.7 to 83.7% in the west.

A motorcycle symbolise high rural status. Dalits' ownership of two-wheelers improved from almost zero to 7.6% and 12.3% respectively. NSS consumption surveys consider purchases only in a short pre-survey period, and so miss durables acquired over the years.

In times of distress, dalits historically mortgaged jewellery to upper caste lenders. The proportion that does so has dropped from 75.8% to 29.3% in east and from 64.6% to 21.2% in the west.

Dalits have switched from inferior foods (broken rice, jaggery ras) to superior foods (whole rice, pulses, tomatoes). The proportion eating roti-chutney for lunch, socially viewed as low-class food, has fallen from 82% to just 2% and 9% in the two zones. The

proportion of kids eating the previous night's leftovers plummeted from 95.9% to just 16.2% in east. The proportion eating broken rice fell from 54% to 2.6% in the east, and 22.7% to 1.1% in west.

Per capita availability of dal in India has been falling. So it's heartening that dalits consuming dal are up from 31% to 90% in the east, and from 60.1% to 96.9% in the west. This may be one cause for rising dal prices.

Consumption of jaggery ras, usually drunk by the poorest, has collapsed. Meanwhile dalit consumption of packaged salt, elaichi and tomatoes has shot up.

Critics say the poor have been bypassed by economic reforms. But in this dalit survey, 61% in the east and 38% in the west said their food and clothing situation was "much better". Only 2% said their condition was stagnant or worse.

Traditionally, dalits were mainly agricultural labourers. In the reform era, they have diversified into non-traditional work. Migration and remittances have become engines of empowerment.

The dalit proportion benefiting from migrant relatives is up from 14% to 50.5% in the east, and from 6.1% to 28.6% in the west. More revolutionary, the proportion running their own business is up from 4.2% to 11% in the east and from 6% to 36.7% in

the west. The proportion of agricultural labour has plummeted from 76% to 45.6% in the east and from 46.1% to just 20.5% in west.

What has driven these changes? The dalits themselves say the changes began 10-15 years ago, in the reform era. UP has lagged well behind the fast-reforming states. Yet in the five years 2003-04 to 2008-09, its average GDP growth has accelerated to 6.29%. This is well behind the national average, yet not far from the 7% generally viewed as the "miracle-economy" threshold. Per capita income is growing almost 10 times faster than in the Nehru-Indira era, and dalits are sharing the new prosperity.

The authors see the last two decades as an economic reform era. But this period has also seen the meteoric rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party, which could be an even stronger driver of dalit economic improvement.

Mayawati has been chief minister four times, and has obliged all bureaucrats and other lobbies to ensure that dalits get their fair share of benefits. This is reflected not just in higher dalit ownership of TVs or cellphones, but in transformed social relations. Dalits can now look upper castes in the eye, and nothing will be the same again.



**VAID'S ICS
DEHLI**

ISSUES RELATED TO NATIONAL INTEGRATION

A NATION is a result of community sentiment, and consideration of various independent functional units of different socio-cultural, economic, political etc. groupings that form the 'building blocks' of a nation. A nation consists of many of such building blocks. The smallest building block or the unit of a nation is the individual, who associated with other individuals and communities forms the visible structure of the nation. In a nation, there is the commonness feeling or the 'we feeling' present between different units. We may, therefore, infer that the psychic elements of a nation are strong that increase the intensity and range of involvement as also the participation of the units towards the interests and objectives of the nation. Various units of the nation are linked together by a linkage mechanism formed by the communication system through the administration, education, various agencies of mass transportation etc. These communication channels, on the one hand forge unity between and among different units of a nation; and on the other, act as insulators for the units of other nations. A nation is integrated if the communication channels are functioning in an ideal way and is disintegrated if the channels fail to deliver goods properly. Here we must add that the process of integration is followed at two levels, at the level of communication channels and functional integration; and integration of heterogeneous elements of various social institutions.

IN INDIAN stance, the integration of various heterogeneous elements in different social institutions was much active during freedom struggle, the integration in terms of economic and political units has shown a more meaningful progress after 1947.

Challenges to National Integration

INCREASING trend towards communalism, casteism, clashes of regional interests, ethnocentrism, clashes of language interests, fighting of political parties with local and regional interests, demand for autonomy or even separation etc have, to a great extent, undermined the cause of national integration. Revivalism and rise of fundamentalism in very recent times have eroded national values that have been trying to inculcate the younger generation with the thoughts, values and attitudes that in the immediate future may create serious problems in national integration.

LOOKING at the facts mentioned above, it is imperative to ask whether India, after independence, has been undergoing a transitional phase in value orientation; or she will succumb to the pressure of the disintegrative centrifugal forces of the kind which never existed before? India, beyond doubt, has been undergoing transition from traditionalism to modernization; this change is perceptible only in the economic and scientific spheres. Socio-cultural values have, more or less, resisted change successfully. The transition in Indian society can be interpreted through the following features of (i) regionalism, whereby different groups of people have started identifying themselves as discrete entities whose interests generally clash with those who do not identify themselves with the group of the former. As a result, people now associate themselves with regional, political, economic or religious groups, than with Indianess. Regionalism is the result of the disparities in peoples' aspirations in different spheres and their respective achievements. (ii) the distribution of power and authority in rural as well as urban areas is based on the concept of 'dominant caste' and other local or regional factors which have their own narrow ends that forfeit the cause of national integration. (iii) The above reason has lead to the emergence of strong local or regional leadership who do not have a national outlook. (iv) As a result of above, the confrontation between the states and the centre as also the violation of center's authority have become common. All the factors (mentioned above) combined together have

resulted in considerable loss of the sentiment of national integration. The facts regarding the above mentioned factors can be supplemented by the clippings from various newspapers almost everyday.

AS A RESULT of the above mentioned factors, our political system has become a mockery of democracy. The defections and floor crossing have been stopped by a recently enacted law but toppling game has been still very much in existence. This denies to a state the rule of legitimate authority. The tensions between and among different socio-economic, political etc. interests most often result in clashes, agitations and violence as a means of bargain in favour of their respective interests. Revivalism, with socio-economic, political, religious or linguistic etc. issues and embracing certain catchy slogans have resulted in different types of isolationist or regionalist or communalist movements. This has, many times in the past, has resulted in mass violence and communal disturbances.

CASTEISM: communalism, tribalism, linguism, provincialism, federalism etc all at one point or the other, are at a discord with national integration. Casteism refers to the ethnocentrism and the feeling by one of his caste's superiority over some or many others. The restriction on mobility in caste-ridden Hindu society has acted as a barrier against diffusion of tension between different caste groups and has been a factor against national integration.

COMMUNALISM denotes similar expression in modern political life. Though it mainly occurs in the form of Hindu-Muslim discord, there are different forms of communalism between different communities and caste groups can not be obliterated without the establishment of a casteless and classless society. Tribalism in today's India too is an expression of national integration. Conflicts with respect to the language are on the increase. Though in the Constitution of India different languages have been given equal status, parochial interests have fanned tensions that initially originate as lingual conflict. Regionalism is an expression of discontent among the masses for the central or the state government, but it also results from the expansive designs of certain disruptive and reactionary forces.

FOR the national integration to be meaningful and complete, all the discordant elements have to be dealt tactfully and seriously. We must, however, realize that none of the above mentioned factors can be studied or removed in isolation as all of them are related to each other directly or indirectly.

THE situation has never been the same. Before analysing the change over time regarding the issue, let us discuss about why these factors have been successful in their own right, in causing to some extent, disintegration.

INDIAN society as a whole is under tremendous pressure for change. Till recently we were a non-market economy but the privatization of the economy and the fast extension of the free market have drawn India into the competence of International market. With economic change, the structure of society in terms of caste and power monopoly has also been undergoing transformation. The influence of religion on an individual's life too has weakened. The development of rational thinking and the country's strides in scientific fields too have played their role in drawing different castes together. All this should have been good enough in developing the spirit of integration. But, to our dismay, consciousness has given rise to caste consciousness as also to awareness with respect to parochial goals. This contrast in national awareness and the local ethnocentrism has been a major source of the spread of the disintegrative forces.

THE problem can be looked from different angles. It can, for example, be seen in conflict with the 'glorious past' we had. The glory was destroyed by certain foreign elements, the Muslim invaders and later on, the British. Those who think in

these terms speak of the revivalism of the ancient Hindu view of life and the '*Hindu Rashtra*'. Superiority of Hindu over the non-Hindu and that of the higher castes over the lower ones is an essential element of this view-point. On similar lines developed the Muslim revivalism. The two revivalist movements have the ends that are in conflict with the ideals of national integration.

THE rise of disruptive forces can also be seen from the angle of the dawn of modernization that lead to the loosening of various traditional bonds, disintegration of the village-based self-reliant economy; and lead to the integration of various groups based on caste, religion and language. The details of modernization have been discussed previously. According to this view point national integration refers to the voluntary unification of various diverse natured groups.

NOW the question arises: Where are we heading for revivalism or modernization? Though apparently we are getting modernized, we must not forget that our freedom struggle was a conglomeration of both types of ideologies. The result was a compromise between the two. We therefore, define secularism excluding religion from its preview.

Solution to the Problem

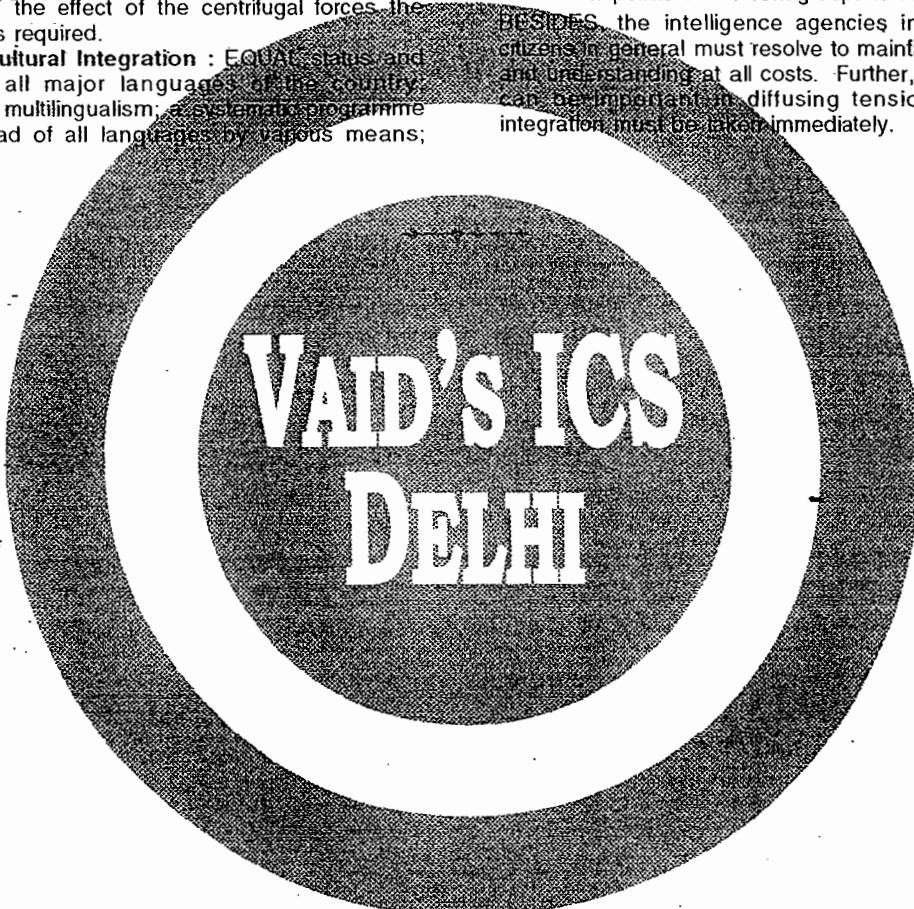
TO COUNTERACT the effect of the centrifugal forces the following strategy is required.

- (i) **For Socio-Cultural Integration :** EQUAL status and respect for all major languages of the country; promotion of multilingualism; a systematic programme for the spread of all languages by various means;

highlighting the similarities between different subcultures through mass-media and other agencies of communication.

- (ii) **For Economic and Political integration :** ALMOST equal economic development of all regions and states to lessen the economic disparities, almost equal access to economic opportunities for everyone; solving intra and inter-regional disputes through legitimate and mutually accepted means; changes in the Constitution, for different regions of the country, assuring economic and political stability etc.
- (iii) **Emotional Integration :** SPREAD of education with emphasis on brotherhood, harmony, tolerance, understanding of each other's perspective etc., and creating awareness regarding oneness of the country; rational analysis of the prevailing mutual distrust between different communities and proper projection of the events; stress on common elements of different sub-cultures; propagation of the ideals of nationalism; providing greater opportunity for interaction between diverse social groups; rational understanding of the view points of different groups in conflict.

BESIDES the intelligence agencies in particular and all citizens in general must resolve to maintain peace, harmony and understanding at all costs. Further, all other steps that can be important in diffusing tension and increasing integration must be taken immediately.



**VAID'S ICS
DELHI**

XITH FIVE YEAR PLAN, 2007-12,

Introduction

The Eleventh Five Year Plan document, as approved by the National Development Council on 19.12.2007 was, after finalization and printing, circulated by the Planning Commission in November, 2008. Chapter 6 ("Social Justice") of "Volume I: Inclusive Growth" of the XI Plan document deals, inter-alia, with the subjects of Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Persons with Disabilities, Senior Citizens and Victims of Substance (Drug) Abuse. The target group-wise approach, as spelt out in the above Eleventh Five Year Plan document, is summarized below:

Target Group-wise Approach as spelt out in the XI Five Year Plan, 2007-12

Scheduled Castes

The strategy for development of Scheduled Castes is educational and economic development, protective measures and reservation. Details of the approach as outlined in the Eleventh Plan Document, are given below:

(a) Educational Development

(i) Elementary Education:

- Incentives in the form of abolition of tuition fee, free supply of books, mid-day meals, scholarships etc.
- Revision of funding pattern of Pre-Matric Scholarship for Scavengers from 50:50 to 100%.
- Special attention to be given for retention of SC students in Schools and quality of teaching for them.

(ii) Post Matric Education:

- The issue of committed liability to be borne by States which always prevents them from coming forward to access the Central Assistance under Post Matric Scholarship for SC students for pursuing higher education in various courses needs to be addressed.
- SC students should have the opportunity to study in quality institutions.
- To enable SC students to access top class educational institutions including those in private sector financial assistance needs to be extended.
- To encourage SC students to prepare for various competitive examinations, the existing scheme of coaching for SCs students needs to be modified to be at least charged by reputed coaching institutions.
- Reimbursement of tuition fee charged by private unaided institutions in higher technical and professional education.
- Need to increase the existing number of fellowships under Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for SC students for pursuing higher studies including M.Phil and Ph.D degrees.
- SC students who cannot continue their education after schooling be provided with vocational training skill training programmes in ITIs, polytechnics etc. These Institutes should have adequate seats on proportionate basis and should be located closer to SC concentrations areas.

(b) Economic Development

- Commission on Land Reforms will be set up to look into the issues of (a) continued possession and effective uses of land distributed earlier to SCs under various programmes/legislative interventions; and (b) availability of land for distribution of SCs/STs/landless families.
- Special programmes of employment are necessary to reduce the increasing unemployment among SCs. Priority needs to be given to SCs in the Employment Guarantee Scheme with proper monitoring of coverage.
- The labour force need to be provided with job-oriented training under the Apprentice Act to enable them to have better opportunities.
- Large numbers of SCs depend on agricultural wages to sustain themselves and thus agricultural wages needs to be revised every five years.

- National Finance and Development Corporation for SCs and Safai karamcharis and State level SCDCs providing credit to SCs have been facing the problem of low recovery rate of loans from the beneficiaries. There is need to restructure the schemes so that they become more sustainable. Further, the corporations need to be thoroughly professionalized so that programmes financed by them help develop entrepreneurial skills of the loanees. The capital available at their disposal may be increased substantially.

- A new scheme "Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers" formulated to rehabilitate scavengers through training, and extension of loans and subsidies in a time bound manner should be implemented in a missionary mode with commitment and zeal.

(c) Protective Measures

- There is a need to complement the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 with a promotional legislation which should cover the rights of SCs with respect to education, vocational training, higher education and employment. Such a legislation may be drafted which clearly spells out what is to be done and who should do it.
- The implementation of the PCR Act 1955 and SC and ST (POA) Act, 1989 has to be enforced in letter and spirit to bring about speech justice to the aggrieved.
- Elimination of caste-based discrimination and harassment in educational institutions should be ensured by institutions by establishing "Equal Opportunity Offices".

Reservation for Scheduled Castes

- Action needs to be taken to clear the backlog in filling up SC reserved posts of various categories in the government. The government shall also explore all possibilities of introducing affirmative action including reservations in the private sector. There is a need to ensure effective and meaningful implementation of SCSP.
- A Committee for monitoring implementation of the programmes under SCSP will be set up which will ensure that each Ministry's allocation of SCSP is indicated well in advance. If any particular Ministry is not able to utilize the earmarked allocation action should be initiated to transfer the unused fund available to those Ministries/Departments which have implemented the SCSP effectively.

Other Backward Classes

The strategy for development of Other Backward Classes is in educational, economic and social development. Details of approach in each category are given below:

(a) Educational Development

(i) Elementary Education

- Reservation in all the Central and Centrally aided schools needs to be ensured.
- Post Matric Scholarship scheme should be revised by enhancing the income ceiling for eligibility and rate of scholarship and maintenance allowance, as this has not been revised since 1998.
- Incentives in the form of abolition of tuition fee, free supply of books, mid-day meals, scholarships etc.

(ii) Post Matric Education

- Continued education through the secondary and higher education stages must be ensured.
- Reservation in all the Central and Centrally aided colleges/ professional institutes needs to be ensured.
- Post-Matric Scholarship scheme should be revised by enhancing the income ceiling for eligibility and rate of scholarship and maintenance allowance, as this has not been revised since 1998.
- The existing coaching scheme for OBCs needs to be revised to attract good, professionally reputed coaching institutions.

- Wherever hostel facilities are not available for OBC students, they should be provided facilities in general hostels by earmarking a certain percentage of seats for them.
- National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for OBCs should also be formulated similar to those for SCs and STs so that OBC students can also go abroad for better educational and professional courses which are generally not available in the country.

(b) **Economic Development**

- There is a need to ensure upgradation of skills of Backward Classes categories so that they can compete better in the market.
- Credit flow must be unhampered and easy to access, especially in occupations which have been the traditional forte of OBCs.
- A suitable marketing strategy needs to be worked out on the lines of TRIFED to market the products manufactured by small artisans.
- The strength and capability of NBCFDC should be augmented.

(c) **Social Development**

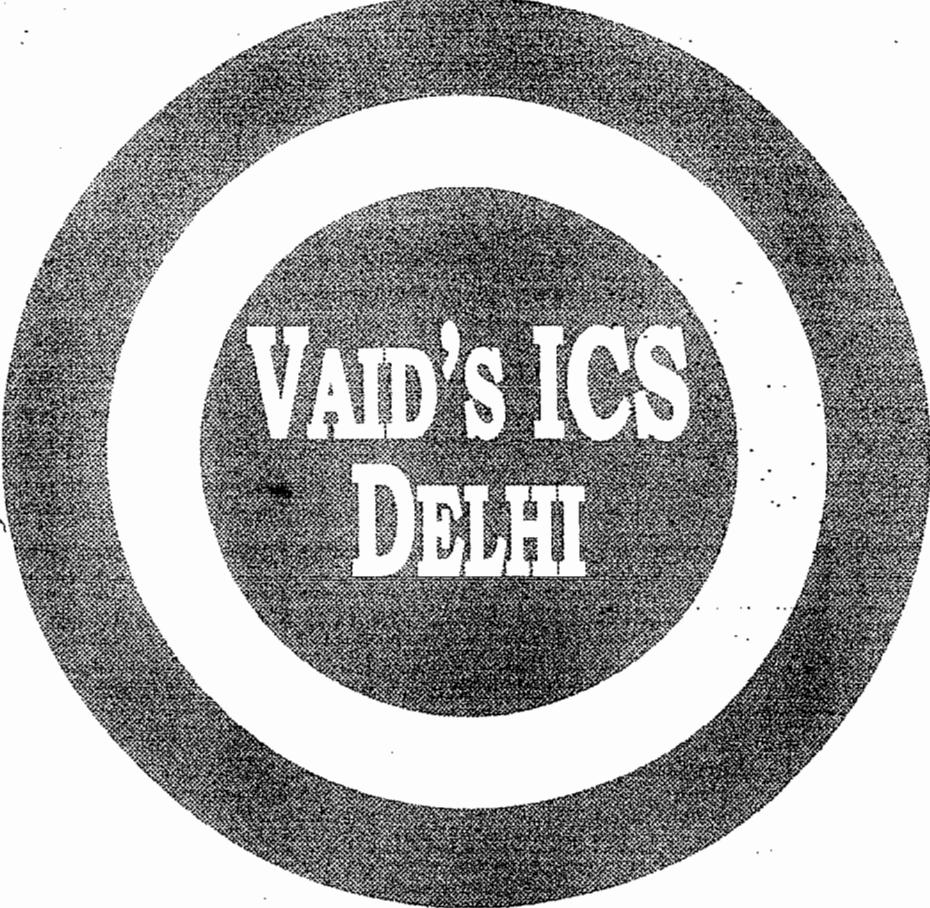
- Proper demographic data on OBCs is necessary for for-

mulating realistic policies and programmes for their development.

- The government should identify occupational diseases prevalent among the backward classes' people and take steps to prevent and treat such diseases.
- The income ceiling of Rs 2.5 lakh per annum for purposes of obtaining OBC certificates may be periodically reviewed to make it more realistic.

Outlay in the XI Five Year Plan, 2007-12

To implement various programmes/ schemes, the Ministry has been allocated Rs. 13,043 crores for the XI Five Year Plan. Outlay for the Ministry is 0.6% of total XI plan outlay of Central Government. The scheme-wise break up of this outlay, as given in the Eleventh Plan document published by the Planning Commission. The document divides the schemes of the Ministry into two broad groups, viz. Backward Classes (i.e. SCs & OBCs) and Social Welfare (i.e. Disability & Social Defence), as also according to Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The total outlay for SCs & OBCs in the XI Plan is Rs. 5011.21 crores for Central Sector Schemes and Rs. 6080.8 crores for Centrally Sponsored Schemes.



VAID'S ICS
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P.S. — STUDENTS ARE ADVISED TO DOWNLOAD LATEST ANNUAL REPORTS OF
(I) MINISTRY FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS
(II) MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT

XITH PLAN VAID'S MID TERM APPRAISAL (2011)

Social Justice

Persistent socio-economic backwardness among the socially disadvantaged groups of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), minorities and other vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, aged, and social defence groups, including victims of drug abuse and alcoholism resulting from inequality, deprivation, and exclusion has been specifically addressed in the Eleventh Plan through the approach of 'faster and inclusive growth.'

Despite a perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status of the disadvantaged groups, much more needs to be done to ensure that these groups take full advantage of India's growth. This situation warrants greater efforts and commitment to pursue the Eleventh Plan agenda of inclusive growth. This calls for a three-pronged strategy : (i) social empowerment; (ii) economic empowerment; and (iii) social justice, to ensure removal of disparities and elimination of exploitation.

SCHEDULED CASTES

The effort in the Eleventh Plan had been directed toward accelerating the process of socio-economic development among SCs so as to bring them on equal footing with the rest of society. 'Inclusive growth' is thus seen as an instrument to ensure social inclusion to SCs and other similarly situated socially disadvantaged groups who are subjected to socio-economic disabilities, particularly those arising from untouchability and social exclusion. (See Box 8.1 for specific commitments).

As per 2001 Census, SCs accounted for 16.2% million (16.2% STs for 84.32 million (8.2% minorities for 12.90 million (10.2% persons with disabilities for 1.1 million (2.1% engaged for 76.62 million (7.5%). It was estimated by the Mandal Commission that OBCs accounted for 27% of the country's total population.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Education being the most effective instrument for socio-economic empowerment, high priority continues to be accorded to improving the educational status of SCs, especially of women and rural children in this category. Basic literacy, enrolment and dropout rates for SCs in comparison with the general population are given in 8.1. The data clearly show that there has been an improvement over time but gaps persist.

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Pre-Matric Scholarships (PMS) to SC students, involving 50% central assistance to states over and above their earlier committed amount, has been accorded high priority in the Eleventh Plan. The scheme has been awarded to all eligible SC students to pursue studies from pre-matriculation and in all courses. In the first three years of the Eleventh Plan (2007-08 to 2009-10), the anticipated expenditure was of the order of 2536.6 crore, amounting to 119.36% utilization of the Eleventh Plan allocation of Rs. 2,125 crore. A total of 104 lakh SC students have benefited under the scheme during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan.

There is a need to develop a suitable administrative mechanism at the state and district levels so as to implement this scheme more effectively. Timely disbursement of scholarships through banks across states and UTs is needed so as to ensure that no SC student faces difficulties and disruption in pursuing further studies. There is also a need to enhance the stipend amount as well as the income ceiling limit under the scheme, which have not been revised since 2003, linking it up with movements in the consumer price index.

The Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for the children of those engaged in unclean occupations, which was launched in 1977-78 is another important scheme for financial assistance to children of

Box 8.1

Commitments of the Eleventh Plan

Social Empowerment

- Pre-matric scholarships for children of those who are engaged in unclean occupations need to be enhanced; with a change in the central assistance from 50:50 to 100%.
- Financial assistance to SC students to access quality education in top class educational institutions.
- Modification of the Coaching and Allied scheme is needed to ensure more coverage.
- Vocational training/skill development programmes for students who discontinued education after schooling through ITI, polytechnics, or other institutes.
- Both Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes should be revised by enhancing the income ceiling for eligibility and rate of scholarship and maintenance allowance.
- National Overseas Scholarships Scheme for OBCs to be formulated; this would be similar to that for SCs and STs.
- Up gradation of skills of such categories so that they can compete better in the market.
- There is an imperative need to carry out a census of OBCs now or in the next Census in 2011.
- The income ceiling of Rs. 2.5 lakh per annum for purposes of obtaining an OBC certificate may be periodically reviewed to make it more realistic.

Economic Empowerment

- A Commission on Land Reforms will be set up look into issues of : (i) continued possession and effective uses of land distributed earlier to SCs under various programmes/legislative interventions; and (ii) availability of land for distribution to SCs/STs/landless families.
- State governments to revise agricultural wages every five years.
- Financial institutions should restructure schemes for more sustainable and viable projects.

Social Justice

- In the Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers, rehabilitation should be in missionary mode with commitment and zeal.
- The implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, have to be enforced in letter and spirit to bring about speedy justice to the aggrieved.
- Action needs to be taken to clear the backlog in filling up SC reserved posts of various categories in the government.
- The Private sector will have to play a proactive role in providing sufficient job opportunities, especially to the marginalized and discriminated sections of society.
- Reservation for OBC students in all central and centrally aided schools/colleges/professional institutes.

parents engaged in occupations, such as scavengers, tanners, flayers, and sweepers. The scheme was revised in December 2008, bringing about a change in the pattern of central assistance from 50:50 to 100% central assistance to state/UTs over and above their committed liabilities. In addition, there was a substantial increase in the stipend amount from Rs. 40 to Rs. 75 per month for day scholars and from Rs. 300 to Rs. 375 per month for hostellers. The ad hoc grant was also raised from Rs. 550 to Rs. 750 per month for day scholars and from Rs. 600 to Rs. 1,000 per month for hostellers. The total expenditure in the first three years of the Eleventh Plan is of the order of Rs. 142.10 crore, which amounts to 89.37% of the Eleventh Plan allocation of Rs. 159 crore for the scheme. The allocation for Annual Plan 2010-11 is Rs. 80 crore.

This Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme was independently evaluated in 2008 by the Himalayan Region Study and Research Institute, Delhi and the Noble Social and Educational Society, Tirupati. The findings of these evaluation studies are given in Box 8.2

The Hostels for Scheduled Caste Girls and Boys Scheme launched in 1961-62 and revised during 1997-98, was renamed Babu Jagivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana in 2008-09. In order to promote education among SC girls, 100% central assistance is provided for the construction of new hostel buildings and for expanding existing girls' hostels by the Central Government for universities in states and UTs. Central assistance is also extended to NGOs and deemed universities to the extent of 90% for expansion of existing girls' hostels. Funding pattern for boys' hostels continues to be on 50:50 sharing basis between the states and Central Government whereas UTs receive 100% central assistance.

There is a need to reduce the time taken for the construction of hostels from five to two years. Hostel facilities need to be made available to SC students in rural areas. Efforts also need to be made towards the proper maintenance of hostel buildings. Evaluation studies have pointed out that infrastructure facilities are quite poor in most of the hostels, maintenance of the buildings is not up to the mark, and construction of new buildings is often hampered due to non-receipt of proper/complete proposals from the states.

The CSS of Coachmen and allied Schemes for weaker Sections, including SCs and OBCs, is being implemented since 1964-65 and 1997-98 respectively, as quality coaching for group A & B services under the central and state governments. The schemes are implemented through government and reprieved coaching institutions/institutions/universities. SC and OBC students whose family incomes of less than Rs. 2 lakh per annum are considered beneficiaries under the scheme. Coverage under the scheme has increased in the first three years of the Eleventh Plan with Rs. 11.70 crore (46.52%) has been utilized against the allocation of Rs. 25 crore for the Plan as a whole. Prolongation of funds reflects the fact that agencies are not coming forward to take advantage of the scheme. This results in deprivation of much-needed coaching to eligible candidates who are aspiring to gain employment. In order to help SC and OBC candidates compete and successfully avail of employment opportunities, the scheme needs to be implemented efficiently and spatially focus on rural areas. An outlay of Rs. 10 crore has been made in 2010-11.

A new Central Sector Scholarship scheme of higher education central scheme for SC students was introduced in 2008-09. The objective of the scheme is to provide liberal financial support to a maximum of 700 SC students per year admitted in pre-university educational institutes. Under this scheme 177 institutes of excellence spread all over the country have been identified. The total family income of a student from all sources should not exceed Rs. 2 lakh per annum. The total estimated expenditure in the first three years of the Eleventh Plan is Rs. 15.5 crore, which is only 27.67% of the Plan allocation of Rs. 56 crore. The outlay for the Annual Plan 2010-11 is Rs. 25 crore. The total number of beneficiaries anticipated to be covered in the first three years of the Eleventh Plan works out to 2,093 as against the Eleventh Plan target of covering 3,500 students. There is a need to increase the coverage under the scheme. Aspiring SC candidates should be provided much-needed special orientation and coaching for succeeding in the entrance examinations, thus facilitating their admissions into institutions of excellence. Larger coverage of SC candidates with special coaching would help enhance the effectiveness under the scheme as more candidates would be qualified to avail admission into desig-

Box 8.2

Pre-Matric Scholarships for Children of Those Engaged in Unclean Occupations — Major Findings of Evaluation Studies

- i. The Himalayan Region Study and Research Institute, Delhi (2008) — Bihar and Madhya Pradesh:
 - Low rates of scholarships for the hostellers and day scholars.
 - There is a much positive impact on enrolment, retention, and dropout rates of children in Madhya Pradesh than in Bihar.
 - There is improvement in attendance of children in both the states.
 - A majority (86.1%) of the beneficiaries intended to join higher levels of studies in Madhya Pradesh as compared to 25% beneficiaries in Bihar.
- ii. Noble Social and Educational Society, Tirupati (2008) — Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala:
 - A majority of the students in these four states said that the scholarship amount was not sufficient to meet their educational expenditure.
 - The problems faced by institutions of excessive documentation delay in sanction, and lack of proper communication from concerned officials.
 - A majority of the students demanded payment of scholarships in cash.
 - Scholarship amount is not sufficient to meet their educational expenditure.
 - Need to create awareness among families in unclean occupations.
 - A sufficient number of educational institutions may be established for the benefit of students from unclean occupations.
 - Transfer of funds from the Central Government to state governments in time to release the scholarship amounts in time.

Source: Evaluation studies.

Under another scheme, the Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship scheme for SC students was launched in 2006 with the objective of providing financial assistance to SC students pursuing MPhil and PhD. Under this scheme, 1,333 fellowships are provided annually to SC beneficiaries. The scheme is implemented through the University Grants Commission (UGC). The response of the target group has been good and is growing. Therefore, there is a justified need to increase the number of fellowships made available every year. The estimated expenditure of Rs. 271.3 crore (111.64% of the plan) has been incurred in the first three years of the Eleventh Plan against the total allocation of Rs. 243 crore. The allocation for the Annual Plan 2010-11 is Rs. 160 crore. The RGNF, except for a budget provision under the nodal ministry, is implemented in its entirety by UGC.

The National Overseas Scholarship scheme for SC students for pursuing higher studies abroad leading to master-level courses and PhD programmes in specific field of engineering, technology, and science, was implemented as a non-Plan scheme in 1954-55. In 2007, the scheme was converted to a central sector plan scheme under the Eleventh Plan with certain amendments increasing the number of scholarship awards to 30 and an income ceiling of Rs. 25,000 per month. The estimated expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan is Rs. 11.30 crore which is 80.71% of the Eleventh Plan allocation of Rs. 14 crore. During first three years of the Eleventh Plan, only 57 students benefited under the scheme. The Annual Plan allocation for 2010-11 is Rs. 6 crore.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Accomplishing 'inclusive growth' is also envisaged through the economic empowerment of SCs living in economic backwardness. Available data suggest that 36.8% rural SCs and 39.9% urban SCs lived below the poverty line (2004-05) in contrast to the 16.1% rural non-SC/ST and 16% urban non-SC/ST population. Various employment-cum-income generating schemes are being implemented with a view to improving their economic conditions and for 'making them economically self-reliant.'

The National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSCFDC) was set up also needs to be assessed. A quick evaluation study of Working of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, and its impact on the Abolition of Untouchability was conducted by the National School of Law, Bangalore in 2006. The recommendations of the study include creation of a comprehensive legislation covering both the PCR and POA Acts as well as laws, such as the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993, and Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, 1976; setting up of a cell to deal exclusively with caste related crimes; and establishing special courts under the Act to deal with caste-based offences in all states and UTs with appointments of prosecutors, police personnel, and other officials. Moreover, since the practice of untouchability still prevails, either directly or indirectly, there is a need for stringent enforcement of existing legislations along with spreading awareness.

On the basis of recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers on Dalit Affairs, a new PM Shramik Mantri Adarsh Gramin Yojana (PMAGY) has been conceived and is in the process of being launched. The objective of the scheme is to ensure integrated development of 44,000 SC villages with more than 50% SC population by providing supplementary support in filling the critical gaps arising in other relevant sectoral development schemes and programmes. A budgetary provision of Rs. 100 crore has been made in 2009-10 to launch the scheme on a pilot basis with a coverage of 1,000 villages. As the scheme is directed towards addressing the developmental deficit besetting the SCs in the identified villages across the country, an expeditious operationalization of the scheme is imperative.

There are several SC settlements that are located on the outskirts of main habitations and are segregated. Many of these SC settlements do not have access to basic services, such as drinking water, approach roads, health facilities, and sanitation. Efforts are therefore, needed to ensure that all the marginalized and deprived settlements, especially the remote and inaccessible areas are provided with basic amenities.

SCHEDULED TRIBES

The STs are among the most backward among similarly disadvantaged groups who live in relative isolation but with a distinct culture and identity. The Eleventh Plan's inclusive growth approach is synonymous with social justice as it primarily addresses the issues of exclusion, exploitation, marginalization, unemployment, governance concerning tribals and tribal areas.

As per the 2001 Census, the ST population was 8.923 million constituting 8.2% of the total population of the country. Out of the total ST population, 2.59 million (3.07%) belong to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) earlier referred to as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs).

While the Eleventh Plan commitments for STs cut across various developmental sectors and are covered under the overall purview of the implementation of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), ST-specific programmes are implemented by the nodal Ministry of Tribal Affairs. In the Eleventh Plan, the inclusive growth process, with respect to STs is operationalised through the adoption of a three-pronged strategy : (i) social-empowerment, especially through educational development, (ii) economic empowerment through employment and income-generating activities ensuring essential livelihood; and (iii) social justice through prevention of exploitation, land alienation, involuntary displacement, and survival, protection and development of endangered PVTGs. To this effect, the Eleventh Plan specifically spells out certain aspirational provisions, (see box 3)

Recognizing that educational development provides the essential basis for social empowerment, various schemes extending incen-

tives, financial assistance, coaching, and hostel facilities are being implemented for the benefit of STs. Data regarding literacy, enrolment, and dropout rates for STs in comparison with the general population are summarized in Table 8.2. The data clearly show that there has been improvement over time but gaps remain.

There are certain parallel educational development schemes implemented for SCs and STs with the same objective and, by and large, with the same modalities. These include the PMS, Top Class Education Scheme, the RGNF scheme for pursuing higher studies leading to MPhil and PhD, National Overseas Scholarships, and Hostels and Coaching and Allied Scheme. Details pertaining to these schemes are given under the review of schemes meant for SCs. However, the financial and physical achievements of these schemes with respect to STs are now discussed.

- The likely expenditure during first three years of the Eleventh Plan under the PMS scheme for STs would be of the order of Rs. 699.4 crore, that is, 46.73% of the Eleventh Plan outlay of Rs. 1,496.3 crore for the scheme. For Annual Plan 2010-11 Rs. 558.03 crore has been provided for the PMS scheme for ST students. The Eleventh Plan's physical target of beneficiaries has been placed at 55 lakh. The actual beneficiaries during the first three years are estimated to be 31.86 lakh indicating nearly 58% coverage so far. State governments often do not submit complete proposals for PMS funding to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in time, which causes delay in releasing funds to the states, thus adversely affecting the prospects of ST students pursuing post-matric studies.
- The Eleventh Plan allocation for the hostels scheme is Rs. 273 crore. The scheme was revised on 1 April, 2005 to provide 100% funding for construction of hostels for both boys and girls in extremism affected areas. The likely expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan would be Rs. 166 crore, that is, 60.8% of the Plan outlay. An outlay of Rs. 74 crore has been made for Annual Plan 2010-11. A physical target of covering 120,000 beneficiaries had been envisaged during the Eleventh Plan. As against that, an impressive coverage of more than twice the Eleventh Plan target has been achieved in the first three years. A disproportionate increase in the actual coverage of beneficiaries against the Eleventh Plan target also reflects the fact that the target fixed did not adequately reflect the socio-demographic and spatial aspects and the prevailing educational backwardness and demand arising there from.
- The Eleventh Plan allocation for Coaching and Allied Scheme is Rs. 300 crore. The likely expenditure during first three years of the Eleventh Plan would be Rs. 129.7 crore, which is 43.23% of the Plan outlay. A total of 12.91 lakh beneficiaries are likely to be assisted through the scheme during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan. An outlay of Rs. 17.5 crore has been made for Annual Plan 2010-11. As per the revised scheme (with effect from January 2005) construction of hostels for both boys and girls in extremism affected areas receive 100% central funding; in other places the construction cost for ST boys' hostels is shared between the Centre and the States in a 50-50 ratio. Due to non-identification of suitable organizations/institutions, the scheme is not being implemented in time with the desired coverage. Therefore, there is the need for proactively identifying accredited institutions and enabling them to avail of the support extended under the scheme in time so that no aspiring ST candidate is deprived of entitled coaching.
- The physical coverage achieved under the Top Class Education scheme, is very poor as only 486 (4.5%) ST students benefited through the scheme during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan against the target of covering 10,105 beneficiaries. The likely expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan would be of Rs. 4.1 crore, which is only 5.55% of the Plan outlay of Rs. 73.80 crore for the scheme. An outlay of Rs. 2.50 crore has been allocated for Annual Plan 2010-11. The poor progress made both in financial and physical terms

Box 8.3

Commitments under the Eleventh Plan

Social Empowerment

- Establishing requisite number of primary schools with proper school buildings, hostels, and water and toilet facilities (particularly for girls' school).
- To set up residential high schools for ST boys and girls at suitable places.
- Timely distribution of fellowships, scholarships, textbooks, uniforms, and school bags to students.
- Evaluation of the ICDS/anganwadi schemes for tribal areas and removing their shortcomings.
- Emphasis on adult education to be paid adequate attention.
- Ensuring affordable and accountable primary healthcare facilities to STs and bridging the gap in rural healthcare services through a cadre of ASHAs.
- Ensuring that the PESA Act functions as instrument of self-governance, preparing and implementing schemes in Scheduled Areas.
- Efforts to conserve the eco-system along with stress on economic programmes for PTGs. Formulation and execution of a national plan of action for tribals. Provision of drinking water supply to the uncovered tribal areas.
- Construction of rainwater harvesting structures. Electrification and telecom coverage in tribal villages. Setting up of the National Institute of Tribal Affairs (NITA).
- Effective operationalization of the provisions of the Fifth Schedule needs to be done urgently. The Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) to be proactive while functioning as an advisory body to the state government in matters relating to STs.

Economic Empowerment

- Efforts to revitalize and expand the agriculture sector. To open training centres to impart skill development training to tribals in diverse occupations.
- Ensuring better coordination at higher levels and efficient delivery at the field level by lending agencies, such as NSTFDC and TRIFED.
- Scheme for quality improvement, higher productivity, and regeneration of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) species. Recruitment of ST women in posts of forest guards, forest rangers, and forest rangers by lowering educational qualifications.
- Infrastructure development in the Fifth and Sixth Scheduled Areas through utilization of grants available under Article 275(I) of the Constitution.

Social Justice

- Steps to prevent exploitation through the effective implementation of SC/ST (POA) Act, 1989.
- Amendment to the Land Acquisition Act, 1927; Forest Conservation Act, 1980; Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition and Development) Act, 1957; and the National Mineral Policy, 1993. Displacement and rehabilitation of tribals also emphasized.
- Plugging of loopholes in implementing laws for preventing alienation of tribal land. Effective follow-up actions of the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007.

warrants a re-look at the modalities involved in implementing the scheme. The procedural delay needs to be addressed and a congenial administrative process needs to be developed facilitating larger coverage of beneficiaries under the scheme.

- The expenditure likely to be incurred under the RGNF scheme during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan

would be Rs. 87 crore, which is 58% of the Plan outlay of Rs. 150 crore for the scheme. An outlay of Rs. 75 crore has been allocated for Annual Plan 2010-11. As against the Eleventh Plan physical target of 13,870 beneficiaries, 4,979 ST candidates are expected to benefit during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan.

- The scheme of ashram schools in the TSP areas is operational since 1990-91 to promote educational development in accordance with the social and cultural milieu of the tribals, especially focusing on ST girls and children of PVTGs. The likely expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan would be Rs. 91 crore, that is 61.65% of the Plan outlay of Rs. 147.60 crore for the scheme. An outlay of Rs. 75 crore has been allocated for Annual Plan 2010-11. A total of 37,139 beneficiaries are envisaged to benefit under the scheme during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan.

A review of the implementation of the scheme reveals that the delay in construction of school buildings affects the programme and prospects of aspiring ST students adversely. Several schools are reported to be poorly maintained with little or no infrastructural facilities. Unless basic facilities with minimum standards are provided in Ashram Schools, it will not only discourage inmates to continue in these schools but their focus on education and training capability be diverted. Books and teaching medium up to the primary level should be in tribal dialects to the extent possible and the primary school teachers should also be drawn from local tribal communities. In case, schoolbooks are either not provided or are provided quite late, after the session has started. This defeats the purpose for which the textbooks are supplied free of cost to these students.

The CSS Educational Component in the Low Literacy Pockets was initiated in 2008-09 and renamed as Strengthening Education among STs (Low Literacy Literacy Districts). The revised scheme is being implemented in 34 identified low literacy districts where the ST population is 25% or more and ST female literacy rate is below 50%. The revised scheme envisages convergence with SSA and GBV schemes of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). It meets the requirements of primary-level students as well as middle/secondary-level students and provides residential facility for primary students facilitating their retention in schools. Besides primary education, the scheme also takes care of skill upgradation of STs in various vocations. Establishment of the District Education Support Agency (DESA) is also taken up in each low literacy district, which is required to make efforts to ensure the scheme's success and also play the role of monitor and facilitator, in liaison with various organisations. The Eleventh Plan allocation for the scheme is Rs. 100 crore. The likely expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan would be Rs. 93.3 crore, that is 58% of the Plan outlay of Rs. 161.20 crore. A target of covering 1.25 lakh beneficiaries during the Eleventh Plan has been set. The actual number of beneficiaries covered during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan is anticipated to be around 0.955 indicating physical achievements of 76%. Non-submission of expected numbers of proposals from state governments, NGOs, and other eligible agencies is the main reason behind the shortfall in achieving targets. Concerted efforts need to be made in motivating the states and other implementing agencies to take maximum advantage of the scheme. To this effect, procedures involved under the scheme need to be simplified.

There are 17 Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) located in various states and UTs providing necessary inputs for formulating suitable policies and programmes, besides conducting relevant research, student surveys, and training. The potentialities of these institutions are not being harnessed fully. TRIs with their technical and professional manpower can be directed to take up action research participatory approach, especially with respect to PVTG development and livelihood programmes. In order to ensure coordinated efforts of these TRIs, it is necessary to designate a TRI as a nodal agency representing the respective region — East, West, South, North-East, and Central. There are eight sub-schemes under the umbrella scheme of TRIs. The likely expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan under for the TRIs scheme would be Rs. 28.75 crore, which is 36.80% of the Plan outlay of Rs. 78.12

crore for the scheme. An outlay of Rs. 47 crore has been allocated for Annual Plan 2010-11.

Economic Empowerment

Economic development among the tribals largely depends upon agriculture and its allied activities. Since more than one-fifth of the population depends on the agriculture and forests, their ability to cope with the changing economic scenario, especially in taking advantage of the new economic avenues is minimal, which calls for capacity building in diversifying their livelihood sources. Bamboo and tendu leaves constitute two important livelihood sources in a majority of the tribal areas of the PESA states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Orissa. Bamboo, popularly known as the poor man's timber, is used by the tribals for making everything from cradles to graves. Collection of tendu leaves forms their mainstay during the lean summer period. Management, harvest, and conservation of these two important livelihood sources needs to be handed over to elected Panchayats in conformity with the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996. Alternative and supplementary resources for subsistence and survival have assumed priority in the context of fast depleting forest resources and agricultural productivity and the growing population.

The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) was set up in 2001 to provide exclusive boost to the economic development of STs. The Eleventh Plan outlay under the scheme is Rs. 260 crore but no expenditure was made during Annual Plans of 2007-08 and 2008-09. An outlay of Rs. 70 crore has been allocated for Annual Plan 2010-11. As against the physical target of covering 7.56 lakh beneficiaries during the Eleventh Plan period, the number of beneficiaries covered during the first three years of the Plan is estimated to be around 4.57 lakh.

A quick evaluation study was carried out by the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) on the functioning of State Tribal Development Finance Corporations (STDFCs) in Karnataka and Maharashtra. While confirming a positive impact of STDFCs, the study recommended that STDFCs need to articulate and strengthen the 'equity plus' concept in organization, visualization, and intervention not merely with respect to the relevance and repayment of loans, but also payment that meets economic as well as social and well-being goals. Equity plus' calls for a clear focus on social gains and opportunity costs of lending in terms of greater professionalism of the agency, more focused approach in lending, better selection of beneficiaries, and increased focus on strengthening of State Channelising Agencies (SCAs). Business reform both at the business and managerial level needs to be taken up so as to make SCAs effective and self-reliant financial instrument to empower the tribals. In this context, there is a need for a re-engineering exercise to assess whether the mandate of the corporations would be redrawn so as to bring about structural changes, which will ensure that the requirements of the STs are met more effectively. Unless such action is taken, there is a concern that these corporations would become a permanent burden on the government.

Tribal Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (TRIFED), a multi-state organization, was set up in 1987 with the mandate of marketing tribal products as a service provider and market developer. A revised form of the TRIFED was introduced during the year 2007-08 replacing the then existing scheme 'Price Support to TRIFED' that focused on developing market for Tribal products/produce. Under the new scheme a comprehensive road map has been chalked out for the Eleventh Plan period focusing on the following four activities : (i) retail marketing development activity, (ii) Minor Forest Produce (MFP) marketing development activity, (iii) vocational training, skill upgradation, and capacity building of ST artisans and MFP gatherers, and (iv) research development/Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) activity.

The likely expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan would be Rs. 61.1 crore, which is 87.78% of the Plan outlay of Rs. 69.59 crore for the scheme. An outlay of Rs. 12 crore has been allocated for Annual Plan 2010-11. TRIFED is marketing its products through 39 outlets (26 outlets are its own and 13 outlets are on a consignment basis in association with state-level organizations). TRIFED would need to clearly establish as to where and how it can trigger socio-economic changes among the tribals through its activities, thus rationalizing its relevance.

The Vocational Training Centre in Tribal Areas scheme was launched in 1992-93 to develop the skills of the ST youth for a variety of jobs as well as for self-employment and improving their socio-economic conditions by enhancing their incomes. The scheme was revised in April 2009. The revised scheme provides enhanced financial norms and a time schedule for submission of proposals. The scheme makes the organizations responsible for establishing linkages with placement services and arranging easy micro-finance/loans for trained youth through financial institutions, the NSTFDC, and banks. This scheme assumes significance as it enables tribal youth to improve their skills and abilities to take up income generating activities and also final placement in the open market, which would wean them away from the influence of extremists. To this effect the newly initiated programme the National Skill Development Mission provides opportunities for the tribal youth to take advantage of the same. The likely expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan would be Rs. 19.44 crore, which is 19.52% of the Plan outlay of Rs. 99.56 crore for the scheme. An outlay of Rs. 9 crore has been allocated for Annual Plan 2010-11.

Social Justice

Owing to their isolated existence, the tribals are not equipped to deal with the ever changing and complex socio-economic developments engulfing them. On the other hand, adversities have made them susceptible to exploitation, atrocities, and crimes, alienation from their land, denial of their forest rights, and overall exclusion either directly or indirectly from their rightful entitlements.

The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, (PCR Act) and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, (POA Act) are two important legal instruments to prevent all types of social discrimination like untouchability, exploitation, and atrocities. The National Crime Bureau Report 2007 states that highly endemic crimes/atrocities are being reported in the states like Andhra Pradesh (27.01%), Rajasthan (20.01%), Andhra Pradesh (11.06%), Chhattisgarh (11.01%), Odisha (7.01), and Jharkhand (4.08%). Therefore, there is an urgent need for effective enforcement of the special legislations of PCR and POA Acts and provisions of the IPC with more stringent measures towards protection of tribals.

The provision made in the Fifth Schedule has enough strength to exercise all actions that ensure survival, protection, and development of the tribals living in tribal areas. Regular monitoring and surveillance of the situation prevailing in the Fifth Schedule Areas needs to be taken up followed by an action plan for an effective delivery system through the powers bestowed upon. Among others, the steps that need to be taken include protection of forest and land rights with a roadmap for restoration of lost claims and building terms of tribals to do administration and development work and developing an administration without encroaching on their social and cultural institutions.

Grants-in-Aid under Article 275(1)

Grants-in-Aid under Article 275(1) is a central sector scheme under which 100% financial assistance is being provided to the states through the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The funds are released based on specific projects, such as raising critical infrastructure and enhancing Human Development Indices of STs for bridging the gaps between STs and the general population. The likely expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan would be Rs. 1129.2 crore. An outlay of Rs. 1,046 crore has been allocated for Annual Plan 2010-11.

The first provision of the Article 275(1), of the Constitution mandates funds for raising the level of administration in tribal areas. Although the Seventh and Eighth Finance Commissions recommended assistance for this purpose, the practice has been discontinued thereafter. The word 'administration' is referred to in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution in a comprehensive sense. There is a need to initiate annual exercises to assess the financial needs of the states for improving the level of administration in the tribal areas and the agreed requirements may be treated as a charge on the Consolidated Fund of India.

The Eklavya Model Residential School scheme has been operation since 1997-98; it is run out of the funds under Article 275(1) for providing quality education to ST students in the tribal areas. To improve educational infrastructure and standard of education in

tribal areas, these schools are modeled on the line of Navodaya Vidyalayas.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

There are 75 PVTGs earlier known as PTGs, in need of categorical attention in view of their fragile living conditions emerging out of their prevailing socio-economic backwardness, vulnerability, and diminishing numbers. In order to address their specific needs and problems, the Scheme of Development for PVTGs is being implemented with flexible terms. Funds under this scheme are made available for those items/activities which are critical for the survival, protection, and development of PVTGs individually. As required, a long-term Conservation-eum-Development (CCD) Plan for PVTGs under the Eleventh Plan prepared by the states and UTs is on the basis of requirements assessed through baseline surveys conducted and by adopting a hamlet/habitat development approach. The likely expenditure during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan would be Rs. 333.6 crore, which is 49.7% of the Eleventh Plan outlay of Rs. 670 crore for the scheme. An outlay of Rs. 85 crore has been allocated for Annual Plan 2010-11. As against the Eleventh Plan target of covering 110 lakh beneficiaries, so far 22.22 lakh beneficiaries are reportedly covered under the scheme.

Monitoring of implementing agencies at the grassroots level is vital for ensuring that the benefits actually reach the needy PVTGs. A convergence of schemes of different ministries of Government of India needs to be done for the welfare of PVTGs. The knowledge about the schemes needs to be disseminated widely amongst tribals, NGOs, and government and local bodies. Supplementing the government's efforts, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) needs to be associated with monitoring implementation agencies, especially at the block and panchayat levels. In view of prevailing nutritional deficiencies, special care towards provision of required nutrition should be ensured on a sustainable basis. Simultaneously, forest security round the year also needs to be ensured among PVTGs by promoting farming and clearly marked reserved areas in forests to which they can have free access for collection of MFPs and shifting cultivation. There is a need for a sensitization and training drive, especially for forest rights and conservation and other vagueness concerned with the entitlements and rights of PVTGs, especially in collecting forest products and grazing.

Sustainable economic rehabilitation of tribes to their permanent settlement is a recognized need. Healthcare facilities, PVTG hamlets and infrastructure development like roads, drinking water, and electricity are imperatively needed. Ekavay Model Residential Schools need to be set up in PVTG areas to ensure quality education among PVTGs. PVTGs need to be made aware of their rights and entitlements as provided in the Forest Rights Act with a special drive on awareness generation, marketing of minor forest products, agriculture, and other products collected and produced by the tribals. TRIFED needs to give special attention to PVTGs. In the interior areas, communication needs to be improved so as to facilitate food, medicines, and other medical services reaching PVTGs in time. Strict surveillance and monitoring of the utilization of funds and proper implementation delivering desired results among PVTGs needs to be carried out on a regular basis.

The extension of funds and benefits is envisaged under various other schemes. Convergence of the efforts made through these schemes needs to be ensured for greater effectiveness.

Fifth And Sixth Scheduled Areas

The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution deals with the areas where the percentage of the tribal population is 50% or more. It covers tribal areas in the nine states of Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and Rajasthan. The Fifth Schedule Areas have a special position as derived from the powers to the governor, especially with respect to preventing transfer of land from tribals and private money lending. To this effect, periodic reports on the tribal situation and governance from the governors of the states are to be submitted to the President of India. Assured submission of the reports not only provides the basis for speedy socio-economic development among the tribals and the tribal areas, but also for a proactive action plan in preventing emerging/burgeoning adversities.

Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Ar-

eas) Act, 1996

The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, (PESA, 1996) was enacted and came into operation on 24 December 1996 with the objective of endowing Panchayats in Scheduled Areas with such powers and authority so as to enable them to function as institutions of self-government. The Act, which extends to tribal areas in the nine states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan aims at bringing communities at the village level in the form of gram sabhas to the centre of governance in the tribal areas. However, not a single state has notified the rules so far, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have framed the rules but have not notified them. There are several critical issues/areas where the objectives of the Act could not be achieved even after more than one decade of its enactment. Prominent among them are as follows :

- Irregularity in elections in the three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions affecting the functioning of the institutions as per the provision of the PESA Act.

- The PESA Act has been enforced in nine states; however, not all states are following the provisions of the central act uniformly.

- The prevailing violence and unrest in tribal areas has affected the functioning of the gram sabhas/panchayats.

- There are some practical issues with the implementation of PESA Act particularly with respect to land acquisition and mining, which need to be discussed in detail with the state governments and sorted out.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and its rules were notified in 2008 but its implementation was made effective from January 2010. As on 30 November 2009, out of the 27 states, only 16 had filed claims for the title documents in the act, whereas the titles had been distributed in 11 states. The total number of claims received were 15,95,120 against which 1,74,227 titles have been distributed. The highest and lowest number of claims received are from the state of Chhattisgarh (4,57,853) and Jharkhand (4,539) respectively.

Displacement

Acquisition of land and displacement of the tribal people by various developmental projects is a recurring phenomenon in the tribal areas. Several policies have been implemented for the rehabilitation and resettlement of the affected people. In most cases, the tribals have been found vulnerable in the post-displacement period. The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2007, specifies that compensation claims shall be extended to all affected families with basic infrastructure facilities and amenities in the resettlement areas within the Fifth and Sixth Schedule Areas. It is imperative that the act is implemented in letter and spirit, so as to enable displaced tribal families to resettle with basic facilities and amenities that provide a conducive environment for their survival, protection, and development. Periodic status reports on the rehabilitation of the displaced tribals need to be prepared on a continuous basis with effective monitoring.

Forests and Minor Forest Produce

Forests are the life support systems of the tribals. All aspects of their economic, social, religious, and cultural life are closely linked to the forest that they inhabit. The tribal people are facing serious problems regarding utilization and rights over forest and land. They face constant harassment from local forest officials due to their inability to voice their entitlements and also because they do not possess land records. The e-governance system needs to be streamlined in the TSP areas so as to make legal record accessible online to the beneficiaries at the panchayat level.

Another vital issue is that of tribals utilizing forest resources, that is, Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP). It is estimated that 70% of NTFP is collected in the five states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh, where 65% of the tribal population lives (*Report of the Expert Group on Prevention of Alienation of Land and Its Restoration*, M/RD, GoI, 2004 : 114).

However, over the years it has been found that forests have suffered tremendous loss and depletion, adversely affecting the dependent tribals, with serious implications for their survival and sustenance.

Shifting Cultivation

The report of Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) indicates that only 6.5% of the households have been reportedly engaged in shifting cultivation in the country. The percentage of area under jhum cultivation is 9.5% in the North-Eastern region, while it is 0.5% for the central tribal belt. The practice of shifting cultivation poses a threat to the ecology of the region at large. Depleting productivity against the growing tribal population has also emerged as a serious concern. It is, therefore, necessary that alternative sources of income and employment are generated with the support of NSTFDC, STFDSS, and other agencies.

Tribal Unrest

By and large, the central tribal belt is engulfed and affected by extremism and unrest. Effective implementation of development programmes, especially in the absence of agencies/personnel, requires special strategies otherwise the isolation and exclusion of the tribals will increase further.

Voluntary Action

Voluntary action and NGOs play a role in the development of tribal areas supplementing governmental efforts, especially in generating awareness and capacity building among the tribals so as to improve their economic status so that they can lead a dignified life. NGOs and voluntary agencies cannot only hold the institutions accountable to the people to bridge the gap between development programmes and the tribals, but it can also act as an effective instrument in facilitating tribal access to facilities and services. There is also a need to involve NGOs working in the tribal areas in promoting effective implementation of the provision of the PESA Act 1996.

Resource Position

The pace of progress in terms of financial achievements during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan reflects that an expenditure of Rs. 950 crore (Rs. 1.9) has been incurred against a total central sector outlay of Rs. 103.15 crore that leaves a balance of Rs. 1,153.15 crore (Rs. 2.2) for the remaining two years of the Plan. The details of allocations made and the expenditure incurred are given in Table 8.3

SCHEDULED CASTE SUB-PLAN AND TRIBAL SUB-PLAN

The SCSP was originally introduced in 1979 under the name Special Component Plan, which was renamed the SCSP to bring the nomenclature in line with the TSP introduced in 1975. The main aim of SCSP is building on the inherent strengths of the SCs and STs through their overall socio-economic development.

The strategy of SCSP and TSP ensures channelizing an adequate flow of funds and benefits to SCs and STs in all sectors of development through the Annual Plans of states/UTs and the central ministries at least in proportion to their population, both in financial and physical terms.

Objectives of Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)

- i Substantial reduction in poverty and unemployment of SCs and STs.
- ii Creation of Productive Assets in their favour and providing them with livelihood opportunities on a sustainable basis.
- iii Human resource development of SCs and STs by providing adequate educational and health services.
- iv Provision of social, physical, and financial security to them against all types of exploitation and oppression.

At present 27 states/UTs are implementing SCSP, while 24 states/UTs are implementing TSP. During Annual Plan 2007-08, Rs. 37,296.11 crore was earmarked under SCSP, which accounted

for 15.92% of total Plan allocation. The earmarked allocation SCSP was slightly lower than the SC population, that is 16.20%. The earmarked allocation SCSP in Annual Plan 2008-09 was Rs. 42,746.94 crore constituting 14.18% of the total Plan allocation. This has shown a downward trend since some states like Chhattisgarh and Jammu & Kashmir have not indicated any outlay under SCSP. Under TSP, outlays of Rs. 18,478.07 crore and Rs. 23,484.27 crore were earmarked for Annual Plan 2007-08 and Annual Plan 2008-09 respectively, amounting to 8.65% and 8.61% of the total Plan allocation, which was in consonance with the share of the ST population that is 8.2% in the national total.

Issues with Implementation of SCSP/TSP

A review of the implementation of SCSP and TSP for Annual Plan 2008-09 reveals the following weaknesses:

- While most states are earmarking funds as per the percentage of their SC population under SCSP, some states like Assam (2.01%), Goa (0.78%), Gujarat (0.89%), Karnataka (12.34%), Rajasthan (14.87%), and Tamil Nadu (14.87%) have earmarked funds less than the corresponding SC share in the population of the state. The situation is somewhat better under TSP wherein most states except Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, and Sikkim have earmarked funds under TSP as per the percentage of ST population.
- All the states/UTs except Jammu & Kashmir and Chhattisgarh have created separate budget heads/sub-heads to prevent diversion of funds. Most of the state governments/UT administrations have followed a sectoral approach in earmarking funds under SCSP and TSP.
- Following the Planning Commission's guidelines, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Uttarakhand have empowered pr. secretary/secretary, Department of SC/ST with financial powers for SCSP and TSP funds.

Except for a few states such as Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, the other states do not seem to be fixing realistic physical targets for SCSP and TSP schemes/programmes. Several states are not conducting benchmark surveys and also not preparing prospective plans and vision documents for long-term goals and outcomes of the schemes/programmes. States, such as Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh have adopted the practice of pooling funds from all the concerned departments and placing them under the nodal department of SC and ST Welfare.

Preparation of SCSP and TSP documents earmarking funds in each Annual Plan as per guidelines with prioritized schemes that benefit the SC and ST population is a prerequisite. Nevertheless, states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Kerala, Punjab, Tripura, and West Bengal did not submit the SCSP and TSP documents along with their Annual Plan for 2008-09.

Though the state governments are earmarking funds under SCSP and TSP as per the guidelines, the actual expenditure met under SCSP and TSP is typically way below the desired level of expenditure. State governments need to ensure full utilization of funds and also the intended benefits reaching the target groups in terms of measurable outcomes.

Expenditure incurred during the first two years of the Eleventh Five Year Plan under SCA to SCSP was Rs. 501.15 crore and Rs. 601.59 crore and that to TSP was Rs. 678.26 crore and 780.87 crore respectively. Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution are 100% central assistance provided to the states to supplement the efforts of the state governments. During Annual Plans 2007-08 and 2008-09, Rs. 400 crore and Rs. 416 crore respectively were made available to the states for Scheduled Area Administration and to raise their level of administration at par with other regions.

Planning Commission guidelines clearly emphasize the need to set up SCSP cells in central ministries/departments. Yet, ministries/departments have not set up the cells to look after the implementation of SCSP and TSP. Recently, some of the ministries/depart-

ments have expressed willingness to formulate schemes and earmark funds under SCSP and TSP. The central ministries/departments need to prepare SCSP and TSP documents, which will provide a definite plan of action and roadmap for the sectoral role and contributions towards the socio-economic development of SCs and STs.

The major issues relating to implementation of SCSP and TSP strategies are :

- Priority sectors and need-based schemes/programmes for the benefit of SCs/STs, such as education, health, and technical/vocational training have not been devised as per the needs based on equity considerations.

- Schemes related to minor irrigation, asset creation, housing, and land distribution have not been given adequate importance under SCSP and TSP. The allocations typically made are only notional in nature showing supposed benefits accruing to SCs/STs welfare. The funds allocated are often not budgeted.

- Since the secretary in-charge of SC and ST development is often not designated as the nodal officer, there is no controlling and monitoring mechanism for the planning, supervision and allocation of funds to these disadvantaged sectors.

Even after three decades of operationalization, the impression persist that SCSP and TSP are still not being implemented satisfactorily. There are some genuine problems regarding assignment or identification of benefits for infrastructure schemes, but even if these are treated differently, it is not clear that the SCSP or TSP are working as well as they should. The Planning Commission is reviewing the experience in this area to see how the implementation of the SC/ST Sub-Plan can be improved. New guidelines will be developed taking account of the experience thus far to guide the formation of the sub-Plan in the Twelfth Plan.

**Table 8.1
Educational Status of Scheduled Castes – Gains and Gaps**

(i) Literacy Rates of SCs and Total Population (1961-2001)*

Year	Total	Female	SC	SC Female	Gap between SC & General (Col. 3-4)	Gap between SC and General Female (Col. 3-5)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1961	28.30	14.35	10.30	5.90	18.00	12.05
1971	29.45	14.60	14.00	10.00	14.75	12.25
1981	36.23	19.45	12.00	10.00	14.23	13.92
1991	52.21	32.24	22.00	15.76	14.21	15.53
2001	65.38	34.16	55.70	41.90	19.68	12.26

(ii) Gross Enrolment Ratios of SCs and Total Population (1990-91 to 2007-08)**

Year	Total	Girls		Total SC		SC Girls		SC & Total Population		Gap between SC Girls and Total Girls	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)
1990-91	83.30	66.70	51.90	51.90	106.40	57.40	53.80	-22.60	14.60	-14.30	6.40
2007-08	114.60	77.50	74.10	74.10	124.90	76.70	67.70	-16.40	16.40	-3.50	-9.70
Gains	30.80	10.80	22.20	22.20	18.50	19.50	31.90	2.80	2.80	10.80	16.10

(iii) Dropout Rates of SCs and Total Population (1990-91 to 2007-08)**

Year	Total	Girls		Total SC		SC Girls		SC & Total Population		Gap between SC Girls and Total Girls	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Classes (I-V)	Classes (I-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (I-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (I-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (I-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (I-VIII)
1990-91	42.60	60.90	46.00	65.10	49.40	67.80	54.00	73.20	-6.80	-6.90	-8.00
2007-08	25.55	43.03	24.82	41.43	29.47	50.98	29.47	50.98	-6.30	-9.59	-4.65
Reduction (-)	17.05	-17.87	-21.18	-23.67	-17.55	-15.18	-24.53	-22.22	-0.50	2.69	-3.35
											-1.45

Sources : *Census of India 2001 figures quoted in Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05 (as on 30.09.2004), Statement 11.6 (page XLIII) Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Department of Higher Education, Statistics Division, New Delhi (2007).

Note : ** Abstract, Selected Educational Statistics 2007-08 (Provisional) (as on 30.09.2007), Government of India, MHRD, Department of Higher Education, Statistics Division, New Delhi (March 2008).

Table 8.2
Educational Status of Scheduled Tribes — Gains and Gaps

(i) Literacy Rates of STs and Total Population (1961-2001)*

Year	Total	Female	ST	ST Female	Gap between STs & General (Col. 2-4)	Gap between ST and General Female (Col. 3-5)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1961	28.30	15.35	8.53	3.16	19.77	12.19
1971	29.45	18.69	11.30	4.85	18.15	13.84
1981	36.23	29.85	16.35	8.04	19.88	21.81
1991	52.21	39.29	29.60	18.19	22.61	21.10
2001	65.38	54.16	47.10	34.76	18.28	19.40

(ii) Gross Enrolment Ratios of STs and Total Population (1990-91 to 2007-08)**

Year	Total		Girls		Total STs		ST Girls		Gap between ST & Total Population		Gap between ST Girls and Total Girls		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (Col. 3-7)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (Col. 4-8)	Classes (Col. 5-9)
1990-91	83.80	66.70	74.90	51.90	104.00	40.70	81.40	26.70	-20.70	26.00	-9.50	25.20	
2007-08	114.60	77.50	113.20	74.10	129.30	73.40	124.00	68.20	-14.70	-3.10	-10.80	5.90	
Gains	30.80	10.80	41.30	22.20	25.30	23.70	42.60	24.50	5.50	-22.90	-1.30	-19.30	

(iii) Dropout Rates of STs and Total Population (1990-91 to 2007-08)*

Year	Total		Girls		Total STs		ST Girls		Gap between ST & Total Population		Gap between ST Girls and Total Girls		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (Col. 2-6)	Classes (I-V)	Classes (VI-VIII)	Classes (Col. 4-8)	Classes (Col. 5-9)
1990-91	42.60	60.90	46.00	65.10	46.30	78.40	56.10	53.20	-19.90	-17.70	-20.10	-17.10	
2007-08	25.55	43.04	24.82	41.43	23.23	46.36	32.45	33.13	-6.68	-29.84	-7.63	-21.70	
Reduction	-17.05	-17.87	-21.18	-23.60	-20.77	-22.03	-23.93	-19.76	13.22	-26.63	12.47	-4.60	
(-)													

Sources : *Census of India, ST figures quoted in Selected Population Statistics 1991-05 (as on 30.9.2004) / Statement 11.6 (page XLIII) Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Department of Higher Education, Statistics Division, New Delhi (2007).

Note : ** Abstract, Selected Educational Statistics 2007-08 (Provisional) (as on 30.09.2007) Government of India, MHRD, Department of Higher Education, Statistics Division, New Delhi (March 2008).

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Table 8.3
Outlay and Expenditure of Scheduled Tribes, Ministry of Tribal Affairs in the Eleventh Plan

Category	Eleventh Plan		Annual Plan (2007-08)		Annual Plan (2008-09)		Annual Plan (2010-11)		Total Expenditure Be	% to XIth Plan Outlay with 3 years Expenditure	Annual Plan (2010-11) Be
	Outlay	Be	Expenditure	Be	Expenditure	Be	Expenditure	Be			
I	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
(i) Central Sector (CS) scheme	2,103.15	224.00	421.56	421.56	387.8	387.8	230.3	230.3	773.0	74.80	464.50
(ii) Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)	2,005.47	228.00	266.2	266.2	243.0	243.0	236.2	236.2	985.1	113.43	735.50
Total I (i & ii)	4,108.62	452.00	455.8	455.8	680.3	680.3	724.5	724.5	1,758.1	92.44	1,200.00
II. Special Central Assistance											
(i) SCA to TSP*	0	83.00	678.3	678.3	780.9	780.9	1,430.5	1,430.5	3,129.7	2,440.4	78.28
(ii) Article 275(1)*	0	400.00	390.3	390.3	339.8	339.8	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,890.1	1,129.1	62.17
Total II (i & ii)	0	483.00	1,068.5	1,068.5	1,120.7	1,120.7	2,430.5	2,430.5	4,939.3	3,569.4	2,006.50
Total (I & II)	4,108.6	535.00	1,524.4	1,524.4	1,800.0	1,800.0	3,128.0	3,128.0	6,867.7	3,327.7	3,206.50

Note : Allocation for 2008-09 has been revised to Rs. 150 crore.

* Allocation is made on year-to-year basis.

TRIBAL PROBLEMS

AS PER the Census of India 1991, Scheduled Tribes numbering crores represent about 9.5% of the total population of the country. Of these about 1 crore about 60% of the families live below poverty line. At a time when enough time has passed since tribal development was started, it is natural to ask: *what is wrong with the process? Why the progress on this front is so slow? Or what, despite forty seven years of India's independence and millions of rupees spent on tribal development, ails our tribal brothers to shun the curse of poverty?* At least since the beginning of Fifth Five Year Plan, the government agencies claim to have put sincere efforts to ameliorate tribal problems and yet, after more than 22 years the end is not in sight. This is because various tribal development programmes have not been co-ordinated successfully, there is a lack of honest personnel sincere to the cause as also somewhat faulty planning. The resultant effect of all the programmes has rather alienated the tribals than developed them. The following discussion reveals the approach of the government towards tribal problems and the lacunae therein.

8.1 LAND ALIENATION

EIGHTY eight percent of the Scheduled Tribe population is engaged in agriculture. Land is therefore the most important source of livelihood and yet most tribal families today are left with either no land or their own small holdings not enough to support the family. To support their families tribals have to look for other resources and in the process land into the net laid by unscrupulous elements. In the process they are alienated from their belongings, including land.

WORKING Group on the VIIth Plan draft has summarized that: "The State Governments have passed a large number of legislations to check alienation of tribal land. Inspite of this, the problem exists on a substantial scale. Many tribals have become paupers and are in utter misery as their land has been grabbed by non-tribals. From the data collected in the States of Orissa, Rajasthan and UP it appears that the percentage of cases where the alienated land is restored to the tribals is very small. There are also many cases of reoccupation of restored land. In the Buxa tribal area of Distt. Nanital, the land belonging to tribals has been gradually grabbed by others on a big scale and subsequently the population of Buxas has dwindled under such environment in the affected villages. In Kerala, the Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restoration of Alienated Land) Act 1975 has not yet been enforced in the Scheduled Areas. The State of Andhra Pradesh (Scheduled Areas) Land Transfer Regulations 1959 by stipulating that "lands of tribals unlawfully coming to the possession of non-tribals who own less than 25 acres irrigated and/or 5 acres unirrigated land will not be restored back to the tribals has come out with true face of development."

VARIOUS studies have revealed the pit-falls in the land alienation legislations. Besides, the problem of land alienation is not uniform in all tribal areas and as Hasnain has observed, "most of the tribal cultivators have uneconomic holdings. Their holdings appear bigger in size is nullified by the poor quality of soil, poor techniques of cultivation and the ever increasing burden of indebtedness" prepare the trap for the poor tribal to surrender his land.

THIS trap is further strengthened by the wasteful expenditure on the part of tribals on non-essential items. Studies have revealed that a tribal, on an average incurs about 50% of the expenditure on marriage, festivals and other social functions, religious ceremonies etc. The money for such purposes is readily made available, by the money-lender, who taking advantage of the uneducated, easy-going tribal, charges exorbitant rate of interest. The tribal is never in a position to repay the debt which keeps on multiplying.

TRIBALS so far do not have good experience with the State sponsored financial institutions who demand guarantee for the repayment of loans. Tidy procedures involved therein as also the bureaucratic attitude of employees and the bribes deter him from approaching such institutions.

HASNAIN has deciphered three bases of land alienation as:

- (a) the lacunae in the laws, —
- (b) the ignorance of the tribal people and —
- (c) the complicated legal procedures to be followed. His analysis reveals that though the state governments have been doing something to help the tribals, the resultant benefits have been nominal except in the hilly districts of Assam, Manipur and Mizoram.

THE Working Group on the VIIth Plan suggests the following remedial measures to free the tribals from the clutches of land alienation:

- (i) **BFNAMI** Transfer of land in the names of wives, ploughmen or servants belonging to Scheduled Tribes must be effectively stopped.
- (ii) **PERMISSION** to Scheduled Tribes to transfer/sell land to non-tribals for meeting their social/production/marketing obligation should be unnecessary if the large network of co-operative institutions and marketing corporations in the tribal areas function properly. Permission to transfer land must be strictly scrutinized and only the District Collector should be the competent authority to grant such permission.
- (iii) **SPECIAL** courts with additional staff be setup near industrial and fast developing areas where incidence of land alienation is the highest.
- (iv) **PHYSICAL** restoration of land to the tribals after passing of the restoration orders be expedited by fixing a time limit for such restoration and erring officials be taken to task.
- (v) **DETERRENT** penalty and punishment must be provided in cases of reoccupation and retransfer of restored land where the previous occupant is involved whether by himself or through behamindars.
- (vi) **PROGRESS** of restoration of land and disposal of land-alienation cases should be reviewed quarterly by the tribal commissioners.
- (vii) **ON THE** pattern of centrally sponsored scheme for assistance to allottees of ceiling-surplus land under Rural Development Ministry, a scheme for providing inputs to tribals who have been restored land should be launched.

INDEBTEDNESS

TRIBAL farmers are generally poor and to fulfil some of the social requirements as also for their subsistence, they depend on the alien money-lenders. Non-payment of the debt through the generations is the most important cause of tribals' plight today as it has resulted in bonded labour, land alienation and other problems. In most tribal areas of the country, indebtedness is rampant, that has broken the backbone of tribal economy, culture and ecology.

EVIDENCE reveals that the problem did not exist (or was at a low ebb) till the beginning of the last century i.e. till the tribals, more or less isolated from the so called civilized world, lived a care-free forest life that was good enough to support them and sustain their cultural values. Development of communication channel between different parts of the country in mid-nineteenth century was a great incentive for the contractors and money-lenders who ruthlessly destroyed the forest wealth and tribal economy, caring least about the destruction of tribal values.

them responsible for speedy and effective implementation of these laws.

FOREST AND TRIBALS

ASSOCIATION of forests and tribals is as old as the mankind himself and this historic association by itself provides for certain tribals' rights in the forests. Much of the tribal economy and many of the traits of tribal culture are the result of tribals interaction with forests.

TILL late nineteenth century tribals could well avail the fruits of their intimacy with forest environment but the then British Government started thinking of capital gains from the forests and forest produce that led to curtailing of tribal movements in the forest lands. In 1894 the Forest Policy of the government was declared according to which the sole object with which state forests are administrated is the public benefit. In some cases the public to benefit are the whole body of tax-payers; but in almost all cases, the constitution and preservation of a forest involves in greater or lesser degree, the regulation of rights and the restriction of privileges of user in the forest area which may have previously been enjoyed by the inhabitants or its neighbourhood. This regulation and restriction are justified only when the advantage to be gained by the public is great.

AFTER Independence, the forest policy was revised in 1952. Hasnain enumerates the deviations in new policy as compared to that of 1894 as :-

1. The old policy envisaged the release of forest land for cultivation, subject to certain safeguards. The new policy withdrew this concession.
2. The old policy had left a margin for the supply of the villagers' needs from the outlying areas in the reserved forests. The new policy decided that there should be village forests for this purpose.
3. The old policy did not touch the private forests of the tribals. The new policy applied the same controls to them.
4. The old policy did not touch free grazing in the forests. The new policy sought to bring it under control. Fees were introduced and grazing was to be kept to the minimum.
5. The new policy made the important concession. It admitted that while it was emphatically opposed to shifting cultivation, persuasive and not coercive measure should be used in sort of missionary rather than in an authoritarian manner to attempt to wean the tribals from their traditional axe-cultivation.

UNDER the new policy, therefore, the tribals were left with no rights but only certain privileges/concessions. Furthermore, these concessions etc., exhibit large discrimination for different regions as also for different forests. The concessions/privileges contained in the 1952 policy are:-

- (i) Right to take water for agricultural purpose.
- (ii) Digging of wells and canals for agricultural purposes.
- (iii) Free grazing in open forests (under passes).
- (iv) Removal of stones and earth for domestic or agricultural use.
- (v) Removal of timber, bamboos, reeds, canes, etc., for construction and repair of houses and for agricultural implements.
- (vi) Collection of dead wood for domestic use.
- (vii) Collection of grass for cattle and for covering their huts,
- (viii) Fishing and hunting excluding the protected fauna,
- (ix) Cultivation of forest land.

Administration Vs Tribals

THIS is undeniable that the rights and privileges of individuals can be taken away for larger good of the society. But it should be done only by creating informed public opinion. Unfortunately, ever since the national forest policy has been enunciated and promulgated, very little has been done to educate the victims—the tribals. This lapse on the part of the

SURVEYS conducted by Working Group on Co-operation for Backward Classes appointed by Ministry of Home Affairs and headed by M.P. Bhargava (1962), Study Team on Tribal Development Programme lead by P.Shilu Ao (1969), Study Group on Relief of Indebtedness (1975) etc., have concluded that an overwhelming majority of the tribals in different parts of the country were under heavy debt; indebtedness had far outgrown the repayment capacity of the debtors and was acting as a severe inertia on their economic development. The last survey mentioned above also reported that while agricultural needs constitute more than half the debt incurred by concerned families; domestic consumption, marriage, death, birth, religious and social festivities accounted for the rest. This ultimately results in grabbing of tribal resources (including land) by the unscrupulous money-lenders.

Causes of Indebtedness

HASNAIN has enlisted the causes and consequences of indebtedness among the tribals as follows:

- (i) Loss of tribal rights over land and forests.
- (ii) Poor and primitive mode of agriculture resulting in deficit supply of foodgrains.
- (iii) Expenditure beyond their means due to extravagant spending on marriages, deaths, fairs and festivals.
- (iv) Ignorance;
- (v) Fatalist attitude and locally-oriented world view; and
- (vi) Adherence to *panchayat* decisions regarding fines for fear of excommunication.

Consequences of Indebtedness

- (i) Loss of freedom and the consequent utilization of their labour power by the creditors.
- (ii) Alienation of land and its acquisition by the creditor.
- (iii) Sale of girls and prostitution; and
- (iv) Chronic venereal diseases.

THE Tribals who fail to clear debt are compelled to work in the fields of money-lenders as "Bonded Labourers" and yet the account-books of the money-lenders never give them a clear chit. The worst hit tribe of this menace are the Jangs of Tarai region who have been converted to bonded labour after getting alienated from their lands in the process.

LEGISLATIONS by various State Governments despite (officially) serious efforts to eradicate bonded labour, have remained inactive. Here the comments made by the Working Group for the VIIth Plan as also its recommendations need mention.

ENACTMENTS/Regulations have been made in different states on money-lending and debt-redemption. Surveys conducted in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan indicate that despite of co-operative and commercial banking facilities in the tribal areas, money-lending as an individual profession is more or less similar. Even tribal members of the co-operative have been approaching private money-lenders in a number of cases. There is pernicious correlation between money-lending and debt-bondage. Therefore, following steps are suggested as a remedy:

- (i) COVERING uncovered tribal areas by Co-operative Commercial Banking institutions.
- (ii) MAKING the laws on money-lending in the tribal areas more stringent with deterrent punishment where injustice to a tribal is involved.
- (iii) MAKING the administrative machinery at Block, Tehsil and other levels effective to bring the culprits to book for violating the provisions of law.
- (iv) ADEQUACY of money-lending legislation in their relevance to the tribals be examined. Instances are not lacking where, notwithstanding debt relief, the old debt continues to be collected from the tribal debtor.
- (v) MONITORING violation of the money-lending and debt relief legislations to relieve the tribals from exploitation in this sector. Project administration be invested with necessary powers under the relevant laws, making

administration coupled with the harassment and exploitation of the tribals by forest officials, revenue officials and private contractors, has created a sense of dismay, frustration and alienation among the affected tribals.

VJDYARTHI has rightly analysed the situation. The forest Acts have given powers to the executive to make rules which are not of a permanent character. These rules have the force of law as soon as they are published in the local gazette. These officers have legal powers:

- (1) Any forest officer can arrest without warning any person against whom a reasonable suspicion exists of being concerned in an offence punishable with one month imprisonment or above.
- (2) They can seize forest produce, cattle, tools, carts, etc. in respect of which there is reason to believe that a forest offence has been committed.
- (3) They are bound to prevent, and interfere in preventing an offence, to warn people to take cognizance of persons carrying axes, saws, etc. in a forest (though this is not an offence in itself).

SINCE the forest officers have to function in extremely difficult physical conditions, they are given legal protection of a far reaching character.

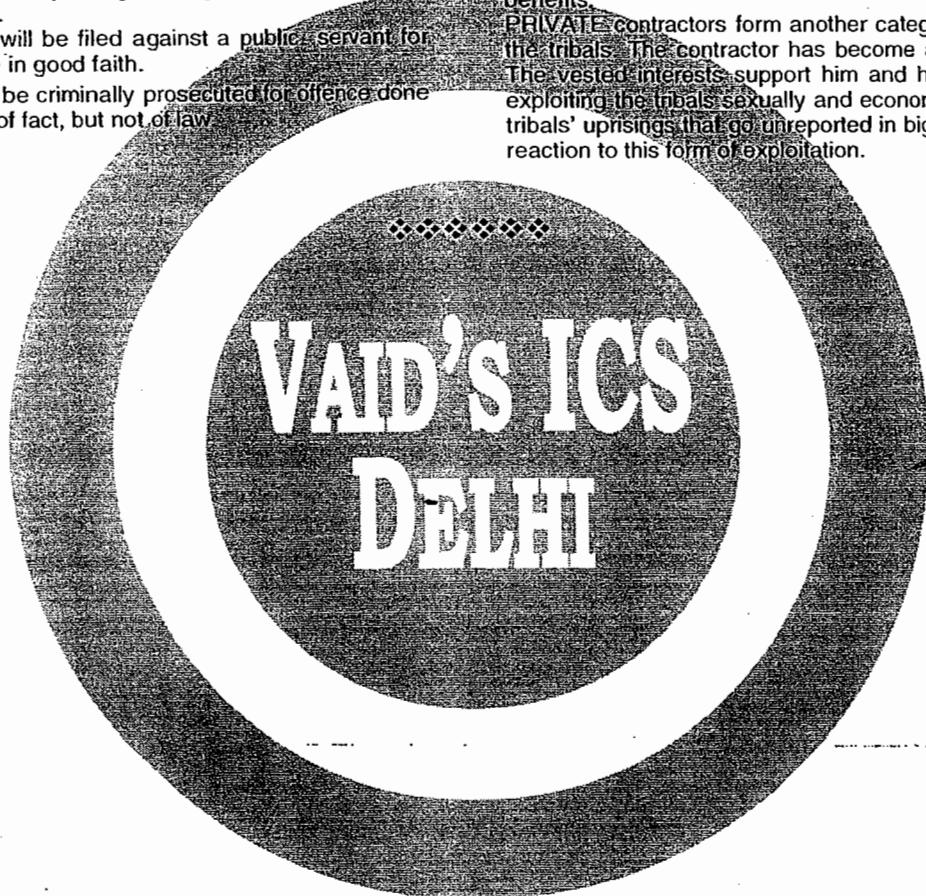
- (1) No civil suit will be filed against a public servant for any act done in good faith.
- (2) They cannot be criminally prosecuted for offence done by mistakes of fact, but not of law.

- (3) They cannot be prosecuted without the approval of government or otherwise, according to the status of the officer (Vidyarthi, 1968).

Hasnain laments : Under such conditions the poor tribal has certainly been placed at the mercy of the forest officials. The unscrupulous officials among them have been playing havoc with their lives and harass them at the slightest pretext. IN SOME of the states, the forest boundaries run very close to the tribal habitations. This leads to conflict between the tribals and the forest department. For example, in Orissa where this conflict is very much pronounced, the tribals are constantly harassed by the petty officials of the forest department on the pretext that the tribals encroach upon forest land and steal timber and forest produce illegally.

IT IS also observed that in many areas the forest departments have claimed as forest land on which not many trees were standing and the tribals are deprived of the opportunity to make it a source of their livelihood. Collection of minor forest produce is not at all likely to hinder the forest either in its growth or its preservation. But at certain places the tribal inhabitants are not allowed to avail of this concession. Instead, the forest officials get it collected and use it to their benefits.

PRIVATE contractors form another category of exploiters of the tribals. The contractor has become a law unto himself. The vested interests support him and he roams scot free, exploiting the tribals sexually and economically. Many minor tribals' uprisings that go unreported in big national press are reaction to this form of exploitation.



FOREST ACT : RIGHT DECISION?

After 80 years, the centre has restored the rights of tribals. But the green lobby is not impressed. Here's look at the conflicting views :

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Indian Forest Act, 1927 : To tap India's vast forest wealth, the British government enacted the Indian Forest Act giving tribal the right to exploit forest resources. After Independence, the rights enshrined in the 1927 Act were never granted.

Forest Conservation Act, 1980 : The rights of Tribals were taken away in the Forest Conservation Act. Tribals were termed encroachers on the land they had been living for generations.

Mid-1920s : In 1986 the commissioner of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in his report to the Parliament dealt extensively with disturbances in tribal areas because of delegitimisation of tribal rights.

National Environment Policy, 1988 : For the first time recognised the relationship between forest-dwellers and conservation.

1996 : Panchayats were extended to Scheduled Tribe areas, the first step in the direction of identifying the rights of tribals.

2000 : The Inspector General of Forests in the Ministry passed an order stating that people encroaching upon forestland can be evicted. This was implemented in 2002.

2003 : Following resistance from tribals, the Centre formed a committee to examine the issue of tribal rights. Based on the committee's recommendations, the process to draft the Tribal Bill started.

The Joint-Parliamentary Committee in May 2006 submitted the report expanding the scope of the bill to include all forest dwellers, resulting in strong opposition to the recommendations by the government.

Factsheet on Tribals

Tribals identified as Scheduled Tribe in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution are 8.2% of the country's population. 20.64 per cent of India's geographical area is under forest cover. Tribals live in 70 per cent of these forests. The Status of Forest Report 2003 had said that forests where the tribals lives are the best in the country.

Objections

Rule (1) defines the gram sabha as the gram sabha of the panchayat, which would include numerous actual villages.

Objection : Many forest dwellers may not get their bona fide right because they would be in minority as the panchayat includes many villages. It is also against section 2(p) of the primary Act, says Campaign for Survival and Dignity, a federation of tribal groups.

Rules 6(a) speak about community's duties to conserve forests.

Objection : There is no specific mention of what type of conservation effort is required.

Rules 11 (a) Seek document evidence to claim forest rights.

Objection : Many forest dwellers may not have documents as evidence. Secondly the law may be misused to take over government land and deny rights to traditional claimants.

Missing : No mention of traditional rights of dwellers over forest produce.

Objection : There is no incentive to the dwellers to protect forests and no accountability for the gram sabhas to make them conserve green areas.

DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST POLICY AND TRIBALS

1. THE relationship between the tribal communities and the forest is extremely close. The tribals are generally called *Vanya Jati* or forest dwellers. The relationship is symbiotic i.e. a close and multi faceted inter independence. The main aspects of the relationship are economic, religio-cultural and emotional. Economically, certain groups of tribals heavily depend on forests. These groups are the food gatherers, hunters and shifting cultivators. A majority of the remaining tribal communities also support and supplement their economy from forests by way of collection and sale of minor forest produce (MFP); materials used in crafts, fuel. Wage-earning in the forest work is another vital supplementary source. The religio-cultural life of the tribes dwelling in the forests revolves round the forests. Their beliefs, abode of gods and the spirits, taboos etc., are all forest linked. Emotionally, many tribal communities are so much attached to the forest life that they find it difficult to imagine a meaningful existence bereft of the forests.

2. THE forest cover in the country has been dwindling fast. At present it is estimated at not more than 22 percent. Some estimates put it at much less, about 10%. The latest satellite data indicate that India is losing 1.3 million hectare of forests in a year which is eight times the annual rate of plantation.

Forest Policy

3. BEFORE the advent of the British rule the regulation of people's use of forest was mainly through local customs. The strength of their own beliefs underpinning both plantation and felling of trees contributed much to the conservation and expansion of forests.

British Period

4. THE British saw Indian forests as a valuable resource to be exploited for the purpose of revenue and export combined with a general policy to increase the agricultural land at the cost of forest. They started heavy deforestation for the needs of their Navy, much before initiating a forest policy in 1855.

1855

GOVERNOR General Dalhousie issued a memorandum on forest conservation to ~~control the previous access enjoyed by rural communities~~ declare teak as state property, the felling of which was to be strictly regulated. Restrictions were also placed on the collection of MFP. As a follow up of the policy, an Inspector General of Forest was appointed by the Government of India in 1856.

Forest Act of 1865

THE act was made to regulate forest exploitation, management and preservation. The hitherto socially regulated practices of the locals were to be restrained by law. The law was applicable only to the forests notified as government property, and not private forests.

Forest Act of 1878

THE law aimed to remove the existing ambiguities about the absolute proprietary rights of State. It increased government control over forests. The classification of forests into reserved, protected and village forests was introduced. The law also required that the people's claims over land and forest produce in the reserved and protected forests had to be recorded, and acts like grazing of cattle and entry for collection of fuel in reserved forest were abolished and declared punishable offences. Thus, the term *privileges* obliterated centuries of customary usage and meant total exclusion of right holders from forest management. Some regulatory provisions were also made for private forests for the first time. Some colonial administrators pressed for total extinction of customary rights over all forest areas at that time and I.G.F.'s proposals to form village forests and ensure some rights of aboriginal tribes were turned down. In pursuance of this law the area under reserved forests was

increased four-fold.

Forest Policy Resolution 1894

APPARENTLY the Resolution was more favourably disposed to village needs to assuage widespread discontent. It declared that forests would be administered in *public interest*, but went on to further restrict the claims of the local communities in the larger interest and in consistence with imperial interest. The rights of the forest dwelling communities were changed to *rights and privileges*. A new four-fold classification was introduced — (a) Such forests the preservation of which was essential on economical and fiscal grounds; (b) Forests which supplied valuable timbers for commercial purpose; (c) Minor forests; and (d) Pasture land. The resolution also allowed freely the conversion of forests into cultivable lands and made some suggestions for utilization of wastelands. Conversion of forest lands facilitated tea and coffee plantation by Europeans and increased entry of outsiders into tribal areas.

Indian Forest Act of 1927

PTO this period the government had gradually increased its control over the forest and strengthened the forest department with a view to regulate people's claims to forest land and produce and increase its commercial exploitation. Certain MFP became commercially valuable and hence there was a need to further reduce traditional rights and codify all the practices of the forest officials. The rights were classified as *concessions, rights, privileges* and an emphasis was laid on detailed codification regarding these. By and large, the private forests could also now be taken over by the government. The machinery to punish offences under the Act was strengthened and the powers of the forest officials enlarged. Large areas in the princely states were also drawn into forest management.

6. THE British policy relating to forest management had thus been fashioned to satisfy the needs in England as well as India and earn large revenues. A British Botanist commented that *Large areas were shamefully and wastefully denuded of valuable timbers, and this exploitation of valuable timbers was not the work of ratay or cultivators but — contractors supplying extraneous demands*. The result was a loss of cohesion in the rural communities, utter misery for tribal groups depending on forests, opening up of their areas to outside elements and fast decline in their traditional management systems and a poor sense of ecology. Even at the time of framing the 1874 law, the government of Madras Presidency had called it a *bill of confiscation* and pleaded for community rights and for the aborigines. This policy also led to tribal unrest and uprisings in different parts of country.

Post Independence

6. National Forest Policy 1952 : THE demands of the World War II (1939-45) had left large forest areas denuded and soon after independence the Government of India considered the preparation of a fresh forest policy at the time of initiating planned development effort. The National Forest Policy resolution stated to denote same rethinking, seems to, be by and large, an extension of the colonial policy. The resolution, claimed to take into account factors like pressure of population, climatic importance of forests, their economic importance, and country's defence needs. In actual practice the concept of *national interest* was interpreted in a narrow sense. The destruction of forest for the construction of roads and other large projects was justified in the name of national interest whereas cultivation of land shown as forest land though without any tree cover was treated as encroachment. The salient features of the policy, as far as tribals were concerned, were :

- (i) This policy totally banned release of forest lands for cultivation.

- (ii) Villager's needs were not to be met at all from the reserved forests and only village forests (almost non-existent) were to serve the needs.
- (iii) Rights/privileges became rights and concessions and their recording procedures were made difficult. Grazing was drastically curbed.
- (iv) Rights to water, digging of well, collecting of dead wood, fishing, hunting, etc, were also curtailed.
- (v) Private forests of the tribals were also controlled.
- (vi) The policy was opposed to shifting cultivation which was further restricted. But the policy laid down that coercive measures should not be used to substitute it. Moreover, the tribals were finding the restrictions quite confusing.

✓ THE Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission (1961) brought to the fore the changes in the rights of tribal communities over forests and forest produce. They highlighted the undermining of their rights and claims and reluctance of forest officials to allow the facilities. The Commission specifically mentioned vast areas of treeless forests and the notification of large areas which had never been actually afforested by the forest Department. The Commission also pointed out the condition and inadequacy of village forests, existence of near serfdom in forest villages and other problems faced by the tribals.

✓ 8. THE report of the National Commission on Agriculture (1976) dealing with forestry, however, took a contrary view. The Commission recommended a drastic reduction in people's rights to forest, further strengthening of forest legislation, and a more effective commercialisation of forests.

✓ 9. Forest (Conservation) Act 1980: THIS law imposed a total ban on any conversion of land notified under forests for any other use. The power to do so was vested in the Government of India. In its strictness, the provisions also covered such uses as cultivation of medicinal plants, horticulture, etc. which are so important in tribal economy. Moreover the ban has made it difficult to obtain even small patches of land necessary to provide infrastructural facilities like electric lines, schools, etc. in the tribal areas. However, certain States like Gujarat taking shelter under legal lacuna have been releasing forest lands for large projects without any regulation by the Centre.

✓ 10. THE Ministry of Home Affairs had appointed a committee to suggest guidelines to reorient Forest Policy to serve the tribal economy under the chairmanship of the reputed anthropologist, Dr. B.K. Roy Burman. Its report (1982) emphasised the importance of forests in tribal life and pointed out that besides getting fuel, fodder, wood for housing and other needs, the tribal also earned one-third of their income from MFP. The committee noted that forestry had gradually come to be linked with the consumption of timber in urban areas and industries. They felt that efforts to develop imaginative forestry programmes for the benefit of tribals had not been undertaken and recommended that: (i) a triangular forest policy should have the individual, tribal, local tribal communities and national interest as its three corners; (ii) forest policy must fulfill the needs of ecological security, food, fruits, fuel etc. and the needs of cottage, medium and large industry; (iii) community's participation and role in forestry should be made unambiguous and active; and (iv) social forestry must be expanded to ensure supply of community needs.

NATIONAL FOREST POLICY : 1988

Basic Objectives

THE basic objectives that should govern the National Forest Policy are the following:

- Maintenance of environment stability through preservation and, where necessary, restoration of the ecological balance that has been adversely disturbed by serious depletion of the forests of the country.
- Conserving the natural heritage of the country by preserving the remaining natural forests with the vast

variety of flora and fauna, which represent the remarkable biological diversity and genetic resources of the country.

- Checking soil erosion and denudation in the catchment areas of rivers, lakes, reservoirs in the interest of soil and water conservation, for mitigating floods and droughts and for the retardation of siltation of reservoirs.
- Increasing substantially the forest tree cover in the country through massive afforestation and social forestry programmes, especially on all denuded, degraded and unproductive lands.
- Checking the extension of sand-dunes in the desert areas of Rajasthan and along the coastal tracts.
- Meeting the requirements of fuelwood, fodder, minor forest produce and small timber of the rural and tribal populations.
- Increasing the productivity of forests to meet essential national needs.
- Encouraging efficient utilisation of forest produce and maximising substitution of wood.

Creating a massive peoples' movement with the involvement of women, for achieving these objectives and to minimise pressure on existing forests.

THE principal aim of Forest Policy must be to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance including atmospheric equilibrium which are vital for sustenance of all life forms, human, animal and plant. The derivation of direct economic benefit must be subordinated to this principal aim.

Essentials For Forest Management

EXISTING forests and forest lands should be fully protected and their productivity improved. Forest and vegetal cover should be increased rapidly on hill slopes, in catchment areas of rivers, lakes and reservoirs and ocean shores and on semi-arid and desert tracts.

DIVERSION of good and productive agricultural lands to forestry should be discouraged in view of the need for increased food production.

FOR the conversion of total biological diversity, the network of national parks, sanctuaries, biosphere reserves and other protected areas should be strengthened and extended adequately.

PROVISION of sufficient fodder-fuel and pasture, specially in areas adjoining forest, is necessary in order to prevent depletion of forest beyond the sustainable limit. Since fuelwood continues to be the predominant source of energy in rural areas, the programme of afforestation should be intensified with special emphasis on augmenting fuel wood production to meet the requirement of the rural people.

MINOR forest produce provides sustenance to tribal population and to other communities residing in and around the forests. Such produce should be protected, improved and their production enhanced with due regard to generation of employment and income.

Strategy

Areas Under Forests

THE national goal should be to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. In the hills and in mountainous regions, the aim should be to maintain two-third of the area under such cover in order to prevent erosion and land degradation and to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-system.

Afforestation, Social Forestry & Farm Forestry

A MASSIVE need-based and time-bound programme of re-afforestation and tree planting, with particular emphasis on fuelwood and fodder development, on all degraded and denuded lands in the country, whether forest or non-forest land, is a national imperative.

IT IS necessary to encourage the planting of trees alongside of roads, railway lines, rivers and streams and canals and on other unutilised lands under State/ Corporate, institutional

or private ownership. Green belts should be raised in urban/industrial areas as well as in arid tracts. Such a programme will help to check erosion and desertification as well as improve the micro-climate.

VILLAGE and community lands, including those on foreshores and environs of tanks, not required for other productive uses, should be taken up for the development of tree crops and fodder resources. Technical assistance and other inputs necessary for initiating such programmes should be provided by the government. The revenue generated through such programmes should belong to the *panchayats* where the lands are vested in them; in all other cases, such revenues should be shared with the local communities in order to provide an incentive to them. The vesting in individuals, particularly from the weaker sections (such as landless labour, small and marginal farmers, scheduled castes, tribals, women) of certain ownership rights over trees, could be considered, subject to appropriate regulations; beneficiaries would be entitled to usufruct and would in turn be responsible for their security and maintenance.

LAND laws should be so modified wherever necessary so as to facilitate and motivate individuals and institutions to undertake tree-farming and grow fodder plants, grasses and legumes on their own land. Wherever possible, degraded lands should be made available for this purpose either on lease or on the basis of a *tree-patta* scheme. Such leasing of the land should be subject to the land grant rules and land ceiling laws. Steps necessary to encourage them to do so must be taken. Appropriate regulations should govern the felling of trees on private holding.

Management of State Forests

SCHEMES and projects which interfere with forests that clothe steep slopes, catchments of rivers, lakes and reservoirs, geologically unstable terrain and such other ecologically sensitive areas should be severely restricted. Tropical rain/moist forests, particularly in areas like Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Andaman & Nicobar Islands should be totally safeguarded.

NO FOREST should be permitted to be worked without the government having approved the management plan, which should be in a prescribed format and in keeping with the National Forest Policy. The Central Government should issue necessary guidelines to the State Government in this regard and monitor compliance.

IN ORDER to meet the growing needs for essential goods and services which the forests provide, it is necessary to enhance forest cover and productivity of the forests through the application of scientific and technical inputs. Production forestry programmes, while aiming at enhancing the forest cover in the country and meeting national needs, should also be oriented to narrowing by the turn of the century, the increasing gap between demand and supply of fuelwood. No such programme, however, should entail clear-felling of adequately stocked natural forests. Nor should exotic species be introduced, through public or private sources unless long term scientific trials, undertaken by specialists in ecology, forestry and agriculture have established that they are suitable and have no adverse impact on native vegetation and environment.

Rights and Concessions

THE rights and concessions, including grazing, should always remain related to the carrying capacity of forests. The capacity itself should be optimised by increased investment, silvicultural research and development of the area. Stall-feeding of cattle should be encouraged. The requirements of the community, which cannot be met by the rights and concessions so determined, should be met by development of social forestry outside the reserved forests.

THE holders of customary rights and concessions in forest areas should be motivated to identify themselves with the protection and development of forests from which they derive benefits. The rights and concessions from forests should primarily be for the bonafide use of the communities living within and around forest areas, specially the tribals.

THE life of tribals and other poor living within and near forests revolves around forests. The rights and concessions enjoyed by them should be fully protected. Their domestic requirements of fuelwood, fodder, minor forest produce and construction timber should be the first charge on forest produce. These and substitute materials should be made available through conveniently located depots and at reasonable prices.

SIMILAR consideration should be given to Scheduled Castes and other poor living near forests. However, the area, which such consideration should cover, would be determined by the carrying capacity of the forests.

WOOD is in short supply. The long term solution for meeting the existing gap lies in increasing the productivity of forests, but to relieve the existing pressure on forests for the demands of railway sleepers, construction industry (particularly in the public sector), furniture and panelling mine-pitprops, paper and paper board etc. substitution of wood needs to be taken recourse to. Similarly, on the front of domestic energy, fuelwood needs to be substituted as far as practicable with alternate sources like bio-gas, LPG and solar energy. Fuel-efficient *Chulhas* as a measure of conservation of fuelwood need to be popularised in rural area.

Diversion of forest lands for non-forest purposes

FOREST land or land with tree cover should not be treated merely as a resource readily available to be utilised for various projects and programmes, but as a national asset which requires to be properly safeguarded for providing sustained benefits to the entire community. Diversion of forest land for any non-forest purposes should be subject to the most careful examination by specialists from the stand point of social and environmental costs and benefits. Construction of dams and reservoirs, mining and industrial development, expansion of agriculture should be consistent with the needs for conservation of trees and forests. Projects which involve such diversion should at least provide in their investment budget, funds for regeneration/compensatory afforestation. BENEFICIARIES who are allowed mining and quarrying in forest land covered by trees should be required to repair and re-vegetate the area in accordance with established forestry practices. No mining lease should be granted to any party, private or public, without a proper mine management plan appraised from the environmental angle and enforced by adequate machinery.

Wildlife Conservation

FOREST management should take special care of the needs of wildlife conservation, and forest management plans should include prescriptions for this purpose. It is specially essential to provide for "Corridors" linking the protected areas in order to maintain genetic continuity between artificially separated sub-sections of migrant wildlife.

Tribal People and Forests

HAVING regard to the symbiotic relationship between the tribal people and forests, a primary task of all agencies responsible for forest management, including the forest development corporations should be to associate the tribal people closely in the protection, regeneration and development of forest as well as to provide gainful employment to people living in and around the forest. While special attention to the following must be paid on priority.

- One of the major causes of degradation of forest is illegal cutting and removal by contractors and their labour. In order to put an end to this practice, contractors should be replaced by institutions such as tribal co-operatives, labour co-operatives, Government corporations etc. as early as possible.
- Protection, regeneration and optimum collection of minor forest produce along with institutional arrangements for the marketing of such produce.
- Development of forest villages on par with revenue villages.
- Family oriented schemes for improving the status of

- the tribal beneficiaries; and
- Undertaking integrated area development programmes to meet the needs of the tribal economy in and around the forest areas, including the provision of alternative sources of domestic energy on a subsidised basis, to reduce pressure on the existing forest areas.

Shifting Cultivation

SHIFTING cultivation is affecting the environment and productivity of land adversely. Alternative avenues of income, suitably harmonised with the right land use practices, should be devised to discourage shifting cultivation. Efforts should be made to contain such cultivation within the area already affected, by propagating improved agricultural practices. Area already damaged by such cultivation should be rehabilitated through social forestry and energy plantations.

Damage to Forests from Encroachments, Fires and Grazing

ENCROACHMENTS on forest lands have been on the increase. This trend has to be arrested and effective action taken to prevent its continuance. There should be regularisation of existing encroachments.

THE incidence of forest fires in the country is high. Standing trees and fodder are destroyed on a large scale and natural regeneration annihilated by such fires. Improved and modern management practices should be adopted to deal with forest fires.

GRAZING in forest areas should be regulated with the involvement of the community. Special conservation areas, young plantations and regeneration areas should be fully protected. Grazing and browsing in forest areas need to be controlled. Adequate grazing fees should be levied to discourage people in forest areas from maintaining large herds of non-essential livestock.

Forest Based Industries

THE main considerations governing the establishment of forest based industries and supply of raw material to them should be as follows:

- As far as possible, a forest based industry should raise the raw material needed for meeting its own requirements, preferably by establishment of a direct relationship between the factory and the individuals who can grow the raw material by supporting the individuals with inputs including credit, constant technical advice and finally harvesting and transport services.
- No forest-based enterprise, except that at the village or cottage level, should be permitted in the future unless it has been first cleared after a careful scrutiny with regard to assured availability of raw material. In any case, the fuel, fodder and timber requirements of the local population should not be sacrificed for this purpose.
- Forest based industries must not only provide employment to local people on priority but also involve them fully in raising trees and raw-material.
- Natural forests serve as a gene pool resource and help to maintain ecological balance. Such forests will not, therefore, be made available to industries for undertaking plantation and for any other activities.
- Farmers, particularly small and marginal farmers would be encouraged to grow, on marginal/ degraded lands available with them, wood species required for industries. These may also be grown along with fuel and fodder species on community lands not required for pasture purposes, and by Forest Department/ Corporations on degraded forests, not earmarked for natural regeneration.
- The practice of supply of forest produce to industry at concessional prices should cease. Industry should be encouraged to use alternative raw materials. Import of wood and wood products should be liberalised.

- The above considerations will however, be subject to the current policy relating to land ceiling and land-laws.

Forest Extension

FOREST conservation programme cannot succeed without the willing support and co-operation of the people. It is essential, therefore, to inculcate in the people, a direct interest in forests, their development and conservation, and to make them conscious of the value of trees, wildlife and nature in general. This can be achieved through the involvement of educational institutions, right from the primary stage. Farmers and interested people should be provided opportunities through institutions like *Krishi Vigyan Kendras*, Trainer's Training Centres to learn agrisilvi-cultural and silvi-cultural techniques to ensure optimum use of their land and water resources. Short term extension courses and lectures should be organised in order to educate farmers. For this purpose, it is essential that suitable programmes are propagated through mass media, audio-visual aids and the extension machinery.

Forestry Education

FORESTRY should be recognised both as a scientific discipline as well as profession. Agriculture universities and institutions dedicated to the development of forestry education should formulate curricula and courses for imparting academic education and promoting post-graduate research and professional excellence, keeping in view the manpower needs of the country. Academic and professional qualifications in forestry should be kept in view for recruitment to the Indian Forest Service and the State Forest Services. Specialised and orientation courses for developing better management skills by inservice training need to be encouraged taking into account the latest developments in forestry and related disciplines.

Forestry Research

WITH increasing recognition of the importance of forests for environmental health, energy and employment, emphasis must be laid on scientific forestry research, necessitating adequate strengthening of the research base as well as new priorities for action. Some broad priority areas of research and development needing special attention are:

1. Increasing the productivity of wood and other forest produce per unit of area per unit time by the application of modern scientific and technological methods.
2. Revegetation of barren/marginal/waste/mined lands and watershed areas.
3. Effective conservation and management of existing forest resources (mainly natural forest eco-system).
4. Research related to social forestry for rural/ tribal development.
5. Development of substitutes to replace wood and wood products.
6. Research related to wildlife and management of national parks and sanctuaries.

Personnel Management

GOVERNMENT policies in personnel management for professional foresters and forest scientists should aim at enhancing their professional competence and status and attracting and retaining qualified and motivated personnel, keeping in view particularly the arduous nature of duties they have to perform, often in remote and inhospitable places.

Forest Survey and Data Base

INADEQUACY of data regarding forest resources is a matter of concern because this creates a false sense of complacency. Priority needs to be accorded to completing the survey of forest resources in the country on scientific lines and to updating information. For this purpose, periodical collection, collation and publication of reliable data on relevant aspects of forest management needs to be improved with recourse to modern technology and equipment.

Legal Support and Infrastructure Development

APPROPRIATE legislation should be undertaken, supported by adequate infrastructure, of the Centre and State levels in order to implement the Policy effectively.

Financial Support for Forestry

THE objectives of this revised Policy cannot be achieved without the investment of financial and other resources on a substantial scale. Such investment is indeed fully justified considering the contribution of forests in maintaining essential ecological processes and life-support systems and in preserving genetic diversity. Forests should not be looked upon as a source of revenue. Forests are a renewable resource. They are a national asset to be protected and enhanced for the well-being of the people and the Nation.

THIS policy resolution is significant in the sense that it eliminates some of the insensitivity of forest policy to the tribals and puts forth a new strategy. The objectives of the policy have been spelt out much more clearly to include maintenance of environmental stability; conservation of natural heritage, checking soil erosion and denudation, massive afforestation and social forestry programmes to meet the needs of rural and urban population, efficient utilization of forest produce and creation of massive peoples' movement for achieving these objects. The policy, however, relates rights/concessions for the local communities to the carrying capacity of the forest which is a very controversial issue and a vague test. The tribals feel that defining this concept should not be left to the forest officials alone. Moreover, the resolution emphasises social forestry as the main source for meeting the needs of the forest dwellers. But development of social forestry, again, is very much in the hands of the Forest Department, who, it has been seen in a many tribal areas like Bastar, Nilgiris etc., have planted such commercial species as pine and eucalyptus which are of no use to the tribal households. It is also seen that while the forest produce from reserved and protected forests is given for industrial use at throw away prices, the needs of the tribal handicraft workers are fulfilled at much higher prices. There are some other difficulties with this policy. In bats totally the entry of tribals to reserved forests and to supply them rights/concessions only from forest depots. It is known that the these depots are inadequate by way of numbers and locations and tribals face exploitation and harassment in these depots. THE 1988 policy breaks a new ground in the case of shifting cultivation. It makes a general resolve to find out way to discourage shifting cultivation and take up social forestry and plantations in the areas damaged by shifting cultivation. But shifting cultivation is not of a homogeneous variety and some areas may even be suitable for shifting cultivation. Suitable packages of alternative cultivation/plantation have to be evolved for different areas at micro level. As the Working Group for VIII Plan has pointed out, these efforts are still in an initial stage.

POVERTY

1. NO DOUBT, chronic and mass poverty had been embedded in India's colonial history. The effort to solve our economic problems and achieve all-round development began with our plans which have transformed the country in numerous ways — substantial industrialization, green revolution leading to surplus food production, improvement in the average life span and a fast increasing middle class opulence. It is, however, a paradox of our planning that it has failed to improve the living conditions of India's poor. Persistence of poverty is clearly manifest in the country's low levels of per capita income and the substantial percentage of population living below the poverty line, set at the consumption level of Rs. 3500/- subsequently, revised to Rs. 6400/-.

2. THE Planning Commission estimated the incidence of poverty at 37.4% in 1983-84 and 29.9% in 1987-88. These percentages are for total population; and in the rural population and the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe populations Planning Commission estimated its incidence in 1983-84 at 44.8% and in 1987-88 at 39.3%. The figures for 1993-94 NSS are yet to be released. The per capita income at 1980-81 constant prices was Rs. 2362/- in 1993-

94. For the 493 million people below the poverty line, development has been a distant phenomenon, watched from the way side (UNDP 1993).

3. THE state of poverty is attributed to various facets inherent in our model of planning and also the socio-political structure of the country. Our plans have laid over-emphasis on industrial growth, both in manufacturing and also in agriculture. In the latter sector we have encouraged large irrigation projects, chemical fertilizers, etc., which, by and large, benefit the substantial and not subsistence farmers. It was generally assumed that the benefits of industrial expansion and increased production and employment would trickle down to those at the very bottom. The attempts contained in these plans to temper the differences, obtaining in a grossly unequal and hierarchy-ridden society, by undertaking a modicum of income distribution have proved to be quite inadequate. Analysts have pointed out that the pattern of state intervention through measures like land-reforms, redistribution of agricultural incomes and surplus, adoption of educational infrastructure to employment potentials have been half-hearted and dominated by the entrepreneurial and capitalist class which have gradually obtained a stranglehold over the political and economic regime.

4. AS A consequence of these trends, the removal of rural poverty through targeting the removal of specific groups emerged as one of the main objects of the IV Plan and thereafter. Besides the key issue of land reforms, emphasis was laid on certain income and employment generation schemes under a package of anti-poverty programmes. These include schemes for generating employment and creation of assets for rural poor and rural areas—IRDP which would help through margin-money and loans to improve agriculture and develop sources for additional income, TRYSEM for creating alternate skills for employment, and programmes to enable rural women to get additional incomes. After the early 80s IRDP expansion and its honing to reach the most disadvantaged has succeeded in making some dent on the situation.

5. THE poverty levels among the Scheduled Tribes are naturally much higher when compared to the others. In 1983-84, the percentage of persons below the poverty line among the Scheduled Tribes was 58.4% in the rural areas (where 94% of them live) and 39.9% among the urban population. The Working Group on VIII Plan for the STs estimated that the number of ST families below the poverty line in 1991 was 99.24 lacs. Out of these, IRDP has assisted about 42% families upto the end of VII Plan. However, accurate estimates of families being able to cross the poverty line were not available and IRDP evaluations had placed this percentage at quite a low level. The Group worked out that an investment of Rs. 8000/- per family would be necessary to enable it to cross the poverty line and as against this the actual investment had been of Rs. 3481/- per family. Moreover, the investment per ST family was substantially lower than the investment on non-ST families. It has been perceived that the impoverishment and marginalisation of the bulk of tribal communities has been intensified in the context of our macro level goals of national development. The tribal populations have gradually been sucked into a process where their resource base and produce have got hinged to a national and even international economy on the one hand; the appropriation of their traditional community rights and economic bases by the State and commercial interests on the other hand. In the words of Dr. B.D. Sharma, former Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, a careful review of the present situation clearly brings out five levels of deprivation; namely

1. non-recognition of rights over resources and restriction of their use;
2. Alienation of workers from the means of production;
3. Denial of due instalment of labour;
4. Bartering of present liberty and finally;
5. Psychological state of accepting deprivation and

destitutions and demise of self respect and dignity. In other words the tribals have lost their traditional rights and access to forests and its produce. They are losing their better quality lands to non-tribal cultivators and being gradually driven to poorer lands and, further, a very large number of them have become wage earners and even the minimum and fair wage is denied to them, even by the government departments. As a result of emphasis on industrial development and large irrigation projects, which mostly benefit substantial agriculturists, tribals have been displaced from their lands in large tracts. Our legal process has been such that they have been getting a raw deal by way of compensation and woefully inadequate rehabilitation programmes. A study of 22 districts in A.P. (1990) points out that while the SCs and BCs were found to be highly responsive to anti-poverty effort, among the STs, the relationship was not so strong. While perceptible dents could be made on the poverty levels of SC and BC households, the efforts of development are to be stretched more though innovative schemes for making inroads with the poverty of ST. In the global march of development, the wealth on earth is being appropriated by elites impoverishing the nature as well as the vast human masses who depend on these natural resources over the centuries. *Adyasis* have constantly fought an unequal battle against outside oppressors (Baviskar 1995).

6. IN THE context of this widespread deprivation and even pauperization on the tribal scene, even the large scale intervention by the State through the impact of anti-poverty and rural employment programmes; revamped public distribution system for the tribal areas and other programmes with similar aims in the cooperative and other sectors have not so far proved to be extensive enough.

✓ AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED ISSUES

Indian Tribesmen as Agriculturists

THE report of the 'Study Team on Tribal Development Programme (Committee on Plan Projects, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi 1969)' gives the percentage distribution of Scheduled Tribe workers by employment in agriculture and other occupation as many as 88% of total working population is engaged in agriculture. In certain States and Union Territories more than this percentage is engaged in agriculture.

THIS picture is not the same for the whole of the country; some States have larger percentage of the agricultural population among the tribal communities, while others have as low a percentage as 1% to 3%. The States of Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Dadra & Nagar Haveli have a larger number of cultivation pursuits than the All-India percentage of 68%. No agricultural pursuits are more favoured in L.M. and A. Islands, NEFA, Kerala, Karnataka, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

MOST of the tribals are cut off from the main stream of the Indian life due to difficult means of transport and communication. Being isolated, they are not exposed to new ideas, which they could have assimilated or adopted. Most of the innovations in agriculture aim at increasing productivity, that would precipitate problems of disposing off the surplus, and thus would be unwelcome as these will require marketing on their part to have agriculture surpluses. Secondly, irrigation facilities are either totally lacking in these regions or are very inadequate, with the obvious result that they can neither switch over to high yielding varieties nor use fertilizers. Low density of population makes it necessary that the communal ownership of land be restored to since there are many hands to manage various agricultural chores. Coupled with it is the fact that due to communal ownership of land means, non-fixity of tenure, with consequent little attachment for the land tilled by the farmer tribesman. The long term improvement of land suffers. Added to this is the weakness of the co-operative credit in the tribal belt.

Assistance from the money-lender results in their losing their lands, while going without credit leaves them with little to invest in land. The difficulties of the terrain in the hills and the forests complete this vicious cycle and compel them to take to shifting cultivation, popularly known as *Jhum*.

Shifting Cultivation

BROADLY speaking, shifting cultivation is the common feature of tribal agriculture. The usual method is to cut down trees and burn them and to sow in their ashes. The tribal areas are generally the undulating terrain, dense forest or otherwise characterised by lack of transport. In the hilly tribes and in the forest regions shifting cultivation is followed. Large numbers of tribal cultivators are engaged in this type of farming.

THE most important states in which shifting cultivation is widely practised are Assam, Orissa, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur and Kerala. The Commissioner for Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in his report for 1961 has calculated the per cultivator availability of land for some states as: Andhra Pradesh 0.48 acres, Assam 0.52 acres, Bihar 0.04 acres, Kerala 5.40 acres, Madhya Pradesh 1.47 acres, Madras (TN) 1.39 acres, Maharashtra 2.89 acres, Manipur 0.29 acres, Karnataka 0.18 acres, Orissa 0.43 acres and Tripura 1.22 acres. In over three decades passed since then, per capita land must have decreased further. This shows that the availability of land per cultivator is very uneconomical and unable to provide even for subsistence of a single family. The main crops grown are: Paddy, Cotton, maize, millets, chillies, ginger, vegetables, fruits and tobacco. Very few crops are grown as such, most of them are grown in mixtures, the usual mixtures are paddy, millets, vegetables, maize, cotton and sesamum.

SHIFTING cultivation has therefore, little scope for specialisation as several crops are sown in the same plot. The *Jhum* cycle requires plots of land to be kept fallow, in order that they retain their fertility. This depends upon the density of population and the availability of land, the *Jhum* cycle extends from three to seven years. Since the same piece of land cannot be cultivated continuously, they have to move from place to place in search of fresh land. The first operation is, therefore, that of locating a suitable place where to start cultivation. Next, they cut and clear the jungle, and often burn the felled trees, and then wait for the monsoons to let the land absorb these ashes which are good fertilisers. This is followed by preparation of land for sowing which starts the regular agricultural operations.

THERE is little marketable surplus, marketing facilities are limited and the extent of monetization is restricted. Tribal cultivators living near the markets or towns may get gradually monetized and may in course of time be influenced by commercialisation trends, but that is not yet. Even if there is surplus produce, it is converted into traditional goods, such as brass bells, beads, and in certain cases, salt, utensils, dry fish and even cloth. Sometimes, the money is invested in the purchase of birds, ornaments and prestigious animals and cattle. It appears that reinvestments in agriculture are very seldom made. Marriage is an important event, for it is the only means (at least for the rich) to procure more labour, slavery having been abolished by law. Hence a change in this cultivation system will mean also a change in the social priorities and in the system of living among tribals.

SHIFTING cultivation is unable to support the tribal communities for the persons, that it can support, are not more than 0.25 per sq.km. as against 0.6 under animal husbandry and 2.0 in the case of primitive agriculture in settled village conditions. Further, shifting cultivation is associated with the traditional ownership of land; often the rights cease when they stop cultivation. Shifting cultivation is thus providing hardly any motivation to the cultivator. It is based on low technology and under-utilization of human resources. Very primitive tools are used—axe, bullock and the digging stick. Since the slash and burn method is followed wholesale, there is large-scale erosion of land. In the case of steep lands and on the slopes, the topsoil is washed away in the fury of the

rains, though out of tree trunks laid across can alleviate this evil. Tribal value orientations also conspire to preserve the shifting cultivation methods among them; some crops are essential for the performance of certain social rites. In addition, this type of cultivation does incalculable harm to the forests. Under this system there is no use of improved seeds or fertilizers, or pesticides. In short, agriculture has remained static. The deciding factors in the tribal society are super-natural, rather than human. Only the low valued crops are possible to cultivate; hence the per acre return is very low indeed. And to top it all, the size of the holdings is very small. In short, shifting cultivation has resulted in destruction of forests, grave soil erosion, and at best the subsistence level of living. It has adversely affected agricultural productivity and obstructed any improvement in agricultural practices.

Upland, Terrace and Taungya Cultivation

THOUGH shifting cultivation is most prevalent type among the tribals, two other forms especially among hilly people are the Taungya and the Terrace systems. Shifting cultivation suffers from several vices and disadvantages, which are somewhat neutralised by these two. In the hilly areas, Terraces are laid along the slopes. It is the first step towards settled agriculture. But certain difficulties are encountered in encouraging the adoption of this type because the land is often not suitable for the construction of the terraces. Plots are too small to be economically viable. Depredations are caused by wild animals while the crop is standing. Scattered plots are difficult to reach. It has also been noticed that for the first few years (usually three), after the construction of the terraces, the yield is not good. This may demand of the peasant a life of austerity. Immediate switch-over from shifting cultivation to terrace cultivation may mean malnutrition for the peasant and his family. In certain areas, the government offered a subsidy covering three-fourth of the cost of terracing, the remaining one-fourth being borne by the tribals themselves. Unfortunately, the productivity of land in the tribal areas was so low that they could not afford to meet the one-fourth out of their own pockets. Even the allocated funds were not utilised. Similarly when the State offered to contribute one-fourth to the cost of the improvements, the tribals did not respond to finance the remaining three-fourth. Upland cultivation is not quite productive or remunerative. The Angami Naga, and in some areas, the Khasi have been practising terrace cultivation, but so heavy are the costs of construction of the terraces that the system was not popular. The yield is also low due to the removal of the topsoil while constructing the terrace. Taungya cultivation is another improvement made in the shifting system. Under this variation, the cultivators are permitted to clear and burn a part of the forest area and there plant rows of commercially valuable trees. Also the farmer is permitted to cultivate his own crops between the rows of the new plantations. Within the span of three or four years, the new plantations get well established, when the cultivator is permitted to move to another part in the forest and repeat the process there. Thus, the commercially useful varieties of forests are also planted while the cultivator is not made to shed shifting cultivation practice at once. This agrisilvicultural method enables the commercially useful trees to be exploited in a cycle of about 50 to 150 years, for it is approximately after this period that the cultivator will return to the first plot. At that interval the trees earlier planted will also have grown to full maturity and be ready for being cut down. This system is reported to be quite successful in the Assam and the Manipur tribal belts while it is under the experimental stage in the Tripura region. Still another variation prevails in Nagaland where they cut down the tree trunk known as *Alda*, but do not burn it at the time of the shifting cultivation. After their tilling is over, the *Alda* re-grows quickly, preventing soil erosion and preserving soil fertility. The felled tree trunks are laid across the slopes, covering them with grass and bamboos, and fixing them with pegs, in order to slow down the velocity of water, so that the top soil is not washed away.

Whatever soil is carried away by the torrential water is deposited on the grass and bamboos binding the tree trunks, thus a rudimentary terrace is formed. But unfortunately, the tree trunks are being more used for fuel rather than for constructing barriers along the slopes.

Tribal Agriculture in the Plains

THE picture in the plains is not very rosy either. As elsewhere, the main reason for the performance of tribals is the uneconomic size of the agricultural holding coupled with the inferior quality of their land use. The tribals usually get the residual lands, that are not taken over by the common peasants. To add to their misery further there is the high incidence of tenancy among them, with all its attendant evils, pressing hard upon them. Also, their system of cultivation has remained miserably primitive and unscientific; the tribals are living in isolation and seclusion with the result that they have remained immune to the progressive movements around them, and continued to practice their ancient crafts in the same old manner, without much changes. Added to these factors are the following: poor soil, low irrigation, lack of measures, ignorance about new techniques and methods, crude and useless implements and tools, great intensity of soil erosion and the total absence of suitable measures to arrest it. Most of these ailments are of a general nature and common to all agriculturists, it may still be pointed out that in the case of the tribals, their intensity is acute. The agricultural productivity therefore remains heavily depleted, the rate of yield of the principle crops is invariably below that of the State level. It is at best only subsistence agriculture, which prevails in the tribal belt.

MOST of the tribal cultivators (in the plains) are tenants, who can be turned out at will. This tenurial disincentive is quite potent in keeping agricultural productivity at the low point. Further, there is the disability arising out of the size of the holding: most of the holdings in the hands of the tribals are below 5 acres, with the consequent uneconomic nature of the enterprise. Their enterprise suffers from lack of funds, which could be ploughed back into it. Even the implements they use are not only imperfect, but in several cases antiquated and unsuited to the tilling operations. Sometimes, the tribals do not have a plough and/or bullock. For the renting of bullocks and of implements they have to pay exorbitant charges, this makes it unremunerative to rent them and the tiller goes without these, contenting himself with the use of whatever implements he has. Frequently only monoculture is practised, with the result that the peasant's destiny is tied to one single crop which (if fails) brings the cultivator to the verge of financial collapse. Under conditions of protected tenancy, the rate of inputs in agriculture is very low and in several instances negligible. Thus, there is the vicious circle of low income, low investments, and low input and the resultant lower production.

No wonder, the tillers are chained in debt, which they have to incur in order to take out an existence and what is worse, to meet their social obligations. This evil is accentuated where the tribals have come under the influence of the urban areas, due to the operation of the well known demonstration effect. In certain cases, their own dress, which could be very cheaply made at home, has given way to the ready-made garments, while their own food habits have slowly yielded to those involving eating outside, in cheap restaurants etc. Thus there has been a drain on the purse, and some deficiency diseases are spreading among them. An artificial rise in the standard of living, that they cannot afford, has become a curse for them. Indebtedness among the helpless peasants has also gone up and appears to be mounting excessively. Needless to point out that most of it is of an unproductive nature.

THE tribes living in the plains are living mainly on the fringes of the forests - in Madhya Pradesh, in terai or in Tamil Nadu; hence their agricultural economy must be married to forestry. Not merely to supplement their income, but also to reduce the pressure on their small holdings, a larger number could be encouraged to tap the forest produce. As the Commission long back put it, the forest policy should be recast to suit the tribal policy. Further, the diversification of their agriculture

should be considered from the point of view of their aptitudes, they may be encouraged to start on ventures like poultry and piggery. Legislative protection should be given to them as share croppers and if possible they should be helped to become full fledged owners and last, but the most important suggestion, is that they may benefit from the extension services, these services should be geared to their needs. Surely intense effort is to be directed towards these weaker sections of economy than before; much more money should also be invested on these services. And what is more important, the people working there should be imbued with a missionary zeal, and not have bureaucratic attitudes.

The Nomadic Tribes

THOUGH strictly not agricultural cultivators, the nomadic tribes have been affected by the development in the agricultural sector. For instance, the nomadic tribes of Rajasthan, the *Raikas*, are mainly herders, raising sheep, camel and goat. They do not have settled homes, they move from place to place in search of good grazing land. They have not owned any grazing land, for the fallow lands (of which there were plenty in the State), would serve as that. The prosperity of the *Raikas* has been linked with the vast stretches of this fallow land. With the recent development in the increased use, intensity of the arid land by bringing it under the plough and by reducing the extent of keeping it fallow for long periods of time, the availability of the grazing lands has consequently decreased. They have been adversely affected and have given up cattle raising in favour of taking up jobs as landless labourers. The whole economy is thus bound to suffer, while the farmer-grazier conflict grows. This is the backwash effect of agricultural improvement. Similarly, there is the difficulty faced by the *Todas* in the matter of finding grazing lands for their herds. This means that all the tribal economy is interlinked.

ANOTHER type of nomadism is to be found in North-east India, among the *Mikir* tribe who move from place to place in search of *Jhum* land. A *Mikir* village is seldom a geographical unit because the site undergoes frequent changes. They shift to new localities in search of new lands for their *Jhuming*. Therefore, they do not construct any permanent abodes or house, the villages generally consist of as few as four or five households. Land among these tribes is community held and the tribal chief is the supreme master of the whole show. Probably co-operativeisation is easier to be introduced among them, while their migratory movements could be directed by the State to suitable sites where "slash and burn" cultivation could be useful to the community for the betterment of farming.

THE nomadic tribes have also to be taken care of and if possible, settled. But probably the nomadic habits are so fixed among them due to traditional customs and generations of nomadism that this may pose a real challenge. In that event, it would be worthwhile considering that this nomadism could be given a useful direction by the State. These tribesmen, if they are herders (as the *Raikas*) may be encouraged to keep their ancestral occupation and the authorities could help them in their hunt for good grazing lands, by locating those fallow lands much in advance of their movements. Grazing could definitely be fitted into the agricultural calendar of the locals. For others, who wander about in search of *Jhuming* lands, it would be a fruitful exercise for the planners and administrators if they could, instead of making vain effort at settling them at one place, find for them such employments, as may involve movement from place to place, so that their innate nomadism could be satisfied, without any destruction to forests. It may require some detailed research.

COMING to agriculture in particular, it may be pointed out that the key characteristics of tribal agriculture are primitive methods of farming, low crop intensity, high labour intensive dry farming, and static cropping patterns. Out of these key characteristics are born the secondary features such as: low farm output, high man-land ratio resulting in low input coefficient, increase in distress sales, repurchase (at a much

higher price) of the agricultural produce required for its daily use, high production costs, and varying farm productivity per acre and per man. This is accentuated by the operation of several factors, which affect tribal agriculture in an adverse manner, unfavourable agro-climatic conditions, non-availability of plain fertile farmlands, irrigation facilities and organised markets, ignorance about the latest agricultural technology and practices, aptitude for the primitive system of agriculture and love for the retention of the tribal culture and ways of living. Certain important factors influence the pattern of farm investment, such as topography of tribal areas, irrigation facilities, structure of the operational holdings and farm families, the rates of saving, the availability of credit, degree of indebtedness, level of education, the nature of social inhibitions and sanctions etc.

THE above list is not exhaustive, but merely points out the very complexity of the problems of tribal agriculture. Probably, there is no cause for despair, provided the above variables (and many more) could be operated to the advantage of the agriculturist tribesmen. The problem is indeed complex but some of the facts mentioned, and the factors enumerated above would have the way for the scrutiny of the policy measures to be suggested for the improvement of the tribal agriculture in this country.

ANY schemes to be successful must rest (and not cut across) on their age-old traditional values and sacrosanct customs. Some modifications may be permitted and even accepted, but major upsets in their processes of living would not be tolerated, howsoever good the policies might happen to be. The process of reform has to be evolutionary, and cannot be revolutionary, especially in a democratic structure as ours. Not this alone, but the process of gradual evolution has to be advocated in view of the fact that the value systems the tribals have built, have been the result of socio-economic movement spreading over centuries and cannot be undone in a day or two. The process cannot doubt be abridged, but within limits. Hence the anthropologist time and again, issues the warning, often unheeded by the ambitious economist-cum-planner, that any undue haste would send the beneficiary back into his shell. Haste has to be made slowly—this is an adage of social evolution and of change.

MOST of the ailments of the tribals are common with those of other peasants: low and insecure and unstable incomes, illiteracy and ignorance, unemployment and under-employment, primitive and unproductive methods of cultivation. To make matters worse, there is the defective communication system which is both inadequate and inefficient. There are certain fundamental handicaps which the planner has to face. There is a complete blackout as far as correct data are concerned. The available statistics fail to shed any light on the state of tribal agriculture. In this context, only broad generalisations are possible. Again there is the lack of co-operation and initiative from the tribal population. Extension services have not made impact desired of them. Even the staff responsible for tribal uplift is not true to its salt, for some of the high executives are unwilling to brave the hazards of journeying into the mountainous and inaccessible reaches of the tribal abodes. In certain cases, the extension services funds are not even available. The allocated funds for tribal development are not fully utilised. Then there is the lack of proper communication with tribesmen. Communication is of superlative importance in the development of an economy, but very little attention has been paid to it, except in Punjab. Transport facilities in the tribal areas are also inadequate; some of the regions are virtually inaccessible and completely cut off from the rest of the country. Tribal development thus remains a dream.

EDUCATION AND TRIBALS

THE tribes of India can be classified in different stages of economic development viz. in hunting and food gathering stage, or in the stage of nomadism, shifting cultivation stage and in the stage of settled agriculture including that of arts and crafts.

KHARIA, Birhor, Kuki, Konyak, Hill Naga, Maria, Koya, Konta,

Reddy, Palyan, Kadar, Hill Pantarm and Juang are in the lowest rung of economic development and are engaged in hunting and food gathering. They wander from one place to another in search of food and game.

AMONG the shifting cultivators are the Korwa, Saheria, Bhuiya, Kharwar, Asur, Garo, Malpahariya, Maler, Naga, Gora, Lakhua, Maria. Agriculturists are Tharu, Oraon, Munda, Manjhi, Bhoksa, Ho, Santal, Polian, Khasi, Porja, Bhatra, Badaga, Kota, Irula, Paraja, Bhil, Gond etc. Similarly, the tribal people are also at different stages of educational development. Considering their percentage of literacy, the tribal communities can be grouped under two categories, developed or semi-developed and extremely backward.

IN THE states of Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, the majority of the tribal communities are having lower literacy percentage than literacy percentage of Scheduled Tribes in India whereas all the tribes of Assam are having higher literacy percentage. Moreover none of the tribes in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa have attained the total literacy percentage of India, but the tribes of Assam namely, Barman, Deori, Kachari, including Sonwal, Khasi and Jaintiya, Mech and Mizo have crossed the national literacy percentage and there are few others, who are approaching the national percentage of literacy.

THUS, it is evident that the tribes of India are in different stages of ecological, economic and educational development. Naturally the problems of education related to those living in different stages of development will be different and the priority in approaches for tackling the problems will be different.

Ecology and Education

THE main problem of education related to the tribes living in hilly, forested and inaccessible areas is lack of schools. At this stage it is very difficult to substantiate this observation quantitatively due to lack of relevant data. However an earlier India Year Book relates to this point by way of citing examples for India as a whole. Nagaland and erstwhile NEFA. In India the average area served by a primary school is 38.5 sq. miles, while in mountainous states having less of communication such as Nagaland, the primary school serves an area of 10 sq. miles. Similarly in the north-east, a primary school serves an area of 20 sq. miles. It is true that on the basis of these two figures from Nagaland and Meghalaya a broad conclusion cannot be derived for the country as a whole but, we can atleast conclude that in tribal areas particularly those which are inaccessible, it becomes difficult for the children to go to a school situated at a distance of more than 3 miles. At some places, it has also been observed that the school has been opened on paper in a particular village which is completely cut off from block-headquarter, but in reality the school is held on a road side village in the name of the other village.

THE schools located in hilly and inaccessible area are mostly single teacher schools. Since the area is inaccessible, the inspecting staff are not likely to come to village and hence the teacher is most of the time out and the classes are not held regularly. The innocent tribal people do not know as to where the teacher has gone.

THE problem of education is different for those who are living in plains and are leading a settled life. In such cases the villages have schools because of being compact, and densely populated. In a mixed village, there is no problem for teacher in getting students, but in a village exclusively inhabited by the tribal communities the teacher has to face lot of difficulties in getting required number of students. In villages having Christian and non-Christian tribal population, it has been noticed that most of the Christian parents send their children to school (whereas most of the Non-Christian tribals do not) because the utility of education has been well impressed on the minds of Christian tribal parents. The Christian missions have been doing work in the field of education since well over a century in these remote areas, while other agencies are relatively newcomers in this field. Again, most of the non-Christian parents are not educated

about the utility of education, and therefore, fail to see the good of educating their children.

THE nomadic communities mainly depend on forest produce and games, and therefore, keep on moving from jungle making the problem of communication still more difficult to have a school for them.

Economy and Education

SOME of the nomadic communities who depend on begging, acrobatic feasts, mendicants, blacksmithy, mistrel (one who since praise), puppeteers etc. are so mobile and their stay at one place is so short that by the time they are actually noticed for purposes of getting their children enrolled they are on the move. Again, the children are trained from very childhood in the profession of the community that they hardly get time for and to realise the importance of education. The lack of educational facilities in such difficult areas as well as their pre-occupation in collection of food for their day-to-day consumption leave no time and create no desire for education among the nomadic communities.

THOSE communities practicing shifting cultivation live on the hill slopes amidst their shifting cultivation land in small settlements which are often distantly located from each other.

The produce from their agricultural practices is very small due to rocky soil condition and primitive agricultural techniques with the result that they live from hand to mouth, not even getting two square meals a day, for a major portion of the year. Again, the process of cultivation necessarily involves all the family members, besides the assistance of co-villagers for a major portion of the years. The role of children in their economy is very significant because little yield forces the family to fall back upon the forest produce which is collected by the children while they graze their cattle. Children are engaged in these activities during the day time which coincides with the school hours.

POVERTY is the way of life of the shifting cultivators and their time, thought and energy are spent only in activities which are intended to produce food for the family. In such circumstances they are left hardly with any time to think about the education nor can they afford it howsoever cheap it may be. They are not in a position to forego the immediate economic gain through a child for a greater gain in distant future through their education.

SETTLED agriculturists come in contact with the educated and urban tradesmen more frequently as compared to other two sections and there is greater consciousness of the utility of education among them than in the other two groups mentioned above. Even the parents are not in a position to provide proper facility to read at night nor do they persuade them to read at home. It is not that they do not feel the necessity of providing light and suitable atmosphere but they are helpless due to economic hardships.

Society and Education

FAMILY which is the smallest unit of the society, plays an important role in the education of the children. In fact the learning process starts in the family and the child learns through the process of limitation and suggestion within the family. The family trains the child in social values, norms and customs and to certain extent in the tradition of the society in the early years of the childhood. Later slowly when the child grows up he comes in contact with the society and acquires its folkways and mores. Thus, in short, we can say that the early education in any society comes through the agency of family. These processes are called the process of socialization.

MOST of the tribal societies in India have special traditional institutions for the purpose of education which can be called Youth dormitories. Such dormitories are called by different names in different tribal societies and quite a large number of studies have come out including Elwin's 'Muria and Their Ghutu'. The function of these dormitories is to impart education in the traditions and customs of the society and prepare the youth for their roles as adult members of the particular society and thus they are the agencies of cultural transmission besides providing co-operating labour unit

enhancing community spirit.

BEFORE the advent of the modern system of education, this institution catered to the needs of education among the tribal people and passed through the word of mouth. There being no script, the formal reading and writing was absent. Though the children gained knowledge in these institutions, yet they remained as such as they could not read and write.

BUT with the changing time it became necessary that they learn reading, writing and arithmetic and, therefore, the necessity of school arose. There are no social barriers, taboos, prejudices, prevalent in tribal societies regarding the acceptance of education, yet there are some strong disincentives. Since modern education was not geared in tune with the prevalent tribal culture, the result was that a tribal child was alienated from his society after having been educated and more often than not was lost to the family. The school environment, the attitude of teachers, the curriculum and content of education contributed to the tribal life and culture. The school going boy becomes a misfit in his own home, detests his parents and their way of life. He is anxious to leave the village for the job in town at the first opportunity. The prevalent education instead of making him a responsible and useful member of his own society forces him out of his traditional occupation and subsequently, society. It also detribalizes him to a large extent. Thus a proud and robust son of the soil goes away to seek a low paid job and lead miserable existence in the dirt and dust of a small town.

Educational Administration

IN TRIBAL areas most of the primary schools do not have any school building and classes are held in residential houses in some varandahs. As such education among the tribal people has yet to go a long way to be at par with the general population. The enrolment of the tribal students is naturally less. Besides the teaching aids provided to school are utterly inadequate. The charts, blackboards, chalk, posters, picture cards, globes, counting sticks or balls etc. are not provided in the school. In the absence of school building it will also be difficult to store them. Naturally, the education of tribal people suffers a great deal. The other important problem related to the education of the tribal people is of the teachers. It is very difficult to appoint a suitable tribal teacher for the school located in tribal areas mainly because literacy among the tribal people is only 20% and there are very few matriculates who can take up the job of a teacher. Since the tribal teachers are not available in required number the non-tribal teachers, who have no proper understanding about the tribal way of life and culture and the problems associated with different tribes, are appointed. The non tribal teachers have formed different attitudes about the tribal people. Apart from their belief that the tribal people are simple folk, honest and ignorant, they believe that they are tradition bound, have no change openness, are dirty and can not be developed even in hundred years of time. They are dull and do not have quick comprehension. Thus the teachers work with a different bias and they do not have the patience to deal with the tribal people with love and affection. Their approach and method of teaching are the same as are prevalent in the schools meant for non-tribal students. Even in school where the students come from tribal and non-tribal society, the teachers pay greater attention to the non-tribal students, because they understand the lesson and occasionally reply in the class. But the tribal children are made to suffer from a sense of inferiority and are hesitant in giving reply.

THE other reason is that the teachers in tribal areas too, are interested in private tuition of the non-tribal students after school hours and charge tuition fee. The tribal people can not afford to engage teachers for private tuition. As such the non-tribal teachers do not take interest in class room teaching and also in the tribal students studying in the school.

THERE are various problems associated with the teachers such as low salary, lack of incentive to work hard, lack of accommodation for teachers in the village, lack of communication etc. Since the post of teachers is transferable,

those who are posted in interior areas take it as a punishment and hence try to spend money but their time and energy are also wasted and, the actual purpose, i.e. education suffers. Besides the basic amenities are also not available to them, so they feel isolated and bored.

IN TRIBAL areas mostly the schools are single teacher schools and the teacher's attention is always divided, hence he can not do justice with lesson in any class and the standard of achievement of tribal students even after primary schooling is quite low.

APART from these, the teachers are at least occasionally involved in the local politics as well as in some other activities which are not in conformity with their duties as teachers. In tribal areas wherever the tribal teachers are appointed they are mostly Christians. Their contact with Christian mission is very frequent and hence they are induced to propagate Christianity in the school for which they are paid some extra money as their remuneration. So they have dual functions as preacher and teacher which force them to behave in different ways with their Christian and non-Christian pupils. In areas where the teachers are influential because of their association with the *Pramukh* or Chairman of the *Panchayat Samiti* or the Christian mission, they act according to their own sweet will. Even in other schools located in tribal areas the teachers do not strictly follow the school hours. School hours are adjusted according to the will of the teacher and convenience of the students and the parents.

INSPECTION of schools in the tribal areas is inadequate because the inspecting staff are engaged in various other activities like compilation of statistics and returns etc. at block, sub-division and district levels and hence the inspection work suffers. Staff is inadequate and the area of operation is so big that even one inspection in a year becomes difficult.

WASTAGE and stagnation is one of the important factors that impedes educational development of the tribal people. This problem is more among the extremely backward tribes, because the incidence of withdrawal of students from school is quite frequent even before completing a particular standard. This is mainly because of the poor economic condition of the tribal people and also because the children have to render services in different economic pursuits to supplement the income of the family. Hence, dropouts among tribal students is very high.

ONE of the major problems of the education of tribal people is that they are not taught through their mother tongue. Hence it is very difficult for the primary level tribal students to learn the regional language and understand the lessons which are taught in the class through regional language.

IMPACT OF URBANISATION AND INDUSTRIALISATION ON TRIBAL CULTURE

UNDER the modern process of change, urbanisation and industrialization have literally brought about revolutionary changes in some parts of tribal India. During the last 80 years and especially during the Plan periods, the pace of mining and manufacturing industries, as well as the exploitation of power and forest resources, have been greatly accelerated in the hilly and forested belts of tribal areas. This release of "pull factors" during the last more than four decades in the hitherto neglected tribal belts get reflected in the growth of the largest percentage of urban population in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

ALONG with the growth of urban population in predominantly tribal states, the number of towns and cities in the hill areas of Central parts of India has also been on the increase specially after the second global war, and the whole belt seems to be spotted with numerous industrial power-producing, mining and manufacturing complexes. In order to illustrate some of these points and also to refer the pattern of impact on tribal culture under the influence of industrial urbanization, we shall select Chhota-nagpur for a case study because industrial urbanization is best reflected in this part

of the belt.

THE first wave of industrialization was felt in the area with the exploitation of coal mining industry in Jharia, Bokaro and Karnapura coal fields in Dhanbad district in 1856 and the installation of Tata Iron and Steel Factory in Jamshedpur in Singhbhum district in 1907. These twin industries of coal and iron marked the beginning of the large-scale exploitation of mineral and other industrial resources of Chhotanagpur. With the world's largest deposit of mica, and India's largest deposit of coal, iron, copper and adequate quantities of bauxite, limestone, phyllite, chromite, asbestos, graphite, kainite and steatite, Chhotanagpur has attracted thousands of local tribals and the immigrants alike, to work in various types of mining as well as mineral-based industries.

CHHOTANAGPUR has been in the grip of an Industrial Revolution, and this had led to rapid urbanization, comparatively, in a short span of time, leading this region to an "industry-based urban explosion". Such an "explosion" in the heart of the tribal belt of middle India has led to "cultural mutation" and the once isolated homogeneous folk and primitive communities are exposed and thrown open to get assimilated in the global network of urban-industrial civilization. Such a situation of "cultural mutation" among the tribal communities of Chhotanagpur and neighbouring areas of Orissa created by the industrial urban-explosion has been studies by a number of anthropologists like Vidvarthi T. R. Sharma, J.S. Tandon, Rajendra Singh, A. Sarkar, Das Gupta and many others.

FROM a longitudinal study of the heavy engineering industrial complex near Ranchi by Vidvarthi it is evident that the pre-industrial setting of the Hatia industrial zone was characterized by "an all-round homogeneity in terms of landscape, population, economy and a general style of life". Demographically, the tribals were the largest single group in these villages forming three-fourth of the total families. Next to them were the Hindus (one-seventh). Economically, three-fourth of them depended on weaving, basket-making and other such activities.

AT THE formulatory stage of industrialization, the problem of land acquisition and rehabilitation of the uprooted villagers had to be tackled.

THESE agricultural people when uprooted had to face manifold problems. The first was regarding their alternative place for rehabilitation as well as an alternative occupation to earn their livelihood. Though these affected families were given reasonable compensation, they had to face numerous social problems cultural crisis, economic disorganization and social disintegration. The problems of their rehabilitation were not tackled with adequate foresight and planning, and they continued to lead a life of cultural disequilibrium.

WHILE the local traditional life was disintegrated during the formulatory phase of industrialization, during the constructive phase, Hatia-industrial complex attracted a large influx of unskilled and skilled industrial workers from different parts of the country. It was discovered that a large percentage of industrial labourers came from other industrial centres of West Bengal (Durgapur), Orissa (Rourkela), Madhya Pradesh (Bhilai), Uttar Pradesh and Kerala. Such a huge force of industrial workers migrating from one place to another in quest of suitable jobs perhaps poses a formidable problem for the planners, and for those interested in social work. These migrating workers have caused a new type of industrial nomadism with numerous social and economic problems. Moreover, such a group of migrants create problems of employment for the local people as the former are preferred owing to their previous experience.

DURING the formulatory and constructive phases of industrialization, Hatia could remain the only surviving village (nearest to the factory site), and it emerged as the most important business centre for meeting the day-to-day requirements of the migrant and the slum labourer. The folk and rural traits of village Hatia got mixed up with numerous urban-industrial characteristics owing to the advent of a new way of life. And, on the whole, all these commercial and

industrial developments in Hatia greatly disturbed the homogenous and rural "style of life" of the village. Ideals, language and population, food habits and dress pattern, social and religious out-look and, for that matter, the entire way of life were characterized by heterogeneity and industrial outlook as the people from different places with different cultural backgrounds came to live in this semi-urbanized village.

VILLAGE Hatia which before 1958 was characterized by isolation, homogeneity, collective "style of living" was thus affected by the first wave of industrialization. Though with the coming of the industrial township and the completion of the construction work, the situation in Hatia has partly changed, the village, however, for all practical purposes, has become part of the industrial complex. The income of the villagers has gone high and they have now learnt to lead a heterogeneous style of life in terms of language, religion and social ethics. In general, it is now providing a good example of blending of rural and industrial "style of life".

A SOCIO-economic study of the neighbouring villages reveals that their traditional agricultural economy continues to be intact, although, at the initial stage, they accepted the industrial work as a subsidiary occupation. The younger generation, however, is not getting attracted to the industrial work in a comparatively large number. The local people engaged in the factory or in the town spend more money (in comparison to those engaged in agriculture) on consumer goods like clothes, batteries, torches, goggles, cycles, etc. It is interesting to note that on the one side, the neighbouring villages are resisting migration from the village and on the other, in an era of cycles providing social and economic mobility to the workers. At present these industrially affected villages show evidence of the agricultural work combined alone with a little industrial jobs. Still, for want of skill required in the different types of work in the factory, these villagers are not in a position to get suitably absorbed in the industrial work. This has caused frustration among these local villagers who were rather unfortunate that neither the government nor the Heavy Engineering Corporation's administration could provide them with the necessary training in some skill and technical know-how required in the emerging industrial complex.

IN THE present context, however, all these economic adjustments (or mal-adjustments) have correspondingly influenced the man-to-man relationship in different villages, as well as in the slum colonies of the migrants. In general, the traditional authority of the elders in the family has become very weak. This violation of the familial authority pattern is reflected in the flouting of the traditional taboos and customs regarding age and sex relationship. Moral laxity, which of course, was not uncommon within a tribal community, has not crossed its boundary, and cases of relationship of the tribals with the non-tribal workers too are coming to light.

THE other two industrial centres, the Patratu Thermal Power Project and the Bokaro Steel Plant are located in a more or less Hinduized and agriculturally advanced area of Chhotanagpur. These two industrial complexes were studied by Rajendra Singh (1967) and Sarkar (1970). The studies show that the impact so far felt is only in terms of disintegration of the traditional culture, the rehabilitation of the uprooted villagers and the trends of the emerging industrial society.

IN PATRATU, economically the most affected families' are those that have lost their mainstay of life, agriculture. They are always on the lookout for industrial work. The neighbouring agriculturists have started growing cash crops, vegetables, and such other items required by the new emerging industrial society at Patratu. The locals who are either landless or have less than 10 acres have been attracted to the factory work. Before industrialization the people of nearby villages were isolated and barter-minded. These villages have now become very much money-minded. In the past, although money was known to them, it was never the monopolized source of exchange. When the local

commodities got a place in the market, barter economy was expected and the "jajmani system" was uppermost in the minds of the people. But today money is everything and it is used for purchasing cloth, food and luxury goods, and it also determines the economic status of an individual.

THE communities at Patratu have shown a considerable degree of change in their occupational structure and other spheres of economic activities. There is a marked decline in the traditional occupation of agriculture, and this has been attributed to the expansion of employment opportunities for the villagers in the industrial concerns as semi-skilled and unskilled labourers.

THE process of industrialization has, however, not affected the traditional core of the social structure of the neighbouring villages so far. In spite of the fact that some of the villagers had to leave their home temporarily, their sense of oneness in the family organization has not been much affected. The inquiry makes it clear that the workers from neighbouring villages return to their homes after the day's work in the factory. But the workers from far-off villages have to live near the factory site and go to their respective villages only for the week-ends. Again, at the factory site, these workers, drawn from a number of villages, stay in one camp and the vagueness of friendship and kinship relations are maintained. The head of the family continues to be respected and the money earned by the workers in the factory is also spent by the family who stays in the village.

RELATED to the social customs, the religious beliefs and practices also reflect the minimum transformation. The religious institutions of the Hindus, Muslims and tribals coexist. The annual festivals and their celebrations at Patratu are joined by all the castes and tribes, and they appear to be more integrated. In the political sphere the influence of the traditional leaders like the *Pahan* and the *Mahlo* is diminishing and a band of educated and politically conscious leaders is fast emerging. The villagers working in factories have been influenced by the labour leaders.

IN BOKARO, the installation of the Bokaro Steel Plant has resulted in a total acquisition of land, and displacement of many families who were also thus, compelled to abandon their traditional occupation of agriculture, though some of them have bought land for cultivation at a distance of 15 to 25 kilometers from the rehabilitation sites. In the absence of other means of livelihood, the displaced persons are on the lookout for non-agricultural work. A majority of them have found jobs as unskilled workers, labourers etc. They also visit the various work-sites for work under the contractors who, however, prefer to employ experienced immigrant workers.

THE traditional village institutions like the "jajmani system", the cycle of festivals and rituals, the caste-affiliation, etc have been completely disintegrated and an all round depression and despair seems to have affected the life of the uprooted villagers.

THE neighbouring villages, however, have been favourably affected by the Bokaro plant. The location of the factory has given them incentive to go for education as they consider it necessary to be educated for getting jobs in the factory. Some of the villagers have been encouraged to open different small or big business establishments.

THE study of the tribals in the industrial setting of Jamshedpur is of special significance as it reflects their adjustment to the industrial society within a period of 80 years (in contrast to the adjustment to the recent impact of public-sector industrial township).

IN A study, Sharma, established that 18 villages with an area of 16,81,020 acres of land were occupied by the Tata Iron and Steel Company as early as 1907. From the study of the village records, it may be reconstructed that these 18 villages were inhabited by the Bhumijs, Santhals, Hos and by others of the different Hindu castes. They depended mainly on agricultural economy of the subsistence level and were completely isolated from the world outside mainly because of their geographical location.

THE uprooted families took shelter in *Bustees* which, later also received tribal migrants from other areas. The number of these *Bustees* today is about 35. The displaced were given preference in employment but only as unskilled workers. Owing to unfamiliarity with the jobs as well as the fear complex, very few could take advantage of the opportunity given to them initially in the constructive phase of the industry. Among the tribal labourers only one-eighth claim to be of the local origin while the rest have migrated from other parts of tribal areas to take up jobs in this city.

THOUGH these migrants stay in the *Bustees*, nearly all of them maintained some sort of contact with their parent villages. The nature of contact gets reflected in their visits to them either frequently or on social or festival occasions, remittance of money to the remaining members of the family left behind as well as in the visits of the parent villagers for jobs and on social calls to the families living in the *Bustees*. IN ADDITION to the tribals living in the *Bustees*, some tribal families live in the company's houses in the city which do not leak and have all the amenities like tapwater, electricity and special sanitation facilities. When these city-dwelling tribals visit their respective villages, they find life somewhat uncomfortable and for their children even more tiring. On the other hand, those living in the *Bustees* have the same conditions as in their own villages.

SUCH city-dwellers tend to be more firmly attached to their jobs which are generally better paid white-collar jobs, and owing to this they are committed to their new physical environments. The attitude, the "world view" and for that matter the social behaviour of the city-dweller have undergone considerable changes.

TO BE precise, then, the impact of industrialization on the tribals living in the city, the *Bustee* and the neighbouring traditional villages is somewhat different but it needs to be understood in the context of the tribal and non-tribal groups.

AT A level of generality it may be visualized that the first stage of the rapid industrialization in Jamshedpur brought about a complete disintegration of the pre-industrial culture which was characterized by forest ecology and homogeneous folk-style of life. The local agricultural economy suffered a complete breakdown and the local villagers had either to abandon the place or to get assimilated into the industrial way of life. Reports recording the impact of industrialization in the first phase are not available. The first report surveying the life and living of Jamshedpur was undertaken in 1918 by Hardik Mann, Principal, Agriculture College, Pune. His report, which remains the oldest survey of Sakchi, throws light on the lopsided growth of the town and remarks that the tribal and semi-tribal rural life of the area underwent a complete disintegration. The provision for housing and the expanding work-force was far below the needs, and the people had to live in temporary tents, self-made tenements, and the low-income group workers took refuge in the neighbouring villages turning them into slums, and on the outskirts of the company lands turning them into *Bustees*.

THE management in consultation with several town planners from time to time made improvements in the *Bustees* as part of their regional planning and made schemes for general improvements in the life and living of the *Adivasis*. But this was rather very late. In the early days of the town settlement, the attitude of the company was of utter neglect of the problems of these tribals people.

ON THE basis of the UNESCO research it may be observed that while on the one hand these industrial complexes herald an economic and industrial growth of the country, they have on the other, caused a great deal of social disruption among the tribals living in the areas of industrialization.

SUCH an approach has obviously led to unexpected consequences of social disruption among the tribal communities and, by and large, instead of being benefited by these developments, their economy and culture, so far, have been adversely affected. The net result of the uprooted tribal, in due course, is loss of traditional occupation, land,

house, the traditional way of life, exhaustion of cash received by way of compensation, unemployment, keen and unfair competition with the migrants in the labour market, high aspiration and great frustration.

SUCH a situation of social disruption of the tribal communities could have been minimized if the accepted policy of "protection", "development" and "integration" of the tribals had been tuned with the programmes of industrialization in tribal areas.

THE impact of industrialization on the neighbouring tribal and non-tribal villages seems to be less disruptive. Though the pace of social and economic transformation has been accelerated, the choice is left with the villagers to be selective in combining the values of the two worlds, the rural and the industrial or the traditional and the modern.

RECENTLY Das Gupta threw some light on the functional interdependence between productive technology and other aspects of culture and mechanism of adjustment to a new organization. The impact of industrialization on the Ho a tribe in south Bihar, has been studied in the background of Jhinkpani Cement Factory in the district of Singhbhum.

THE Chaibasa Cement Works, Jhinkpani, one of the cement factories of the Associated Cement Companies Ltd., started production in 1947, is located in the heart of a Ho area and the bulk of the labour force of the factory is composed of the Hos who are mainly unskilled and most of whom have no previous experience as wage-labour. Unlike the villages where the Ho are the dominant ethnic group, here in the industrial town although they maintain their dominance in number in the work force, they belong to the lowest socio-economic strata.

DAS GUPTA (1973) has dealt with the changes the Ho have faced with respect to their economic life, social and cultural life and religious life. He found that three-fourth of the villagers in a traditional Ho village were engaged in agriculture whereas only one-third of the population of an industrial village took to agriculture. In an industrial village most of the villagers are engaged in non-agricultural occupations giving rise to a mixed type of occupation. The average land holding in an industrial village is much less in comparison to the traditional Ho village. The inhabitants of an industrial village have taken up quite extensively to vegetable gardening in response to the new demands created by the factory township. During transplanting and harvesting the industrial workers of an industrial village, whether permanent or casual work in their fields. The shift duty workers utilize their spare time in these agricultural operations, one also employs agricultural labourers. The agricultural labourers are relatively more available in the industrial village than in the traditional village. In the traditional village the number of desilabourers is more than that in an industrial village.

IN ORDER to examine the role of the Ho workers in the factory their categories need mention. The workers of the Chaibasa Cement Works are divided into five grades of skill, viz skilled high (2.1% of total workers), skilled upper (6.8%), skilled lower (9.5%), semi-skilled (27%), and unskilled (54.4%). The Ho occupy the last category most (65.7%) whereas only less than one percent (0.9%) are graded as skilled high. The Ho skilled upper (3.3%), skilled lower (8.7%) and semi-skilled (25.8%) workers are less in number than the non-Ho workers. Among the monthly paid staffs only

23% (42 in number) are Ho. There is no Ho representation in the managerial category. There are only two foremen who belong to the Ho community.

THE impact of industrialization on the social and cultural life is more dominant among the factory workers than among the people of an industrial village or traditional village. The Ho industrial workers who live in the township possess similar domestic articles as are owned by other non-tribal workers. The level of literacy is much higher in an industrial town (67.4%) whereas it is about 20 percent in the traditional non-industrial village. It is also true that industrialization has accelerated the pace of education in general generating a sense of utility of education in the matter of service opportunities. In the matter of imparting education to the children the industrial workers are better placed than their farmer counterparts. The change in family institution is also remarkable when viewed on the kin basis. The husband lives in the industrial town with his school-going children while his wife with minor children and grown-up daughters lives in the villages. In the township inter-ethnic marriage is not uncommon (though very low, 4.3%). About the impact on religious life, Das Gupta, observes that the Ho are still in a process of combining the requisites of the factory style of life with social, cultural demands of village festivals. Similarly, they conveniently accommodate modern medicine and a scientific conception of disease along with traditional magical treatments.

STILL, there are some changes in the form of festivity. Dancing and singing during the Maghe festival have been restricted to some extent on account of the uneasiness felt on exposure to the outsiders belonging to various communities. Now the dancing area has shifted from the village Akharas to the courtyard or the Dori. The other dimension of the fact is that the Ho of the industrial town living in the quarters have started raising a fund from subscription to observe festivals. Lastly, industrial employment has brought together the Ho from a wide region and from many clans and has forced them to confront many outsider groups. This has forged a new solidarity in them at a level higher than that of the traditional pattern.

THE other industrial complex in the midst of the tribal belt of middle India finds its location in Rourkela in Orissa near the border of Chhattisgarh. The Rourkela steel project, which started in 1956 in the original Rourkela village, has become a big steel city with about 2 lakh population covering an area of about 80 sq. km. But the steel city has also been responsible for uprooting 30 villages inhabited mainly by the tribals (about three-fourth of the population) like the Oraons, Bhumijis, Kharias and a few Hindu and Muslim families. The uprooted tribals and non-tribal families have, however, been rehabilitated in three colonies within a radius of 5 kms.

THE traditional society of the Rourkela and other villages has been completely disintegrated (J.S. Tandon). While the occupational structure of the villagers has undergone complete transformation in which cultivation has been reduced to a great extent, the engagement as industrial labour has gone considerably high. The other new occupations which have absorbed the villagers are mining, quarry, construction works, transport, trade and commerce. Though, in many ways, they stand for the traditional "style of life" they have considerably changed in their economic occupation and material life.



PANCHAYATI RAJ AND TRIBALS

AN ARGUMENT that occasionally tempers enthusiasm for panchayati raj is that decentralisation, far from bringing about participatory democracy, may in fact institutionalise the rural power structure. Since village society is very differentiated and inequitable, it is suggested that panchayati raj will put local elites in positions of authority at the village, taluk and district levels in the three-tier system introduced by the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution. There is a point to this argument though those who make it cannot possibly argue that the elites ruling in State capitals and in New Delhi are more concerned about the rural poor. Inequitable rural society is, but it cannot be denied that elected bodies at the local level could quite possibly give a voice to the disadvantaged and simultaneously give them a say in setting expenditure priorities — however limited this influence may be.

A RELATED and at the same time a different question is how panchayati raj will evolve in tribal areas. It is a related issue insofar as in areas which have a tribal and non-tribal population, panchayati raj will in all likelihood result in the non-tribal elite capturing power. For the tribals of such areas this will mean problems similar to what some fear will take place under panchayati raj in general. It is a different issue insofar as in entirely tribal tracts — the so-called Scheduled Areas and other similar regions — the applicability of the rigid three-tier system of the 73rd Amendment is open to question.

THE problems in spreading panchayati raj to the tribal areas have already been taken to the courts in Andhra Pradesh. Earlier, in early '95 on the eve of local elections in that state, a writ petition questioned the legality of polls in the tribal tracts of Andhra Pradesh. The basic argument was that the Constitutional amendment did not apply to the Scheduled and other tribal areas. (The Scheduled areas are those identified by the Sixth and Fifth Schedule of the Constitution giving protection to the tribal people in respectively, the North-East and in the rest of the country.)

AN AWARENESS of the need for a different structure of panchayati raj in tribal areas is indeed contained in the 73rd Amendment. Article 243-M of the amendment notes that Part IX of the Constitution — which deals with panchayats — will not apply to the Scheduled Areas and other tribal tracts. At the same time, clause 4(b) of Article 243-M gives Parliament the right to extend the coverage of Part IX to the tribal areas, with or necessary, modifications and reservations. But Parliament is yet to enact a law which, with special features, would extend coverage of panchayati raj to the tribal areas. On these and other grounds, the Andhra Pradesh High Court held that under the A.P. Panchayati Raj Act of 1994, elections could not be held in tribal areas of the State. The issue has now gone to the Supreme Court.

WHY should the structure of panchayati raj be different in tribal areas? One reason put forward by Mr. B.D. Sharma, former Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, is that many tribal communities continue to be living as effective institutions. That is, they continue to have their own systems of decision-making which have evolved over centuries. Superimposing the three-tier panchayati raj structure on this system will not only destroy the existing bodies but also make for ineffective local decision-making. Thus, for example, the gram panchayat — the lowest layer of the 73rd Amendment's three-tier panchayati raj, is based on the village as an administrative and not as a social unit. Gram panchayats can and do cover more than one village. In contrast, decision-making in tribal communities takes place within each village, which is the basic social organism of the community. The story is different in areas where both tribals and non-tribals live. Many of the traditional systems in such

areas have already been destroyed. The problem here is of preventing further alienation of land, protecting what remains of tradition and preventing the exercise of dominance by non-tribals.

WHAT can happen in tribal tracts under panchayati raj not modified in any way is illustrated by the experience of the Samaj Pragati Sahyog (SPS), a non-government organisation in Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh. Dewas district has a tribal population of 15 percent. But the tehsil Bagli — in which the NGO functions — has a tribal population of 33 percent and in the particular pocket (revenue circle) in which most of the work of the SPS is carried out, tribals constitute as much as 80 percent of the population. Since the tract is not part of any Scheduled Tribal Area, panchayati polls were held in the entire district last year and the three layers of local bodies — gram panchayats, janpada panchayats and the Zila parishad — were subsequently constituted.

THE voluntary organisation works in the field of watershed development — building underground dykes and farm ponds, desilting tanks and carrying out bunding of fields — and in evolving alternative agricultural practices. Over the past three years, all these activities have generated almost 30,000 days of employment — no small amount considering that the area is largely a single crop region and the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana is almost non-existent. Simultaneously, the SPS took up the job of training tribal youth in the maintenance of hand pumps in 90 villages. Since breakdowns of hand pumps are a recurring event in the area and cause major problems during the summer, the presence of skilled personnel — men and women — has made a world of difference in the availability of drinking water.

ALL these activities have been planned with the involvement of the people of the area who have been supportive of the organisation. But they have taken place at a time when the local bodies and the elected representatives — especially the sarpanches — have been led to believe that they will, under panchayati raj, wield considerable power. Non-tribals dominate these bodies and the few tribals among them have been co-opted. On the other hand, the main beneficiaries of all the programmes of the SPS have been tribal men and women. While expectations about the power of panchayats have been raised among the elected representatives, the reality on the ground has been different.

RESPONSIBILITIES have been transferred but neither the funds nor the expertise is available. There is no manpower even to maintain the hand pumps, forcing local bodies to depend on the SPS for this job. With the presence of local power-brokers who are eager to weaken any independent initiative, the situation early this year developed into one where sarpanches of the area made the presence of the voluntary organisation a major issue. There were threats of violence, intimidation and efforts to force the organisation.

Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996.

Parts IX and IX(A) of the Indian Constitution govern the creation of gram panchayats and urban municipalities and specifically state that their provisions shall not be applicable in scheduled areas. So, the PESA was necessary to extend the panchayat system to rural areas.

The PESA only governs gram panchayats and makes no mention of urban bodies like nagar panchayats. You need a separate act to create a nagar panchayat in a scheduled area, without which notification of an urban area would be unconstitutional.

A Municipal (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Bill was

introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 2001, but was not passed. In September 2009, the Jabalpur High Court held that the PESA did not apply to scheduled areas, stayed the election in 52 district panchayats and municipalities in such areas, and asked for the parliament to devise a law for urban areas.

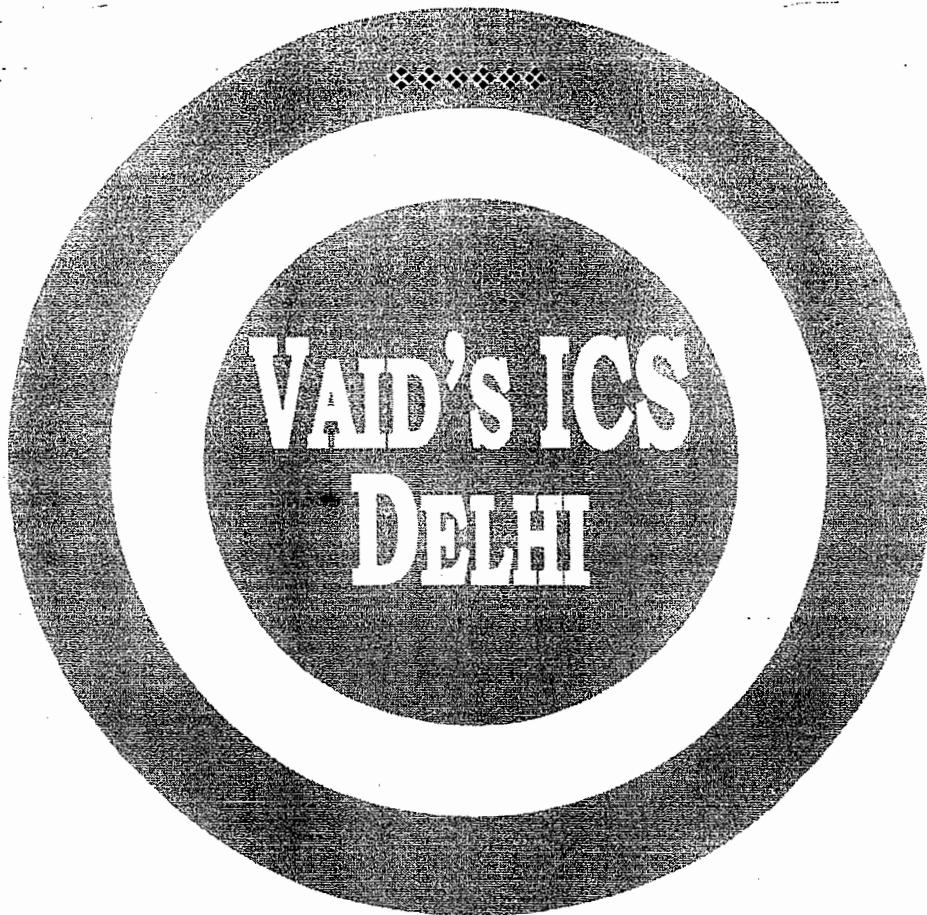
It is hard to overstate the importance of the PESA. Specific provisions in the law are designed to prevent tribal alienation from their lands and the restoration of illegally alienated land. Another provision makes it mandatory for the gram sabha to be consulted prior to land acquisition in tribal areas. In 2009 report, '*Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas*', the Planning Commission notes that "Schedule V and PESA are powerful legislation...but implementation of this law is weak and ineffective."

✓ In 2008, the Union government asked the Institute of Rural Management, Anand, (IRMA) to include a chapter on the PESA in the Panchayati Raj Report 2008-09. Titled, '*PESA, Left-wing Extremism and Governance : Concerns and Challenges in India's tribal districts;*' the chapter noted that "legal and administrative subterfuge has kept the provisions of the PESA as a set of aspirations and the agenda of self-governance remains postponed...In several cases, the

practice of the State government is to sign high profile MoUs with corporate houses...deploy the Acquisition Act to ostensibly acquire the land for the State industrial corporation...[which] leases the land to private corporation — a complete travesty of the term 'acquisition for a public purpose' as sanctioned by the act." However, the chapter was dropped from the final report without any explanation.

The conclusions of the IRMA report are eerily echoed in the Premnagar experience. In June 2005, the Chhattisgarh State Electricity Board and Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative (IFFCO) signed a memorandum of understanding to set up a 1,320 MW thermal power plant on about 850 hectares of land in Premnagar and six adjoining villages. The plant would have taken about three quarters of the land of the village.

Through 2005 and 2006, the Premnagar gram sabha passed three resolutions opposing the project and expressed their opposition in a series of representations to the office of the Governor of Chhattisgarh and the President of India. The proposed power plant was finally shifted to an adjacent cluster of villages, "But the government made the village an urban centre because of our opposition to the power plant.



MODERN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMMES ON TRIBALS

1. A RANGE of differences in the geographic locations (accessibility), population, cultural variations, levels of economy and context situations of the tribals have contributed to the differences in the impact of developmental measures, modern democratic institutions and other policies pursued by the State for these communities. Further, Social change has also been caused by the opening up of the tribal areas as a result of the economic and political forces. Therefore, it is not an easy task to describe or quantify the change brought due to all such factors. By and large the response of tribals has been mixed and uneven. If we examine changes as a result of the developmental process, we come across situations which may be positive as well as negative with differences in their degree from one tribe to another and within the same tribe.

2. CHAUDHARY (1990) in the introduction to *Tribal Transformation in India* (5 vols), while highlighting their unmatched plurality, points out some salient facets of the change.

- (i) Transformation from a marginalised and peripheral existence to an acute awareness of their civic rights.
- (ii) Their progress or development has not been upto expectation mainly due to the deficiencies in the formulation and implementation of the programmes, such as their not being fully responsive to the local felt needs; their implementation by persons lacking empathy and insight into the tribal culture; the process of elite formation; and their being pushed into a macro capitalist market economy.
- (iii) The elite class has emerged through the present democratic institutions and have cornered developmental benefits.

IN HIS opinion the situation demands serious thinking and building up of processes and conditionalities in the development programmes to meet these situations.

3. THE Peoples of India Project (Anthropological Survey of India), completed in 1994 studied 635 tribal communities, tribes, their groups and segments including territorial units. It has come out with some quantitative data regarding tribal participation in the mainstream and their responses to developmental effort. The following changes are largely traceable to the development efforts.

- (i) An elite stratum of entrepreneurs, businessmen (156 tribes), teachers (380), administrators (156), engineers/doctors (150) and defence personnel (178) has been created.
- (ii) There has been a rise in the political leadership with the number of tribes playing leadership role at various levels viz.— Village Panchayat (362), Regional (185) and National (45).
- (iii) Reaction to education has been favourable in case of both boys and girls and incidence of drop outs is less in the tribal communities. Educational level has increased from 8.53% in 1961 to 16.35% (excluding Assam) in 1981.
- (iv) The tribes avail of health and medical facilities and 531 tribes (83.5%) have expressed favourable attitudes towards these facilities. There has been a decline in death rate and rise in birth rate.
- (v) Many tribal communities are aware of and participate in self employment schemes initiated by the government. Their number in agriculture (438); animal husbandry (302); piggery (160), basketry (151), poultry (164); fishery (98), small scale industry (67), etc is significant.
- (vi) The electronic media cover the tribal areas well — radio (91%) and T.V. (27%).

4. H.M. Mathur citing Furer *Haimendorf* says that development has succeeded in creating positive and desirable changes in several tribes. Their social economy level should be slowly rising and so is their participation in national life. However, certain groups create a drag on the process.

5. THE general trends described above are discerned if a macro level view of social change among the tribals is taken. But many micro level studies, more often than not, give a different impression and throw up many important issues and policy questions related to our tribal policies and programmes, such as :

- (i) What are the potentialities of current development strategy to deliver goods.
- (ii) What are the alternatives and whether directions of development are quite desirable and the sections which gain through these measures are the real needy ones.
- (iii) How the impoverishment and powerlessness of the common tribals is traceable to national policies like forest policy, construction of large projects, heavy mining and industrialisation and the direction of agricultural policies. How this can be prevented and eliminated. The situation has been labelled as *internal colonisation*.
- (iv) The investments in tribal areas specially through TSP have been going up but analysts find that investment on infrastructure has consumed most of these resources and they question how these investments benefit the ordinary tribals.

THE above situation together with remedial action has been reflected by Bhupender Singh in his *Sixth Plan Mid-Term Appraisal* (1983). He concludes that

- (a) The shift in the planning strategy in favour of family oriented programmes initiated in the VI Plan has to make further strides. Till mid Sixth Plan the funds flowing into programme were meagre. But a beginning has been made and they are liable to make their impact felt.
- (b) Though targets achieved in family oriented programmes have exceeded the proposed numbers but a precise idea of the capacity of families to cross the poverty line is not available. The situation needs to be closely monitored and evaluated.
- (c) The much needed planned coordination between family based programmes with infrastructural and human resource development need a finely balanced planning.
- (d) The unified administrative structure concomitant to resource mobilisation and project plans has to be created and made responsive and accessible to the common tribal.
- (e) The regional imbalances reflected in the export of national resources from tribal areas should be remedied so that these resources benefit the tribals.

CASE STUDIES

6. Hunter gathers

GADGIL and Guha (1992) have adduced evidence that this group of tribals began losing control over their means of subsistence from the early part of colonial rule. This has forced them to take to other survival strategies, as well as disorganisation and impoverishment. Jenu Kurumba with their vast traditional knowledge of forests now help the Forest Department in rearing elephants and collection of forest produce, earning a mere pittance while creating large earnings for the Forest Dept. Hill Pandaram (Kerala) live as trespassers, in mortal fear of Forest Department serving its officers. The Chenchu have taken to crime in certain areas.

Baviskar (1995) has traced criminality among the Bhil and the Bhilala of Jhabua district in Madhya Pradesh to growing control of the State over the forest resources and degradation of culturable lands. G.P. Reddy's study (Satyanarayana, 1990) highlights the failure of Chenchu resettlement scheme. The deficiencies were that little time was allowed for their reorientation into agriculture and poor management of agriculture operations by project officers, insensitivity of the officers to the social organisations and individualistic way of life of the Chenchu, creation of large agricultural colony which did not suit the small group way of life of the Chenchu, and creation of Chenchu settlements amidst ryots who were afraid of them and actively discouraged Chenchu resettlements.

7. Artisans

GADGIL and Guha (1992) have pointed out how certain artisan activities such as iron-smithy totally died out and Agarias and Asurs had to take to poor agriculture or wage earning. Further, the availability of raw materials for other crafts like basketry and the high price charged for bamboo by the forest department has contributed to the impoverishment of the tribals. Chaudhary (1990), discussing the situation among 49 tribal communities having first level involvement in handicrafts, concludes : (a) though many tribal crafts have emerged as very popular, government schemes for their promotion are not quite beneficial to the tribal craftsmen themselves; (b) poor marketing of the original craft-ware has led to imitation objects coming into the market causing loss to the genuine artisans.

Another study of the Dhokda craft among the Dhuvara of Madhya Pradesh also points out similar drawbacks, particularly the deficiencies in the government schemes related to training, supply of tool kits and marketing.

8. Shifting Cultivators

SHIFTING cultivators have also suffered as a result of government forest policy and the deficiencies in the alternative economic development programmes. They have, however, been resisting the government policies in a more concerted manner (Gaddil and Guha 1992). These resistance movements have mostly brought reprisals and sometimes relief, for example the success of Hill Madia move against pine plantation. Even though it has been realised often that the shifting cultivation should be controlled and substituted by a whole package of alternative pattern of cultivation and forestry, achievements of such a programme have been quite limited. Three case studies in Tripura give the impression of a partial success. Jhum continues to be popular though settled cultivation was gaining ground. Alternative packages viz., animal husbandry, plantation and horticulture have achieved some success. Plantation has been taken up by a section who have become substantial land owners as a result of tenancy reforms. A class of landless agricultural workers unknown earlier in the tribal areas has emerged as a result of the taking over of Jhum lands by the forest department. These people now are wage earners in the plantations.

9. Settled Agriculture

THAKUR'S study in Dumka which relates to adoption of improved agricultural techniques by tribals, points out that though tribals have been made aware of various techniques, they have adopted only some for instance, line sowing and manure pits which did not involve extra expenditure. Use of chemical fertilisers has not been successful and caused even losses because of lack of irrigation. In fact dry farming research suitable for tribal areas is still wanting. The extension agents have also shown a lack of genuine interest and enthusiasm.

MAHAPATRA'S study of Mayurbhanj also highlights a similar situation. He has specifically pointed out that creation of change needs sustained efforts. Introduction of technological

changes should also be synchronised with agricultural ritual cycle and the role of tribal priests.

ANOTHER study among Santhals in Bihar pointed out that out of eight Santhal sub-groups, the Murmu (priest), the Mardi and the Tude who are most influential and landed, have gained the most through the planning process, depriving the other groups.

MODERN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

10. THE People of India study, discussing the Gond, points out that the statutory panchayats are the elected bodies. These, however, have their activities limited to planning & implementation of welfare and developmental activities at village level. Apparently there is no clash between the traditional Gond leadership and the statutory panchayats as yet and the village leaders who have emerged here are powerful men active in village politics and close to power structure.... and, Nowadays most of the traditional panchayats have restricted their activities to deciding marital disputes.

11. PRASAD'S study of role of tribal leadership in rural Bihar fostered by the Panchyat Raj found that this emerging leadership was not much different from the traditional leadership in their background (education, sex, occupation, etc.) but they were inadequately trained for their role. They are quite representative but qualitatively weak. Significantly, they show a lack of any collective effort to help the masses and are oriented more towards self-aggrandisement and fulfillment of their private needs. He underlines the similarities between this emerging tribal leadership and the mainstream Neta-culture..

12. THE state of the old traditional institutions in the tribal areas and their relationship with the formal statutory institutions has been critically examined in the 29th Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Report points out that:

(i) The traditional self governing institutions, a living facet of tribal life have now no role in administration, development process, etc. and they get no benefits of new ideas and are isolated. Usually, these institutions come into play when certain vital matters reach a crisis situation.

(ii) The formal institutions given to tribals in the name of self governing system could not become their own. These are largely ineffective and routinised in functioning. In fact they have become a cause of social discord due to the politics of voters and the emergence of unhealthy leadership.

(iii) The dichotomy of the situation i.e.. social matters going to traditional institutions and others to statutory bodies has left the simple common tribal confused and disillusioned.

13. VII PLAN discusses the desirability of recognising the traditional institutions which command widespread respect and are deep rooted. The VIII Plan, while discussing measures needed to ensure tribal participation in development process recommends that traditional tribal institutions should be blended with the new system to ensure better participation of tribals. The case studies mentioned earlier also point out to such a need. However, in spite of this realisation, no concrete steps, say inclusion of some traditional panchayat heads, etc. in the statutory bodies, without elections, have so far been tried. On the other hand, moves are afoot in some states like M.P. and Manipur to invest more powers in elected bodies by adapting the VI Schedule of the Constitution. Dr. B.D. Sharma (29th Report) goes to highlight quite a different model—the Raisabhas of Adilabad in A.P. : a confluence of the New and the Old—where a village community comes together as a group to deal with all outsiders including the government departments.



TRIBAL REVOLTS

THE tribal people, spread over a large part of India organised hundreds of militant outbreaks and insurrections during the 19th century. These uprisings were marked by immense courage and sacrifices on their part and brutal suppression and veritable butchery on the part of the rulers.

THE term *tribe* is used to distinguish people socially organised differently from caste. Actually, apart some isolated food-gatherers, the tribals were and very much are part of Indian society as the lowest stratum of the peasantry subsisting through shifting cultivation, agricultural labourers, coolies, recruited for work in distant plantations, mines and factories.

BRITISH rule and its accompanying commercialization strengthened already present tendencies towards penetration of tribal areas by rank outsiders from the plains—moneylenders, traders, land grabbers and contractors, the *dikus* so hated by santhals. These middlemen were the chief instrument for bringing the tribals within the vortex of colonial economy and exploitation. They increasingly took possession of tribal land and ensnared the tribals in the coils of debt. BRITISH legal conceptions of absolute private property eroded traditions of joint ownership (like the *Kunukatli* tenure in Chota Nagpur) and sharpened tension within tribal society. It recognised tribal chiefs as zamindars and introduced a new system of land revenue and taxation of tribal products. THE intrusion of colonialism and the outsiders produced cataclysmic changes in tribal society. The tribal people increasingly lost their lands and were reduced to the position of agricultural labourers, share croppers and rack-rented tenants on the land they had earlier brought under cultivation and held on a communal basis.

THE British rule encouraged the influx of Christian missionaries into the tribal areas, bringing education and some promise of social ascent, but often provoking an interesting variety of reactions which included hostility as well as attempts to use some Christian tenets in antiforeign ways.

COLONIALISM also transformed their relationship to the forest. A new but increasingly important factor during the 1870s and 80s was the tightening of control by the colonial state over forest zones for revenue purposes. Shifting cultivation, which required no plough-animals and therefore was often essential for the survival of the poorest in rural society, was banned or restricted in the reserved forests from 1867 onwards and attempts were made to monopolize forest-wealth through curbs on use of timber and grazing facilities.

OPPRESSION and extortion by policemen and other petty officials also produced a great deal of distress among the tribals. The revenue farmers and government agents also extended manifold the system of *begar*—making tribals perform unpaid labour.

ALL this differed in intensity from region to region. But the complete disruption of the old agrarian order of tribal communities provided the common factor to all tribal uprisings. These uprisings were all broad-based, each involving thousands of tribals, often the tribal societies in entire groups of villages or even regions. In fact ethnic ties were a basic feature of tribal rebellions. The rebels saw themselves in terms of tribal identity, as Santhals or Kols or Mundas, and so on. The fellow tribals were never attacked unless they had collaborated with the enemy. At the same time not all outsiders were attacked as enemies. Often there was no violence against the non-tribal poor. They were not only spared, but were seen as allies. They were as much rebels as the tribals. Elements of class bonds operated in such cases.

IN REGION after region, the tribals found themselves in a

desperate situation and felt that they had to fight, for there was no way out. They often started by taking recourse to spontaneous violence against the outsiders, looting their ill-gotten property and expelling them from their villages. This brought them into conflict with the colonial authorities. The tribals began to move towards armed resistance and elementary organisation.

OFTEN at this stage emerged religious and charismatic leaders, messiahs who promised divine intervention and an end to their suffering at the hand of the outsiders and who asked their fellow tribals to rise up and rebel against the foreign authority. Most of these leaders claimed to be deriving their authority from God. They also often claimed that they possessed magical powers, for example, the power to make the enemy's bullets ineffective. Filled with hope and confidence, the tribals masses tended to follow these leaders to the very end.

THE warfare between the tribal rebels and the British armed forces was totally unequal. On one side were drilled regiments armed with the latest of weapons and on the other were angry and brave men and women fighting in roving bands armed with primitive weapons such as stones, axes, spears and bows and arrow believing in the magical powers of their commanders. Tribal people died in lakhs in this unequal warfare. Among the numerous tribal revolts, those of the Kols from 1820 to 1837, the Santhals in 1855-56, the Ramps in 1879 and the Mundas from 1895 to 1901 stand out.

The Santhal Revolt

AMONG the numerous tribal revolts, the *Santhal Hool* was the most massive and thoroughgoing. The Santals living in the area between Bhagalpur and Rajmahal, known as Daman-Koh, arose in thousands made determined attempt to expel the outsider—the *Dikus* and proclaimed the complete annihilation of the alien regime and the setting up of a government of their own. The social condition which drove them into insurrection was described by a contemporary in the *Calcutta Review* as follows :

ZAMINDARS, the police and courts also have exercised a combined system of extortions, oppressive exactions, forcible dispossessions of property, abuse and personal violence and a variety of petty tyrannies upon the timid yielding Santhals. Usurious interest on loans of money ranging from 50 to 500 percent, false measures at the market, wilful and uncharitable trespass by the rich by means of their untethered cattle; tigers, porches and even elephants on the growing crops of the poorer race and such illegalities have been prevalent. The Dikus and government servants were also perceived by Santhals as carriers of moral corruption in the form of robbery, stealing, lying and drunkenness.

BY 1854 the tribal heads, the Majhis and Parganites, had begun to meet and discuss taking the road to open revolt. Stray cases of robbing zamindars and moneylenders began to occur. The tribal leaders called an assembly of nearly 6,000 Santhals representing 400 villages at Bhaganidhi in June 1855. It was decided to raise the banner of revolt, get rid of the outsiders and their colonial masters, once for all and usher in *Satyug* and *true justice*.

THE Santhals also believed that in doing so they had the blessing of God, Sido and Kanhu, the principal rebel leaders claimed that *Thakur* (God) had communicated with them and told them to take to arms and fight for independence.

THE leaders mobilised Santhal men and women by organising huge processions through the villages accompanied by drummers and other musicians. At their head rode the leaders on horses and elephants and in *palkis*. Soon nearly 60,000 Santhals had been mobilised in arms. They attacked *mahajans* and *zamindars* and their houses, police stations, railway construction sites, the *dak* (post)

carriers; in fact all forms of *Diku* exploitation and colonial power.

THE Santhal insurrection was helped by a large number of non-tribal, poor Dikus.

ONCE the government woke up to the scale of the rebellion, it organised a major military campaign against the rebels. It mobilised tens of regiments under the command of a major general, declared martial law in the affected areas and offered rewards of upto Rs. 10,000 for the capture of various leaders.

THE rebellion was crushed with complete ruthlessness. More than 15,000 Santhals were killed and many of their villages destroyed. Sido was betrayed, captured and killed in Aug. 1855 while Kanhu was arrested by accident at the tail end of rebellion in Feb. 1886.

Kol Rebellion

THE Kol s of Chotanagpur rebelled from 1820 to 1837. Thousands of them were massacred before British authority could be reimposed.

Rampa's Rebellion

THE hill tribesmen of Rampa in Coastal Andhra revolted in March 1879 against the depredations of the government supported Mansabdar and the new restrictive forest regulations. The authorities had to mobilise six regiments of infantry, a squadron of cavalry and two companies of sappers and miners before the rebels, numbering several thousands, could be put down by the end of 1880.

The Ulgulan of the Mundas

THE rebellion (*Ulgulan*) of the Munda tribesmen led by Birsa

Munda occurred during 1899-1900. For over 30 years the Munda Sardars had been struggling against the destruction of their system of common land holdings by the intrusion of *jagirdars*, *thikdars* (revenue farmers) and merchants, moneylenders etc.

BIRSA, born in a poor share-cropper household in 1874 in the region south of Ranchi, had a vision of God in 1895, and who in 1893-99 had participated in a movement to prevent village wastelands being taken over by the Forest Department. He declared himself to be a divine messenger, possessing miraculous healing powers. Thousands gathered round him seeing in him a *messiah* with a new religious message. Under the influence of Sardars, the religious movement soon acquired an agrarian and political content. Birsa began to move from village to village organizing rallies and mobilising his followers both on religious and political grounds.

ON CHRISTMAS eve 1899 Birsa proclaimed a rebellion to establish Munda's own rule in the land and urging the killing of *thikadars* and *Jagirdars* and *Rajas* and *Hakimes* and *Christians*. *Satyug* would be established in place of the present day *Kalyug*. He declared that there was going to be a fight with the *Dikus*, the ground would be red as the red flag with their blood. The non-tribal poor were not to be attacked.

TO BRING about liberation, Birsa gathered a force of 6,000 Mundas armed with swords, spears, battle axes and bows and arrows. He was however, captured in 1900 and died in Jail. The rebellion had failed. But Birsa was to enter folk memory as a legend.

1/5/99
Santhal
Revolt
Kilogram
BIRSA
MUNDA
Ulgulan
among
Munda

VAID'S ICS

DELI

ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs) IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF T.D. PROGRAMMES

1. VOLUNTARYISM draws its inspiration from the concept of social justice and the term is derived from the Latin word *Volunteers* meaning will. Voluntary action has been an integral part of the socio-political and cultural life of our people since long. In fact non-governmental initiatives in the course of our non-violent struggle for freedom helped largely in creating awareness among the masses. Gandhiji's call for constructive work with a 19 point programme was seen as laying the foundation for that struggle, in the early twenties. As a result a large number of social action and service-groups came into being.

2. IN THE field of tribal welfare or *uplift* as it was then called, Gandhiji's lieutenant A.V. Thakkar took the initiative. He created a number of organizations in different parts of the country beginning with the *Bhil Seva Mandal* in 1919, to organize famine relief in the Panchmahals area. These organisations were created in the areas of tribal concentration in both the British India and the princely states and took up educational, medical and cooperative work. Some of the institutions created by these non-official organisations such as *ashram*, schools, forest labour cooperatives and *grainbanks* subsequently served as models for tribal development. These organisations were brought under an umbrella organisation, the *Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh*, after independence with its own cadre of workers. For work among the scheduled castes he had set up the *Harjan Sevak Sangh*.

3. THE Five Year Plans which organised and systematised the policies and content of our development objectives tried to gear up this important sector from the very beginning, realizing fully the advantages of non-governmental organisations. Plan II document itself aimed at resting on them a major responsibility for organizing activities in fields like welfare of women and children, social education, community organisation etc. The Plan argued that voluntary bodies could be a suitable alternative to the existing formal organisations in certain sectors. Some of the advantages for such an approach are the zeal and devotion of their workers, their better rapport with the rural masses, better communication network and greater flexibility and initiative as they are not bound by rigid bureaucratic rules and procedures. Voluntary groups were also held to be organized expression of peoples' will to foster social change. It was felt that government and non-governmental agencies could complement each other. This enabled these organisations to get involved in a variety of development services — health, education, agricultural and allied activities, family welfare and economic diversification — to name a few. Many of them began to experiment with innovative approaches to different development issues. Presently, according to a Planning Commission handbook, voluntary agencies are encouraged to take up the implementation of some important programmes initiated by the Ministries of Human Resource Development; Rural Development; Health and Family Welfare; Science and Technology; etc. An autonomous *Council for Advancement of People's Action* (CAPART) has also been setup to guide, strengthen, finance and coordinate voluntary bodies.

4. IN THE course of our plans policy frame for providing financial support to non-government organization has been evolved. The Planning Commission has put down following conditions for supporting voluntary organisations :

- It must be a registered society trust.
- It must not be linked directly or indirectly to any political

party and no one holding public office through a process of election should represent the organization.

- It must have continued its work in the area for 4-5 years
- It must have professional and managerial expertise to properly keep accounts.
- The non-government organisations should be explicitly committed to secularism, socialism and democracy; and
- It must implement anti-poverty, minimum needs and socio-economic development programmes designed to raise awareness among those below the poverty line and leading to an improvement in the quality of their lives.

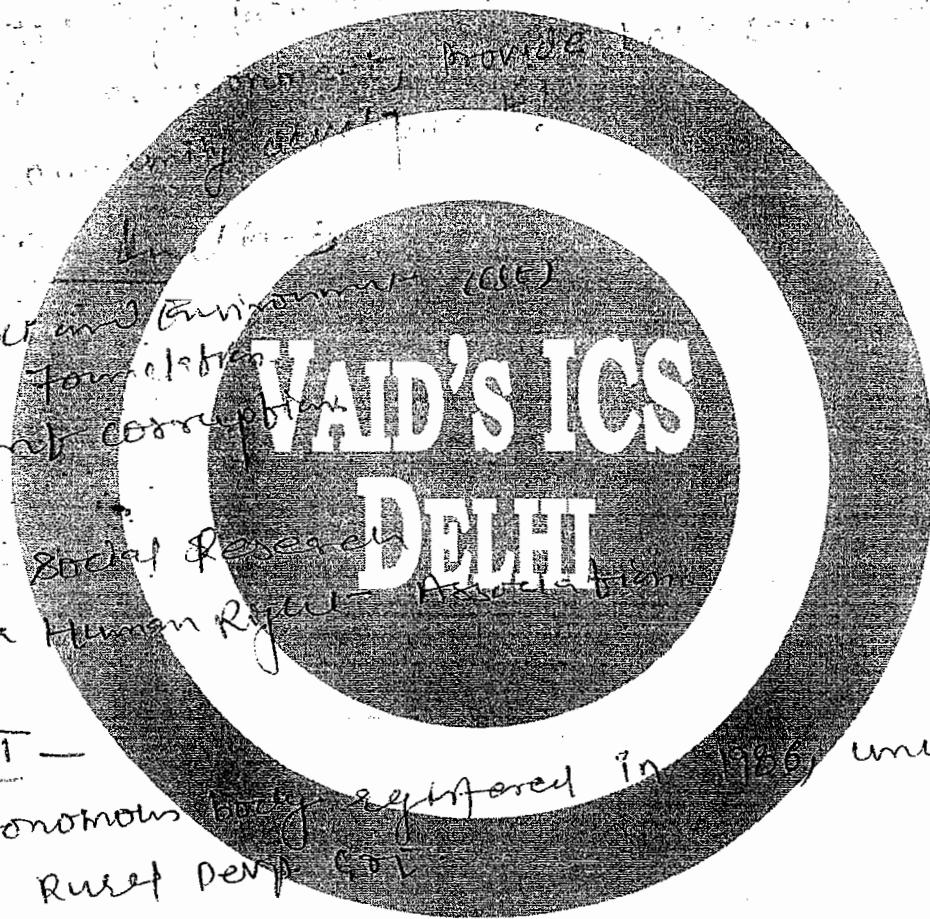
5. IN THE sphere of tribal welfare, the Government of India and most of the State Governments were committed from the earliest to taking active help from voluntary organisations. The reports of the Commissioner for SCs & STs has emphasised this aspect and made significant suggestions for enlarging co-ordination with the voluntary organisations. The policy has been that the Government of India assists voluntary agencies of all-India character i.e. those working in more than one state. The states grant finances to the bodies at local levels. Some of national level organisations working in this field are *Rāma Krishna Mission*, *Servants of India Society*, *Bhartiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh*, etc. It may, however, be pointed out that most of these organisations have a perspective or orientation to tribal welfare which may not be in consonance with the perceptions of the tribals and tribals leaders themselves. The Working Group on Development of STs during VIII Plan have significantly expressed the view that the participation of organisations having substantial tribal representatives should be encouraged. They should work with tribals and not for tribals. There is need for evolving a careful strategy of involvement of voluntary agencies..... The group recommended that for achieving this end the present conditions like all-India character and 10-20 per cent contribution by the organisation should be changed. Other suggestions made by the Group include proper identification of agencies and proper coordination of their work, building up of suitably oriented and trained cadres, providing them orientation training in specialised institutions of the government or voluntary organisations themselves, identifying more and more specific programmes for the participation of non-government organisations and assuring a regular flow of financial assistance for their work.

6. WHILE there is no doubt that voluntary organisations can and have been playing a crucial role in the tribal areas, where functioning of government agencies is not satisfactory due to a variety of reasons, these organisations have been found to suffer from some patent deficiencies like lack of credibility in financial management, coordination and consequent duplication and absence of a devoted cadre. Some of these are attributable to faulty government policies—for instance, when voluntary agencies have to make deductions from the meagre salaries of their workers to meet the contribution or when the procedural delays in sanctioning of funds cause interruption in the services rendered. Financial irregularities and corruption seem to have come to the fore with the manifold increase in funding. CAPARAT have, in recent years, blacklisted more than 500 organisations on

this account. It is quite likely that many defaulters may be a prey to the *cumbersome, dilatory and irritating* government procedures. The Planning Commission had in 1994 agreed to an action plan to remove irritants in the rules as well as the Income Tax Act, Registration of Societies Act, Public Trust Act and the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act. But this has not been done so far.

7. AFTER the 70s, voluntary organisations working generally in the rural areas have assumed new roles as promoters of peoples' organisation, consciousness and mobilisation. They have successfully raised debates on new issues and large

dams, irrigation projects, etc. which have emerged from our developmental policies. They have made their presence felt in the vital areas of bonded labour, child labour and subsequently the issues of deforestation, air and water pollution, ecology, rights of women, rights of project affected persons, occupational health hazards, right to information to work and a broad spectrum of adult literacy. Since 80s, the national and international funding for non-government agencies has also increased substantially and their activism too has gathered an effective thrust through public interest litigation and pleadings before the different national Commissions.



→ CAPART —

↳ an autonomous body registered in 1986 under the
ministry of Rural Development

29TH REPORT OF COMMISSIONER FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

BACKGROUND

SOME basic Constitutional issues were discussed at length in the Twentyninth Report. The main conclusion was that our Constitution envisages the establishment of a society which should be imbued with the spirit of equality, justice and fraternity. All necessary ingredients for this purpose have been provided for, directly or indirectly, in our Constitution.

THE way to achieve this goal has been clearly set out in the Constitution itself. First of all, the Constitution envisages termination of all inhuman practices and relationships such as untouchability and forced labour. The next step in this regard was to be termination of all inequitous relationships of the traditional economic system. Accordingly, the princely states were abolished, Jagirs and Zamindaris were abolished and the principle of land to the tiller was to be operationalised through removal of all sorts of intermediaries. The next natural question after this was the creation of a new economic system free from the ravages of poverty. Through the common man could lead a happy life. There were two facets of this question. Firstly, the British has destroyed our industrial base for the well-being and progress of their home economy. Therefore, the foremost task after independence was to protect the household and village industries to provide relief to people engaged in them and create opportunities for their further advancement. Secondly, a new economic system was also to be established dedicated to the development of the national economy. The new economy could assume one of the many possible forms. But our Constitution envisaged a modern economy which would provide equal opportunity for participation to all the citizens. There were two important conditions for achievement. Firstly, it was necessary that all citizens should have equal opportunity for acquiring necessary skills for participation in the new economic system. It was on this account that compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 was to be provided within a period of 10 years. Secondly, even after 10 years a person could expect to get an equal opportunity for participation in the economic system only if the new means of production were under social control. Accordingly, public sector and co-operative institutions were to be given the highest position and the private sector was relegated to the secondary position in the new economic system.

THUS, broadly every citizen can be expected to make a place for himself as an equal participant in a new economic system according to his institutional abilities. But lest primordial instincts may overwhelm the inclination for development, the Constitution specifically prohibits discrimination in any form on the basis of caste, religion, region, sex and such like. Ordinarily all these provisions should have been adequate for establishment of an equitable system. But they could prove to be inadequate in the context of our social situation. It was, therefore, considered necessary to give special attention to the backward classes. Accordingly some special provisions particularly in favour of members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were considered desirable and the principle of positive discrimination was given an important position in the Constitution.

IF THESE Constitutional provisions were implemented in their true spirit, it was expected that the processes of equity would get strengthened as the traditional vestiges of inequity faded out. It was thought that after some time there may be no need for positive discrimination in favour of the backward classes. Therefore, political reservation for the SCs and STs was initially kept only for 10 years. There was, however, no time limit for reservations in economic opportunities. Decision

in this regard could be taken according to the emerging situation. The Constitution itself envisaged appointment of a Commission after 10 years of its enforcement for assessing the conditions of the Scheduled Areas and STs so that the entire issue could be reviewed afresh.

A VARIETY of programmes were initiated soon after Independence for the welfare and advancement of members of the SCs and STs. Some benefits have also accrued particularly in education. Many people belonging to these communities entered government services but the condition of the bulk of the people has not improved. In many cases their condition has further deteriorated. The main reason for this was that the entire economic system of our country has been moving in a way such that inequality has increased instead of decreasing and continues to increase. A sort of dualistic or three-tier economy is getting established. On the one hand there is a new world of well-to-do people who belong to the modern sector. On the other hand, the dichotomy within the traditional sector of our economy is accentuating with people having command over resources forming one group while the resourceless people comprise a different world of poverty.

WHEN inequality is increasing in the country, all sections of population are trying to acquire as large a share as possible for themselves in the new wealth and new opportunities. Members of the SCs and STs have obviously a claim therein. The result is that it has become necessary not only to continue with the policy of positive discrimination, which should have faded out if the basic egalitarian spirit of the Constitution were honored, but it has become necessary to increase its scope.

IT IS clear that even if the policy of positive discrimination, which has claimed maximum attention so far in relation to the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, were to subside entirely, it could benefit only a small section of these communities. On the other hand, if inequality continues to increase in our country or continues even at the present level the maximum damage will befall members of these communities themselves because their condition is already the worst as in the case of the SCs or because they are facing the most severe vagaries of development as in the case of the STs. Therefore even though recommendations were made for extending the scope of the principle of positive discrimination, the main emphasis was placed on basic structural changes in the economy through formulation of equitable policies and their effective implementation besides attending to the immediate problems related to wages, right to work and protection of traditional occupations and such like.

THERE has been no significant change in the general situation after the submission of the last report. However, the Central Government have decided not to dereserve the reserved vacancies in services and launch a special drive for filling the vacant positions. But the scope of this measure is rather limited. Moreover, two new institutions at the national level have been created, viz., Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited and National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation. These institutions have just started working. There has been no significant change in relation to any other issues referred to in my previous report. IT MAY be necessary to state here that the review in the previous report covered a period of seven years. There were some notable successes during that period the details of which were also given. But so far as implementation of many a programme was concerned, it was not only found deficient in many regards but in many cases the programmes

themselves were defective. There is no indication so far if any corrective measures are being taken for the Eight Five Year Plan. The most serious issue in that Report related to the Constitutional provisions. In many important matters not even the first steps have been taken even after 40 years of the adoption of the Constitution. Moreover, there are a number of cases in which the State itself is responsible for violating Constitutional provisions. Non-action on such grave issues even after their reference in the Report cannot but be said to be gross violation of the Constitution. It is also regretted that this Report has neither been discussed in Parliament nor in the State Assemblies so far. In this context, it can only be expected that the situation must have remained the same as was the case during the previous seven years, if not deteriorated as has happened in relation to exploitative processes.

ANOTHER important issue had come to the fore in the last review. No information is being collected on many an important issue. I have sent a set of new proforma to the state government so that a realistic review could be made of the Constitutional provisions. It has also been urged that the information may not be sent just in a raw form after collection. It should be considered in detail first at the State level. Whatever important issues arise in that review, the government should send their own reactions and also the full details about action taken thereon or likely to be taken. Thus, it is hoped that the Report will not be a mere compilation of figures, ideas and good wishes but will become an integral part of the process for social equity and a basis for immediate intervention and formulation of long term policies. This new process of review will begin with effect from the review year 1988-89 about which information has been received so far only from a few states and that too rather scantily. It also appears that the states have not appreciated the importance of indepth review at the state level. I hope that the next Report will be an indepth and realistic review in pursuance of the Constitutional provisions.

THE most important question in the last Report related to the command over natural resources and their use. Some aspects of this question were also discussed but in view of the importance of the question, it was thought that it deserved a special report. It appears that the situation in this regard has deteriorated in the meantime. In reality the questions about command over resources, their use and entitlement of people in the gross national product not only affect the livelihood of common man but are vital for the right to life. It is in this context that a detailed review of command over resources has been attempted in the present Report. It involves the review of means of livelihood of people and their right to life. THIS Report concerns the right to life of the common man. Therefore, I have tried to address the same to the common man so that he can himself understand as to why his condition continues to deteriorate in spite of incessant enunciation of great principles of social equity and promises at all levels. Ordinarily the Report after being presented to the President is placed on the Table of the House. It is followed by a debate. Finally the Parliamentary Committee on the Welfare of SCs and STs tries to see that its recommendations are implemented. It is clear that the situation has been deteriorating instead of improving, notwithstanding the above elaborate formal process. The main reason for this is that the net effect of operation of the system as a whole is adverse. The ordinary people for whose welfare and protection elaborate Constitutional provisions exist and about whom this Report is made, are not even aware about what happens at the higher levels and the nature of the other processes which concern them vitally.

I HAVE considered it necessary to discuss another special issue in this Report. After all if those persons, who have been specially charged with certain responsibilities under this Constitution, do not act what are the options before the people? I had clarified at some length this serious issue in my last Report. For example, the Governors have failed to discharge the responsibilities in relation to Scheduled Area.

The Central Government have failed to issue directions even in cases where Constitution was clearly violated. The courts are helpless because either no laws have been made or their attention has not been drawn to the problems. The National Development Council has not found it necessary to consider this important issue in its totality and in depth. Similarly, the interests of members of the SCs are linked with land and wages about which there is lack of sensitivity if not a state of helplessness. It is now necessary to consider seriously the options which the people have in this situation. THIS question does not concern only those who are victims of the exploitation or irresponsible behaviour of the system but all those who are responsible for operating the system and also those who are co-sharers in the benefits of the modern system. I have specially given in detail the reactions of the people in many areas against the inequitous processes of the system and have also discussed as to what the people can and should do in such situations. I hope that the Government will make necessary arrangements so that this Report in which Constitutional rights, the attitude of the system in that regard and the reactions of the people and what can be done by them in the context of Constitutional provisions, have been discussed, reaches the concerned people in a form and language which can be understood by them.

I HAVE not made formal recommendations in this Report. The recommendations made in the earlier Reports, particularly the Twenty-eight Report, are quite extensive and if they are implemented, the lot of STs can be expected to improve significantly. But the examination of the question of command over resources in this Report makes it clear that the weaker sections of the community, particularly members of the SCs and STs, cannot get justice in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution unless there is basic change in our perceptions and the entire legal and formal system. It is true that this change cannot be effected in a day. But what is important is the process of change. The very nature of the system today is against their interests. Our entire legal system has not got out of the colonial mould. The right to life of the people has not only remained ignored but no attention has been paid to the same. A beginning can be made for this basic change. It is clear that a beginning must be straightaway at those points where the spirit of the Constitution and human rights are being violated. A serious discussion is, therefore, necessary on the entire Report and action must follow on these conclusions arrived at so that the spirit of the Constitution can be honoured and people can have justice in all spheres of life.

REPORT

I AM presenting herewith the Twentyninth Report on the condition of SCs and STs under Article 338 of the Constitution. In the last report which was my first report, I had reviewed the situation of the SCs and STs in broad terms. In that report one major aspect which came to the fore was that a dualistic system is getting established in our country. The modern organised sector comprises the upper segment of this system while the traditional unorganised sector comprises the lower segment. Consequently even among the SCs and STs, two different segments are getting established exactly in the same fashion. The modern organised sector is the leading sector of our developing economy. Therefore, all eyes are set on it and everyone is looking at it with fond hope. It was in this context that I had made extensive recommendations in the earlier report so to ensure that the members of the SCs and STs get an equal opportunity and honourable position in both the segments, particularly in the organised modern sector. The real partnership in the grand procession of development cannot remain confined only to reservations in services but must extend to all segments of national life. Only then the system can truly be considered to imbibe the spirit of the Constitution implicit in the protective provisions and the right to equality. THE irony, however, is that such a dualistic system is by its very nature inequitous. Therefore, if we see the above plea for equity and justice in the broader context of national

economy, it will mean a plea merely for sharing of non-justified benefits of an inequitable system. Secondly, even after the policy of equitable sharing is implemented with full responsibility and honesty, it will benefit only a small segment amongst the weaker sections of our society. And here is an extremely regrettable aspect of this scheme. If the system confines as it is, the burden of deprivation and exploitation will continue to increase and will, to a large extent, fall on the members of the same community, bulk of whom happen to be located in the lowest stratum of our system. In this way, a highly anomalous situation is being created. This partnership in injustice in the name of justice acquires appearance of justice. But by the same token in such a milieu, not only ignoring broader issues of justice and equity but even opposing the same also tend to be justified. Therefore unless the question of equity and justice is considered from the perception of the people located at the lowest rung of our society, which accounts for bulk of the members of SCs and STs excepting a small section who have joined organised sector, the safeguards in the Constitution for these communities will remain, more or less, meaningless.

THE life of the vast majority of our people is linked with three elements, viz., the right over resources, the right over means of production and the entitlement for labour. These aspects unfortunately have either not been properly discussed or, if case there is some discussion, it is mostly rhetorical. The reason is that the moment such a subject is seriously considered, the very foundation of the vested interests, which are flourishing in the name of modernity, progress and development gets shaken. But these are the questions which are crucial for the welfare of the members of the SCs and STs. And what is more, they are also crucial for the quality of national life, basic principles and human values. It is in this context that I had decided to undertake a special review of the national scene with regard to these three elements. The present report and the previous one taken together in a way make for comprehensive frame. This frame can provide the basis for a life of honour and dignity for all members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Moreover, the frame can also become the frame for establishment of a social order imbued fully with the ideals of equality and justice.

The Three-Tiers in National Life

THE situation in our country with regard to the establishment of an appropriate system and suitable infrastructure enabling the common man to lead his life with honour and dignity is rather unhappy. The polarisation in our national scenario is becoming increasingly sharper. On the one end we have the carefree setting of the modern organised sector. The moment a person steps in this sector, he is free from all worries about his ordinary living for all times. In that worryless life, the only worries are how to retain one's position, how to get as large a share in the comforts and luxury goods characteristics of that sector and so on. He may move along the high tide of so-called development. On the other extreme is located the unorganised traditional sector. The question before the ordinary people here is that of just two square meals. The only wish of those people, however, in this sector who command the resources and also those who understand the new world, is somehow to join the modern sector, or else to amass similar artifacts of comforts and luxury there itself. Therefore, the general scenario in this sector is that of strife, loot and raw struggle for existence.

IN THIS milieu, the growing centralisation in our economy is adding fuel to fire. Whatever is left with the ordinary people is being snatched away on the strength of law or sheer use of force and money power. Whatever is being snatched away from this side is getting accumulated at the other end. In this way not only a dualist but a three-tier structure is getting consolidated comprising, India, *Bharat* and '*Hindustan*'. The bulk of the members of the SCs and STs are included in this lowest tier of *Hindustan*.

IT IS clear that this process in our national life is not keeping with the intention of our Constitution. It is not also against

the declared principles. But then how is it happening? I have tried to look into this question in some detail with a view to find a possible solution. There are two basic aspects—one concerns the texture of our legal structure and the other is related to the paradigm of development. So far as the paradigm of development is concerned, we have accepted the path adopted by the western countries as the ideal. Moreover, in a hurry for development we have accepted the questionable premise of "development first" and given social equity a secondary position. In this approach an important fact of the global system was over-looked that the "dustbin" of a third world was necessary concomitant of the process of development in the first and the second worlds. In the same continuation, the third world now required a 'dustbin' of "fourth world". Today in our country *Hindustan* has become that very dustbin of development.

Dissonance between Law and Constitution

THE present system is patently inequitable. But unfortunately our legal structure has also proved to be its compeer. The warp and weft of our legal system was broadly set during the British period. The basic premises of the system established by the British were those of their own society and its objective was to strengthen the foundations of their empire. The people were subject and the system was a symbol of the Raj. After independence we prepared and adopted Constitution dedicated to the establishment of a socialist society based on our own traditions and basic human values. But the structure of the system, over which this crown of Constitution was placed, was totally dissonant with its basic spirit. This dissonance not only continued in the coming years but the situation became still worse. Firstly, the nascent ruling elite came to relish the old system. Secondly, in the hurry for development the incongruities were first ignored and later on they were accepted even as necessary for the maintenance and advancement of the new system. There was yet another important reason for the continuance of the incongruous situation. The law and the rules are concrete and functional while values are abstract. The latter are generally a good subject of thought and discussion which by itself can be a matter of satisfaction. Consequently big mountain of violation of Constitution and human rights could remain hidden behind the small straws of the legal frame.

Right to Life

THE most sacred and primary amongst all human rights is the right to life. The right to life does not only mean the right to bare animal-level subsistence; it really means right to life with human dignity. And the other elements for a life with dignity are personal liberty and adequate means of livelihood. The sum of these elements in real situations can be quite different depending on the specific economic and social situations. For example, in the modern sector they comprise what are known as the fundamental rights. But when it comes to the tribal people who are located on the other end of the spectrum in the traditional sector, these formal principles in the present context have no meaning. In their situation a self-governing system based on their own tradition and within the understanding of the ordinary people is essential for enjoyment of these rights in the real sense.

THE situation, related to appropriate means of livelihood, is very complex. Moreover, numerous anomalies have plagued the system. So far as the adequate means of livelihood in the organised sector are concerned, the formal form is dominant. Every member of this sector has specified position and whatever the role of that person, irrespective of its utility or non-utility for life, he not only can claim due entitlement just by virtue of the membership of the organised sector but can also openly claim entitlements which are not really justified. But, in the case of unorganised sector, nobody is sure about what a member of that sector will finally get. And the situation of each member in the sector may be quite different. Nevertheless it can be said that broadly command over resources, ownership of means of production and due entitlement for labour are three such elements which together