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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

This is a quarterly journal dealing with articles and research findings in various social sciences, developmental strategies and other co-related matters emphasising the problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It also publishes reviews of books pertaining to the aforementioned subjects.

TO THE CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions based on Anthropology, Demography, Economics, Human Geography, Museology, Planning and Sociology with particular reference to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are invited. The articles should be type-written in double space on one side of half foolscap paper. Invariably two copies of the articles should be sent. The contributors should also not forget to send their bio-data in a separate sheet alongwith the article and its brief synopsis. No remuneration is paid to the contributors. Only twenty-five off-prints of the articles are supplied. Two copies of the books should be sent for purpose of review.

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Techniques of Measuring Level of Development

N. Patnaik
B. B. Mohanty
S. C. Biswal

A Universal Bench Mark Survey was conducted in the entire Sub-Plan Areas of the State covering 9 districts, 21 I. T. D. As. and 118 blocks. With the help of the data collected at the household level an attempt has been made—

(1) to rate backwardness of some chosen socio-economic items at the I. T. D. A. level, and

(2) to determine relative levels of blocks in development I. T. D. A. wise.

SECTION I

Ordering of selected socio-economic items according to backwardness

The socio-economic items chosen for this purpose are—

1. Caste composition
2. Language
3. House/House site
4. Land holding
5. Land transfer
6. Shifting cultivation
7. Education
8. Literacy
9. Membership in Co-operative Society and
10. Indebtedness to local money-lenders

The conditions which are supposed to attribute to most backwardness of a block are—

0. More than 50 per cent tribal concentration.
1. More than 50 per cent scheduled tribe population not understanding Oriya language.
2. More than 50 per cent scheduled tribe households not having their own house and house site.
3. More than 50 per cent tribal households having no cultivable land.
4. More than 50 per cent tribal households transferring land to non-tribals in the last 10 years.
5. More than 50 per cent tribal households depending upon shifting cultivation fully for subsistence.
6. Less than 10 per cent of boys and girls of 6—11 years age-group in school.
7. The ratio between

$$\frac{\text{Total No. of literate tribal households}}{\text{Total No. of tribal house holds}}$$ —Falling below 0·5

8. The ratio between

$$\frac{\text{Total No. of tribal households having membership in Co-operative Society}}{\text{Total No. of tribal households}}$$ —Falling below 0·5

9. The ratio between:

$$\frac{\text{Total No. of tribal households indebted}}{\text{Total No. of tribal households}}$$ —Exceeding above 0·5

Number of observations under each of the above mentioned items were recorded and the ratio calculated for each item by dividing the number of villages under the block.

The next step was to find out the extent of difference in the case of that item having zero observation and calculate difference between the ratio of each item and difference at

zero observation. The difference at zero observation is calculated by dividing the total number of observations by total number of villages multiplied by the number of items, i. e. 10.

Some of these difference values may be in the positive and others in the negative. These difference values are arranged with the plus highest value at the top and minus highest value at the bottom. The order in which the values are arranged from top to bottom shows the items are graded in relative backwardness, that is, the most backward is represented by the value mentioned at the top and the least backward is represented by the value mentioned at the bottom. On the basis of this method the arrangement of items in the order of backwardness is presented.

On the basis of the above procedure the values of difference for each of the items were determined blockwise and the items were arranged in order of their backwardness from the most backward placed at the top to the least backward placed at the bottom of the scale.

SECTION II

Rank order of blocks in terms of backwardness

In the I. T. D. A., the blocks are at different levels of development. The method which is used to analyse the data for determining the relative backwardness of the blocks is discussed below.

The basic information required for determining the rank order of the blocks in terms of their relative backwardness are:—

1. No. of villages in each block;
2. No. of observations made under 10 items during data collection; and
3. Ratio derived for each block by dividing number of villages by number of observations.

The difference between the highest ratio and lowest ratio is calculated. As there are several blocks in an I. T. D. A. it would be proper to divide the blocks into three groups in order of their backwardness as group I representing most backward, group II moderately backward and group III least backward. Since the blocks are grouped into three categories, the value of the difference between the highest and lowest ratio is divided by three to get the interval size.

Then the range of ratios for the three groups is calculated.

On the basis of the abovementioned techniques the ordering of the selected socio-economic items according to backwardness and the rank order of blocks in terms of backwardness have been calculated I. T. D. A. wise and presented in graphs and bar-diagrams in the following pages.

Ordering of selected Socio-Economic items according to Backwardness

Serial No.	I. T. D. A.	Position of Items from least to most Backward									
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
1	Nilgiri	Lit.	S. C.	H./H. S.	P. R. L.	Tr. L.	Ch. Edn.	Land	Indbt.	T. C.	M. C. S.
2	Thuamul Rampur	Tr. L.	P. R. L.	H./H. S.	Indbt.	S. C.	Lit.	Land	Ch. Edn.	T. C.	M. C. S.
3	Parlakhemundi	Tr. L.	H./H. S.	Indbt.	T. C.	Land.	P. R. L.	S. C.	Lit.	Ch. Edn.	M. C. S.
4	Kuchinda	S. C.	Tr. L.	P. R. L.	Lit.	Indbt.	Ch. Edn.	Land	H./H. S.	T. C.	M. C. S.
5	Keonjhar	Tr. L.	P.R.L.	H./H. S.	Land	S. C.	Lit.	Ch. Edn.	Indbt.	M. C. S.	T. C.
6	Champua	S. C.	Tr, L.	Lit.	P. R. L.	H./H.S.	Land.	Ch. Edn.	Indbt.	T. C.	M. C. S.
7	Phulbani	Tr. L.	H./H. S.	S. C.	Land.	Indbt.	Lit.	Ch. Edn.	P. R. L.	T. C.	M. C. S.
8	Balliguda	Tr. L.	H./H. S.	S. C.	Land.	Lit.	Ch. Edn.	P. R. L.	Indbt.	T. C.	M. C. S.
9	Panposh	Ch. Edn.	S. C.	Tr. L.	Indbt.	H./H. S.	Land.	Lit.	P. R. L.	T. C.	M. C. S.
10	Sundargarh	S. C.	Tr. L.	Lit.	H./H. S.	P. R. L.	Indbt.	Land	Ch. Edn.	T. C.	M. C. S.
11	Bonai	S. C.	Tr. L.	P. R. L.	Indbt.	H./H. S.	Lit.	Land.	Ch. Edn.	T. C.	M. C. S.
12	Kaptipada	S. C.	Tr. L.	H./H. S.	Ch. Edn.	H./H. S.	P. R. L.	Land.	Indbt.	T. C.	M. C. S.
13	Karanjia	S. C.	Tr. L.	Lit.	Land.	Lit.	P. R. L.	Ch. Edn.	Indbt.	T. C.	M. C. S.
14	Rairangpur	S. C.	Tr. L.	Lit.	Land.	H./H. S.	P. R. L.	Ch. Edn.	Indbt.	T. C.	M. C. S.

Serial No.	I. T. D. A.	Position of Items from least to most Backward									
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
15	Baripada	.. S. C. ..	Tr. L. ..	P. R. L.	Lit. ..	H./H. S.	Land. ..	Ch. Edn.	Indbt. ..	T. C. ..	M. C. S.
16	Koraput	.. Tr. L. ..	Indbt. ..	H./H. S.	S. C. ..	P. R. L.	Land. ..	Lit. ..	Ch. Edn.	T. C. ..	M. C. S.
17	Jeypore	.. Tr. L. ..	P. R. L.	S. C. ..	Indbt. ..	H./H. S.	Lit. ..	Land. ..	Ch. Edn.	T. C. ..	M. C. S.
18	Nawarangpur	.. Tr. L. ..	S. C. ..	Indbt. .	H./H. S.	P. R. L.	Land. ..	Lit. ..	Ch. Edn.	T. C. ..	M. C. S.
19	Malkangiri	.. Tr. L. ..	Indbt. ..	H./H. S.	S. C. ..	Land ..	P. R. L.	Lit. ..	Ch. Edn.	T. C. ..	M. C. S.
20	Rayagada	.. Tr. L. ..	H./H.S. ..	Indbt. ..	S. C. ..	P. R. L.	Lit. ..	Land ..	Ch. Edn.	T. C. ..	M. C. S.
21	Gunupur	.. Tr. L. ..	H./H.S. .	Indbt. ..	P. R. L.	S. C. ..	Lit. ..	Land. ..	Ch. Edn.	T. C. ..	M. C. S.

ABBREVIATION

T. C.—Tribal Concentration

P. R. L.—Proficiency in Regional Language

H./H. S.—House/House Site

Land.—Landless

T. R. L.—Transfer of Land by Tribals to non-tribals

S. C.—Shifting Cultivation

Ch. Edn.—Child Education

Lit.—Literacy

M. C. S.—Membership in Co-operative Society

Indbt.—Indebtedness

Forest Policy and Tribal Development

Bhupinder Singh

The 1894 Forest Policy Statement based its objective on the corner-stone of "public benefit". It involved "the regulation of rights and the restriction of privileges of user in the forest area, which may have previously been enjoyed by the inhabitants of its immediate neighbourhood.... the cardinal principle to be observed is that the rights and privileges of individuals must be limited otherwise than for their own benefit...." In other words, it subordinated the individual advantage to public benefit. The principle is unexceptionable and is relevant even today, but it hinges on what "public benefit" means. Presently, public benefit may be interpreted as increase of afforested area to serve the needs of ecology and production. Without going into semantics, in retrospect, it seems that the interpretation of the term in the pre-independence days was different as the fall-out of policy application can be seen in the tremendous depletion of the country's forest cover during the past century.

The revised Forest Policy of 1952, adopted soon after Independence, laid stress on balanced and complementary land use under which each type of land should be allotted to that form of use under which it will produce the most and deteriorate the least. It articulated forest's role in both conservation of soil and moisture and economic development in agriculture, industry and communications. It also recognised the local needs of wood, grass, etc. while discouraging uncontrolled and excessive grazing.

The loss of forest cover was estimated in the report of the Committee on Forest and Tribals in India (1982) of the Ministry of Home Affairs to be 4·8 million hectares during the past three decades. However, recent assessments reveal the serious situation of an annual loss of 15 million hectares. This Castes doubt on the figure of the cumulative loss of 4·8 million hectares. In any event, the loss of the forest cover has manifold implications on the national ecology and economy. But while the effect of such a situation may not be immediately felt by the country's non-tribal population, it has been leaving indelible scars on the tribal population; some tribal communities have been getting marginalised.

If, along with an annual denudation rate of 1·5 million hectares, for a moment, it is assumed that the incremental additive is nil' 75 million hectares of forest cover will vanish in 50 years. However, if the extent of real forest cover is assessed as about half of that, we may not have to wait for even that long. We might witness the horrendous spectacle of the barren and bald landscape in our own life-time. Then, we have to contend with a high growth-rate of population, feared to hit the one-billionth mark by the time we bid good-bye to the twentieth century. These two basic features of the country's situation strike alarm: we have the scenario of shrinking subsistence resources of water, food, fuel wood, fodder and small timber alongwith expanding population and growing requirements. If, indeed, ecological balance is the desideratum, devoutly to be wished for, then a massive effort at reforestation of the degraded land is a *sine qua non*.

It is understood that a new forest policy has been under consideration for some time. The parameters of the new policy were debated by the Committee on Forest & Tribals in India set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs. After due deliberations, the Committee recommended the following three parameters for forest policy : (a) ecological security, (b) requirements of the

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rural and tribal population in respect of food, fuel, fruit, fodder, fibre, timber and other domestic needs (c) requirements of industry, including the requirements of defence and communications. Since the new forest policy of the Government of India was, at that time, on the anvil, the Committee made the strong plea that the policy statement should incorporate those three important criteria. It is not known what progress has been made in the evolution of the new forest policy.

One aspect deserves special mention. Some influential observers of the national scene have commented that the major blame for the loss of vegetal cover lies at the door of rural people, particularly the tribals. In their view, indiscriminate tree-felling by people for their domestic needs, particularly fuel, has been the single biggest cause of the receding and disappearing forest-line. To say the least, such a charge seems rather grotesque, considering the factual background of forest deplation. It was the colonial government which pillaged the forest resource for their aristocracy in U. K. and for armaments etc. for the two world wars; recently, one commentator remarked that a Mahogany flush-seat possessing Englishmen's fancy requires 30 years of growth. After Independence, the affluent classes in the country have indulged in an equally consumerist extravagance at the expense of every conceivable natural resource, not excluding forest. The record must be set straight. The rural and tribal population require forest for their sustenance. They derive employment, food, minor forest produce, etc. Above all, they obtain fuel from forest for cooking, heating and even lighting purposes. It is not known whether scientific comparisons have been made between the timber draft made on forest for consumerists items for the rich and subsistence items for the poor. Looking back at the events of the past century, it seems likely that the draft for the former would have far surpassed that for the latter. In any event, with the increasing needs of the galloping numbers, it will be a folly to ignore the survival compulsions of a vast majority in the country. Further, to save the forest, it is necessary to evolve a fuel policy which places viable fuel alternatives in the hands of the poor; this should in fact form an integral part of the forest policy.

8. There is another sphere in which the record has to be set straight. Many tribal communities have been charged with illicit, clandestine depredation. The experience of close tribal watchers is somewhat different. Though exceptionally, some tribals could be accused thus, in general, it can be said that the tribals have reverence for the forest and would not, ordinarily, cut trees. In fact, many tribal communities regard the forest as sacred. Many trees like sal (shorea robusta), Mohua (Madhuca indica) are regarded as sacred. There are sacred groves in Meghalaya, Bihar, Orissa, M. P. etc. Yet there have been occasions when some tribal communities have played into the hands of forest contractors exploiting this very zeal. For instance, in the late seventies and early eighties, the tribals of Singhbhum district of Bihar launched an agitation against replacement of sal by teak in the Saranda forest; the forest contractors made huge capital out of the situation by encouraging them to remove teak, exploiting their innocence. Further, some experts have cast doubts over tribal knowledge and competence in the floral field. Again, tribologists are of the view that such doubts may not be well-founded. It may bear repitition to say that lay observations suggest that normally a tribal does not cut a tree particularly a fruit tree, though he may be obliged to fell some other trees in certain compelling circumstances. It seems that the tribal psyche has instinctively inherited a good knowledge of ethno-ecology, ethno-botany, ethno-biology, etc. Modern sciences may attempt to supplement it, but it would not do either to be-little it or supplant it.

The fact is that in forest we have a critical sector of national life, since the nation's survival depends on maintenance of ecological equilibrium through forest. Then, we have a section of population namely the tribals whose life-pattern and ethos have been woven around forest. It has to be clearly understood that there cannot be any development of forest without the involvement of forest-dwelling tribal communities. Forest development and tribal development go together and our policy and programmes should be characterised by mutual congruence and benefit.

With the sylvan experience, love of trees and generations' knowledge behind the tribals, it is little wonder that the Dhebar Commission should have recommended (1961) that the tribal should be made a partner in forest development. The Home Ministry's Committee on Forest and Tribals reiterated it. The recommendation has been repeated by other bodies. One cannot do better than to emphasise it. At the same time, it is relevant to understand the perspective of the present age in so far as tribals and forests are concerned. In the 1894 forest policy

statement, rights over forest were mentioned in the context of their curtailment in favour of "public benefit". The 1952 forest policy whittled the rights down to "concessions". The trend seems ominous in the world of gigantic domestic and multinational corporate sector. At this rate, it seems that even the concessions will be snuffed out and the last man will find the chances of his survival fade out gradually. He would then have come a full circle, commencing from the days when each village and tribal community had full control and access over the neighbourhood resources to a situation when the resources vest wholly in the state. There is a need for serious consideration in our democratic policy of how state ownership and control of the resources can be transformed into true common-wealth society wherein the interests of the last man are upheld vis-a-vis the gargantuan organised sector as well as the powerful elite stratum. The transition from sylvan and sylvo-agricultural stages to an industrial age in this country is being accompanied by such traumatic upheavals that unless the rigour is regulated and the principle of equity vigorously applied, there is a danger of the numerically-massive small man being squeezed out by a small elite minority. However, the latter must heed the long-run prospect apprehensively in the background of historical examples during the last two centuries, commencing with the French revolution.

In a sense, every historical moment can be a water-shed. The present moment is particularly significant for the nation since it can be utilised for the welding of the nation before it is too late. The tide must be seized for sementing the diverse constituents. In making the tribal a partner in forest development, no great favour will be shown to him. His solicitude and dedication to forest can become an asset in its promotion and his protective instinct infallible substitute to expensive and impracticable policing. Such a positive policy has to be accompanied by reversal of certain disturbing trends in the tribal field. It is a matter of no small concern that to-day's atmosphere is vitiated on account of loss by tribals of primary resources like land and forest. This is not the place for elaborating the loss of agricultural land. However, there has been enormous loss of forest land for location of industrial, mining, irrigation, hydel etc. development projects. Then there are some well-meaning ventures of authorities which have landed tribals in an equally woeful predicament. One example is the survey and settlement operations. Meant to benefit the tribals, ill-conceived, in not a few cases they have boomeranged. Designed in ignorance of the traditional tribal land-holding systems, they have tended to upset the socio-economic structure of some tribal communities. Worse, they have led to the slippage of the community's land. I came across one example in the Juangpirh tract of the Keonjhar district of Orissa. Till the conclusion of the survey and settlement operations in the seventies, land was held by the Juang community in the tract and individual holding were parcelled out to families by the Juang elders. With the conventional settlement proceedings coming into force, the communal land has passed on to the State as forest, depriving the Juang of their shifting cultivation area, Gocher (grazing land), burial ground, temples etc. The situation might get aggravated with the enforcement of the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 prohibiting shifting cultivation in the forest land, depriving the Juang of their sustenance. When, during my visit, I queried the Juang elders about what they would do in the ultimate event of land passing out of their possession, innocently they replied that they would petition the government asking them for the means of subsistence. Such examples can be multiplied. In the interest of both forest and tribal development, and in the larger national interest, the erosion of the tribal rights in land and forest has not only to be stemmed, but also they have to be given the confidence that no inroads will otherwise be made into their environment.

There is alively debate over shifting cultivation. Views have been expressed to the effect that this mode of cultivation is injurious to the eco-system and, on the other side, that it is a tribal way of life not to be interfered with lightly. Though it is not possible for me to take the position of supporting Jhum on the ground of its contribution to the eco-system (as some students claims) I cannot help observing that a change in the life-style of a community is not a matter of technology alone and the sociolcgical and human dimensions are weighty. Further, shifting cultivation is characterised by so many ethnic and regional variations with in-built safeguards that its condemnation out of hand would be imprudent. The students of podu would do well to unravel all its features including those

which make it conservation-oriented. Above all energies should be concentrated on evolution of viable alternatives, since few are so far in sight. Horticulture, rubber, coffee, tea etc., plantations have been suggested and in some places tried as alternatives. In the State of Orissa, in the middle seventies we had laid out thousands of acres of horticultural plantations, but most of these languished for want of proper marketing arrangements. Tripura has achieved some success in rubber plantations and Andhra Pradesh in coffee plantations. But there are snags. Highcost schemes have to be abjured. There cannot be escape from the shadow which lies between the concept and reality. Hence, not only are the finest and delicated men and women required for originating concepts, but equally determined and perceptive minds are required to master the art of implementation.

In the late seventies, the Administrative Staff College of India organised an investigation into the role of minor forest produce (MFP) in the tribal economy in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar. The study came to conclusion that on an average income from MFP accounts for between 10 per cent and 60 per cent of the total for a tribal family. With such a heavy dependence, it appears that attention being paid to MFP is inadequate. The first requisite is to ensure payment of remunerative price to the tribal in the Hat for his MFP items. Secondly, there should be accent on growth of MFP trees in all plantation programmes, where they be in the purview of the Forest department or other department. Thirdly, R. & D. effort should focus on better yields, processing, marketing etc., MFP should be an integral part of the forest policy.

Forest villages are an anachronism in the liberal out-look of today, since the tribal villagers can be better than bonded labour. I have had occasion to go through the parchments of agreements between the department and these villagers and can say the scale is titled heavily against the latter. Notwithstanding policy resolutions at the level of the Government of India and the State Governments, some State authorities are lagging behind in conferment of land titles on these tribals. It is time that the hesitation is shaken and measures envisaged in the Forest Ministers' Conference of 1975 are implemented.

In step with ecological balance has been the scheme of establishment of game sanctuaries. However, it is observed that in many cases the game sanctuaries have been established at the expense of local and, particularly, tribal people. For instance, in the acclaimed Project Tiger, 15 tiger reserves have been reported to have been grounded, the tiger population rising to more than a thousand with forests in the projects, in the project areas thriving, Yet, little is heard of the human population in the project areas. The reservation of select forests and protection of flora made ideal habitats for proliferation of wild animals, in turn congenial hunting ground for and multiplication of tigers. But the exclusive pursuit of an increasing tiger population has led to competition between the tiger and the surrounding human population (including those displaced or dreading displacement) for land, forest, pastures, water etc. In Kanha, N. P., entire villages were uprooted to be exposed to insecurity and uncertainty. The tribals of Palamau of Bihar and Similipal, of Orissa have been having a rough time, eking out a living after having had to make room for tigers. The Dudhwa, (U. P.) and Sundarbans, (West-Bengal) tiger project reserves have spawned maneaters. In Melghat, Maharastra, the Korku live with the unenviable predicament of loss of crops and cattle. The Villagers of Ranthambore (Rajasthan), incensed over loss of grazing-land, have been up in arms. As the number of tigers grows, the number of other wild animals over which they predate, declines, converting tigers into maneaters. Thus, Project Tiger has tended to become anti-people. A review of the wild-life conservation policy is called for.

The tendency to regard the tribal scene as frozen is a grave error. The tribal scene is dynamic both in time and space. For one thing, we have the spectacle of continuity and change over a time-horizon. In our own life-time, in a single tribal community we have seen the kaleidoscope of advancement albeit slow movement. There has been improvement in their life-quality, though not of the proportion one would have wished. Then we have the great socio-cultural diversity of the numerous tribal communities spread through the length and breadh of the country. The dynamism and diversity are source of both hope and despair. Hope, because the continuity and change propel advancement without loss of moorings. Despair, because it poses a great challenge to the planners, administrators and social scientists. Nevertheless the challenge has to be accepted and, in doing so, we must be guided by tribal perceptions as much as we are

influenced by our own. It should be regarded as axiomatic that the pattern of development visualised for tribals is founded on their perceptions. The fact that the tribals have not emerged as a powerful pressure group should be counted as a blessing and the polity should not wait for confrontationist and conflict situations.

In approaching the tribal issue, not quite a few of us gatheredhere are apt to be emotive. Perhaps, our prediations incline us so. But we should look at the matter rationally in the context of the broad sweep of historical socio-political forces. From the geo-political point of view, the last century and a half appear to have been the worst in a millennium or more for tribals. In many continents, after the quiescent centuries, this period witnessed the tribal peoples in turmoil, being pushed out from ancestral homes and hearths to enable the imperialist, mainly the western, man seize the world's natural resources like forest, minerals, water. Thus, many of the tribal peoples of Latin America, Africa, Australia and Asia have been evicted from their fore-fathers' lands and marginalised. The copper, tin, tungsten ores and oil-bearing areas have been captured by the more powerful white races. In the struggle, many tribal communities have perished. Those who have survived have been eking out a bare living. However, the tide of history is turning. The struggle of the colonial peoples in Asia and Africa has started bearing fruit. It would appear that the legitimate due of the tribal communities cannot be denied for long. The battle-cry of self-determination has penetrated the hearts of ethnic groups like tribal groups and it is interpreted in the narrower sense of sub-nationalism or intra-nationalism. In any event, it is a demand for recognition, a recognition of their voice in national affairs. It has to be treated as such, notwithstanding its stridence sometimes.

For too long in history, this country remained fragmented. Now through force of circumstances, it has a chance of a projection of an integral entity, let the opportunity not be wasted away. The people should have a sense of history, and the leaders a sense of historical mission, a sense of historical destiny. At the cost of sounding pessimistic, one cannot help observing that today we are too much pre-occupied with petty wrangling, each section of the nation engaged in clamouring for more for itself. Two observations are called for in this context. First that the democratic framework calls for not only that a constituent should agitate only peacefully, but also that there should be rapport among the constituent groups and regions willing to negotiate with one another on the basis of give-and-take. Today, the spirit is more of take and give not. What is that we want to take? The national cake? But what is the size of the cake ? It is far too meagre, too paltry. Each section is hitting the other like church mice, while the church cat, the elite, walks away with the minuscule cake. The better-off sections should realise that this game cannot go on for long. The awakening, hastened and deepened by socio-political movements among the deprived peoples, will come, perhaps too soon for the affluent. Then they may find themselves cornered. The lessons of history are too recent to need recounting. It is in their interest that there should be a equity-based national compact. In any case, all sections, rich and poor, have to realise that the cake has to be enlarged. The dry wheat-cake has to become a real cake. This requires hard, sustained labour on the part of every member of this nation, rich or poor, big or small, forward or backward. So far as the tribals are concerned, even a small bit done for them is likely to go a long way. One cannot help recalling the English Poet, Robert Browning, in this context :

A little more, and how much it is —

A little less, and what worlds away :

Forest Management and Tribal Development

S. C. Padhi

Forest is a living complex. So is the humankind. Both are integral parts of the precious environment. Proper and balanced management of both is imperative if we are to maintain and improve upon the enviroment and ensure continuance of life on this planet.

The word "Forest" is derived from the Latin word "Fores" which means outside. Man cleared forest for dwelling and any thing outside the clearance was called forest. Forest consist of trees, shrubs, climbers, creepers, grasses, fungi, bacteria, parasites and the like, all of which are living organisms with different modes of life, life cycles and systems of reproduction. Equally complicated is the humankind or the human species with different races and tribes, each with peculiar social, economical and cultural heritage and life style. Management of such complicated living beings needs foresight, thought and objectivity. It is in this regard that the policies and programmes play a very vital role. Instead of the two managements being complimentary to each other they seem to have drifted apart in our country creating problems for both. This could be due to lack of comprehension and direction.

This training course is titled "Forest and tribal problems". What exactly are the problems ? Those have to be identified and tackled with on well laid out scientific lines for durable solutions. The chief problem is that of dwindling forests and explosion in the populations of forest dwellers and users i. e., the tribals.

The socio-economic status and life style of the tribals are primitive. They depend entirely on the forests for their food and shelter. The explosion in their populations has surfaced many a problems for themselves as well as for the country, the major and most important victim being the forests. This vicious cycle still continues unabated and the country will soon face a catastrophe unless the process is halted and then reversed.

Being inter-related, inter-connected and inter-dependent the management of both the forests and the tribals need be closely knit and inter-woven. This has to find expression not only in the policies and programmes, but in their actual execution. The management systems have to blend the interests of both forests and tribals and for successful results their implementation has to be through one unified agency, i. e., the forest cadres. It is not desirable to leave the management of forests and tribals to different agencies and follow a policy of non-intervention or helplessness.

State intervention in forest management dates back to Hindu and Muslim Rule. Such intervention was however limited to "royal" interests. Scientific forestry in our country was introduced sometimes in 1864 when the Forest Departments were created in the erstwhile British Colonies. The first Act to give effect to the rules of management and preservation of forests was passed in 1865. This was repealed by the Indian Forest Act 1878 which divided the forest areas into reserved forests, protected forests and village forests. Special provisions were made under this Act for exercise of rights and concessions by forest dwellers and forest users. In 1894 the Government reviewed its forest policy and implementation and pronounced the following intentions.

(*a*) The sole object with which forests are to be administered is public benefit.

* Presented in the Seminar on "Planning for Scientific Forestry and Development of Tribal Communities" organized by the Tribal and Harijan Research-*cum*-Training Institute, Bhubaneswar on 20th January 1987.

(*b*) Forests situated on hill slopes should be maintained as protected forests to preserve the climate and physical conditions of the country.

(*c*) Honey-Combing of forests by pacthes of cultivation should not be allowed.

(*d*) Cultivation must be permanent and must not be allowed to encroach upon the minimum area of forests needed to meet reasonable forest requirements.

(*e*) Forests that yield inferior timber, firewood or fodder or used for grazing should be managed mainly in the interest of local population, care being taken to see that the user is not exercised so as to annihilate its subject and the people are protected against their own improvidence.

(*f*) Forests which are reservoirs of valuable timbers should be managed to meet national needs and interests and as a source of revenue to the State.

The Indian Forest Act, 1878 was modified in parts by different Acts of the local Governments which was later replaced by a very comprehensive Act called the "Indian Forest Act, 1927". This Act brought together major provisions of all the previous Acts and policies pursued till then. In recent years many of the State Governments have passed their own Acts, keeping however the frame work and contents more or less unchanged.

Soon after independence the first National Forest Policy was issued by the Government of India in 1952. The National Commission on Agriculture reveiwed the Forest Policy as implemented up to 1976 and came to the following conclusions.

> "Free supply of forest produce to the rural population and their rights and privileges have brought destruction to the forests and so it is necessary to reverse the process. The rural people have not contributed much towards the maintenance or regeneration of the forests. Having over-exploited the resources they cannot in all fairness expect that somebody else will take the trouble of providing them with forest produce free of charge".

The NAC have suggested that the new forest policy should indicate clearly the inter-relationship of forest economy with rural and tribal economy and the factors to be considered are (a) employment, (b) rights of user and (c) involvement of local people. Employment could be offered as an alternative to rights of user, if forest development is properly organised. Whereas the 1952 policy provided for a functional classification of forests as protective forests, National Forest, Village Forests and tree lands the NAC has recommended the classification to be confined to three categories such as "Production Forests", "Protection Forests", and "Social Forests". They have advocated that tribal welfare should be ensured by making arrangements to satisfy their domestic needs of various forest products and recognising the priority need of their direct employment in forestry operation. Although, the forest policies invariably mention about the local needs, they have observed that the investment policy has been more attuned to the exotic needs of the larger economy.

Since then many a changes have occurred in the approach to tribal development, i. e., improving the tribal populations within their own environment. Tribal Sub-Plans have been identified. Middle man have been eliminated in the harvesting of timbers or collection of minor forest produces and replaced by forest corporations, Forest Labour Co-operative Societies or Tribal Development Corporations. Special Acts and Rules have been enforced over the tribal tracts to protect the interests of the tribals over their properties including trees on their lands. Plantations of M. F. P., fodder and fruit trees and other essential works like rehabilitation of degraded forests, Social forestry plantations, development of communication, sinking of wells, provision for health and education, terracing of lands and construction of minor or medium irrigation projects, etc. are being taken up. Attempts are being made to settle the shifting cultivators in developed colonies and to improve the existing forest villages.

Forest was a subject in the State list in the 7th Schedule of the Constitution till 1976. It was transferred to the concurrent list by the 42nd amendment. This resulted in dimunition of powers of the State Governments and using its power the Government of India have promulgated the Forest Conservation Act

in October. 1980 which prohibits diversion of forest land to non-forestry purposes without their prior approval.

But all those have not reversed as yet the process of destruction of forests or brought about any improvement of the tribals. The goal appears to be shifting farther and farther. The chief reason is the lack of appreciation of the Governments, Social and Religious Organisations and people in general that:—

(*a*) Forest management and development are long term strategies and that short term interests of any kind should not have overriding consideration.

(*b*) Scientific management of forests involving short term hardships and restrictions is inescapable for development of forests and people depending upon the forests.

(*c*) Forests cannot develop by themselves (as children cannot) and that heavy investment of funds and sustained efforts over decades are prime necessities to manage the forests on proper scientific lines believing the Forest Working Plans and Schemes as "Words of Truth".

(*d*) Proper scientific management of forests would automatically meet the multidimensional requirements of varied interests. (Scientific forestry has deviated from the path in the past due to low investment in forests, interference by all and sundry, populastic approaches and promises made to the poor forest dwellers, etc.).

The solution lies in self restraint for the Nation and every constituent part of it with regard to the use of forests, bolder and imaginative investment in the forestry and tribal sectors with patience and faith through the Forest Departments, and last but not the least, reliance on the forest cadres and uplifting their morales by every possible means.

The Estimates Committee of Parliament suggested in 1969 that the existing forest policy should be reapraised and revised. In 1974, the said Committee has observed that the delay has adversely affected the development of forest sector. The National Commission on Agriculture in 1976 has again recommended that the forest policy should be revised and uniform and comprehensive set up of regulations should be brought out immediately. It is to be hoped that the revised forest policy would incorporate the suggestions made above. A few marginal changes in the existing policies and programmes are not going to be effective. There should be a fundamental change favouring forestry. Internal rigidities and cumbersome bureaucratic procedures often associated with controlled planning make the transition difficult. A proper land use policy for each district which can help sustainable development has to be formulated. Such a policy should not be counterproductive and over-exploitative, but must be long term oriented and conservation promoting. It should have a thrust of saving the remaining forests and retriving the lost forests. A package of incentives and decentive have to be devised and implemented. There appears to be no short cut to success.

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