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Adibasi

Vol. XXIII, No. 3

Instruction to Authors

Adibasi is a quarterly periodical published by the Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute, Bhubaneswar, Orissa every year in April, July, October and January. It contains papers and findings on Social Sciences emphasising tribal problems of Orissa.

Adibasi invites contribution from persons interested in Anthropology, Demography, Economics, Human Geography, Museology, Planning and Sociology with particular reference to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

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Note on Forest Policy vis-a-vis Tribal Welfare in Andhra Pradesh

—Shri R. K. Rao,

The Forest area of the State extends over sixty-four thousand Sq. Km. and constitute 23 per cent of the land area. Our tribal population is twenty-two lakhs and forms 5.11 per cent of the State population (as per 1971 Census).

Approximately nine lakhs of these tribals live in forest areas confined mostly to the districts of Srikakulam, Vizag, East and West Godavari, Khammam, Warangal, and Adilabad. The total forest area in these districts is 30 lakh hectares and forms nearly 50 per cent of the forest area of the State. These are also our most valuable forests supplying every year very large quantities of firewood and timber and bamboo to meet domestic requirements and raw materials for wood based industries. Approximately 50 per cent of the land in tribal sub-plan areas (ITDAs) is under forests.

There is no separate forest policy for the State and the National Forest Policy of 1952, to the extent applicable has been the guiding principle of forestry in the State. This policy among other things has enjoined on the States to :

1. maintain in general one-third of land area under forests and upto 60 per cent of land area in hills to protect the hilly regions.
2. to wean the tribal population from shifting cultivation by providing alternative sources of livelihood.
3. to instill in the local people a direct interest in the utilization of forests by slowly replacing the system of exploitation of forests by contractors with forest labour co-operatives.

4. to meet the requirements of local people for forest products to a reasonable extent consistent with forest conservation either free of royalty or at concessional rates.

The Forest Policy of the State as it now stands, and as in keeping with the Forest Policy of the country prohibits cutting of tree growth for other than forestry purposes. This applies to pattas in agency areas outside the Reserved Forests also, except, cases with the permission of the Collector. It is yet to be seen how the tribal reacts to this latter provision which has been recently inserted in the forest Act with good intentions.

Briefly the main programmes undertaken by the Department to benefit the tribal people either directly or indirectly are :

1. *Employment*—Forestry operations comprising of felling and extraction of firewood, timber and bamboo, collection of beedi leaf, and other minor forest produce, raising of forest plantations, provide daily wage employment or piece rate wages to tribals. It is estimated that such forestry operations provide annually one crore mandays of employment in tribal areas, largely to tribals and partly to non-tribals, but economically and social weaker sections of the population residing close to the forest areas.

2. *Departmental working*—In order to ensure that fair and reasonable wages are paid to the labour, departmental collection of beedi leaf has been introduced since 1971 and departmental extraction of timber, firewood and bamboo since 1975-76.

3. *M. F. P. Collection*—The right of collection of M. F. P. in the tribal areas of the State has been given on monopoly lease to the Girijan Development Corporation at a highly concessional royalty.

4. *Coffee Plantations*—The Department has taken up since 1961 a programme of raising Coffee plantations in the agency areas of Visakhapatnam and East Godavari, with a view to provide gainful employment to tribals to train tribals in Coffee cultivation and to find out suitable plantation crops for these areas. Coffee plantations are labour intensive and provide year round employment at one labourer for every two acres of coffee planted. Up to 1978, 3,200 acres of coffee plantations have been raised.

With a view to bring more area under coffee cultivation, utilizing institutional finance, the programme for further expansion of coffee planting in these areas has been entrusted to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation.

5. *Pepper cultivation*—Pepper cultivation has been introduced in the agency areas and a progeny orchard of high-yielding pepper varieties has also been established, to distribute high yielding pepper seedlings to tribal farmers.

6. *M. F. P. Plantations*—With a view to increase production of Minor Forest Produce in the tribal areas, plantations of trees yielding valuable minor forest produce are being raised in Tribal areas since 1976. 1000 ha. of plantations of Jack, Mango, Tamarind, etc., have been raised so far under this programme.

7. *Pilot Project on shifting cultivation*—With a view to wean the tribals from shifting cultivation a Pilot Project to settle 100 families of tribals on 200 ha. of developed land has been taken up in Visakhapatnam district in 1977-78. Under this project each beneficiary family will be provided one ha. of land suitably developed for wet cultivation and one ha. of fruit orchard, the entire expenditure on development of fruit orchards up to end of 3rd year being borne by the Department.

8. *Allotment and lease of forest lands*—In the districts of Warangal, Adilabad and Hyderabad forest lands containing *Madd* are being allotted for tassar cultivation wherever there is demand for such allotment. In Srikakulam district a Pilot

Project for leasing of forest lands for cultivation of coffee at the rate of 2 hect. per tribal family is being taken up from 1979-80.

9. *Concessions in recruitment to forest service*—Several concessions have been provided for the benefit of Scheduled Tribes in recruitment to the various levels of executive and subordinate posts in the Forest Department like Assistant Conservators of Forests, Range Officers, Foresters and Forest Guards. A detailed note on concessions in service conditions is given in Appendix-I.

Forest Conservation and tribals—Source of friction.

Demand for Forest land—There has been a persistent demand from tribals for dis-reservation of sizeable chunks of forest lands particularly in the district of Adilabad and Visakhapatnam. There have also been large-scale encroachments and illicit cultivation in reserved forest areas in Adilabad district for several years. As per the decision of the Government, over 1.50 lakh hectares under that cultivation by tribals before 1964 have been regularized by dis-reservation of these lands. Further encroachments and illicit cultivation in forest lands is continuing ever since.

Since 1965-67, large areas of reserved forest lands have been encroached upon by tribals mainly in Visakhapatnam district and illicit cultivation is going on in these areas.

The demand for more forest land remains and is the greatest threat to both the forests, the soil and the tribals living in these areas, as destruction of forest cover in these hilly areas is leading to drying up of perennial streams, unchecked soil erosion and reduction in M.F.P., which affect to the tribal economy as a whole.

2. *Problems of preservation of Gum trees*—Over the last few years there has been a sudden spurt in prices of gum karaya, leading to increase in collection of this gum by tribals through excessive tapping of the karaya trees. Excessive and unscientific tapping leads to premature death of the trees, resulting in loss of a valuable resource. A better method of gum tapping and management of these gum yielding trees, needs to be introduced in the interest of both the tribal economy and to conserve and protect a valuable resource. A system of tree pattas is being thought of in consultation with the Girijan Co-operative Corporation to achieve this end.

3. Labour wages in departmental operations—

There are at times complaints from tribals that the daily wages paid by the department are not adequate. On the other hand departmental functionaries at the field level complain that the tribals hardly work for 4 to 5 hours in a working day and that their productivity is also low.

Forestry activities, as a major source of employment to tribals should ensure not only adequate, but fairly attractive wages to tribals. However, such wage payment can only be achieved by increasing productivity of the labour, through wages linked to production using improved logging and plantation tools, and training labour in use of same. A small beginning has been made in training labour in use of improved logging tools over the last few years, however much more needs to be done in this direction to make forestry operations not as a last source of employment, but a first and privileged source of employment to the tribals.

Some Possible solutions

1. *Administrative structure*—In the tribal areas government machinery should be predominantly manned by the Forest Personnel. The tribal areas are in the midst of forests, which are most frequently visited by the Forest Personnel. The latter have more personal knowledge of the tribals and their problems as well as the areas they live in and the forests from which draw their livelihood. Hence the suggestion, for example the ITDA Project Officer could be a Forest Officer.

2. *Infrastructure*—The funds available to the Forest Department exclusively for development of tribal areas are limited to forestry operations, such as raising of plantations. If the principle enunciated in item No. 1 above is accepted, the Forest Department/Forest Personnel will have adequate funds for implementation of various developmental schemes inclusive of non-forestry programmes such as running of schools, hospitals, maintaining roads, etc., in the tribal areas.

3. *Major Problems*—The tribals living in the forest draw their livelihood from the forest. The tribal enjoys certain concessions under the Forest Act enabling him to collect MFP from the reserved forests and sell it as a means of his livelihood. The major problem is how to ensure maximum returns from this source, how to prevent exploitation of the tribals by the non-tribals and how to develop the source to provide

for increasing returns to the tribal community. First and foremost we must remove all forms of exploitation of the tribal in this field. To ensure this, MFP trade should be made State monopoly as in the case of Beedi leaves in Telangana areas. This can be done by including all MFP under the MFP (Regulation Act of Trade) 1971, so that nobody can purchase MFP except the Government or their agents.

Agency of procurement of MFP

MFP is a major source of revenue in tribal area. At present the MFP is leased out to the G. C. C. by the Forest Department at a concessional rate. The G. C. C. buys the MFP at the shandies. There are however, invisible outlets through which the MFP is sold by the tribal to other traders. If the principle enunciated in item No. 1 is accepted, G. C. C. should have a separate forest wing to look after Procurement of the MFP, because the forest set up within the G. C. C. can establish close liaison with the Forest Department and thereby plug all loopholes in this trade. An alternative, which is more commendable is to entrust the entire work to the Forest Department with the condition that revenue derived therefrom should be earmarked for all developmental programmes in the tribal areas. Yet another alternative is to entrust the entire work of procurement and working of MFP to a Forest Corporation as in Gujarat.

Revenue derived from the Forest products occurring in the tribal areas including timber, fuel wood, Bamboo, MFP, etc., etc., should be ploughed back to create potential assets like orchards, coffee plantations, teak plantations, etc., etc., in order to improve the sources of revenue for undertaking more and more developmental works in the tribal areas.

The tribal is very much attached to MFP trees and his goodwill and co-operation in development works could be won by granting a M. F. P. treepatta to the tribal within his village limit. For this purpose each tribal family should be allotted certain number of MFP trees, to provide sustained income to the family year after year.

Land hunger in tribal areas

One possible way of meeting the demand for more land for agriculture in tribal areas is by encouraging (1) Agri-silviculture

(or i.e., cultivation of agricultural crops in the forest plantations) (2) Long lease or tree patta of forest lands for cultivation of fruit orchards.

Prosperity has been so closely identified with irrigated lands and annual crop husbandry that it requires high calibre personnel with missionary zeal to bring home to the tribals that there is no adequate irrigable lands in these hills and that orchards as *permanent agriculture* (tree farming) capable of sustained annual yields of fruits, nuts, etc., in these hilly regions, is a better means to prosperity.

A complete assessment of the land resources in tribal areas both under forest and outside has to be carried out and also necessary steps taken to arrive at a rational man-land ratio to avoid continuous friction with tribals, and to remove a major source of irritant.

Welfare activities to be entrusted to Forestry Department.

Forests occupy 50 per cent of land in tribal areas and forestry is the most important source of employment for tribals. Forest Personnel come in intimate and daily contact with the tribals. Unfortunately this contact at present is confined to the implementation of the protective provisions of the Forest Act and recruitment of labour for forestry operations.

Several National Committees that have examined in depth the various facts of tribal economy in forest areas (such as the Dhebar Commission, Shilu A. Committee, Harisingh Committee) have strongly recommended that the Forest Department be entrusted with a large part of the welfare programmes for tribals. The G. C. C., does not have any forest personnel on its rolls even in the important MFP collection and purchase activity. The I. T. D. As. also do not have any forestry personnel nor any worthwhile forestry programmes. Active involvement of forestry personnel in these organizations and their activities will benefit both the tribals and forest conservation. This will also help to evolve programmes based on locally available forest resources for quick optimum development of tribal economy.

Personnel policy in tribal areas

The success of any developmental programme depends ultimately on the quality and devotion of the executing personnel. To attract young, energetic executive staff with missionary zeal to work in tribal areas, special incentives like

liberal education allowance, free housing and special pays should be granted to staff specially selected for working in tribal areas.

It will be interesting to note that in U. S. S. R. staff posted for work in Siberia are paid increased special pay with increase in the length of service in that area such as an incentive help to retain experienced staff in the same area for a long time. It is learnt that staff is paid 25 per cent of pay as special pay for first three to four years and 50 per cent more for stay beyond five years. Similar incentives will go a long way in attracting right type of staff to work in the remote, unhealthy tribal and agency areas, which is the first and major step to implement successfully any programme.

Detailed note on concessions in service conditions.

The following relaxations in educational and physical standards are provided for recruitment of Scheduled Tribes to various posts in the Forestry sector.

Officers

For direct recruitment of Assistant Conservator of Forests under Rule (4) (i) (a) of A. P. Forest Service Rules in the case of scheduled tribes class the upper age-limit shall be relaxed by not more than five years. There is no relaxation in physical and educational standards.

Range Officer: Relaxation in age/physical measurements.

For direct recruitment as Forest apprentice against the maximum age-limit of 24 years, a scheduled tribe candidate is eligible up to 29 years of age as on 1st November of the year in which he is admitted to the college.

No relaxation of physical standards or educational qualification is allowed.

Ad hoc rules issued in G. O. Ms. 770—General Administration (Ser. D) Department, dated the 15th November 1975 provides that in respect of promotion to Selection posts other than the post mentioned in the Annexure, thereto, the claims of candidates belonging to scheduled tribes shall be considered for promotion to such posts on the basis of seniority subject to fitness.

There are no rules on hand giving facilities to the tribals other than those mentioned above.

As per rule 22 of the State and Subordinate Service Rules 4 per cent of the vacancies in every category which are to be filled by direct recruitment are reserved for appointment of candidates belonging to scheduled tribes.

The age-limit of 28 years as per General Rules of State Subordinate Services is relaxed by five years in the case of Scheduled Tribes for appointment of Foresters, Forest Guards, and Reserve Watchers.

Concession for the post of Foresters

(a) *Physical Standards*—In respect of Foresters, Government directed that the restriction of height of 163 Cms. (5'-4") prescribed be relaxed to the extent of 5 Cms. in respect of Scheduled Tribe candidates applying for recruitment (Vide G. O. Ms. No 882, Forests and Rural Development Department dated the 28th August 1976). In respect of chest measurements the minimum is fixed at 78.8 Cms. for Tribal candidates as against 84 Cms. for all others.

(b) *Educational Qualifications*—There is no relaxation of the minimum educational qualifications of pass in S. S. L. C.

Concessions for the post of Forest Guards

(a) *Physical Standards*—As for Foresters given above.

(b) *Educational Qualifications*—The qualification of a pass in or 8th Class from a recognised school or an equivalent examination shall not be required in the case of Scheduled Tribes.

Reserve watchers: Bungalow watchers: Tanadars, etc.

These posts come under Forest Subordinate Establishment. In respect of candidates for appointment preference will be given to the following persons in the order of preference indicated hereunder :—

- (i) Ex-Servicemen,
- (ii) Members belong to Forest Tribes
- (iii) Members belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

(iv) Others

The educational qualifications of 6th class shall not be required in respect of candidates belonging to the Forest Tribes, but they must be able to read and write the languages or one of the languages of the districts in which appointment is to be made. The qualifications of height of 5' 4" prescribed shall not be required in respect of candidates belonging to Forest Tribes.

Ministerial Staff (LDCs. etc.)

In the case of tribals there is age relaxation by five years over the prescribed age of 28 years.

A person belonging to any of the aboriginal tribes as per the list indicated in Part I to Several Service Rules shall be deemed to possess the Minimum General Educational Qualifications, if he has appeared for the S. S. L. C. or H. S. C., Public Examination and has obtained not less than 20 per cent of the marks in each of the subjects prescribed to hold the post. This concession was in operation up to 31st December 1972.

In addition to the above privileges, for direct recruitment as Foresters and Forest Guards, Scheduled Tribes candidates shall be preferred over all other candidates provided they possess the minimum qualifications prescribed in the rules. Moreover the candidates belonging to Scheduled Tribes shall be discharged in the order of juniority only after all the persons appointed in the unit not belonging to Scheduled Tribes are discharged. The protection to Scheduled Tribes at the time of discharge has been given in the *Ad hoc* Rules issued in G. O. Ms. No. 686—General Administration (Services-D) Department, dated the 3rd September 1967.

Scheduled Tribes candidates need not come through employment exchange for the post of Forest Guards, Reserve Watchers, Bungalow watchers and Tanadars (Vide G. O. Ms. No. 2135—Food and Agriculture Department, dated the 7th October 1963).

—X—

Forest Policy in Andhra Pradesh

—Shri S. M. Madaruddin I. F. S.

The following observations regarding the tribals and their problems are based upon my knowledge of the tribal tracts of Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh for over a decade from 1965 to 1979 in the following capacities.

- (a) As a Working Plan Officer for Soil Conservation in Machkund basin in Visakhapatnam district entirely inhabited by the tribals (3 years).
- (b) As a Divisional Forest Officer of Visakhapatnam and Kakinada Forest Divisions comprising of the agency tracts inhabited by tribals (3 years).
- (c) As a Divisional Forest Officer in charge of Coffee Estates comprising the areas in the Agency tracts of Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts inhabited by the tribals (2 years).
- (d) As a Divisional Forest Officer, Soil Conservation Division, Paderu with Headquarters at Paderu located in the tribal tract (1 year).
- (e) As a Conservator of Forests, Soil Conservation Circle, Visakhapatnam (1 year).

These observations cannot be confined to the parametres of any of the 5 topics mentioned in the D. O. letter addressed to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, while they may embrace a part of each of the topics.

Forest Policy

The Statute in the form of 'Forest Act' gives the role of a policeman to the Forest Officials in the tribal tract. His job is to book cases against them for illicit fellings or illicit cultivation and collect compounding fee or prosecute them in the

Executive Magistrate's Court of the Agency tracts presided by the Tahsildars. At present Executive and Judiciary are not separated in these agency areas inhabited by tribals.

Apprehending the tribals especially when they fell Forests in groups for shifting cultivation, arresting them and conducting them from their native villages in the face of fierce opposition, to the Magistrate's Court through trackless tracts, through hills and dales and across streams is a formidable task which is cast upon the shoulders of a ill paid Forest Subordinate. Despite the fact that all that Forester does is strictly legal under the Statute and his action of protecting the Forests is well meaning and is for the ultimate benefit of the tribal who lives among the Forests and he is performing his duty, the action of the Forester is projected in utmost bad light both by Official and non-official bodies. The Forester in addition incurs the wrath of the native tribals despite the fact that his actions are within the Statute and meant for the protection of the habitat of the tribal.

After, all the trouble taken, when finally the charge sheet is filed in the Magistrate's Court, and a Forest subordinate appears each time, the case is posted, with the accused and the witnesses, ultimately the Magistrate who is a Revenue Official and the Tahsildar of the Taluk and who is supposed to be the representative of the Government and responsible for the welfare of the tribals, ultimately passes Judgement and levies a penalty of Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 per head as a measure of punishment despite the fact that the loss caused to the Forest runs into several thousands. When questioned as to why only a penalty is levied and not a sentence of imprisonment for the havoc caused to the Forests, the stock reply of the Magistrate is that they are

tribals and the Government's efforts are to uplift their lot and therefore he has to be lenient to them. It may not be out of place to mention that in a recent case that occurred in March this year, an area of about 50 hectares was cleared by an organised gang of tribals overnight and this department, under grave threat of loss of life controlled the situation and in order not to harass the innocent tribals, most of whom were hired labour were let off and the prosecution was launched on only the ring leaders who are 8 in number. The destruction caused was worth more than a lakh of rupees. Despite personal discussions and D. O. letters to the District Collector, who is Agent to Government for these tracts and the district Collector's instructions to the Sub-Collector and Sub-Collector's instructions in turn to the Tahsildar, who is the Magistrate, who is trying the case, all that happened was a penalty of Rs. 75 for each of the ring leaders. When the Tahsildar was educated on the needs of the Forests for the well being of the tribals and protection of Forests is protection of tribals, and as an officer responsible to the Government for the well being of the tribals, it is also his responsibility to protect the Forests for the benefit of the tribals, and tribals' song and drama, fairs and festivals are closely inter-linked with the existence of the Forests, and whatever benefits we can do, to the tribals without protecting his habitat, the Forest, would be suicidal for the continuance of the tribals' way of life and culture, and a tribal without a forest is something like a fish out of water. That since the tribal lives in the hills, and the Forest is essential to replenish the underground reserves of water without which the very source of drinking water, of the tribal of natural springs and the perennial streams, would disappear with the loss of forests and the tribal will be forced to go down the hills for sheer need of quenching his thirst and so on, had no effect on the Magistrate. On the other hand he dealt at length as to the courage he mustered in levying a penalty of the incredibly stupendous amount of Rs. 75 per head which is a record in the history of Chintapalli Tahsil itself. He said while all agencies of the Government are working for the welfare of the tribals, he can never think of imprisoning a tribal, that too for a petty forest offence.

If Forests are vanishing, it is not for lack of vigour or pursuit by the Forest Officials. It is because the type of attitude described at length

that is entertained by the Revenue Officials who are also the Magistrates, in whose Courts, ultimately the Forester has to produce the accused.

As long as this procedure continues, there is no future for the Forests in the tribal tracts and in the long run, for the tribals themselves. An independent Judicial Officer would actually do justice in such matters, hence as in the plains Judiciary should be separated from the Executive wing of the Government forthwith. At the same time alternative source of living to the hardpressed families should also be provided.

This is no time to indulge in persuasive exposition of good or bad effects of shifting cultivation but time has come to put down the destruction of Forests by the tribals with a firm hand in their own interest. We can no longer allow the calamitous destruction of Forests by a handful of tribals who inhabit the major rainbearing forest clad hill-tracts of our major river catchments. The Hydro-Electric and Irrigation Projects built based on the water yield of these catchments, will be silted up within a short span and the energy that bathes the fields with water and turns the wheels of industry, will vanish within a life's time and plunges the unwary multitudes that live in the plains into dismal disarray. It is unimaginable that such a calamity of disastrous proportion that strikes at the very root of the National economy should be allowed to continue Day in and Day out even after 32 years of Independence in the name of the tribals and misconceived welfare of the tribals destruction of Forests as crystallised by the attitude of the Chintapalli Tahsildar cannot be allowed to continue even for a moment further.

It may be mentioned here that this is not an isolated case of a landless tribal trying to eke his livelihood but an organised affair by well-to-do tribals who have hired tribals on daily wages for clearing the Forests and in some instances even the Plantations.

Despite the formidable task, the Forester tries to shoulder for the benefit of the tribals, ironically enough he is branded as the enemy of the tribals. The mistake does not lie in the Forester, but in the attitude and machinery adopted by Government for the welfare of the tribals.

At this rate the efforts of the Forest Department of the Government, for the protection of Forests is completely nullified by the efforts of the sister Departments of the same Government.

Overnight one becomes popular among the tribals if only he encourages to fell the Forests and cultivate the land completely oblivious of the colossal loss of the public property and incalculable damage to the community by way of ecological imbalance, rapid siltation of the reservoirs that were built by sinking crores of public money and several indirect benefits which cannot be quantified easily such as the ground water replenishment and conditioning the climate and elimination of environmental pollution.

The tribal with all his drawbacks, I find, is very quick to recognise as a leader in the person who goes among them and encourages to fell the Forests and defy the Government Orders. This attitude of theirs is unfortunately has given rise to a type of leadership of certain persons from the plains of questionable character and integrity. They are also in the habit of collecting amounts from the tribals and masquerade as their leaders and benefactors. At this rate, there is no scope for protection of Forests in the hills inhabited by the tribals and it is only a matter of time that the remnants of the balance Forest tracts are subjected to the axe yielding hands of the tribals. It is needless to say that in the long run disappearance of Forests would do away with the very base of the tribal life and culture.

Need for involving the Forest Department in any legislation concerning the tribals.

We may consider for example Regulation 11/69 for Mutta Abolition and Conversion into Ryotwari. Under the Regulation, the Survey and Settlement Department is to decide the claim for a Ryotwari Patta. It is the experience of the Forest Department that the Survey and Settlement Department which is to implement the Regulation in interior Forest tracts neither consulted the Forest Department nor did they interpret the Regulation in its true spirit. To quote one instance, Section 2 (c) of the Regulation defines the Agricultural land as follows:

Section 2 (c) "Agricultural lands—Means: land which is used or is capable of being used for purposes of Agriculture including horticulture but does not include land used exclusively for non-agricultural purposes".

Despite the fact that this definition in the latter part clearly excludes the land that has been exclusively put to non-agricultural purpose from the purview of the Agricultural lands, no

Settlement Officer, took it into consideration and passed away excellent high Forests piecemeal into several thousands of tribal land holdings. This brought in its wake the formidable force of the erstwhile Forest contractors who are out of job with the introduction of departmental working. These erstwhile Forest contractors charged with the thumb impressions of the tribals on agreements purported to have been entered into with them for removal of Forest produce free of cost as the tribals are not able to meet the cost of clearing the Forest for bringing the land under cultivation. The High Courts therefore have no option except to recognise the right of the tribal and in its anxiety to uphold the rights, privileges of the tribals, went on giving Judgement after Judgement directing the Forest Department to issue transit permits to the erstwhile Forest contractors who are out to reap the virgin Forests protected and preserved atleast over 3 generations. The Officials of the Department bewildered by the colossal clearance of virgin Forests ran from pillar to post and put in a relentless fight at every level of administration, viz. Survey and Settlement Department, the Secretariat dealing with Forests, Revenue, Tribal Welfare as well as Legal Departments, have ultimately obtained a remedy in the form of amendment to Forest Act Chapter III (b) and under its provisions the notifications of the Government G. O. Ms. No. 871 Forests and Rural Development (For. III) Department dated the 17th November 1977 G. O. Ms. No. 410 Forests and Rural Development (For. III) Department dated the 7th June 1978, and G. O. Ms. No. 816 Forests and Rural Development (For. III) Department, dated the 25th November 1978. For the malady that started in the year 1974, we could only find the remedy in the year 1979. During this period of 5 years it is needless to mention that several lakhs worth of virgin Forests were exploited by the erstwhile Forest contractors and their assistants who made the Forest Officials involved in legal battles in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh and waved the High Court Orders in the face of the Forest Official directing the issue of permits, often stipulating the Number of permits to be issued specieswise. They accosted the Forest Officials with derision and used intemperate language and at the same time threatened and also filed contempt cases against the Forest Officials to compel them to issue permits to fell and remove the Forests before any impediments

could be created. The efforts of Forest Department Officials in halting this, were not equally effective because of the procedure laid down, the short time, available with the Government Pleaders who are very busy with more important issues.

The pity of the whole situation is the society as a whole lost something very valuable built in by nature over several decades and cannot be remedied overnight by human efforts, as growing of Forest is a function of nature and not in the hands of man.

All this could have been prevented had the Government thought it fit to consult the Forest Department in formulating the legislation. This would have helped in bringing in the modification of the definition and other clauses of the Regulation suggested by the Forest Department subsequently.

This apart the association of the Forest Department by the Survey and Settlement Department in the field work of delineating the agricultural land boundaries would have been of immense help in preserving the high Forest that was given away piece-meal and included in the tribal land holdings.

As could be seen ultimately it is not the tribal who is benefitted but the erstwhile Forest contractor.

Forester the 'Enemy' of the Tribals turns a Social worker.

A Forester as usual goes on a patrol leaves the beaten track, after tracking the hills and vallies comes across a new tribal settlement right in the heart of the Reserve Forest. A good chunk of the valley and a part of the hill slope was cleared of the Forests, Agriculture crops, their huts and cattle are there.

As per the Forest Act no cultivation can be allowed in the Reserve Forests, cases have to be booked and prosecution launched. As stated earlier the tribal will pay his five rupees fine imposed by the Executive Magistrate and returns to the same cleared patch and cultivates. If the local Forester and the Divisional Forest Officer are very firm the tribal is not allowed to reoccupy the cleared land in the Reserve Forests and the tribal will walk across 2 or 3 hill ranges and starts a fresh clearing of Forest. This vicious circle goes on and net result is disappearance of Forests, Soil erosion, Siltation of water

course, Service reservoirs of irrigation and Hydro-Electric Projects, Power shortage, Floods and Famines.

In Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh a new step is taken by the Forest Department.

In Krishnapuram Reserve Forest, shifting cultivation is found. A preliminary survey indicated that it is not a case of a well-to-do tribal getting Forest cleared by hired labour as a business enterprise. It was established that it is a case of backward tribal class of "Samanthas" who have done the shifting cultivation for sheer survival.

The area was reconnoitred by the staff of the Forest Department. Minor Irrigation potential is identified and location of the structure was fixed tentatively. Minor Irrigation Engineers assistance was sought from the I.T.D.A. Cross Section and estimates of the Minor Irrigation structures were prepared. The structures costing from 10 to 25 thousands were put up by the Forest Department.

The agricultural wing (Dy. Director of Agriculture and his staff) of the Soil Conservation working under the control of the Forest Department was pressed into service, land treatment such as bunding, terracing was done.

The Engineering Supervisor of the Agricultural wing aligned the irrigation channel and fixed the levels.

The Forest Range Officer took up the work of blasting the rocks and digging for the irrigation channel. The channel was lined for making better use of the water.

The Agricultural Assistants (B. Sc., Ag.) trained in Soil Conservation aligned the layout of the terraces for the land under the command of the irrigation channel.

The tribal families who were previously persuaded to share the irrigable land among themselves amicably, swing into action and levelled the land for raising paddy under irrigation.

Good variety of paddy seed provided by the Agricultural wing was sown after pre-treatment in the nursery beds. Paddy is transplanted.

Fertilizers kept in stock will be applied under the direct supervision of the Agricultural staff.

Farm implements normally in use by the tribals such as crow bar and long handle spades were also given.

The Forest Officer under the Soil Conservation Scheme put his men on to the hill slopes surrounding the land brought under irrigation. The hill slope cleared for shifting cultivation were bench terraced. Fruit trees of the choice of the tribals viz., citrus, graft Mango, Guava, Banana were planted and looked after. This land was divided into plots on the ground and given to each tribal beneficiary. The plots will be looked after till they are established by the Forest Department. The pattas for the enjoyment of the usufruct of the trees were also granted to the tribals. Further denuded hills are planted with Silver Oak so that after three or four seasons Coffee can be introduced giving further returns to the tribals.

These people never knew a Government Agency helping them till the Forest Department stepped in.

The object of this project is to stabilize the existing families of shifting cultivators where they are and to provide enough returns for their permanent settlement. Thus the need for shifting to another patch of Forest and clearing it for their living is eliminated.

Efforts for extending the benefits of different I.T.D.A. activities such as supply of Milch cattle, establishment of schools, visits of health workers, etc., are under way by the Forest Department.

This is possible because of the dedication of the agencies involved and the maturity shown by the top brass in allowing the Officers to formulate their ideas into action and encourage and protect them.

This project is started as a Pilot Project of Government of India with fifty families and now extended to 100 families. Now the Government of India has dropped this project i.e. Pilot Project for rehabilitation of shifting cultivation and fortunately continued this year by the State Government with funds under Non-Plan

There is great scope for extending this Programme. Forest, Agriculture, and Minor Irrigation Engineering Technicians and Officials should tackle the problem as a team.

There should be a unified control both at the stage of planning as well as execution.

Land Tenure

Survey and Settlement operations have been taken up in the area for land having less than 10 per cent slope. A very important feature

among the tribals in this area is the tribes like Samantha, generally do not own any land below 10 per cent slope. Samantha's livelihood is mainly dependent on shifting cultivation and are considered to be backward among the tribals. If the pattas are issued on the basis of the existing enjoyment on lands below 10 per cent slope according to the registers of enjoyment prepared by the survey party, then Samanthas who depend on podu, as a class, would be deprived of any land of settled cultivation and would in perpetuity be left to sustain their livelihood on shifting cultivation. As one of the objects of settling the land in this tract is to settle tribals on permanent agriculture and prevention of shifting cultivation to eliminate the Samanthas from giving pattas as they do not have settled cultivation below 10 per cent slope, would be the negation of one of the important aspect of settlement.

Therefore it is very important that the above aspect should be taken into cognisance at the time of settlement and lands should also be allotted on pattas to the Samanthas who at present do not have enjoyment of agricultural lands below 10 per cent slope.

The survey of the agricultural lands is completed and the issue of final pattas has yet to take place. Unfortunately the remedy indicated above is not taken into cognisance and as a result the well to do Bhagathas in the vallies will get good farm land on pattas while the Samanthas will be left in perpetuity to eke their livelihood on unproductive land or on shifting cultivation. In order to remedy the situation, a rational redistribution of agricultural land under 10 per cent slope in the vallies has to be done by the Revenue, Survey and Settlement Commissioner before awarding the final pattas since as on today entire land is Government land. If we lose this opportunity it will be very difficult to remedy the situation once the final pattas are issued.

The tract where the tribals live is the catchment of Sileru River which support 4 important Hydro Electric Projects viz., Machkund, Balimela, Upper and Lower Sileru, Hydro-Electric Projects generating 1,095 M. W. of Electric Energy for Andhra Pradesh.

It is needless to say that these Hydro-Electric Projects are created investing several crores of public money and we have to safeguard the life of the service reservoirs of these projects at all costs.

It is therefore, very necessary that we have to confine to permanent agriculture only up to 10 per cent slope. Beyond this gradient there is excellent scope for plantation crops such as Coffee and fruit orchards in which direction, the Forest Department has taken a pioneering step and established thriving plantations.

Therefore giving permanent legal rights over land beyond 10 per cent slope should never be thought of and giving pattas on the hill slopes will not only spell the ruination of the tribals but also the entire matrix of civilization which is supported by the Hydro-Electric Energy, will be disrupted.

There are two types of leadership in the tribal areas (a) Statutory leadership, (b) Traditional leadership.

(a) *Statutory Leadership*—The statutory leadership consists of village Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti members and Presidents as well as Members in the Zilla Parishad and the tribal M. L. As and M. L. Cs while there is some kind of relationship between the tribals and the Panchayat members, there is a wide gap between the tribal masses and M. L. As and M. L. Cs. Vast majority of the tribals do not know who is their M. L. A. despite the fact that the M. L. A. happens to be a tribal himself. Most of the tribal M. L. As and M. L. Cs. are those who have departed from the main stream of tribals, exposed to the plains' culture and in contact with the politicians of the plains. Their life style is more akin to the plains men than the traditional life and culture enjoyed by the tribals whom they are supposed to represent. The statutory leaderships have contacts with the tribals that live on either banks of the streams and broad vallies, where mostly wet cultivation is practised. The community that dwells in these tracts belong to Bhagatha community and comparatively well off than the tribal communities that live on the hill slopes. The tribals that live in the vallies muster people and take active part in the elections. The M. L. As are elected based on the votes cast by these populated areas in the vallies and generally a candidate obtaining 20 to 25 per cent of the total votes in that Constituency gets elected. Most of the Government activities are concentrated on the tribals dwelling in the vallies where there are a net work of roads, and the people are comparatively well off.

(b) *Traditional Leadership*—The tribal follows even till today, scrupulously the dictates of the traditional leadership. The traditional leadership

consists of the Village Headman recognised as such by convention and the medicine man of the tribals. The Village Headman commands respect and the tribals honour his words. The village medical man also fixes the dates for different operations such as starting of agricultural operations, etc. In order to reach the core of the tribals, it is necessary for all Government Agencies to conduct a survey of the villages and locate personnel of the traditional leadership and try to convince them, the different good aspects of work they want to do and win them over first, before launching any programme. Any activity done without taking the traditional leadership into confidence, will be ignored by the tribals and public moneys invested in the Projects would be a total loss.

Communications

Most of the welfare activities of the different departments are limited to the zone up to which a jeep rolls by. Beyond that point, it is often found that these benefits do not reach the tribals and there are cases where the tribals do not know that there are several Government Agencies that are meant exclusively for their assistance. There are large communities of the tribals, who live beyond the modern means of communications across 2 or 3 Ranges of hills and the only means of communications are a pair of legs, a sturdy heart and a good stamina to reach the tribals.

To overcome the hurdle of transport, which is a bottleneck for extending the welfare activity to the interior tribal tracts, laying a net work of bridle paths and equipping the personnel of different departments of welfare with mules and horses to reach the tribals, who, for all these years have been denied the fruits of the Government's multifarious welfare activities are very necessary.

Agriculture

There is vast scope for improving the streambed paddy land cultivation practised by the tribals. By putting minor irrigation structures at the Head of the streams, it is possible to protect the streambed paddy lands from wild flood during heavy rains. The structures will also help in bringing some more dry lands under wet cultivation by diverting water at the head of the stream.

The grade of the streambed paddy lands can also be stabilised by constructing drop structures at suitable intervals along the course of the stream. A team of Engineers with the background

of Hydrology and Minor Irrigation, can do an excellent job and put the potential for minor irrigation in the hills at the service of the people.

My experience shows that the tribals like wet cultivation wholeheartedly and volunteers to put in any amount of labour needed for levelling the lands once minor irrigation structures are put in, and the land is brought under the command of an irrigation channel.

There is vast potential for growing large quantities of vegetables as well as medicinal plants in these tracts. The Agricultural Extension Wing should set up a net work of vegetable gardens as a measure of demonstration in the lands of the tribals so that the returns from the lands can be increased.

The Pharmaceutical Firms may also likewise start medicinal farms in the lands of the tribals through the tribals giving necessary seeds and on-the-spot Technical advice.

In the above 2 cases necessary collection, transport and marketing facilities should be provided by the marketing wing of the Girijan Corporation.

Health

There are Primary Health Centres but in most cases the accommodation for the staff who are to run the Public Health Centres is lacking nor is there a scope for alternative accommodation in the tribal hamlet. For want of accommodation most of the staffs are either absent or attend to their duties once in a while.

At the same time there are cases where well-meaning youngsters of the medical profession put up with the hardships and spend day after day in the interior agency tracts without anything to do as no one turns up for medical care due to superstition and fear of the unknown as to what will happen to them if they go to the Public Health Centre. The only exception to this, I found was the Vasectomy Operation for which he offers himself for the sake of money he gets for it. Even here not even 10 per cent would come for the removal of the sutures often a week. He would perhaps come provided some more money is offered to him for removal of the sutures. There is need for teams of Health Workers to reach the tribal hamlets and educate them in accepting the modern method of treatment. There are several cases where accidental fall from the trees or attacks of bears, etc., which

would be cured by modern method easily but are never brought to the notice of the Medical Officer by the suffering tribals.

There is vast scope for preventive medication in these tracts and it could be accomplished on the lines of N. M. E. P. net work by taking the teams of medical men to the door step of the tribals. The weekly shandies where tribals come, would serve as the focal points to have a survey of different diseases, the tribals suffer. No tribal would like to be treated on a shandy day as it is a day of enjoyment and would be in no mood to subject himself for medical examination.

Afterwards, the medical teams will have to fan out into the villages from which the tribals have come to the weekly shandies with medicines to treat them.

Each weekly shandy has a well defined hinter-land from which the tribals flock to the shandy for sale of their products and purchase of the necessities and such hinter-land can be taken as a unit for taking a programme of preventive medicine as well as treatment of the illness.

It may be noted that there are some Medical Officers who do not like to serve in the tribal area but at the same time there are also Medical Officers who go to the tribal areas with good intentions and leave the places rejected for want of response from the tribals in taking modern methods of treatment. These young medical officers express that they may be out of tune with the development in modern methods of treatment by idling themselves 2 to 3 years in inaccessible tracts during the best part of their career.

Education

There is a net work of Ashram Schools, I had occasion to visit. Here again as in the case of Public Health Centres, the accommodation of the teaching staff is lacking. I have seen some teachers sharing the hostel accommodation of the students by putting a sort of partition. I have also seen a case where a lady teacher has tied her sari across the hostel of the Students to serve as a privacy for her living. The education in the Ashram Schools is purely dependent upon the initiative taken by the teachers. There are some Schools where most of the teaching staff is absent for want of various reasons.

There are some teachers who want to teach, but leave the places for want of basic necessities of life, there are some teachers who have made it a point to serve in the tribal areas for years without even asking for a transfer. A certain percentage of this type, do out of dedication, which a vast majority are those who are having parallel life in the near by plains from where they hail. They attend to their duties in the schools once in a while by keeping track of the visits of Very Important Persons or the Inspecting Staff and live on a regular basis in the plains.

A survey of the dwelling places of the teaching staff in the tribal hamlets will show that most of the time they are unoccupied.

There are also several rules and Regulations that come in the way of remedying the situation by enthusiastic Project Officer of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency. There are cases where salaries of these teachers could not be disbursed for several months at a time due to knotty problems of administration. There are several authorities that are responsible for the administration of the schools such as District Educational Officers' Schools, Zilla Prishad Schools, Integrated Tribal Development Agency Schools etc., and are funded from different budget heads and under different controlling authorities.

To remedy the situation, residential accommodation for the teaching staff as well as a unified authority responsible for all types of schools in the scheduled tracts, is necessary.

Markets, marketable products and consumer goods.

By and large it is seen that the tribal is forging ahead in improving his Agricultural expertise and is keen in developing agriculture. The Girijan Co-operative Corporation purchases all the M. F. P. that is gathered and brought to the weekly markets in the tribal area. While this is so, there is no safeguard or protection to the tribals to see that proper prices are paid for the agricultural produce that is grown by them and brought to sale. Here again the tribals are at the sweet mercies of the plains merchants who come to the weekly markets for purchasing the Agricultural produce. The method employed by the middlemen in cheating the tribal is, that he will equip himself with a spring balance and hires an unscrupulous tribal as his henchman to

commander the tribals that bring the Agricultural produce. This merchant usually stops the tribals bringing heavy loads even before the reaches the weekly market at vantage point 1 or 2 Kms. ahead of the weekly market place. The tribal, who, by that time has walked sufficient distance carrying heavy loads getting up and down the hills, tired physically and perspiring looks at the prospect of unburdening himself of his load and falls into the trap of the middleman and his henchman. The hired tribal of the merchant will be giving his own commentary in the tribal dialect and brain-washes the tribal into selling the produce for whatever price the middleman offers. The poor tribal part takes with his Agricultural produce which is the fruit of his labours of a full season for whatever that is offered to them and there is no way of knowing the actual return he should get for his produce.

There is another class of merchants who are even more resourceful. He goes to the villages and assesses the value of the standing crops such as maize which is ready for harvest in a month or two and advances money to the tribal landholder, unasked for, promising him the balance payment at the time of delivery. The tribals accept the money and feel bound to give their crop to the merchant from whom they have received the payment in advance. Thus the tribal is denied of a proper return for the crop.

It is, therefore, very necessary that the Girijan Co-operative Corporation should come into the picture and purchase the Agricultural produce by paying proper price as they are already having a vast net work of staff for purchase of the forest produce. This will also help in cutting down their overheads by increasing the turnover of their business substantially and they will also be in a position to pay more for the M. F. P. they purchase from the tribals as a result of cutting down their expenses on overheads as a result of taking over the business in the Agricultural produce.

Consumer goods

Pumping in enough money into the hands of the tribals is not the end all and be all of the tribal development. Tribal who has enough money in his hands does not know what to do with it. The tribal in whose way of life consuming liquor is no taboo but a part of life, invests most of his surplus money on liquor. The plain's arrack merchant is very resourceful and has spread his net work of sale of liquor in every nook and

corner and reaps a rich harvest of the tribals, hard earned money. While the tribal is free to brew his own liquor under the statute without any fetters, the plain's arrack merchant who has no jurisdiction over this area supplies bottled liquor at his door step.

It is pitiable to find a spread out gunny sacks and a tray of liquor bottles, at points where a foot-path from the hills joins a high way. The tribal who reaches this point on a shandy day vending his way through hills and dales carrying heavy loads of the products he brought for sale, finds this arrack merchant like an Oasis, tired as he is, he consumes the liquor and with the little sense left in him, he departs, and God only knows for what price he parts with the products he brought for sale. Despite the fact that the arrack contractor has no jurisdiction for sale in this tribal tract, the sale goes on. Committed District Officials including the District Collector who is also a District Magistrate and Agent to Government for these scheduled tracts are unable to curb this evil despite their efforts. There appears to be very powerful vested interests behind the sale of liquor, whose actions are to be brought to a halt with a firm hand.

I happened to see on a shandy day, a tribal returning from a shandy who has put on a pair of socks on his weather-worn unfettered feet and put on a pair of rubber shoes and walking along with his colleagues. When asked, of what value are these socks and shoes for him, he smiled and said that they are meant for his son who is at home. The socks are made of cotton of an inferior quality and the rubber shoes would not last long on the terrain he has to traverse. A survey of the products brought from the plains for sale in the weekly markets would indicate that most of them are of dubious utility for the tribals, the tracts he lives in and the way of his life. For example of all the products brought to the shandy, the Agricultural implements made of iron, clothes, salt, kerosene, dry fish are of utility. Rest of the items such as cosmetics, shoes, socks, second hand clothes, etc., are all of dubious value and are of no use at all to the tribals. I find that even the tribal women pay a fantastic price for very thin trinkets of gold that are sold in some of the major shandies, what part of these trinkets is gold and what part is copper is only known to the seller.

The basic necessities of life in the tribal tract such as blankets, sweaters, rain-coats and good quality clothing and nutritious foods like the

sweetmeats prepared out of jaggery, groundnut, coconut, etc., do not find place. Therefore, it is necessary that the Girijan Co-operative Corporation should also cater to the basic consumer goods to the tribals. I have also observed that in places where there is a Girijan Co-operative Corporation Stores, selling kerosene and other products within a stones throw from the tribal shandy, there is no rush of people while the kerosene kept in the open in the heart of the shandy is mobbed by several tribals. The price for which the kerosene is being sold by the plains' merchant and the correctness of the measure are both questionable. A little imagination on the part of the Girijan Co-operative Corporation Store-keeper by taking his products right into the heart of the shandy on a shandy day and offering the produce for sale in the same manner as that of a plains' merchant, would make a great change in the total turnover of his business and helps the tribal in getting proper return for his money.

Hardships of the personnel posted in the Tribal areas.

1. Lack of proper accommodation, education to their children and medical aid.
2. Sense of remoteness, lack of avenues for recreation and company.
3. Extremes of climate.
4. Need for keeping two establishments for the family and aged dependents.
5. Posting as a measure of punishment
6. Once a person reports to duty he is forgotten by the higher authorities and even genuine pleas for transfer to plains are not considered.

To remedy the situation reasonable accommodation and basic amenities should be provided.

Only willing workers to be posted for specific period like say 2 years.

Incentives like free accommodation and special pay for keeping two establishments have to be given.

Good result oriented work turned out in tribal areas should be considered for out of turn promotion or award of advance increments to the deserving officials.

The Neglected Sector of Tribals

As stated earlier, the 'Bagathas' living in the vallies and are under occupation of fertile land with facility for irrigation can look after themselves with the available resources of land and water and expertise gained in agriculture and the help rendered by the Integrated Tribal Development Agency and other Agencies in this tribal tract. The tribals become poorer and poorer as the elevation where they live, extend upwards from the valley to the foot hills, the hill slopes and ultimately the hill tops. A survey of economic status and the returns of individual house-holds will also bring out this picture very clearly.

Unfortunately the tribals who live below the poverty line confine to the hilly and inaccessible terrain and they by nature do not ask for a favour. If any agency has to bring help and succour to these, backward tribals, it has to go out seeking them in order to help them. If these agencies look for people to come to them to ask for help, then no body would turn up.

It is no exaggeration to say that there are several tribals who have never seen Government Officials in the interior areas. Recently while I was trekking on the hills in the Project Area of Paderu taluk of Visakhapatnam district for the rehabilitation of shifting cultivation alongwith my

colleagues we climbed a hill and a tribal with a herd of cattle came into our view. On seeing us he was shivering from top to toe like a leaf. I told him we meant no harm to him and embraced him and held him tight till he stopped shivering. His name is Besu. This state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue any longer.

The loan agency of the Government which has succeeded in sending its representatives deep into the tribal area and to each individual tribal hamlet, is the N. M. E. P. Organisation, whose surveillance worker has gone to inaccessible villages as revealed by my enquiries with the tribals.

To remedy the situation, and to extend the helping hand of the different welfare agencies of the Government in the tribal tract where it is needed most, it is necessary to identify the tribals who are living below the poverty line seek them out and render all assistance. Unfortunately the statutory leaderships that come into contact with the development agencies of the Government is not at all bothered about the down trodden and backward tribals like Samanths and others, that dwell on the hill slopes and on the hills. These population do not matter much in the elections of the statutory leadership and also not so advanced to seek help from the agencies of the Government.



Forest Policy and Tribal Development

—Shri K. S. Chandrasekharan, I.A.S.

Introductory

Forests constitute 23 per cent of the land area of the country. 75 million hectares of land are classed as Forests. But there are large tracts which are completely devoided of forest growth while there are others which are understocked or stocked with miscellaneous species of poor economic value. Forests in use were reported as 42.74 hectares (57 per cent) and potential exploitable forests 17.82 million hectares in 1973-74. 49.54 million hectares were covered by Working Plan. More than 95.2 per cent of the forests are State owned, 3.1 per cent belong to Corporate Bodies and 1.7 per cent to private people. Coniferous forests represent 5.6 per cent, bamboo forests 12.8 per cent and broad leaved forests 81.6 per cent. About 51 per cent of forests are reserved where there are no private rights and 32.3 per cent are protected forests and 16.3 per cent are unclassed.

The record outturn of industrial wood in 1973-74 was 9.7 million cubic meters (5.068 million cubic meters of saw logs, veneer logs and sleepers) and 16.5 million cubic meters of fuel wood.

The *per capita* forest area in India was only 0.12 hectares compared to 3.6 in U. S. S. R., 20.0 in Canada, 1.4 in U.S.A. and 2.9 in Australia and 1.04 hectare for the whole world, and *per capita* and growing stock of Indian Forests in use is less than 7 cubic meters as against 123 for Asia, 24 for Europe, 320.4 for U. S. S. R., 94.2 for U. S. A. and 46.7 for the whole world. The average annual production per hectare in India is 0.5 cubic meter as against 2.5 in Europe, 2.6 in Asia and 2.1 for the whole world. India contributes only 1 per cent of world production through its forest area constitutes 1.8 per cent of the forest in the world.

The contribution of forests (with 22% of land) to Net Domestic Product in 1973-74 was 1.4 per cent as against 39.7 per cent in the case of Agriculture (with 46.4 per cent of land). Employment provided by forestry and logging accounted for 0.2 per cent only.

The National Commission on Agriculture has estimated the requirement of industrial wood and fuel wood as 25 million M³ (R) and 184 million M³ (R) in 1980 and 47 million M³ (R) and 225 million M³ (R) in 2,000 A. D. The present level of production is much below the requirement projected for 1980.

Forest Revenue has become a very important item under non-tax revenue of the State Governments. In 1974-75 the income obtained by State Governments from Forest royalties and other income amounted to Rs. 204.3 crores of which Rs. 60.8 crores represented income from Minor Forest Produce and other miscellaneous sources.

There are diverse and at times conflicting interests in regard to exploitation of Forests. For the primitive tribes who continue to live in the forests, forests provide the main source for food, shelter and even to some extent clothing. Besides the customs of tribal life including religious customs, social fabric and folklore have been shaped and formed by forests with which they have lived in virtual symbiosis from the dawn of human history.

While some primitive tribes are in hunting and food gathering stage, others have progressed to the shifting cultivation stage. The dependence on forests continues to be more direct and intimate at this stage as well. The next stage of development is marked by settled agriculture. Very often agricultural settlements are in the

vicinity of forests. The inhabitants depend on forests for getting fuel and small timbers needed for making ploughs and putting up houses. In the case of the industrial man "forests are part of a long assembly line" and constitutes an important source of raw materials. Defence, communication and other major industries of national importance make a heavy demand on forest resources.

Forest policy has to make a compromise for bringing about a harmonious balance between various interests. It is not practicable to leave forests and tribals alone and follow a policy of non-interference. Apart from other interests ecological considerations call for regulation of the use of forests for preventing soil conservation and preventing violent atmospheric changes. At the same time interests of tribals and villagers living in the vicinity of forests cannot be totally ignored. The large potential that exists for substantial growth in production through a dynamic commercial oriented forest production policy has been brought out forcefully in the report of the National Commission on Agriculture. The adoption of the recommendations of the Commission which are dealt within the later sections show the way for reaching an equilibrium and minimising the apparent conflict of interests involved in the development of Forests.

The evolution of the Forest policy over the past century and the present position regarding rights/concessions given and enjoyed by local people are briefly dealt within the next Section. This is followed by the statement of specific issues relating to Forest Policy which need to be considered in the context of development of Tribal/Backward areas. These issues are dealt with individually in the subsequent sections.

II

Evolution of Forest Policy

State intervention in forest management was a feature even during the Hindu and Muslim rule. The objective of such intervention was, however, limited to protection of royal and public hunting grounds and forests and pastures needed for maintenance of horses and elephant. The first step taken by the British Administration towards regulation of forests was in South India in 1800 when a commission was appointed to report on the availability of Teak in Malabar Forests. This pioneer study led to the issue of

the first forest regulation in India. The regulation prohibited the felling of Teak trees below a certain girth. Shortly thereafter in 1805, a Committee was set up to make an assessment of forest resources and also to report on the nature of proprietary rights in forests. The outcome of the study was to prohibit unauthorised felling of teak and decision to levy royalty on this species. The radical effects of the pioneering work in forest conservation in the South slowly spread first to Bombay around 1840 and thereafter to other parts of India in the next twenty years.

The practice of scientific forestry in India begun sometimes in 1864 when forest departments were created in various British provinces. The major task that devolved on the forest department was to inspect tree clad lands and hilly regions to demarcate, survey and map suitable areas for settlement as Reserve or Protected forests under the newly enacted Indian Forest Act of 1865. The Government of India, at that time had invited Dr. Voeloker, a German expert, to examine the condition of Indian Agriculture and to suggest how it could be improved. In his report submitted in 1893, Dr. Voeloker discussed the role of forests vis-a-vis agriculture and stressed the need for formulating a forest policy with a definite basis for serving agricultural interest more directly than before. Accordingly, Government issued a resolution dated the 19th October, 1894, declaring their forest policy. The basic principles laid down in this policy document were—

- (i) the sole object with which State forests are administered is public benefit and therefore the constitution and preservation of forests involves regulation of rights and restriction of privileges of user in the forest by the neighbouring populations;
- (ii) forests situated on hilltops should be protected to preserve the climatic and physical conditions of the land and to protect the cultivated plains against erosion;
- (iii) forests are to be managed on commercial lines as a source of revenue to the State;
- (iv) if a demand for cultivable land arises and can be met from forests also, it should be exercised without hesitation, provided that honey-combing of forests should be discouraged and permanent cultivation encouraged within limits;

- (v) forests containing inferior timber, or where used as grazing grounds, should be managed mainly in the interest of local population.

During the interval that had elapsed since the pronouncement of 1884 policy and independence changes of far reaching importance had taken place in the physical, economic and political fields which called the re-orientation of the old forest policy. It was realised that value of forests was not only important from physical aspects such as conservation of moisture and prevention of erosion but also in the economic fields such as development of agriculture, industry and communications. The post-war reconstruction projects for industrial expansion, river valley projects and development of communications leaned heavily on forest products. Forestry was no longer regarded as the hand-made of agriculture but was recognized to be its foster mother. While the fundamental principles underlying the 1894 policy are ever true and were therefore re-iterated, Government of India thought it fit to lay greater emphasis on a number of other points in the revised forest policy of 1952. This revised policy aimed at classification of forests on a functional basis such as protected forests, national forests, village forests and tree lands. It emphasised the need for evolving a system of balanced and complementary land use and to establish tree-lands wherever possible for amelioration of the climatic conditions. It also made provision for ensuring progressively increasing supplies of grazing, timber and fuelwood. It checked indiscriminate extension of agriculture by extension of reserved forests. It also, *inter alia* laid stress on weaning away the tribals by persuasion from the baneful practice of shifting cultivation. This policy recommended that 60 per cent of the areas in mountainous regions and 20 per cent in the plains should be retained under permanent forest cover.

The 1952 forest policy resolution continued the earlier approach towards forest management and went a step ahead by conceding the principle of total subordination of forest-dwellers' interest to the wider needs of national interest.

The initial British policy of isolation kept tribals away from the mainstream of change and development. The unrestricted use of forests then instilled a kind of belief in a tribal that he

is the owner of the forests. From the middle of the 19th century the progressive curtailment of the tribals led to the belief that the tribals were being reduced from the status of lord of forests to that of subjects of the Forest Department. This has the effect of instilling a sense of hostility in the minds of tribals against Forest Officers. This was aggravated by the exploitation of Forest contractors and overzealous attitude of some Foresters who looked upon tribals as unwarranted intruders and enemies of forest protection and conservation. No effort was made to convince the tribals that use of forests had to be regulated in their long term interest. A major lacuna in the Forest policy enunciated in 1952 was its failure to spell out the alternatives that were being offered where the rights of tribals had to be abridged or cancelled in the larger public interest.

The Orissa Government had appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of Radhanath Rath in 1957, called the "Forest Enquiry Committee" to advise the Government on improvement of forest management in the State and on certain important aspects such as Nistar rights, reclamation of forest lands, podu prevention, new demarcation, forest legislation, transit rules, survey and afforestation, staffing pattern, Kendu Leaf Trade, grazing rules and control on minor forest product. The Committee in its report in 1959 has recommended *inter alia* to allow (1) free removal of all classes of trees up to 3½, girth to tribal from Protected Forests and 'B' Class Reserve Forests, (2) provision of 250 bamboos per tribal family free of cost for domestic consumption per year, (3) colonisation of podu cultivating adibasis at well selected sites near their present habitat, (4) Permission of controlled podu on hill slopes up to 1 in 10 slope and retention of higher slopes under forest cover, (5) undertaking of employment oriented schemes such as raising of cash crops such as cashew, wattle, coffee and bamboos in podu ravaged lands and (6) formation of co-operatives and granting them leases of Minor Forest Produce on preferential basis.

The Central Board of Forestry and the Estimates Committee of the Lok Sabha in the 76th report recommended a reappraisal of the National Forest Policy of 1952 and introduction of suitable agri-silvicultural measures for the benefit of tribals and provision of alternative means of livelihood to wean them away from shifting cultivation. The Dhebar Commission observed that tribals have every right, moral and

ethical, to expect forests to be used as agencies for their economic uplift and not as instrument of harassment. Similar were the findings of Hari Singh Committee. The report of the task force of the Planning Commission regarding measures for tribal development in forest areas contained the following recommendations among others.

- (i) Diversion of employment opportunities to tribal areas by locating forest based industries—minimum wages to be extended to forest labour and enforcement of the same.
- (ii) Exploitation of forest coupes through labour Co-operatives and promotion of cottage and processing units for minor forest produce items.

The National Commission on Agriculture recommended formulation of a new forest policy based on the following two pivotal points.

- (i) to meet the requirement of wood, small timber, fuel, fodder, etc. for rural community ;
- (ii) to satisfy the present and future demands for protective and recreative functions of the forests.

They 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 NCA 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 by recognising the priority need of their direct employment in forestry operation. Although, the forest policies invariably mention about the local needs, the investment policy has been more attuned to the exotic needs of the larger economy. The working group on tribal development during mid-term plan (1978—83) has recommended that forest based programmes should be so planned that they subserve the tribal economy. The plantation programmes should

include plantation of forest trees and other locally useful species. In the case of Minor Forest Produce the tribals should have full rights and remunerative terms should be ensured to them without significantly burdening them with royalties. The tribals should be given the right of usufruct in plantations and horticultural groves.

A major conclusion that emerges from the above analysis of the Forest Policy is that the policy has so far failed to harness the tremendous attachment the tribals have for the forests for their development. The tribals should be convinced that the development of forests also bestowed benefits on the tribals. Instead of making our forest policies purely forest oriented, it would be advisable to enlist the tribals, co-operation for preservation and management of forests by establishing a nexus between their welfare and the forest development.

III

Major Issues

This history of the evaluation of the National Forest policy clearly brings out the compromises made from time to time to strike a balance between the conflicting interests. In the beginning forest was treated as a hand-made to agriculture and the demands of agriculture were given precedence. With the advance in industrial development the forest gained increasing importance as provides major raw materials for defence, communication and industries. Growth of scientific knowledge led to the recognition of the important protectionist role of forests in controlling soil erosion, simultaneously precipitation and maintaining ecological equilibrium. Forests became a foster mother to Agriculture. The concept of village forests was introduced to minimise the difficulties of local population in getting their requirements of fuel and small timber. Unfortunately the programme of creating village forests did not gather momentum. The feeling of deprivation of rights engendered among tribals and other forest dwellers by the Forest Regulations got aggravated to a large extent as a result of the overzealous conservative oriented attitude of Foresters who have been looking upon tribals as unwarranted intruders and destroyers of forests. It is not adequately recognised that Forest Development and Tribal Development can go together and without the support of tribals, forest Development Programme will always be in jeopardy.

The crux of the problem is how to create a nexus between forest development and tribal economy. The solution lies in a multi-dimensional use of Forests to satisfy the varied interests. In the case of tribals and those whose dependence on forests is more direct and intimate the Forest Policy should provide for adequate arrangements to satisfy the needs in respect of the following:

- (1) Needs relating to cultivators.
- (2) Needs relating to grazing in forests.
- (3) Needs relating to shifting cultivation.
- (4) Needs relating to collection of firewood and small timber needed for housing, preparation of plough, bullock cart, etc.
- (5) Needs relating to village industries.
- (6) Needs relating to hunting; and
- (7) Needs relating to collection of Minor Forest produce.

In the succeeding chapter each of these are dealt within some detail.

IV

Cultivation Needs

The heavy inroads made into Forests by Irrigation and other projects have been cited by conservationists to justify complete ban on dereservation of forests for agricultural purposes. There is also another strong body of opinion which holds that the policy of indiscriminate reservation has led to inclusion of regular villages and cultivated lands in Reserve Forests. The Reserve line has been brought so near the village boundary that the villagers' rights of user have been severely restricted. Lands completely devoid of forest growth have been notified as Reserve Forests of proposed for reservation, thereby denying its use for horticulture or agricultural purposes.

Balanced land use demands that lands should be utilised according to its capabilities. In Orissa Taluk Level Committees had been constituted to demarcate lands to be put under agricultural use with reference to the soil status and competing demand. Lands devoid of forest growth and not needed in the near future for forest plantations are to be dereserved. These Committees comprise of officers of Revenue and Forest Departments. It is necessary to accelerate the pace of work of these Committees. They should also fix the Reserve lines on a rational basis.

Grazing in Forests

Grazing rights have been regulated. The present position in different States regarding rights and concessions enjoyed by Tribals in Forests is given in the note given in the Annexure. Grazing in Reserve Forests gives rise to complications. A regular programme should be drawn up to develop fodder reserves. In States like Maharashtra the Forest Department has taken up fodder cultivation under the World Bank aided D. P. A. P. Programme. It should be examined whether the working plans could provide for conscious creation of pasture.

The programme of Social Forestry should give greater emphasis on development of village common lands for grazing purposes.

Shifting Cultivation

In 1959 it was estimated that more than 5.29 lakh house-holds with a population of 26.44 lakhs are practising shifting cultivation over an area of 5.42 lakh acres in the whole country. In Orissa an eye-estimate made by Dr. Mooney who worked as Ex-Forest Advisor for erstwhile princely States which merged with Orissa estimated that about 2,770 square miles comprising 1/5th of the land surface was affected by shifting cultivation and about one million tribals comprising 25 per cent of tribal population depend on shifting cultivation. According to another estimate about 4 lakh acres are cultivated each year by 9.35 lakh tribal cultivators.

The practice of shifting cultivation persists among primitive communities in Phillipines, Java, Malaya, Burma, Thailand, Indo China and Sub-tropical regions of Africa and the new world. The area under the sphere of its influence is estimated at 36 million square kilometers populated by 200 million people.

Shifting cultivation has been condemned out of hand as ruinous and wasteful. It is the cause of drying of springs, accelerated soil erosion, destruction of valuable forests and ecological imbalance affecting the atmosphere and rainfall. It cannot, however, be denied that all societies have passed through the stage of shifting cultivation which in a sense was the earliest sylvicultural practice which helped in better forest management.

Some communities without any assets other than their own labour have found a natural and rational answer in shifting cultivation to the physiographical characteristics of the land from

which they have to take out their precarious livelihood. It was also an answer to the external aggression into tribal territory.

Shifting cultivation did not pose much of a problem so long as the land man ratio continued to be favourable. The equilibrium reached by the original inhabitants of the area with surrounding forests has been disturbed due to growth of population. This led to the reduction in the fallow period in between two cropping cycles leading to rapid depletion of soil fertility and permanent damage to land. Larger tracts of forests had to bear the brunt of shifting cultivation. Such a situation is posing a serious economic problem in North-Eastern region as well as States like Orissa.

The need for tackling the problems arising out of shifting cultivation has been emphasised even before independence. The partially Excluded Areas Committee recommended in 1940 that shifting cultivations should be given cultivable lands in the valley bottoms and assisted with subsidies for purchase of bullocks and other inputs. In Madhya Pradesh shifting cultivation was confined to specific areas reserved for this purpose and Baigas practising shifting cultivation were made to settle in these reserves. This operation caused considerable hardship to the tribals. During the first Five-Year Plan special colonies were established to settle shifting cultivators. The Dhebar Commission drew attention to the failure of this programme in many places and pointed out that the cost of colonisation was prohibitive and it will take a very long time to settle a significant percentage of the shifting cultivators. Measures to stop shifting cultivation through legal ban and prosecution resulted in making tribals hardened criminals and it was found difficult to enforce such legislation.

It is interesting to refer in this context to some of the findings of the studies undertaken in specific areas in Orissa and North-Eastern Region. The Tribal Harijan Research Institute took up a study in three villages—Tumkur, a village inhabited by Lanjia Souras in Ganjam district, Sankae, a village inhabited by Hill

Bhuians and Sundijuba, a Khond village. It was noticed in these villages that all families took to shifting cultivation in varying degrees. In Tumkur persons having good terraced lands kept shifting cultivation plots to grow some special pulses which provided the necessary proteins in their diet. The general pattern was to utilise the land for 3 years to grow pulses, oil seeds, minor millets and paddy and allow a rest period of 4 to 7 years. Earlier when land man ratio was most favourable, lands used to be left fallow for 12 to 18 years. Mixed cropping provided an insurance against total crop failure and ensure regular follow of produce through a major part of the year. In Tumkur, shifting cultivation plots are owned individually and they can be sold or mortgaged. In Sankare lands are allotted to individuals by village council for as long a period as they are in a position to cultivate. Lands are allotted by village council but allottees can mortgage the land. Thus community ownership has given away to individual ownership. There is, however, considerable degree of community participation in clearing of forest growth and in undertaking other common operations. It was noted in a case study conducted in Tumkur, the cash expenses in cultivation was only Rs. 85 per acre under shifting cultivation since only food and liquor had to be provided for 315 persons engaged in different operation. Though the money value of produce obtained from shifting cultivation was less per acre compared to cultivation of plain land, the net income was more due to much lower monetary expenses. The larger labour input did not matter in the absence of opportunity cost for labour.

It will be useful to refer to some of the findings on the economics of shifting cultivation. In his paper presented to the symposium on shifting cultivation held under the auspices of the 10th International Congress of Anthropologists held in Bhubaneswar Professor L. K. Mohapatra, has given statistics to show that the money value of crops produced in an acre of shifting cultivation had exceeded the value of crops obtained from a single crop plain dry land. The following figures relating to 3 Sasra villages in Ganjam district have been mentioned in the paper.

| | Subalda | Tentulikundi | Bhuban |
|---|--|---|--|
| Highest average yield from shifting cultivation per acre. | Rs. 358.45 (206.66Kgs. cereals, 65.35 Kgs. pulses and 58 Kgs. of oil-seeds or root crops). | Rs. 293.71 (210.51Kgs. of cereals, 65.93 Kgs. of pulses and 45.08 Kgs. of oil-seeds or root crops). | Rs. 282.10 (235.28 Kgs. of cereals, 78.28 Kgs. of pulses). |

| | Subalda | Tentulikundi | Bhuban |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Highest yield of single paddy crop. | Rs. 231.27 (272.08 Kgs. of paddy). | Rs. 237.15 (279 Kgs. of paddy). | Rs. 212.22 (249.67 Kgs. of cereals). |
| Highest yield from double crop land. | Rs. 608.00 (716.06 Kgs. of cereals). | Rs. 569.50 (670 Kgs. of paddy). | Rs. 642.89 (756.34 Kgs. of cereals). |
| Highest yield from Padar or upland cultivation. | Rs. 266.00 (242.16 Kgs. maize or 70 Kgs. of Til) Rs. 152.57. | Rs. 243.10 (221 Kgs. of maize or 69.16 Kgs. of Til) Rs. 153.61. | Rs. 53.51 (110.02 Kgs. of maize). |

In another paper presented by Dr. Salki, Director, Agro Economic Research Centre, Assam Agricultural University, reference has been made to the findings of a study on pattern of crop production under Jhuming, Jhums and terraced fields undertaken by Agro Economic Research Centre, in 1977 in Darangiri village in Garo Hills. Of the total land under the operation of the sample families taken up for the survey 26.75% was under shifting cultivation and 28.75% under terraced cultivation. The Soil Conservation Department had constructed terraces on 246 hectares of land and distributed to 123 families. The average gross return per hectare under shifting cultivation was Rs. 1,598.28 as against Rs. 851.63 in the case of terraced cultivation. This was due to non-efficient utilisation of terraced fields and intensive cropping of fields under shifting cultivation.

In Occasional paper—10 issued by Agro Economic Research Centre of Andhra University, Waltair, it has been indicated that the surplus of farm business income over cost was higher in the case of tribals practising exclusively shifting cultivation than the case of tribal following settled cultivation in Ganjam and Koraput districts—Rs. 99.21 more in Koraput district and Rs. 127 more in Ganjam district. There is a wide-spread feeling among the tribals that dry cultivation with the existing technique is less profitable than shifting cultivation.

The foregoing findings of different surveys emphasise the fact that mere provision of land for settled cultivation cannot be a powerful incentive for weaning away tribals from shifting cultivation unless irrigation facilities are provided to the extent possible and a suitable system of profitable cultivation is developed by local adaptation of farming technique practised in non-tribal areas.

A rational land use programme envisaging plantation of forest species above 30 per cent slope, fruit trees in lands between 10 per cent to

30 per cent and settled cultivation in lands up to 10 per cent slope with contour bunds and terraces has been developed in Orissa. This scheme of conservation farming is being implemented on catchment basis. A horticulture programme for raising fruit bearing trees in lands put under shifting cultivation and developing valley bottom lands for allotment to shifting cultivators has also been introduced. But with the available technical manpower and funds it will take many decades before the entire area subjected to shifting cultivation can be tackled. In the meantime it is imperative that the adverse effects of shifting cultivation is minimised. This calls for measures meant to improve the techniques of shifting cultivation, diversification of the cropping pattern and increasing productivity of the lands put under shifting cultivation so that shifting cultivation can be progressively confined to a smaller area and the recuperation period of affected lands increased considerably.

The Dhebar Commission received many suggestions for regulation and improvement of practice of shifting cultivation with increasing cycle of rotation. Mr. M. S. Sivaraman had suggested growing of perennial red gram along with calpagenium in the third year when land is left fallow. Dr. Verrier Elwin commended the practice adopted in French and Belgian Andennes where great care is taken to preserve the vitality of the stools while cutting the trees so that the branches can shoot out quickly. D. J. Greenland in an article "Bringing the Green" Revolution to the shifting cultivation has advocated introduction of mixture of better yielding and pest resistant improved seeds and legumes with highly active nitrogen fixing rhyzobia and controlling the acidity by means of ash or mulches of deep rooted species.

In some of the papers presented to the International Symposium instances have been cited about introduction of changes in cropping patterns and techniques in areas under shifting cultivation brought about in some African States

like Nigeria which have led to increase the fallow period and the tenure of cultivation in the Swidden.

What is needed is evolution of new technology for shifting cultivation. It is said that fallow period required for natural regeneration is 5 times as long as the cultivation period. One year of leguminous fallow is said to have regenerating effect of 3 years of bush fallow. So far, adequate research has not been devoted to these aspects in view of the belief that shifting cultivation should be discouraged by all means. Shifting cultivation cannot be withered away and will have to continue till a viable alternative is developed for the entire area covered by the practice. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that concentrated efforts are made to improve the techniques adopted by tribals in the Swiddens. Research work has been initiated in the North-Eastern Region under the auspices of I. C. A. R. Successful tribals have been made on cheap terraces. It is not known whether the research programme includes trials on leguminous crops, cropping pattern, etc. These should receive urgent attention.

It is necessary to establish a research station in Orissa where the problem is acute. In view of widely varying conditions and practices in different parts of Orissa affected by shifting cultivation at least 3 sub-stations will be needed.

Immediate steps are necessary to get a correct estimate of the area affected by shifting cultivation. With the help of aerial photographs and Satellite Imaginary a more accurate delineation can be done in the map. This should be followed up by detailed surveys with the help of multi disciplined team of experts who should also prepare specific action plans.

The action plan for tackling shifting cultivation should be an integral part of the agricultural plan. At present the areas covered by shifting cultivation have not been surveyed and mapped as part of settlement operations. The village Agriculture workers are also not paying attention to the shifting cultivators. Only a few Pilot Projects have been taken up in Orissa with funds made available out of special control assistance. It is high time the gravity of the problem is recognised and systematic efforts made to deal with it in a comprehensive manner. The Union Minister of Agriculture should take the lead in the matter and ensure that adequate provision is made under Agriculture Sector for this purpose.

Minor Forest Produce

The National Commission on Agriculture (1976) reported that the visible contribution of Minor Forest Produce to the total revenue of Forest Department in Orissa was 28.91 per cent in 1969-70. According to the publication 'India's Forests' issued by Central Forestry Commission to total Forest Revenue obtained by States and Union Territories was Rs. 263.18 crores in 1974-75 and revenue from Minor Forest Products accounted for about Rs. 94 crores. The importance of many items included under Minor Forests has increased with discovery of new uses for them.

A Study conducted by a Team of the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad revealed that more than 50 per cent of the time of a tribal is spent in agricultural activities, followed by labour and Minor Forest Produce collection and that in respect of income collection of Minor Forest Produce and labour came next to Agriculture. In Madhya Pradesh 48 per cent of the tribal's income was contributed by Agriculture and 34 per cent of the tribal's income was contributed by Agriculture and 34 per cent by collection of Minor Forest Produce. In Orissa the average percentage of income from collection of Minor Forest Produce was 11 per cent. In Andhra Pradesh it ranged from 10 per cent to 55 per cent and in Bihar 7 per cent to 14.4 per cent. The National Commission estimated that employment provided by collection of Minor Forest Produce was 250 million Man days and by proper management it can increase to 1,000 million in 200 A. D.

The gap between the ultimate sale price and the actual return to the tribal is very wide in respect of most of the items of Minor Forest Produce. In the case of Kendu leaf a major item included under Minor Forest Produce in Orissa the purchase price per quintal of Kendu leaves was Rs. 50. The collection is organized departmentally and sale is entrusted to Orissa Forest Corporation. The average sale price during the 1979-80 is anticipated as Rs. 350 per quintal. The cost of collection and processing leaves other than purchase price has been fixed as Rs. 170. The Orissa Forest Corporation receive Rs. 28 per quintal towards marketing charges. The Government have fixed a royalty of Rs. 140 per quintal for 1979-80. Considerable economy in processing charges can be affected by entrusting collection and processing to Co-operatives.

In the case of Bamboo which is another item of Minor Forest Produce about Rs. 50 per tonnes was spent on labour intensive items. In Orissa about Rs. 150 lakhs are spent on wages for working of bamboo coupes.

The right for collection of Minor Forest produce is enjoyed by tribals along with others. His status is, however, that of a wage earner and the price he gets has no relation to the ultimate market price. Government, the middlemen, lessee or Corporation or industries getting leases appropriated a substantial share of the margin. In some cases Government fixed the minimum purchase rate. This rate was generally fixed in such a way as to ensure an income equivalent to minimum wage. Even these rates were not paid by private contractors while it was possible to ensure compliance from public sector corporations.

Sal seed is emerging as an important item after the discovery of the process of extraction of a substitute for cocoabutter from sal fat. There has been wide fluctuation in yields and consequently in the ultimate sale price of sal seed. The experience of Orissa Forest Corporation which used to have a lease for collection of sal seeds revealed that the tribal was given about Rs. 400 to Rs. 450 per tonne which was higher than Rs. 300 per tonne fixed by Government and the Corporation got a profit of Rs. 200 per tonne. Government charges a royalty of Rs. 100.

The revenue from Kendu Leaf royalty is 20 to 25 per cent of the total forest revenue in Orissa. With the accent on maximisation of non-tax revenue to improve the resource position the trend is to raise the rates of royalty from year to year. The administrative costs of collection which was Rs. 125 per quintal at the time of Nationalisation of Kendu Leaf trade has also gone up to Rs. 170 per quintal. The Orissa Forest Corporation is getting roughly a net margin of Rs. 5 per quintal. In this situation any increase in the share of the price of Kendu Leaves going to tribals can be only at the expense of Government revenue and this has become very difficult in the context of the emphasis given on maximisation of non-tax revenue for stepping up resources for the plan.

Oil production from minor oil seeds of tree and shrub origin is projected to increase to 1.2 million tonnes in 2000 A. D. by National Commission on Agriculture. Potential from identified seeds has been placed at 8 lakh tonnes.

Employment in collection of minor oil seeds of tree origin was 17 million mandays in 1970-71 when the collection was 2.33 lakh tonnes. There has been a steady growth in collection of minor oil seeds. The collection of Sal seeds alone had gone upto 1.71 lakh tonnes in 1977-78.

The main use for the oil seeds of tree origin is in manufacture of soaps. The National Committee on Science and Technology Planning Group on Oils, Fats, Soaps, Paints and Varnishes in its status paper on Soaps had given the following consumption pattern of oils and fatty matter in the organised sector of soap industry in 1971.

| | Tonnes |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Coconut oil .. | 5,000 |
| 2. Hard oils .. | 61,000 |
| 3. Tallow .. | 8,050 |
| 4. Sal oil .. | 1,950 |
| 5. Hydrogenerated vegetable oil. | 36,390 |
| 6. Soft oil .. | 53,800 |

Sal oil is used for soap manufacture after extracting valuable by-products like glycerine. Recently it has been used to recover a substitute for cocoabutter used in Chocolate manufacture. The export price of refined oil used for this purpose was Rs. 18,000 per tonne.

In the organised sector of Soap Industry a few manufacturers dominated the market and the price offered for the oil has no relation to their profit in manufacture of soaps. Due to glut in collection, the price of sal oil was reduced to Rs. 7,400 tonnes in 1977-78. The Orissa Forest Corporation which had lease for purchase of sal seeds from some areas in Orissa had calculated that the ex-godown cost of collection was Rs. 600 (Rupees 400 purchase price and Rs. 200 transport storage, interest and other administrative overheads). Including royalty of Rs. 100 the ex-godown price was Rs. 700 F. O. R. price come to Rs. 800 to Rs. 820 on the basis of the oil price of Rs. 7,400 the F. O. R. price worked out only to Rs. 700.

Apart from the monopoly situation prevailing in oil-seeds markets the middlemen intervening between tribal collector and the Mills appropriated a large margin. Besides the State Government also levied royalty ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200. Unless collection is organised on a

co-operative basis and Government was satisfied with a nominal royalty, the share of tribal cannot be increased.

It has been repeatedly emphasised that the tribal should be recognised as the owner of the Minor Forest Produce and should get the major share of the market price. The present position is that Government is the owner and tribal is only a wage labourer engaged along with others for collection. In spite of various resolutions passed at high level Ministerial Conferences there has been no substantial change and the revenue angle continues to dominate.

If the full potential of oil seeds of the tree origin as well as other Minor Forest Produce are to be exploited fully large investments are necessary to develop roads and other infrastructure and the share of tribals in the price stepped up. With the low return given to tribals, collection of Sal and other oil seeds of tree origin is done as an incidental operation along with collection of fuel and other domestic requirements. He has also no incentive to go into interior areas which involves greater effort and more time in the absence of easy accessibility. The policy of maximising present revenue may prove to be short-sighted and hinder optimum long-term growth.

Without going into the theoretical questions regarding ownership of Minor Forest Produce it will suffice for safeguarding the interests of tribals if the following major aspects receive urgent attention.

1. A survey should be made to assess the realistic potential. The present calculations are based on multiplication of number of trees by projected out-put per tree in the case of oil seeds of tree origin without taking into account factors like availability of labour, existing infrastructure facilities and administrative feasibility of organising collection.
2. There has been no systematic research on improving techniques of collection, processing, storage and transport. There is considerable wastage in all these stages.
3. The policy of entrusting collection to Minor Forest Corporation or LAMPS and other co-operatives should be strictly enforced.

4. Various devices have been developed by Marketing Co-operatives to pass on bulk of the benefit out of the market price to actual producers. These should be followed in the case of Minor Forest Produce.

5. Government should be satisfied with a nominal royalty and encourage ploughing of a part of the net accrual to schemes of developing infrastructure and promoting welfare of tribal collectors.

Needs Relating to fuel, small timber village Industries, etc.

There has been considerable discussion on the rights that tribals used to enjoy in collection of fuel and small timber when they had virtual undisputed sway over forests. In the context of the wide gap between production and requirement of timber for industries and domestic consumption it needs to be recognised that it will not be possible to revert to status quo ante. By saying this it does not mean that tribals and the local inhabitants should be left to fend for themselves. The National Commission has come out with "Social Forestry" as a major solution for this problem. Social Forestry including Farm Forestry and Extension Forestry is meant to meet the farmer's need of wood and fodder and create additional job opportunities. The approach is not purely commercial as in the case of creation of man made forest with quick growing species. The social implications of the schemes are to be given precedence. Social forestry also includes afforestation on village waste lands along road sides, canal and railway lines for producing fuel, fodder, fruit and small timber for use of agriculturists and artisans.

As a centrally sponsored scheme with 100 per cent central assistance the scheme was making rapid stride in many States. From 1979-80 the scheme has been transferred to the category of 50 per cent centrally assisted scheme. In States like Orissa which faces severe resource constraint this change will lead to drastic curtailment of the programme. It is in such States there is tribal concentration and the need for social forestry is foremost.

The social forestry programme should be given top priority and 100 per cent assistance should be provided by the Central Government.

In the case of fuel, small timber and forest material required by village artisans, arrangements should be made for adequate supplies keeping in view the traditional rights enjoyed by them. The Forest Corporations/Departments can open depots at convenient places for supplying these at concessional rates.

Tribals living in forests may have to be permitted to get their requirement directly. With a view to avoid confrontation between tribals and the functionaries of Forest Department arrangements should be involved to associate tribals closely in the formulation of the programmes relating to the management of the local forests.

Integration of Forest and Tribal Development Programme.

(a) *Employment Opportunities*—The National Commission on Agriculture and Planning Commission have laid stress on maximising employment opportunities for tribals. This can in certain circumstances serve as an alternative for the user rights taken away from tribals.

It is estimated that about 10 man-days of employment is generated in felling, logging, dragging and loading of one cubic metre of timber. In the case of firewood one cubic meter involves slightly more than one man-day. Under the present system of working of forest coupes through contractors very often non-tribal labourers are brought from outside to work forest coupes on the plea that the tribals are not experts in logging. Logging is not such a specialised operation that a tribal cannot learn.

Gujrat and Maharashtra have set an example for organising the working of forest coupes through forest labourers' co-operatives. In the case of A and B class Co-operatives in Maharashtra it is more or less a joint operation between Forest Department and the Co-operatives. A schedule of rates for all operations are worked out in consultation with the representatives of Forest Labour Co-operatives. The services of Foresters and Forest Guards are lent to societies for supervision of the coupe work. The disposal of timber is done by Forest Department.

In the case of C and D class Co-operatives, a system of logging contract has been developed. The societies are allowed operational costs as per schedule of rates and 10 per cent of such cost as profit.

The Forest Development Corporation is also engaging Forest Labour Co-operatives for clear felling and planting operations on logging contract basis.

The programme of Forest Labour Co-operatives is not receiving serious attention from States other than Maharashtra and Gujrat. Government of India should issue a directive for ensuring the implementation of a time bound programme for entrusting all forest operations to Forest Labour Co-operatives.

It should be ensured that Forest Labour Co-operatives are managed by labourers themselves and there should be no scope for development of vested interests belonging to outsiders. In Maharashtra and Gujrat selfless workers belonging to voluntary organisations served as the sponsoring agencies for Forest Labour Co-operatives. Since similar organisations are not available in other States the Forest Departments should play the role of voluntary organisations.

Liberal financial support should be made available out of Special Central Assistance towards share-capital, managerial facility, equipment, transport and training.

As in Maharashtra and Gujrat, transport by bullock carts should be encouraged to the maximum extent possible so as to increase employment opportunities.

Since it will take some time to organise co-operatives, immediate steps should be taken to incorporate a condition in the private contracts that the contractors should engage only local labourers. The contract should be made terminable if minimum wages are not paid. A schedule of rates should be fixed for various operations on the analogy of the schedule drawn up in Maharashtra and Gujrat for Forest Labour Co-operatives.

The other measures needed for enlarging employment opportunities for tribals include the following.

- (1) Primary processing of Minor Forest Produce should invariably be done by Co-operatives entrusted with the collection of the minor forest produce.
- (2) More than 50 per cent of Kendu Leaves are rejected at the time of processing. Research should be undertaken for finding methods of utilising the rejected leaves for promoting Cottage Industries.

- (3) When Kendu Leaves are collected from tribal areas bidi production is organised in distant non-tribal areas. Conscious efforts should be made to organise bidi production in the tribal areas.
- (4) An acre of plantation costs Rs. 360 and 81% i. e. Rs. 292/ is disbursed as wages in Orissa generating 73 man-days of employment. It should be ensured that only local labour is utilised by Forest Department and Forest Corporation. The target for Plantation for 1978-79 was 1.3 million hectares for the whole country.
- (5) The per hectare employment norm for clear felling of forest zones is about 90 man-days, 30 man-days for normal working areas, 25 man-days for bamboo working and 60 man-days for road construction and maintenance. Annually about 11,000 KM and 15,000 KM and worked under high forests and coppice system in Orissa and this can provide large employment opportunities for tribals.
- (6) As already indicated earlier collection of minor forest produce should be maximised.
- (7) Saw milling should be developed intensively in tribal areas. In Orissa large percentage of timber is sold in round form and taken to other States. This should be stopped.

Reorientation of Forest Development Programmes.

Considerable emphasis is placed on man made forestry. In selecting species for plantation the requirement of local tribals should be given the utmost importance. In Orissa large plantations have been raised with Accacia and Eucalyptus under the programme for plantation of quick growing species. Since the existing bamboo resources are not fully utilised pulp species need not have been taken up. On the other hand the depletion of Assan and Arjun plantations has affected the growth of Tasar Industry. There are also other species coming under minor

forest produce like Tamarind, Kusum, Karanj, Neem, etc., which can increase production of minor forest produce. The plantation programmes should be reoriented to meet the needs of tribal economy. The Forest Department in Government of India should take the initiative and get specific programmes worked out for different areas.

The same policy should be adopted in respect of Special Forestry Programme.

Commercial forestry is now assuming great importance and the backward tribal areas with their rich resources will naturally get highest priority. There is need for regulating the pace of commercialist in order to avoid sudden upheaval in the social and economic life of tribals which will be the inevitable consequence of large scale of induction of non-tribals for taking up the commercial operations. Integration of forest development and tribal economy may mean in this context deliberate slowing down the commercialisation programme and choice of an intermediate technology.

Commercial forestry through forest corporations necessarily involves cleanfelling and plantation of economically viable species. In this process some of the Minor Forest Produce species and other species which provide a source of food and other house-hold requirements may be completely eliminated unless special care is taken to preserve them. The tree nux for the plantation programme adopted by Forest Corporations should give due consideration to needs of tribals.

Community Participation

The association of the tribal or the Co-operative comprising tribal majority membership in the formulation of forest development programmes will help in the clearing of the misunderstanding between tribals and Forest authorities. Suitable institutional arrangements need to be developed for the purpose. Advisory Committees can be set up in each Forest Circle for this purpose. Committees at Range level can also be thought of for consultation on local issues.

ANNEXURE-I

PRIVILEGES AND CONCESSIONS OF TRIBALS IN VARIOUS STATES

I. Andhra Pradesh

(a) *Golugonda agency tracts of Visakhapatnam district*—In unreserved Podu cultivation is permitted subject to the following conditions:—

- (i) No land within 5 chains of a reserved forest shall be cleared.
- (ii) No land within 2 chains of the bank of a stream shall be cleared except for fruit gardens.
- (iii) No clearance should be made on hill slopes over one-third slopes from the foot of the hills.
- (iv) The rotation of Podu in this area shall not be less than 10 years.
- (v) No family shall do Podu over more than 10 acres.
- (vi) No tamarind, bamboo, myrobalans, or mango trees shall be felled or burnt.

(b) *Bhadrachalam and Nugur Taluks*

- (i) Koyans and Reddies of Bhadrachalam Taluk are permitted to do Podu subject to the restrictions imposed by Government.
- (ii) Clearing of land for Podu is prohibited in Nugur Taluk.

(c) *Nallamalai forests of Kurnul Prakasam district*—Tribals are permitted to do Podu in Palkonda agencies except in areas proposed to be reserved. Grazing is permitted generally over all the forests except in reserved forests where it is closed for 3 months from July. In Andhra Pradesh about more than 2 lakh tribals practise Podu over one lakh acres. Tribals enjoy the right of cutting and removal of timber, bamboo and fuel for their own requirements excepting reserved and classified trees. They are also permitted to collect minor forest produce for the practice of crafts. The Privileges and concessions relating to hunting and fishing have been gradually withdrawn. The tribals residing in Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godabari districts are allowed to collect minor forest produce free of cost

for their own requirements and also for sale of M. F. P.

II. Madhya Pradesh

Traditionally the villagers in and around forest areas enjoy the Nistar right of grazing in forests. Tribals practise shifting cultivation over a wide area estimated to be 50,000 acres. This practise is allowed subject to control and the regulation in Bastar, Bilaspur and Sarguja districts. Shifting cultivation is legally authorised in Mandala district in a specially reserved area called Baigachha. Tribal villagers have the traditional Nistar rights to collect timber, fuel and bamboos for their requirements. In the hilly Vindhya Pradesh and Madhya Bharat forests a nominal charge of 0.50 Paise per annum is collected. Collection of M. F. P. for tribal crafts is permissible in forest areas. Hunting has been declared illegal in reserved and protected forests recently. Tribals are permitted to collect free specified items of minor forest produce for their own domestic consumption. According to techno-economic survey of Madhya Pradesh, the tribals of Jhabua, Matam and Dhar derive about 22 per cent, 38 per cent and 12 per cent respectively of their livelihood from sale of M.F.P.

III. Orissa

Grazing of cattle in reserved forests is permitted on payment of grazing fees and regulated through issue of permits. Shifting cultivation is quite extensive in Koraput, Kalahandi, Phulbani, Ganjam, Sundargarh and Keonjhar districts. Pattas were assigned in Kalahandi for shifting cultivation. In Keonjhar district the Forest Department was required to demarcate and assign areas for shifting cultivation by Juangs.

Tribal villagers are allowed to cut and remove firewood of unreserved species in the protected forests. Rules and restrictions governing collection and removal of minor forest produce collected by tribals is permissible in the forests. The minor forest produce collected by them is sold to lessees authorised by Forest Department to operate over the areas. Further details are in Annexure-II.

IV. Bihar

Shifting cultivation is being practised particularly by Sahuria, Pahadias of Rajmahal. The latter were authorised to practice Podu cultivation under the Santal Pargannah Regulation

of 1872. The tribals have been allowed to collect and sell minor forest produce from the forests.

The concept of nationalisation of M. F. P. as worked by Forest Departments of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa has reduced the tribal from being the natural owner of minor forest produce he collects to the level of a wage earner. As a result, the tribal gets a fair wage for his labour, not a fair value for the minor forest produce he alone collects. In fact the object of such nationalisation or monopoly State trading turn out to be to earn more revenue by Forest Departments and through them to the States. There is no systematic and conscious planned effort, in any of the minor forest produce collection programmes by the Governmental agencies. The tribal is not educated regarding what he should collect and how much he should collect. There is no systematic and sustained effort to train the tribals in the mode of collection of some tricky items of minor forest produce such as Genduli gum and Patalgarud roots. These minor forest produce items unless properly collected will ultimately erode the resources in the forests. No policy guidelines are articulated in any of the programmes of minor forest produce collection for renewal of the resources. Major portion of non-nationalised monopoly items of minor forest produce are transacted through private contractors the main reasons being the private traders have the easy access to the forest and tribals, lack of rapport between the Governmental agencies and the tribals, the social relationship of the trader with the tribals and the latter's psychological attunement and elasticity in the money lending of the private traders and lack of rapport between the developmental agencies and the Forest Departments. There is absolutely no assessment of the quantum of availability of the minor forest produce items how much is available, how much is consumed and how much surplus should be available for procurement. No market surveys have been undertaken by most of the States to assess the demand potential, for the traditionally transacted items or to identify the commercial potential of other minor forest produce. The tribals and the collecting agencies set up by the Government feel as if they are alien bodies in the forest environment, mainly due to the concept of royalty on forest lease/products/coupes.

Nationalisation or monopoly should only mean state trading. It should no doubt be the responsibility of the State only to trade in the minor forest produce as a monopoly agency to the exclusion of the private trader and should not deprive the tribal of the ownership of minor forest produce. In other words the monopoly or nationalisation must bind the tribal to sell the minor forest produce he collects only to the State. There is thus a need to review the National Forest Policy keeping the following two factors in view.

- (a) The tribal's right over minor forest produce as a natural owner.
- (b) The tribal's unfettered right to live in his natural nexus i. e. the forest.

While the minor forest produce collection and procurement is basically an economic activity and should continue to be so, it should be linked with the overall objective of the welfare of the tribals. The State must retain only items which have a definite market potential and are definite to be available in adequate quantities for input to the industries or for long range export commitments for which a market survey is imperative. Government should also adopt a policy of productive pricing for the minor forest produce.

There are many important minor forest produce with medicinal value. The World Health Organisation has been spearheading the revival of world wide interest in herbal or folk medicine and has been impressing upon various State Governments in South East Asia to promote their respective traditional systems of medicines and to integrate them with the modern system of medicines. A survey undertaken of the indigenous medicines shows that out of 1,200 such medicines manufactured by 155 pharmaceutical concerns, about 425 botanical species are being used in different formulations. The M. F. P. trade requires improvement in procurement planning, procurement forecasting, identification of procurement points and leasing of M. F. P. and the forests. Co-ordination of various agencies is involved in optimum of its use. Besides the above the primary process, storage and transportation are the other activities which need careful handling.

Pricing of the M. F. P. is a complicated pattern due to different in nature of the products concerned. In a normal situation it follows a set pattern of cost of production-total cost of finished goods which includes labour and over heads plus the pre-determined margin of profit. For

minor forest produce there are two facets of pricing—one is the purchase price as paid to the tribal at the primary level by the Government agencies or the traders and the other is the organisation or trader's sale price. In such a case the cost of produce is neither counted nor valued. And also the labour of the tribal is not calculated in economic terms. When a tribal brings the produce collected by him from the forest it takes the following things as free.

(a) the product, (b) the input of his labour in collection and (c) the value of his services in getting the product to the market.

In such a case the pricing instead of starting from the product and being influenced by the market environment, is in the reverse. It begins with the market pricing status and is influenced by its availability and collection. From a study undertaken by the Administrative staff college (1977-78), it is revealed that in M.P. about 48% of tribal income occurred from agriculture about 34% from collection of M.F.P. The figures for other States are:

| States | Income from M.F.P |
|-----------|-------------------|
| Andhra .. | 10 % to 55 % |
| Orissa .. | 5.4 % to 13.4 % |
| Bihar .. | 7 % to 41.4 % |

ANNEXURE-II

RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF TRIBALS IN ORISSA FORESTS

(i) *Cultivation*—Dry cultivation is usually permitted by the Revenue Department to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the undemarcated protected forests throughout the State. No cultivation is allowed inside the Reserved Forests. Most of the ex-State rules have provisions for cultivation inside the undemarcated protected forest with permission. Applications received for lease of forest lands referred to Forest Department. Wherever necessary, concurrence is conveyed to the Revenue Department together with the assessment of valuation of tree growth. In case of Reserve Forests such lease are generally discouraged.

(ii) *Grazing*—Grazing is sometimes allowed inside the Reserved Forest on realisation of prescribed fees as per rules the schedule of rates applicable to the locality, which is usually half the amount payable by outsiders. The scheduled tribes exercise the same right as

the tenants. The following are the rates generally prescribed as grazing fees.

| | For tenants | For outsiders |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Buffalo .. | Re. 0.50 | Re. 1.00 |
| Cow or Bullock | Re. 0.25 | Re. 0.50 |

Free grazing is however allowed in the undemarcated protected forests in most of areas. In Phulbani the 'Kondhas' are allowed to graze their cattle free of cost inside the reserved forests as recorded at the time of settlement.

(iii) *Fuel*—No concession is allowed in the Reserved Forests for collection of fire-wood in most of the places but where there is scarcity of firewood in demarcated protected forests and undemarcated protected forests, it is at times supplied through the contractors from the annual coupes at concessional rates were special conditions in the sale notice. In demarcated protected forests and undemarcated protected forests unreserved species are allowed free. In Ranpur the 'Kondhs' are allowed free removal of firewood from the Reserved Forests. In Ghumsur South and Ghumsur North, the 'Kondhs' are allowed firewood free in time of the service rendered by them to protect the forest from fire. In 'B' class Reserved Forest of ex-State area, firewood are issued on permits at concessional rates to tenants. (including scheduled caste and scheduled tribes) for their *bona fide* domestic consumption but not for sale or barter.

(iv) *Timber for construction of Houses (bamboos)*—The usual practice in most of the areas is to allow timber and bamboo from the 'B' Reserve Forest for *bonafide* use of the tenants and Adivasis at $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the royalty, the rates varying from place to place. In Koraput district the scheduled tribes are allowed to remove the unreserved species up to 3' girth free after marking. The Kondhs of Chakapad Khandamal are permitted to remove unreserved species free for constructional purposes. This facility is given to the aboriginal tribes in Gh. North, Gh. South, Phulbani and Parlakhemundi Divisions. In Ranpur the 'Kandhos' are allowed unreserved species free from the reserved forest and the reserved species at half the rates. In addition to the above, from the lease held areas of paper mills, permits for bamboo are issued to local tenants (including scheduled castes and scheduled tribes) for their *bona fide* domestic consumption but not for sale or barter.

(v) *Forest produce for crafts*—In Keonjhar Division the 'Kondhas' are permitted to remove trees for making combs on payment of royalty a half the rate. The washerman, blacksmiths goldsmiths, potmakers pay an annual fuel cess and in return are given the privilege for removal of firewood for their profession consumption and smelting of pig iron. In Dompara area the 'Kansaries' are allowed to do charcoal business on payment of an annual fees of Rs. 2. In Kanika state the 'Kumbar', 'Kamar' and 'Banir' are allowed to remove firewood on payment of a nominal fee. In Pallahara ex-State the 'Juangs' around Malyagiri are allowed frne bamboos for making baskets for sale. In Dhenkanal and Keonjhar the aboriginal tribes get Minor Forest Produce and firewood free for sale. In Angul the professional basket makers get bamboos from the coupes on a nominal fee. In Athmallik Ghooting stone is allowed free for manufacture of tile.

(vi) *Mining and quarrying*—Local tenants are allowed to quarry stones and minor minerals for their *bona fied* use free of payment from undemarcated protected forests. In reserved forests and demarcated protected forest, royalty at schedule of rates is charged except in cases were free exercise of right is recorded in the settlement records.

(vii) *Hunting and Fishing*—This is prohibited in Reserved Forests. For hunting and fishing inside the Reserved Forest permits are issued after realisation of necessary fees as per rules and no concession or privilege is given to the scheduled tribes in this respect. Hunting and fishing is also prohibited in Protected Forest as per provision in the Forest Act.

(viii) *Minor Forest produce*—Edible fruits, roots, thatch grass, sabai grass are allowed free in some of the reserved forests, where such

rights are recorded in settlement records otherwise this is prohibited in Reserved Forests. In the demarcated protected forests and undemarcated protected forest these are allowed free at all places. In Daspalla, Khandapara, Ranpur areas no concession is given to the tenant but the tribals are allowed edible fruits, flowers, grasses etc., on payment of royalty at the rates in force for purpose of sale. In Pallahara ex-State while the tenants get their minor forest produce on concessional rates the Adivasi get them free of cost. In Gh. South and Gh. North the 'Kondhas' get minor forest produce free in lieu of the services rendered by them in protecting the forest against fire. In Dhenkanal the tribals and landless labourers get minor forest produce and dry firewood from Reserved Forest as much they require for personal consumption and also for sale free of cost within the limits of the ex-State, some rights are also exercised by them in protected forests.

(ix) *Shifting Cultivation*—Shifting cultivation is allowed only to the scheduled tribes in certain places in Ganjam, Koraput and Phulbani districts. Shifting cultivation is permitted in Forest Rules of Bamra (Deogarh), Bonai, Keonjhar to Kondhas, Bhuyans and Juangs. In Bamra areas having miscellaneous forest growth is demarcated by the Range Officer and distributed amongst applicants. A fee at the rate of Re. 1 per 10,000 sht. and in special tracts Rs. 2 per 90,000 sht. of land is charged. In Keonjhar shifting cultivation is also regulated more or less on the above pattern. In Bonai although this is prohibited the tribals do practice this on a large scale. It is allowed in Chandragiri, Parlakhemundi, Malia and Thumba Mutha under certain conditions while in Balliguda, it is being practised in the un-reserved. In the ex-State of Ganjam and Koraput it is prohibited in the Reserved Forest but is allowed in the unreserve with permission of Collector.

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Forest Policy in Maharashtra

—Government of Maharashtra

Introduction

Maharashtra's tribal population as per 1971 census is 29.54 lakhs which constitutes about 6 per cent of the State population. Maharashtra State stands sixth in the country according to the size of tribal population and shares about 7.3 per cent of its tribal population. The tribal population is mostly concentrated in three distinct regions namely Western Region, including part of Thane, Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Pune, Ahmednagar and Kolaba districts. Northern Region comprising of Melghat Tahsil of Amravati district and Eastern Region including Chandrapur and parts of Nagpur, Bhandara, Yavatmal and Nanded districts. The bulk of the tribal population lives in the forest tracts and, therefore, there is a mutual inter-dependence between the forests and tribals. This inter-relationship between the tribals and forests has been duly recognised and respected by the Maharashtra Forest Department. The forest policy of the State is in consonance with the broad objective of ameliorating the socio-economic condition of the tribals in particular and other forest inhabitants in general.

2. Apart from the relationship between the tribals and the forests, there are also other important factors which have a direct bearing on the socio-economic conditions of the tribals, and which need attention. These are items such as inaccessibility, fragmentation of holdings, lack of soil conservation measures, limited use or non-use of improved agricultural practices, paucity of cash resources on easy terms, limited working-livestock, ignorance about facilities for introducing innovations in the methods, inadequacy of other supporting enterprises like dairy, poultry farming, agriculture, sericulture and horticulture

and the exploitation of the tribals by money lenders, contractors, middlemen, etc. The State Forest Department while formulating its projects and schemes has, therefore, always kept in view the important objective of upliftment of the tribals by ameliorating their socio-economic status.

The important activities of the Forest Department which aim at the above objectives are discussed here below.

1. Forest Labourers' Co-operative Movement

As far back as 1947, the Forest Department introduced the system of working forest coupes (both harvesting and marketing of forest produce), through the Forest Labourers' Co-operative Societies in order to save the Adivasis from the exploitation by private forest contractors. The Co-operative movement gradually picked up momentum and the number of F.L.C.S. increased to 397 by the year 1977-78. The membership of these societies has also swelled considerably and today the total number of members in all these F. L. C. S. is 55,20,000 of which 51,081 are the tribals. The F. L. C. S. are assigned forest coupe works either on revised formula or on logging formula basis and the entire operations right from felling of the trees to its sale at the sale depot, are executed by or in collaboration with F. L. C. S. After deducting the expenditure incurred on all these operations from the total sale proceeds the F. L. C. S. are given fixed percentage as profits. The profits are distributed amongst the members of the society. The Societies are also provided with the working capital by the Forest Department at the initial stage. The magnitude and the

scope of the work done by the F. L. C. S. is evident from the following chart :

| Year | No. of F.L.C.S. | No. of coupes worked by F.L.C.S. | Coupes worked departmentally | Coupes sold to contractors |
|---------|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1961-62 | 258 | 459 | 149 | 1,631 |
| 1978-79 | 397 | 560 | 357 | 399 |

Total turnover for the year 1977-78 Rs. 856 lakhs.

Amount of profits earned by the F. L. C. S. for the year 1977-78. (Rs. in lakhs) 41.00

Share Capital 16.00

In addition to the work of forest harvesting which is assigned to F. L. C. S. the Societies are also encouraged to work Minor Forest Produce farms such as gum, hirda, charoli, rosha grass, etc.

2. Upliftment of Forest Villages

In Maharashtra State there were 442 villages which were established in the past with the object of ensuring assured supply of labourers for forestry operations throughout the year. The Forest Department took special pains to bring about general upliftment of these villages by providing social amenities to the inhabitants such as primary schools, health centres, tanks, wells, roads, etc. The *bona fide* requirements of these inhabitants so far as the forest produce was concerned were also fully met with by granting them certain privileges and concessions. Later on, in order to bring the forest village inhabitants on par with the revenue village inhabitants so as to enable them to derive benefits of others developmental plans, the administration of these forest villages has been entrusted to the Revenue Department with effect from the 1st September 1977.

3. Nationalisation of Kendu Leaves

In the past Kendu leaves units were sold to contractors who used to pay very meagre wages for collection to the forest inhabitants and use to reap rich profits in the trade. The Government of Maharashtra, therefore, regulated this trade in Kendu leaves by way of monopoly purchase from the year 1969. With this, the Department

could statutorily fix the rates of collection, grading, purchase, etc., and this could obliterate the exploitation of forest inhabitants by the middlemen and Kendu contractors so far as payment of wages is concerned. The forest inhabitants could earn a steady increase in the wages per standard bag. In the year 1969, whereas he could earn only Rs. 7.50 per standard bag, by the year 1978 he could earn in between Rs. 28 to Rs. 40 per standard bag.

4. Enactment for Economic Improvement

An Act, namely Maharashtra Tribal Economic Condition (Improvement) Act, 1976 has been introduced by the Government in the State whereby the Government monopolised the purchase of certain specified agricultural produce and minor forest produce in the talukas predominantly inhabited by the tribals. As per the provisions under this Act the purchase and sale of the agriculture and minor forest produce could be done by the State Government or by its agents at the prices fixed by the Government under the Act every year. This enactment resulted in mitigating the difficulty of tribal populace in getting rightful wages and adequate prices for the produce brought by them. This has helped considerably in ameliorating their socio-economic status. The minor forest products which have been brought under the purview of the Act, are hirda, gum, lac, mohwa flowers and seeds, grass and fodder charoli.

5. Forest Privileges and Concessions

The inhabitants of villages situated in or near the forest areas are granted certain concessions or privileges concerning the use of the forest produce and other material derived from the reserved and protected forests constituted under the I. F. Act. Such privileges enjoyed by the villagers generally differ from district to district in the nature and the extent of concessions enjoyed by them and are published in a booklet form. The Adivasis of forest tracts are also given such concessions and privileges in respect of forest produce. The intention of these privileges and concessions is mainly to meet the genuine requirements of household agricultural implements, hunting materials and other personal requirements of the villagers who reside in or near forests. But some concessions are allowed even for trading purposes.

6. Generation of employment in Forestry Sector.

The various activities undertaken by the Forest Department both under plan and non-plan constitute a major source of employment to the tribals. The Forest Department incurred a total expenditure of Rs. 23.55 crores (Rs. 2.53 crores under plan and Rs. 21.11 crores under non-plan) wherein an amount of nearly Rs. 14 crores was spent on wages alone during the year 1978-79. This amount of wages was disbursed amongst the forest labourers of which 80 per cent constitute tribals.

In addition to this under the Employment Guarantee Scheme during the year 1978-79, out of the total expenditure of Rs. 168.158 lakhs, expenditure to the extent of Rs. 145.434 lakhs was incurred in the 13 tribal districts, out of which Rs. 87.00 lakhs constitute wage component. These activities, therefore, resulted in generation of Rs. 21.75 lakhs mandays in these tribal districts.

7. Implementation of Plan Schemes in Tribal areas.

The Forest Department has already undertaken various developmental plan schemes as not only to create employment potential for the tribals but also to ensure that the tribals get immense social benefits with their implementation. Some of the schemes which could be listed are :—

- (i) Forest communications
- (ii) Raising of the seedlings by the tribals
- (iii) Forest Labour Welfare
- (iv) Departmental gum collection etc, etc.

In addition, the Department has proposed implementation of the schemes, Establishment of Firewood and Timber depots, manufacture of Tool Handles, collection of peacock feathers, manufacture of reinforced organic manure for supply to tribals, providing training in carpentry and other skills to tribals, raising of plantation of fruit trees on Adivasi lands and raising of supplementary crops on Adivasi lands, etc, etc. These new schemes have been proposed for

implementation with a view to gradually diversify their source of income and create self-confidence in the Adivasis. The schemes have also been proposed with a view to utilise their born skill and expertise.

8. Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd.

The F. D. C. M. established in 1974 is operating in eight districts, which consists of mostly tribal tracts and annually carries out forest harvesting, marketing and subsequent plantation operations over an area of nearly 12000 Ha./year. The Corporation generates employment to the extent of 66 lakh mandays annually. The Corporation has constituted a Welfare Fund by pooling the savings on account of supply of foodgrains in lieu of part wages under World Food Programme and the collections in this Welfare Fund now amount to about Rs. 1 crore. From this Fund, the Corporation undertakes various welfare activities for Tribals and other forest workers such as programme of housing, free medical aid, mobile dispensaries, recreational facilities, water supply, subsidised meal service, assistance to school and college going children of Tribals, opening of fair price shops, establishment of consumers societies, running of flour mills etc., etc.

Though the Department and the F. D. C. M. Ltd., are undertaking the above activities for bringing about general upliftment of the tribal people, the Department is aware that there is still considerable scope to expand the activities so as to accelerate the process of development of tribals at a faster pace, in a shorter period. The Schemes are therefore, constantly reviewed and necessary action taken, subject to the available resources and other ingredients necessary for enlarging the scope of activities. The Department is also aware that the all round development of the tribals could not be achieved only by enlarging the scope of forestry Schemes alone but by an integrated development in allied sectors such as Agriculture, Co-operation, Education, Health, Communications, etc. Therefore, requisite liaison is maintained with other Departments in achieving an integrated development in forest tracts.

—X—

Girijan Prosperity through Forest Development

—Shri C. V. Konda Reddy, I. F. S.

The tribals or hill tribes are the Forest dwellers. They are, in Andhra Pradesh, Koyas and Konda Reddies in the forest regions of the east coast, Gonds in Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal districts of Telangana and Chenchus or Anadies in Kurnool, Prakasam, Nellore and Guntur. Lambadas who were the contract carriers of food for the armies of Mughals and Rajputs were originally from Rajasthan and were not really Tribals but were drop outs in Deccan when once the armies were disbanded. Having no other vocation, Lambadas settled near the forests and took to cattle rearing, lime burning and fuel trading. In their anxiety to maintain their separate identity they enforced very strict marital laws and have succeeded in maintaining their racial purity to a large extent.

The Konda reddies, Chenchus and Gonds do not appear to be the real tribals in the strict sense of the term. From the mores and customs of Konda Reddies it is seen that they migrated in to the jungles probably at the time of Muslim invasions and forcible conversions and lived in isolation for about four centuries oblivious to all changes in the political, social and economic fields. They were good agriculturists and even now we can see the terraces and contour bounds in the fields long abandoned and invaded by the trees. There is every proof that to start with, they practised only settled agriculture. They later on took to 'Podu' or shifting cultivation, and became pure forest tribals. There is need for Sociologists to unravel their origin.

The Gonds in Adilabad of Andhra Pradesh and Chanda of Maharashtra were the original sons of the soil. The Dandakaranya was mostly populated by Gonds and the name Gondwana' for this

region amply illustrates this point. The Gonds were good agriculturists and there were to well known dynasties of Gond Kings one at Suryapur (Sirpur), and the other at Chandrapur (Chanda). Even now the forts and battlements they built are in evidence and their glory in the Jungle tracts is of recent history.

Mathuras said to be tribals found only in Adilabad are fair skinned and the women dress exactly like 'GOPIKAS' of Krishna's time and live in Adilabad Forest practising Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. They speak 'Mathura' a language akin to Hindi. They are the people who migrated from Mathura when Muslims occupied Northern India and attempted forcible conversion. They maintain their identity and prohibit marriages with the local people. In the process, the race as such is decimating gradually.

The Chenchus who live in Nallamalais according to tradition and stories were also people of fairly advanced culture and had ruled around Srisailem. They have even now some preferential rights in the worship and in folklore they were the chosen people of the deities in all the Hills. The Chenchu Chieftains were defeated in War and the Society disintegrated and fled into inaccessible wilds. Their numbers gradually decreased under the scourges of Malaria, Cholera and Plague and they started taking out their precarious livelihood from the fruit tubers and honey they gathered and occasional forestry works in the forests.

In the sixties of the nineteenth century when the British first thought of forest reservation and protection in South India, their attention was concentrated on Cuddapah and Kurnool districts

which were closer to the Presidency town (Madras) and large tracts of forests were reserved. Chenchu and Anadi Welfare was entrusted to the Forest department and certain concessions regarding M. F. P., grazing, use of timber etc., were granted.

The Collector of the district was designated as District Chenchu Officer and the District Forest Officer as Assistant Chenchu Officer. Schools and Hospitals were started and managed by the Forest Department and forestry works were provided the tribals some employment. There was perfect harmony between the tribals and Forest Department and the forest Officials who alone can visit the Tribals and can look after them provided the necessary employment and the links with the outside world. The Tribal Schools and hostels providing elementary education and mid-day meals produced some educated men and there was around satisfaction.

The Tribal administration was transferred to Tribal Welfare Department in seventies and this unfortunate stop resulted the closure of schools, hostels and hospitals and their shifting to easily accessible plains where Doctors could live in comfort and Revenue Officers could easily reach for occasional check. The Forest Officers and tribals led a mutually dependent existence for about a century and the Forest Officers frequently visited the Tribal Settlements and looked after their welfare. The Officers of the Tribal Welfare Department rarely visit them except when absolutely necessary. When all institutions were shifted to the fringes of forest and into the plains like Dornal, the Chenchu population took to crime and gradually decimated in this one decade in Kurnool, Prakasam and Cuddapah districts. Anadies have fortunately migrated into the plains and have become agricultural labourers and domestic servants in Cuddapah and Nellore.

The Tribals in Andhra Pradesh had the right to collect the minor forest produce and sell it at the weekly shandies only to those merchants or middlemen to whom the 'Purchase' right was sold in auction specifying the rate which the Contractor should offer for each commodity. No doubt, there were defects and loopholes in this arrangement but the aggrieved tribals could look to the Forest Officer who was part of Tribal—Jungle life, for redressal of his grievances.

Now, the Girijan Corporation is set up managed by the Revenue Administration. There are serious complaints that Tribals do not get

their due. Institutions such as Hospitals and schools have sprung up in the Tribal Districts but these are all exotic in character. Several of these institutions have been shifted into the plains and the tribals have been denied the little attention they were getting in the past. The Controlling Officers may make annual visits and inspections which serve little purpose, and most of the money spent on buildings, equipment, vehicles and staff goes waste, since the proper functioning of these institutions cannot be ensured by the Tribal or Revenue Departments.

The tribals are part of the Forest community. He lives in the forest, gathering the fruit, tuber and honey freely and working in the extraction of bamboo and felling of forest coupes. His only contact with the outside world is through the Forest Officers who also depend entirely on Tribals for the protection and scientific exploitation of forests. The Forest Officer, by necessity, must visit the Tribal settlements frequently and has the facility and necessary to look in to their grievances. He is the only friend and philosopher to the Tribals.

The Girijan Corporation which does not associate the Forest Officers is not able to win the confidence of the Tribals and redress their grievances. The City or town bred and town located officers of the Corporation cannot, through their visits to forest areas, understand and appreciate the problems of the Tribals. The Girijan corporations should be handed over to the Forest Department and the Forest Officers must manage the affairs of Tribals.

The Forest Development Corporation now set up in Andhra Pradesh is in charge of large scale extraction of pulpwood and timber to feed the giant wood-based industries that are being set up in Andhra Pradesh. They have taken up large scale plantation activity in the interior jungles and have to set up labour colonies with amenities for drinking water, health and education of the labourers. The Corporation will be growing not only Timber plantations where Agro-Forestry can be practised through Tribal labour but will also be creating settlements for labour with running water, schools and elementary medical care. Coffee and medicinal plants would be grown in the interior jungles and attempts to wean the Tribals from the pernicious practice of shifting cultivation will be made. Improved Logging techniques will be introduced to increase the timber yield and the productivity

of the tribal labour. It is the Forest Officer who has the necessity to mix with Tribals and ensure their welfare. It is only the Forest Officer who can ensure any Tribal Development in the interior Forest. Any attempt to improve the lot of the Tribals without the active association of the

Forest Officer is bound to fail. Tribals must live in the Forests and the forest is their home and environment. Tribal Development and Forest Development cannot be separated without harming the interests of Tribals and the Forest in the Country.

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