

**A STUDY OVER THE
JHUM AND JHUMIA REHABILITATION
IN THE UNION TERRITORY OF TRIPURA**

S. B. K. Deu Varman

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**Directorate of Research
Department of Welfare for Sch. Tribes & Sch. Castes
Government of Tripura
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To meet the demand from different Government organisations as well as research scholars a re-print of "A STUDY OVER THE JHUM AND JHUMIA REHABILITATION IN THE UNION TERRITORY OF TRIPURA" has become necessary. It may be stated here that though some modifications in figures and interpretations should have been made in view of passage of time, to retain the archival value of this publication the temptation of improving on this book has been checked.

PREFACE

The Second Edition of our Special Series No. 2 upon the Jhum and Jhumia Rehabilitation in the Union Territory of Tripura, is offered for the appreciation of the persons who work for the Tribals and think for them. These attempts are intended to build up the edifice upon which actual research will begin. Enough attention has been rendered by us to correct the copy the still we are meticulous in this regard. We shall, with open mind, receive with thanks any suggestion from any corner which may compensate our drawbacks. Our is a new Organisation yet to be adequately equipped and it was the joint venture of all of which made it possible to bring out the Second Edition. I have at all times had the sincerest cooperation of my colleague Shri Ramendra Bhattacharjee, M.A.L.S.W. who has given me sustained and constant assistance in giving it concrete shape. Bringing out of this Edition required typing, re-typing and compiling and in this Edition required typing, re-typing and compiling and in this, Shri Ashit Ranjan Das, Stenographer, had spared no pains to complete the task assigned to him. My thanks are due to all of them. I shall consider our labour is rewarded if anybody working in the line is benefited by it.

S. B. K. Dev Varman
1971.

PREFACE

This volume of Study over the Jhum and Jhumia Rehabilitation in the small state had been conducted in the year 1971 when Tripura was Union Territory. At present Tripura attained statehood and in the meantime a lot of development of the State has been envisaged in the field of demography, economy, communication etc. and specially in rehabilitation of Jhumias. Even then, the volume of study is worthy enough to understand the basic condition & problem of the past and the development attained basing on the past.

This volume is 3rd reprint which will meet long demand of the scholars who are specially wanting to have an idea about the past condition of this state. I do hope that this volume will be much help of the scholars who are studing the economic problems of this state in special and North East Region as a whole.

Agartala
01.02.1999

S. K. Sarkar,
Director
Tribal Research Institute.

The people of Tripura, the Administration as well are very much acquainted with the term 'Jhumia' and 'Jhum' Cultivation. In their attempt to apprise people of outside the territory; they very commonly see this term and add some flesh and blood to narrate the life and work of the people who hereditarily resort to 'Jhum' cultivation. Common people are more interested to know the peculiarity of the life of those people than what they are interested to know their problems. Ordinary men, men of literary group and tourists have all their attraction for the Jhumias, as because, in their opinion, this Union Territory has been more attracting to outsiders for her tribals who are traditionally and hereditarily sticking to some unchanged peculiarity.

Truly, there was a day when people could remain contented only by appreciating the beauty of the life and labour of those tribals. Jhumias had life in those days. They had affluence in their lives because, the Jhum in those days had all bumper yields. But situation has been radically changed. India was divided in 1947 and sequel to that division there has been a tremendous influx of population in this tiny state which, as a natural consequence, has been responsible to snatch away the laugh from the faces of the tribals fifty percent of whom are Jhumias, are the worst sufferers. Whatever may be the view of the tourists, the thinking mind has been upset by the deplorable condition of the life of those people who are gradually becoming weaker in their struggle for existence. The Administration had become quite alert of the situation and many practical schemes had been adopted to change the lot of the tribals; although, many proved futile. This state of affair is not only responsible for the perpetuation of poverty of those tribals but also responsible for forming distorted personalities and misunderstanding among them. This is the prelude of the necessity of our research.

Our endeavour would, therefore, be a systematic enquiry into the problems of the tribals and find out the lacunas which are responsible for the failure of the administration and forming the misunderstanding among tribals and also to suggest, as and when possible, ways and means to combat the problems faced by the Administration. Thus the object of our research necessitates the study of the life and labour of all the tribals as preliminary prior to anything. In this part we shall try to bring out a sketch of the nature and practice of cultivation rehabilitation which is reckoned by all as fundamental of all.

Quite relevantly, our attention is drawn towards two important lines of Thomas Alva Edison one of the greatest investigators of all times. He observed, "when I want to discover something, I begin by reading everything that has been done along the line past". The more the information are gathered by us the more solid and easy would be our job in future. the bibliographical sources are, therefore, tapped because, if we can use these with adequate precautions they may be profitably utilized by us; although, our findings would never rest upon secondary informations only but upon both secondary and primary data. So, let us embark upon to draw the sketch.

Our prelude lines have not so far explained the term 'Jhumia'. Though the people of this territory know it, we should not fail to define and depict it with precision to apprise the people of the rest of the world.

Jhumias are shifting cultivators in Tripura and the term 'Jhum' is most frequently used for shifting cultivation in this territory. It is the most prominent among the terms used by other tribes in Tripura. For instance, the Garos call it 'abagama' while the Khasis use the word 'Lyngkhalum'. The Madias who live in the most inaccessible hilly areas, practise a method of shifting cultivation known as 'dahia'. this system of cultivation is known as 'Bewar' or 'Dyaya' in Madhya Pradesh, kumari by Malayalans or Malabar, 'Pama Dohi' 'Komon' or 'Bringa' in North ORISSA 'Gudia' or 'Dhongarchar' in the South Orissa. The Reangs of Tripura again have 'Hookni Smong' as synonym to Jhum. However, all the tribal communities including personnel of the Administration are very much closely acquainted with only the term 'Jhum'.

There are few lines of historical interest behind the evolution of the term 'Jhum'. Rajmohan Nath, the eminent historian who wrote book of ethnological importance mentioned that the people who once migrated from the South-west part of China to Kamrup used to call "Chao-Thieus" when referring their original place of above. The very word "chao-thieus" assumed many changes in it and it was pronounced in various typical ways depending upon different phonetic change which took place from time to time. Thus "chao-thieus" was once developed as "Jehe-thieus" which meant people of high land and since then 'Jehe' was evolved as a word to mean high land; because the people of this group who migrated from South-west part of China settled in the hilly part

of Assam and adopted a type of cultivation in which paddy, turmeric and other useful seeds were sown by the use of 'Takhal' (a kind of hoe). Such cultivation was named "Joho-Mo" and this very joho-Mo sometimes assumed the name jhum which means cultivation in hill slopes by the use of hoe.

Coming down to the present day many anthropologists attempted to define it in different languages; although, all their definitions brought out the same thing. Conklin defined Jhum as any continuing agricultural system in which impermanent clearings are cropped for shorter periods in years than they are followed. Just when and how people fell into the custom of this type of cultivation will always remain a matter of speculation. Be that as it may, the general consensus of opinion among anthropologists is that the foundation of agriculture economy was once laid by the shifting cultivators in all parts of the globe.

Pattern of the Cultivation

The variety of soils, of climates and, of cultivation are responsible for many types of agriculture existing in the world. The patch agriculture of the tropical forests without draught animal and hoe cultivation prevailing in many parts of the globe are characteristically the most primitive among the types. This is equally true for the tribals of Tripura. This hoe cultivation which is shifting cultivation is practiced all over the territory under the name of Jhum. Few lines describing this type of cultivation are, therefore, quite relevant.

Jhum being the main cultivation for the Jhumias, they go out to select the suitable hill for raising Jhum in the early autumn. Generally, the slope of the hills are reckoned suitable for Jhum Cultivation. When the plot is preliminarily selected, the tribesman cuts the undergrowth to make a small clearing in the forest. Many interesting rites are associated with the cultivation; although, with the advent of new economic order in the hills much of those rituals have become faded afflatus. Religious minded and God fearing tribes want to know the approval of the God behind selection of Jhum by making a toss. A piece of bamboo is thus cut vertically into two and thrown above to fall upon the ground. If the two pieces fall upon the ground in positions which are contrary to the other, the Jhumias deem it to be a good sign. If, however, the pieces fall in a way which does not communicate any sanction of the unseen, the Jhumias have custom to try the luck for a couple of times through toss. In circumstances when

approval of the supernatural is not obtained, the plot, however suitable it may be, would be abandoned and if the case is reverse, the Jhumia would plant a piece of bamboo upon which two thin pieces would be fixed crosswise to let others know that this particular plot has been chosen by one. Some even take a little soil from the plot and keep it in their beds at night before retiring to sleep with the expectation of a sweet dream. If some one really dreams a sweet dream the plot would be deemed to be the harbinger of affluence and the next phase of work would follow then.

After the decision has been final the next phase of programme becomes cutting the forest and setting them to fire. It is a hard job and hence, requires a sort of planning 'Hook-Hog' is the Tripuri synonym for jungle cutting prior to Jhum. The tribals co-operate among them in cutting the jungle. Such a system is commonly termed by them as "ug-ul-khil-lyo". The women are generally excluded, because, cutting jungle and setting fire is a hard task in which women folk naturally do not match well. Not only this, but also there is a custom or rather we should say any system of cutting the Jungle. The tribals do not proceed from the top of the hill to the slopes, rather, from the down gradually to up. Bamboo which was chiefly available in our hills even before a couple of decades was the only thing which was to cut, although much of the hills of to-day are practically infested with creepers and bushes. The tribals generally cut the bamboos by one sharp incision with their hoe commonly known as 'Takhal' (a chopper with a wooden haft) and allow all these to fall upon the slopes. Nobody collects these as fuel, because everybody knows that to burn the soil these bamboos would be essential for the Jhumia.

Thus burning of Jhum starts from mid-march when rain is yet to begin. The tribals are not ignorant about the consequence of forest fire. They mark with attention the direction of the wind and set fire when it is favourable. It serves two ends. Saving the hamlets from anticipated fire and burning the Jhum quickly and nicely with the help of favourable wind. If someone looks to the hills during a March eve he would simply be spell-bound by the splendid beauty of the Jhum fire. But there is also a danger latent in such splendid fire. It may cause a conflagration ultimately burning many valuable forest resources which is not desirable. A fire-line is thus made around all such important holdings so that, in absence of any object to burn upon such fire-line the fire cannot spread.

However unimportant these rituals are in our object of research, they deserve mention; because, it manifests the mind of those of whom we deliberate. They have series of rites to perform throughout the entire Jhum from the inception to the harvest. Jhum is inextricably related with their lives and so, many interesting aspects of rituals are revealed in their songs. We could collect a few such songs and could know that the Jhumias take some fired rice & broadcast those in the Jhum before setting fire because, the convention is that cotton will come up well if such things are broadcast. They then keep a piece of turmeric under the ground as a part of the ceremony to save the Jhum from the grip of the old Satan because, unless it is done there is fear that Satan might throw the seeds of wild weeds to spoil for having a smooth and undisturbed growth of the Jhum. In the morning that follows they visit the burnt Jhum and give finishing touch if somewhere fire could not breakout and burn it well.

Cultivation of Jhum depends upon rain and so, actual work of cultivation starts only after a few showers. The tribals have all their sanctity in cultivation of Jhum. The Jhumia take bath before they set out for cultivation & the entire family participate in that. The principal crop is paddy. They depend upon rain water and so, only one crop (generally the 'Aush' Paddy) is taken from the Jhum during summer season. They do not mix various paddy seeds and sow them although, other kinds of vegetables and cereal seeds are generally mixed together and sown in the Jhum with the help of 'Takhal' the only agricultural implement peculiar to the tribals of Tripura. 'Takhal' requires some explanation. Takhal is the name of the implement which the tribals of Tripura use both as hoe and cutter. Although a Tripuri word, this is used by both Non-tribals and all other tribals of the territory. This is also used by them for defensive purposes. The usual size is 45 c.m. length and 9.2 c.m. breadth at the tip which gradually tapers off downwards and it is only 5 c.m. breadth just above the handle. The tip is flat and it is unlike the usual heavy knife or



TAKHAL

chopper of the Bengalees which curves in at the tip and commonly known as 'da'. Both the top and right edges are sharp which help



TIT LAO

to cut anything they like while helping them to use it as hoe. It has got place in the rituals too. The Tripuris use this particular 'Takhal' even for sacrifice of animals before God. Its usual weight is one kg. unless one is accustomed to use this implement he would not be able to handle it properly. The Jhum thus becomes an all unclusive mixed crop-field where various vegetables, Maize, Tit lao (bitter gourd), Til, Cotton and other rarely available fruits are grown besides paddy. 'Tit lao' is a kind of vegetable grown in the Jhum during rainy season and harvested during September. It belongs to the genus

cucurbitacal. It gives a bitter taste for which it is called Tit i.e. bitter 'lao' (Gourd)*.

On the other hand Til is a bengali word. It is an oilseed. There are two kinds of Til available, one is black while the other kind is white. The Tripuris cultivate white til in their Jhum generally. Its botanical name is Sesamum. The 'Til' also yields gingili or gingelly oil. This is not all. They do not forget to adopt measures to protect the Jhum from wild animals specially boars. They, therefore, construct little "Machang Ghar" at least ten to twelve feet in height above the ground level and live in that to drive out the wild boars and monkeys. Throughout the days, until the crop is harvested, the tribal family keeps a constant vigil and drive away the birds and other animals with the help of instrument made of bamboo which is known as 'Wathop'. When the Jhum was available in abundance and when it occupied a vital position in their economy they, the adult members of the tribal families, used to shift in their Jhums where temporary shelters were raised by them to live there till harvest. The general consensus is that the tribals are not aware of weeds and insects which may damage the crop. But our investigation does not reveal this fact. The Jhumias are

* Tit lao = Luffa Sp.

conscious about all these. After a month of sowing when each turns into green lawn in the midst of deep forest wild grasses and roots soon raise their heads and the tribals do not neglect to remove these things. Again after a month or so the second weeding is done. Women and children also participate in the weeding work. The Tripuris have a nice word for this. They call it "Mycakang Tango".

Their last rite in connection with the Jhum is observed when harvesting starts. The Jhumias do not consume anything from their Jhum unless some sort of sacrifice is given in the name of God. The first product along with the sacrifice of a cock or hen is given in their worship.

This is all about the ceremonial aspects of JHUM Cultivation. In those days when Jhum was the only cultivation and when it occupied a vital position in their economy the tribals had all these rituals in their lives, but now, the circumstances have changed. Cultivation of Jhum no longer occupies a vital position in their economy. Even the Jhumias cannot depend fully upon the Jhum as it has become much scarce these days. As a result of it, Jhum has occupied the status of a subsidiary livelihood and as a natural sequel to it, the part of rituals has proportionally disappeared from the lives of the Jhumias even. Question may arise in common mind as to why Jhum has been scarce when the entire state is a hilly State. There are reasons for it.

1. Unrestricted Jhum becomes responsible for soil erosion for which natural forest grows very slowly and again subject the soil for further erosion. This is the reason for which Jhum cannot be practised upon the same part of hill continuously for year after year. The tribals also know it & hence, the system of leaving the Jhum for two subsequent years is prevalent among them. This gap is allowed for increasing the natural fertility because, in the Jhum, the Jhumia does not give any kind of manuring except potash which the soil gets the burning festival. It may come to one's mind by the by as how potash adds to the fertility of the soil.

We have mentioned that the tribals cut the bamboos and weeds and allow these to dry-up and set fire afterwards, when the burning is over the ashes thus remain on the hill top and slopes are gradually absorbed in the soil after showers. The ash contain potash which is quickly absorbed in the soil with the help of rain water and add to the fertility of the soil. The tribals

do not add any other kind of manuring in the Jhum except potash which the soil gets from the burning festival.

2. Secondly, notwithstanding the endeavour of the Administration to abolish Jhum, the number of persons the scarcity has become much acute. We shall try to enlist the reasons in due place why persons resorting to Jhum are increasing.

3. Thirdly, the programme of afforestation has necessitated to keep under it a vast areas as reserve forest and non forest- rules of the Administration have been promulgated prohibiting Jhum within such jurisdiction. Naturally, the tribals are to hunt about Jhum in completion among themselves.

Be that as it may, geographical condition have left only this alternative to our tribals. When sufficient plain land is not available and when the techniques of bunding is still foreign to them, the Jhum becomes the only alternative. In Assam, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Hyderabad and Madras everywhere shifting cultivation is prevalent. In foreign lands also such a thing is not foreign. Bamboo of Rhodesia, the Yao of southern Nyasaland, the Boro of Amazan Forest, the hill tribes of Borneo, Indo-china, Burma and Ceylon raise crop in the same way so to say like the tribals of Tripura.

Now, there is good deal of controversy about the effect of shifting cultivation. The first blame which all attribute to Jhum is the cause of soil erosion. The hill tops and slopes are open due to constant Jhum cultivation & this results in increased barrenness of the hills. Dr. N. L. Bor, Forest Botanist of the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun is among many specialists of to-day who considered that "of all practices initiated by men, the most obnoxious one was shifting cultivation". There are other indirect effects too. The effect of shifting cultivation is said to be responsible for causing flood in the valleys. Want of requisite forest in the hills fail to retain the rain water for sometime as a result of which flood looms in the rivers. Besides this. Jhum fire may also cause devastation in the forest. Important plantations and other forest areas enriched with valuable timbers maybe burnt to ashes due to this. These are the reasons behind the disapproval of Jhum in this territory. But there are many who held a different view. In his discourse of N.E.F.A. Dr. Elwin contradicted to the above view. He wrote, "It is sometimes said that the floods which from time to time devastate the plains of Assam are due to the practice of Jhuming in the N.E.F.A. hills. But this cannot be so, for the

conditions of rainfall, humidity and temperature in the Jhumed areas of N.E.F.A. are so favourable that no clearing remains without a vegetable cover for any length of time. Immediately after any area goes fallow at the close of the cropping period, it is covered with some kind of vegetation which checks erosion and the run-off of rain water. Moreover, the area under cropping at any one time is estimated at only three to four percent of the total area of the Agency. It is the loss of soil fertility, rather than the danger of erosion which is the real problem. "In 1953 Mr. M. D. Chadurvedi who was then Inspector-General of Forests to the Government of India, made an investigation of forestry problems in Assam and came to the conclusion that, "the nation widely held that shifting cultivation is responsible in the main for large scale soil erosion needs to be effectively dispelled". The correct approach to the problem of shifting cultivation lies in accepting it not as a necessary evil but recognising it as a way of life; not condemning it as an evil practise, but regarding it as an agricultural practice evolved as a reflex to the Physiographical character of the land. For too long 'Jhuming' has been condemned out of hand as a cause to be ashamed, of a vandalism to be decried. This attitude engenders an inferiority complex and unhealthy atmosphere for the launching of any development scheme seeking to improve the current practice".

(Report of the Committee on Special multipurposes Tribal Block, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1960 p.p. 48)

Shri M. S. Sivarman, Adviser, programme Administration of the planning Commission, observed that it is a mistake to assume that shifting cultivation in itself is unscientific land use. Actually it is a practical approach to certain inherent difficulties in preparing proper seed beds in steep slopes where any disturbance of the surface by hoeing and ploughing will result in washing away the fertile top soil. The tribal people, therefore take care not to plough or disturb the soil before sowing. The destruction of weeds and improvement of tillage necessary for a proper seed bed are achieved with the help of fire. In most of the interior areas where communication is not developed and not sufficient land suitable for terracing is available, Jhuming alone can be done for the present and as such every effort should be made to improve the fertility of the Jhumed land. So, the Jhum method properly controlled and directed, is the only possible method of cultivation

in such areas. From the above it appears that while the harmful effect of shifting cultivation has often been exaggerated, as far as possible, in the long run it requires to be replaced by more advanced method of land use.

Whatever we have enlisted to advocate Jhum apply with great force to N.E.F.A. The condition of Tripura being a bit different we cannot possibly refute all the Explanations given against it. The rainfall of Tripura is not such as it helps to grow forest quickly just after the harvest and hence every attempt has to be taken us to prevent the disadvantages associated with such cultivation. The Government of Tripura, of course, adopted many measures to improve the process of cultivation in the hill areas ultimately to resist the Jhumias from resosting to shifting cultivation.

As regards economy of the Jhum, although it becomes unprofitable in the long run specially in comparison with the plough cultivation in the plain, the initial yields is never discouraging. It is seen that the first harvest from a virgin slope becomes considerably high in comparison to plough cultivation upon an arranged plot. The economic benefit is high in a virgin Jhum because cost of cultivation is less. Not only this, many tribals find it easy to go for Jhum than for ploughing. It has less botheration also. The tribals need not keep bullocks and plough for this cultivation. The hoe is the champion implement which completes the entire jhum starting from felling of trees to sowing and harvesting. The economic advantage of jhum in the initial year is shown in the calculation of the cost of cultivation. Such advantage, however, quickly proves to be disadvantage as law of diminishing return operates very soon.

THE COST OF JHUM CULTIVATION - OF ONE ACRE

Sl. No	Particulars of Operations	Labour	Cost of labour	Other cost
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.	Presowing Operations			
	a) Selection of Plot	2 ¹ / ₂	7.50	—
	b) Cutting of rees.	10	30.00	—
	c) Firing.	—	—	—
	d) Root clearing.	10	30.00	—

Sl. No		Particulars of Operations	Labour	Cost of labour	Other cost
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
2.	Sowing operation.	a) Cost of seed 30 Rs.	—	—	30.0
		b) Sowing.	7 ¹ / ₂	22.50	—
3.	Inter-culture Operations.	a) 1st weeding.	12	36.00	—
		b) 2nd weeding.	12	36.00	—
4.	Harvesting Operation.	a) Harvesting & Carrying.	6 ¹ / ₂	19.50	—
		b) Thrashing.	5	15.00	—
			65 ¹ / ₂	196.50	30.00

Rs. 196.50 + Rs. 30.00 = Rs. 226.50p.

Now let us see the position of yield. In one acre a tribal is sure to get 17 Mds. of paddy at least the cost of which is approximately Rs. 544/- thus providing an economic benefit of Rs. 544/- - Rs. 226.50 = Rs. 317.50 p. in lieu of 65¹/₂ man days.

In these man-days are included the women-labourdays also which a tribal has not to purchase by cash. The craftsmanship is easy to them in which their women also are expert. Again, the yield becomes higher than what is mentioned as because, a jhum in most of the cases, is a mixed-crop-field in which besides paddy many other things are also sown.

These are the circumstances which induce us to give a second thought upon the Jhum. The jhum, as such, requires to be modified as a method of cultivation to enable our tribals to practise it. Thus our Administration also rendered adequate attention towards it.

The following are the measures adopted by the administration to have a soft switching over to the improved way of cultivation.

a) One of the best programmes ever taken by the Govt. was terracing the undulated hilly land through subsidy scheme and handing over those plots to the tribals for adopting plough cultivation. Under this scheme of soil conservation 50% subsidy is given for bench terracing @ Rs. 600/- per acre of land while for bunding the rate is Rs. 150/- per acre. 25% subsidy is given for

lunga reclamation @ Rs. 250/- per acre of land. The tribals, however, cannot do the work as per specification and hardly can get this advantage although this applies to them mostly. This realisation has helped the Administration to bring about few modification in the approach and now, in the karbook at Amarpur Sub-division Tribals are engaged as labourers for terracing work and when the plots are finally completed project authority handover those to a family of jhumia with requisite loans to support them in the initial stage.

b) Distribution of Seeds.

The Scheme for distribution of seeds envisages opportunity to the newly settled tribals to adopt improved methods in agriculture. The newly settled Jhumias have not been able and acquainted with the improved methods of plough cultivation for which it is necessary to provide special facilities and incentives to them. Paddy and potato being the principal food for them, scheme has been taken up to supply them improved seeds free of cost.

c) Introduction of Sugar-cane Cultivation.

The flat tilla lands have enough potentially for sugar-cane Cultivation. Even the slopes on tilla land can be utilised for this. Sugar-cane has sample economic value in the state and therefore, the scheme to distribute sugar-cane sets to newly settled jhumias and other tribals has been proposed in the 4th plan. This may encourage the jhumias.

d) Introduction of Other crops.

The tribals are not acquainted with the cultivation of various types of cereals, pulses and oilseeds which can be grown on the type of land they possess. Hencem, to popularise wheat, bajra, pulses and oilseeds scheme has been made 4th plan to supply them seeds free of cost alongwith necessary supply of fertiliser and knowhow.

e) Training Scheme.

The truth that new economic order in the tribal communities would be established by the new generation; a very fruitful scheme was taken up to train up the young tribal farmers' sons so as to enable them to adopt improved method of cultivation. This training is expected to give all necessary information regarding improved jhum cultivation.

f) Development of Horticulture.

There is immense scope for horticultural development upon the type of land generally possessed by the tribals. The lands so far allotted to the landless tribals and jhumias are not

properly utilised for other cultivation except jhum and so the scheme for horticultural development is made. Horticulture is expected to play a vital role in the economy of the tribals, naturally, therefore, measures have already been taken up to supply fruit plants, seeds and fertilisers.

g) Minor Irrigation.

Minor Irrigation is a must for the tribal areas if we want them adopt cultivation throughout the year. They up till now, depend upon rain water and as it is obtainable only during summer, the tribals pay little heed to other crops which are grown in other seasons. Facility of irrigation will change their sense of value and they may ultimately try to retain water in their lands which would mean excepting the programme of terracing. Government programme envisages exeavaton of tands etc. although, as ill luck would have it, it has made little headway.

h) Demonstration Farm.

To acquaint the tribals with improve way of cultivation programme has been taken up set-up demonstraton farms to educate the tribals through direct method of seeing is believing.

Now, we may embark to evaluate the success of all these programmes. The degree of acceptance and the attitude these will be the measure-stick in this regard. As regard acceptance of the programme our assessment does not give us a hopeful picture. Many terraced plots which are already allotted to the so called Jhumias and landless tribals are yet to be properly utilised by them. Want of irrigation facility is, however, a cause behind such behavior. Their attitude towards such programmes can be understood by the participation rate in the soil conservation work. The tribals have hitherto showed enough reluctance towards it. What is striking in the matter is that the tribals have been sufficiently antagonised by the Forest rules which have asked them to abstain from Jhum. their long formed skill lies in Jhum and hence, to serve both the ends i.e. to remove th antagonism from their mind and to offer them scope to stabilize in such form of cultivation which is more akin to Jhum cultivation, the Jhum needs to be modified as a method of cultivation, such a deleberation drags us to the ways and means by which we can bring about some improvement in the existing Jhums and subsequently allow them to resort to it.

Advisor, planning commission to the Eastern Zonal council Mr. Sivaraman advocated for small experimental Jhum area where soil fertility may be retained by leguminous plants and creepers. He also suggested to open combined Jhum research station to solve all the vrious problems pertaining to Jhum in other States.

It will, therefore, not be irrelevant the this stage to quote some of the steps what Government of Assam and NEFA Administration have tried. In Assam three steps have been taken:

1. Starting of nurseries of such cash crops as cashew nut, black-paper, coffee and cardamon and distributing them to local farmers.

2. Opening up afforestation centres in such a way as upper and middle parts of hillocks would be brought under plantation after contour and slope terrace and respectively done while the lowest portion will be marked for wet paddy cultivation.

3. "Use of hydrams" which means that water reservoir will be installed to pump water to back-sloped terraced plots.

Many of these steps will perhaps be impracticable or us because item No. 2 and 3 appear to be complicative and expansive. Moreover such perinial source of water is hardly seen in the vicinity of prolonged Jhumed area wherefrom water can be lifted to the reservoirs. So, disregard to point No. 2 and 3 let us evaluate point No. 1. This appears practicable and a feeble attempt is being made in Tripura regarding it.

As regards NEFA, and Nagaland, they have got a type of plant called 'Alda' which they cut prior to Jhum but do not burn. Such plants come up quickly and check soil erosion. Again, in many areas of Nagaland people put tree trunks across the slope so as to check the velocity of water. Thus gradually a form of rudimentary terrace comes into existence in course of time.

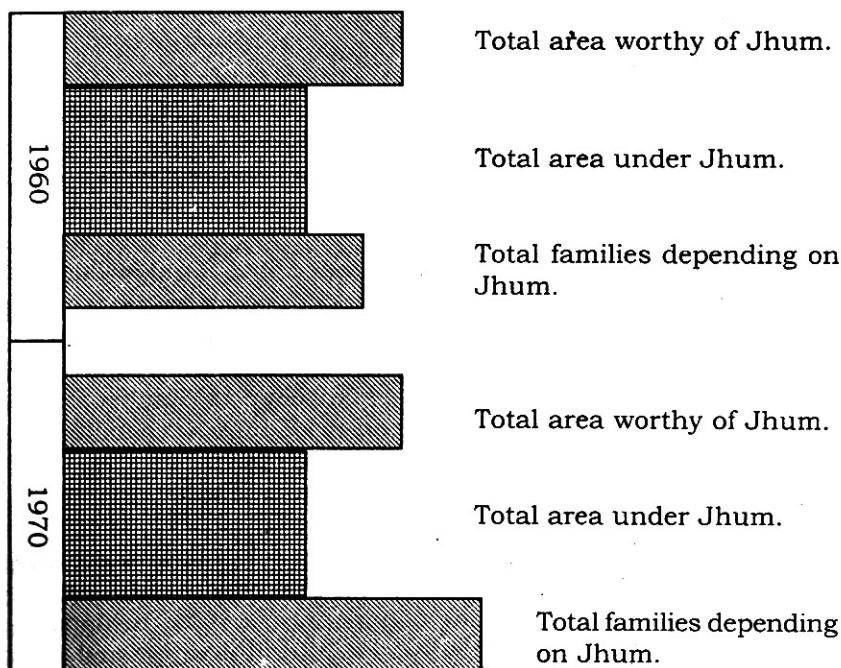
Still another approach to the question of abating the evil effects of Jhum cultivation is taungiya or combination of silviculture and impermanent agriculture. The National Forest Policy resolution of 1962, stipulates that as far as possible taungiya should be introduced to tackle the problems of shifting cultivation. In manipur this system works well although here it is in experimental stage. In fine, let us try to construct a table to compare the trend of Jhum in Tripura amidst so many measures.

TABLE - I.

	1960	1970
1. Population (as per 1951 Census)	6,45,707	11,42,005
2. No. of Tribal families engaged in Jhum.	28,554	35,000
3. Total area of Jhum Total area (Atable + Forest reserve)	6,75,734 Hec.	5,01,713 Hec.

It appears from the above table that where total population of the territory increased by 119.92% the area which could be brought under jhum decreased by 25.86% whereas the number of households increased considerably. Adding the number of migrated people and considering the encroachment of land under the refugee rehabilitation to Scheme the total jhummed area further declined although the area under forest reserve increased year by year. The refugee being mostly settled in undulated areas they have also appreciated the technique of Jhum in many places being failed to prepare land as per necessity. Thus trend of Jhum has sufficiently been increased. The area under Jhum has declined trully but this does not prove the attitude of the people. The crisis of the situation has further been heightend and the picture would be available in our hand when the census report of 1971 would finally be out in detail.

We may try to show the picture in a Graph. It is seen that total area worthy of Jhum has sufficiently been decreased while the total area of jhum remained almost the same. The steep rise of the wall representing the families has manifested the degree of dependence as well as the crisis arising therefrom.



Question naturally may arise in our mind as to why the number of families have been gradually increasing who resort to jhum. The finding is alarming and interesting too. The marginal tribal farmers are gradually becoming landless for their increased burden of debts and as a result of it, on the other hand they are enlisting themselves as jhumias. We shall keep adequate space to bring out the entire fact relating to it in due place.

Now, in the perspective of the entire picture, although we require to find out few measures which can be prescribed for the assistance of the Administration, we are unable to do it just now because our exploration of facts is not yet final and any conclusive remark would be a hasty decision. The problem of jhum has been sufficiently heavy. It needs to be tackled not only by administrative measures but also by the modern measures of soil conservation. Besides all these, the sociological approach has to be constantly made for a reconciliation between the expectation of the people and the measure, of the Government so as to avoid any future misunderstanding. However, the jhum, its scarcity and evil effects are not problems in themselves. They are constantly breeding another problem which has been deemed as one of the biggest problems pertaining to the tribals of this territory. This is the problem of their rehabilitation. In this chapter we have only acquainted ourselves to the subject. Our research in this matter will lead us in to the deep of it and enable us to suggest something. But one thing we can probably say, that had the Administration been alert when it accepted all the migrated people, the problem of jhum and the problem of jhumia rehabilitation might have not been arisen by now. Our small territory had only five lakhs people. At that time, the jhumias and marginal tribal farmers had no difficulty in getting jhum. The influx of population within a short span of time had been responsible for the scarcity of land because, double the number of the total population of the territory settled in it. If we had foreseen the situation and allowed a number which our land was able to bear then the problem of jhumia rehabilitation would not have been so acute as it is now.

In Manipur, N E F A and Nagal hills every where the practice of jhum is prevalent but no such problem of rehabilitation has roused so cumbrously there as it is in Tripura. It is but the presure of population that can be held responsible for all these.

Now before concluding the chapter for the time being with the expectation to explore it fully in future, it is suggested that

the following suggestion of the experts may be taken into consideration.

Shifting cultivation even though is an arduous and wasteful means of cultivation has been accepted a tribal agriculture which is both a way of life and an aspect of culture.

In order to respect the tribal way of life and culture the existing practice of shifting cultivation in a restricted form may for some more be allowed to the tribals where it is possible. Any abrupt restriction may tell upon their economy and thereby create adverse psychology in the tribal community.

The Scheduled tribes and Scheduled Areas commission suggested the following methods for continuation of restricted type of shifting cultivation.

"The land should be divided into three parts according to its slopes. Hills and steep slopes should be kept permanent under afforestation. Gentle slopes upto 10' should be terraced and in between shifting cultivation may be permitted leaving enough land for rotation purpose. Immediately after the use of land or simultaneously it should be taken for afforestation of the jhumed areas".

"It is most desirable that in the hilly areas where there is a pressure on agricultural land; we should concentrate, on the scientific improvement of shifting cultivation in order to maintain the fertility of the soil. This plan has been accepted by both the Renuka Roy and the Inaccessible Areas Community. Dr. V. Elwin has suggested that when the crop is weeded or harvested all damages to the shoots that come up from the stools is carefully avoided so that after the cropping is over, they quickly sprouted out branches and leaves, cover. Thus protecting it will the next clearing is due".

Shifting cultivation as mentioned earlier being an arduous and wasteful method, is condemned but it has its bright side also. The system of shifting cultivation provides an excellent foundation for the cooperative communal farming towards which many parts of the world are moving. The introduction of permanent cultivation is turning the minds of the younger people more and more to the idea of private ownership. We have to be on the guard that introduction of settled cultivation that fosters individualism and private ownership does not lead to fragmentation and litigation about land. This sociological factor would have to be seriously kept in view.

THE JHUMIA REHABILITATION

In the outline of the topic is pregnant an indirect confession that the inhabitants of whom we endeavour to indite were once settled in some way and question of rehabilitation had arisen when those off springs of simplicity were divorced from their easy go of life either by automatic process of economic evolution or by any unknown pressure born of social interaction. So, before embarking upon the investigation of the pros and cons of the problems relating to rehabilitation, we need spend some time to ponder upon those remote past upon which the edifice of the present problems was built. This drags us to those days of the late Maharajas when Tripura had a population of not more than five lakhs and in that the tribals predominated. Economy was then based upon forest and agriculture. Many were dependant upon forest and had a forest economy while others had an agriculture economy. Still we cannot draw a line of demarcation between forest and agriculture because, one was never divorced from the other. The forest and the tribals have remained in close communion with each other till the greedy claws of the present century began to trespass into their domain and to smash their life-long bond. The incentives of the modern world took this opportunity of the breakage and dragged these poor, helpless people out of the peaceful lap of the forest, so also man made laws and regulations which forbade them to glean the wealth of the forest. The activities of different sectors have brought the destruction to the dumb forestry and have cursed these poor people with exploitation, demoralization and deculturation. Members of the tribal communities who depended upon forest had also cultivation was mostly Jhum cultivation because, ownership upon plain land was divided among tribals and non-tribals and as the former group has an unfailing fascination for hill areas, the area of plain land was virtually less in their portion. Many tribal families were there who possessed small area of plain and reduced to marginal farmers. Jhum occupied a place, no less important in the lives of those also. Question of rehabilitation, in course of time, cropped up for the aforesaid three group of tribals. Those who had sufficient plain land to support them throughout the entire year was, however, outside the purview of this question.

Such a necessity did not arise suddenly. the tribals who depended upon forest lost their dependence upon it when the timber business was stopped due to partition of Bengal during 1947 and the only means of their livelihood became the cultivation of Jhum. The members of this group constitute the first category of tribals who need rehabilitation.

The second group of people are those whose main source of livelihood was jhum cultivation and dependence upon forest resource was rather secondary for them. such people had no plain land in their possession either because they had no urge to have it due to abundance of Jhum or they were little accustomed to plough cultivation. The third group of tribals are the most wretched of all. they belong to the group of marginal farmers. A portion of them resort to jhum cultivation only to make-up the deficit while the other portion are gradually alienating their property to either tribals and non-tribals for their uneconomic activities, extravagancy and increased burden of debt and becoming Jhumias although in the true sense they are not exactly Jhumias. this means that the tribals who have already become landless by their uneconomic activities or by transference of land to Non-tribals and tribals find no alternative employment than becoming jhumias. Jhum can be raised in the hills by self attempt and one need not take permission for doing the same and hence, the tribals find it easy to become jhumias. they are not jhumias in true sense because, they are all plough cultivators on the plain and sub-hills and it is their economic plight which has rendered them this status. In true sense, jhumias are they who from time out of their mind live on this type of livelihood than doing anything else. Jhum lies in the lowest strata of all economic activities and one falls back to it when all other acquired economic pursuits have been closed to him. They resort to Jhum as it is the only thing which is open before them. The picture of debt is peculiar in the hills and hence, an ordinary plough cultivator to-day are becoming jhumia tomorrow. their lands are not alienated by registration but the virtual ownership is transferred in such a way that the tribals are becoming labourers in their own fields. they toil from sunrise to sunset for the benefit of the money lenders who gave them money only to occupy their fields. The beneficial

order of the Administration which does not allow the tribals to sell their lands without the permission of the D.M. Happens to be a curse for them. Could they sell it without the order, they at least could get the requisite value of the land and thus could free them from debt in lieu of one or two kanis of land. But now, they do not approach the office for obtaining the permission as they have been fed up by the official paraphernalia and procrastination. They find it easy to go to village money lenders and mortgage their land even for an insignificant amount with exorbitant rate of interest which is generally counted on a cumulative basis thus making the loan amount quite fat within a short span of time. The ultimate consequence reduce such marginal farmers to landless tribal who either work as agricultural labourers or resort to Jhum. So, the statistics regarding the number of jhumia very so often. The more acute the foul play of indebtedness the more flexible is the number of jhumias.

So, we find that the question of rehabilitation concerns both the so called jhumias and landless tribal farmers.

The table below will give us a part picture of the whole situation.

Total population of Tribals	Number depend upon Jhum	Number of landless agriculture labours	Total of 2 and 3
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
3,60,070	1,75,000	8,231	1,83,231

This is a part picture because this does not include the marginal farmers who are gradually becoming landless and requiring rehabilitation. The total number would be much more bigger than what we have shown.

However, the Government of Tripura was all along conscious of the matter. The Maharaja of Tripura had enough foresight. He anticipated the probable exploitation of the tribals by other non-tribals and kept a vast area as tribal reserve wherein the tribals are only to live. Question of rehabilitation did not arise at that time and it would probably have not been arisen by now also had the tribal reserve areas remained exclusively for them. Notwithstanding Government's desire to keep them undisturbed

the influx of population caused infiltration and gave birth to all cumbrous situation.

Since the Administration began to deal with the problems of the tribals to bring them at par with the main stream of population; the programme of rehabilitation along with the problems which are inextricably connected with it, received sufficiently upper hand in the plan Scheme.

The programme was first taken up during the first half of the fifties and since then it progressed through experiments. Planners' view of the matter, however thorough it was, was proved to be somewhat different than what the tribals perceived it. Naturally, the outcome was that the colonies were abandoned. Such a phase at least opened our eye in the matter and extended the scope to understand the people, their nature and condition in the true perspective.

As regards the tribals who come under the scheme, they are not exactly wandering tribes. They are not nomads in true sense and hence, their psychology should also be understood as unlike the nomads. Given proper facility they are expected to change. They do not constantly move. Continuous movement with all the belongings does not depict their order of life. The Jhumias do move truly, but such movement with belongings happens after a cycle of ten years when they find no suitable slopes of hills in the vicinity where Jhum can be raised. Although the tribals have fascination for Jhum yet, hardly any tribal will prefer Jhum when sufficient plan land will be given at his disposal. The Jhumias of Tripura know the process of plough cultivation and they do not have any disliking for it. They are brought up in an economy of self sufficiency. They use hand woven clothes, use bamboo made furniture, use banana leaves instead of dishes, eat vegetables gathered from forests, and kindle bamboos instead of Oil.

As regards their nature, it is mostly manifested through their way of life. They were born in the environment of hill and therefore, they have an unfailing relation with the hill environment. We were astonished to see that many tribals preferred to construct their villages just on the peak of the hill even though, they were to collect water from beneath the hill which was at least three hundred feet below. Therefore, besides the scarcity of land, the Administration

has to consider more aspects while dealing with the schemes the problems in connection with it have all been evolved from those aspects. Let us, therefore, try to enlist few problems which we thought real in thinking with the programme.

a) Problems connected with the programme of rehabilitation are manifold. Besides other things of which endeavour will be made to focus them, the economic consideration abode on the peak. Tribals who are Jhumias generally do not show apathy towards the programme of rehabilitation but want plain land to settle down. Interview with the tribals revealed this fact. The problem before Administration has, therefore, been the scarcity of suitable plain land or so to say lunga land where the tribals can be rehabilitated. The land allotted are generally tilla land where one crop can be grown only in rainy season. Such a crop does not give them a yield which is higher than their previous Jhum yields. Besides this, tribals who are traditionally and habitually Jhuming find it some what inconvenient to plough and try to resort to their traditional cultivation. This is, however, not true for all. Habit of growing fruit garden and other cash crops has not yet grown in them. Habitually idle and without farsight the tribals of this group do not want to labour in systematic ways and convert the plots into fertile and whole time plots.

Such lunga is hardly available which can be reclaimed and allotted eventhough their interest lies in that. There is programme of acquisition of land trully, but that being too much expensive may retard the progress of the scheme if really followed.

Secondly, sufficient employment is not available in the vicinity of the tribal colonies for which the inmates practically hang during the seasons when they are not busy in fields. In their original homestead they could atleast cut forests legally or illegally, procure fuels from forests and sell those, but in a colony they do not get ample forest resource in exploit. Thus, want of employment potentiality has become a problem before the Administration because, attachment to the colonies is concomitant to it.

Thirdly, taking the landless cultivators under its purview, the problem has rather been heightened. As their number is increasing day by day, the task of rehabilitation is becoming heavy. The tribals who are in the border line of landless and landholder

that is to say, who possess only one or half acre of land are becoming landless for their debts. They are over head and ears in debts and their money lenders give them loan only for their fields without security. In a short period the amount becomes fat including the interest and the last resort to free them from debt becomes handing over their land to the lenders. They cannot always sell the fields for restriction but part with the virtual ownership and hence, the number of landless is increasing and thereby the radius of the problem is also extended as the landless also require further settlement. They cannot remain satisfied with single-crop-tilla-land and enter in their forgotten chapter of life and labour. Thus a landless becomes Jhumia.

Fourthly, the psychology of the Jhumias being still obscure, such a scheme is in the nature of pilot scheme for which permanent houses are not raised in the colonies. The repair of the houses is to be made by the inmates themselves and it has been observed that many do not take the pain to repair but escape in the deep forest and build houses in their own fashion. The goal has been that so long the houses are alright and so long the once supplied things given out of grants are not finished the inmates stay and the moment these are finished they without notice escape one day.

Fifthly, there is a dearth of such personnel who possess the imagination to deal with the tribals and their problems. A stereotyped outlook may not be able to find out the difficulties the tribals meet in their daily lives in a new place and eradicate those. A constant look into all affairs of the inmates and facing the problems on behalf of them in the initial stage requires qualified and experienced personnel. Only professional people can do the job. Charitable outlook has jeopardised the venture in many cases and nipped the success in the bud.

STAGE PROGRAMME OF REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation of the tribals in Tripura may be understood in two parts. Rehabilitation of the Jhumias in colonies and settlement of landless tribals in areas where land is available. Government of Tripura took-up the programme in these two ways. Out of the total population of 3,60,070 near about 1,75,000 are marked for

rehabilitation. The Constitute 35,000 families. The need for such a scheme was felt in the first plan itself and accordingly, a plan was drawn-up in the year 1953-54. Under the scheme, each family was allotted 5 acres of arable land over and above a grant of Rs. 500/- for purchasing the essential requirements to support cultivation. From this period up to 1955-56 the Jhumias were settled in sporadic way. Thereafter, it was felt that Jhumias should be settled in compact areas amidst essential facilities and the colonisation scheme was accordingly taken-up. Jhumia settlement programme in the true sense was taken-up during 1956-57 when on an experimental basis a tribal colony was set-up in Bislamganj. The success of the scheme made the Administration optimistic and decision was accordingly taken-to taken-up the scheme on an intensive scale in compact areas. Administration had a benevolent approach towards it. Besides posting of whole time staff in each colony; Jhumia grant, subsidy for land reclamation and terracing, facilities for irrigation, communication and subsidiary income were also provided with.

On the other side of the picture, there is the scheme for the settlement of the landless tribals found as agricultural labourers. The scheme was first taken-up in the year 1960-61 the last year of the second Five Year Plan. Under the scheme, each family is allotted two standard acres of land alongwith a grant of Rs. 300/- for purchase of materials essential to cultivation.

Beside these things, the administration had taken-up other programmes also. Acquisition of land, land reclamation, terrace cultivation, contour bunding, excavation of tanks, horticultural development and supply of seeds are among those. To increase the attachment to the colonies pigs and birds of improved variety are also supplied and to support the family expenditure their crafts are also duly attended to.

Again, there is a programme to absorb the Jhumias as forest villagers. Under this employment they get wages as per recommendation of the Central Wage Board for tea plantation and they are supposed to get Bonus @ Rs. 40/- and Rs. 25/- as per Bonus Act, 1963. Besides medical aid, benefit of housing and exploitation of forest in a subsidise for subsistence in the first 4 months @ Rs. 50/- per family.

ATTITUDE OF THE TRIBALS TOWARDS THE SCHEME

There are two means open before us to judge the attitude of the tribals who are brought or who would in future be brought under the Scheme. One is the opinion the notion they sustain in them and the other is their behaviour and activities which are obviously shaped out of their notion. If attitude is judged on the basis of opinion of the families of the colonies a correct picture cannot be had because, the inmates tell in favour of it although, their behaviour and activities do not always support it. So, in the midst of these two means of evaluation the attitude may be presumed as mixed. As the attitude is generally formed through their leaders, the leaders view of the matter should be taken into consideration. The leaders do not rule out the importance of this scheme but want that freedom to exploit the forest and freedom to make liquors should be retained on the plea that such things are part and parcel of tribal life and without these things the tribals cannot feel easy in te colonies. Their other consideration goes for a hilly surrounding and hence, colony beside other plain villages is not always liked by them. Many who have been tired of searching Jhum and are vexed of continuous shifting have already realised the necessity of such a scheme. Their attitude towards it is fair although the tribals who are jutdars & who could exploit the landless, are not in favour of it as it does not give them opportunity to exploit. Thus evolved is the task and responsibility for the welfare workers to bring the fair side of the scheme to book of the beneficiaries. A direct explanation of the entire picture of exploitation by the jotedars may create antagonism in a powerful section of tribals and hence, a slow and tactful approach is necessary. The ordinary tribes men should be given the information that they by reducing them to landless agriculture labour, gain less then what they are expected to gain when in a colony. The media of such communication should be constant individual approach and making case works.

Achievement :

Up to March, 1969, 59 colonies have been opened with an expenditure of Rs. 37,628 lakhs. These colonies are situated in the Sub-divisions. The achievements in respect of rehabilitation may be shown in the table nest page :-

Name of Sub-division	Total No. of families	No. of families settled upto March, 1969	No. yet to be settled
Sadar	3,232	2,236	996
Khowai	2,800	1,076	1,724
Kamalpur	2,610	1,796	820
Kailashahar	4,619	3,436	1,183
Dharmanagar	4,630	3,410	1,220
Sonamura	1,118	703	415
Udaipur	2,887	1,374	1,513
Amarpur	4,442	2,627	1,815

Again, under the scheme of Settlement of the landless tribal labourers, 3,556 families of the landless have been settled-up to March, 1969 with an expenditure of 10.068 lakhs.

Notwithstanding the figure an air of success should not prevail in the mind of the Administration, because, many colonies by this time have been abandoned for which the figure under the head "Yet to be settled" has been increased. The latest endeavour of the Administration which has been explicit in karbook under Amarapur Pilot Project is entirely a grant scheme with somewhat different approach. Reclaiming land for the inmates by their labour while paying them wage from their grant amount opens avenue for temporary employment trully but success can be evaluated only after a considerable period, the measure stick being the percentage of stay-at-home people. The scheme is encouraging 30,000 acres of land with a total outlay of 289.385 lakhs may be expected to do a lot.

PROBABLE SUGGESTIONS

We may recall our previous assertion that many suggestion on the basis of finding requires thorough and meticulous research which has yet to begin in our Directorate. But still, on the basis of our present appraisement we may endeavour to put forward few suggestions which will be subjected to varification before they are given any status.

The Principal problems of rehabilitation of the tribals in colonies do not lie in the vary implementation of the scheme but in creating such socio-economic conditions which will help them to settle there permanently. If sufficient attraction is not created towards their homes in the colonies they may try to escape when change is obtained. Considering this a good suggestion will be to extend the programme of horticulture. People do not form love for the things which are not created by them. The tribals do not find anything in the colonies which can impede them to leave. Tribal also have love for plants. And they should be encouraged and provided with the necessary know-how for undertaking afforestation programmes preferably in the plantation crops like oranges, Guave, eucalyptus, Lichhi, Mangoes etc. according to the elevation of land, rainfall, depth of soil and other crop requirement. If such fruit plants are planted, nursed and brought-up in the individual households than a time is sure to come when the tribals will find it difficult to leave their fruit bearing trees. We may have them to have such plants. Let them form love for their self grown plants and get the attraction to stay at home.

Secondly, our tribals are very much God fearing. This statement is probably true for all tribal communities irrespective of their religion-Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism. They believe in God and fear God. Although, in our secular state the Government is silent about the religion yet, as we hope, this can be exploited as a method of approach, If small temples are built in the colonies and a holy atmosphere is created amidst worship, prayer, dedication and promise, the tribals will certainly fear to leave the colony, at least to avoid the anger of God.

People may say that such an approach is not compatible with our secularism. Truly, difficulty may arise in building temple of a particular religion when there is mixed population. But the case with Tripura is a bit different. The tribals of Tripura are either Hindus, Christians or Buddhists and there are specified religious also where they live. The colonies are also accordingly set-up so that people may have common religious culture incompatible to others and hence, by temple one need not take it as a temple for the Hindus. It may be a church, a Visnu Mandir or a Vipara depending upon the religion of the inmates provided

they are not mixed religious people. This is an idea only and thinking mind may consider its pros and cons.

Thirdly, the colonization scheme should be organised as near to the original habitation of the Tribal as possible since the rehabilitation of the tribal families in far away colonies results in snatching away the tribal from both physical and social environments which are very dear to him. The social environment provides him protection and a sense of solidarity as every tribal family maintains a net work of social relations through local marriages and reciprocal visits and assistance in times of need. Hence rehabilitation of tribals to new colonies should involve minimum strain on these social relations as every tribal family prefers to survive or perish with the large social group of which it is one of the vital components.

Fourthly, the colony should invariably be built in ideal surrounding where the tribals can live undisturbed with all their peculiarities. Their houses should be such in which they are accustomed to live and limited freedom may be given for self employment in the forests. There are good number of plantations under the Forest Department. If such plantations are raised near the tribal colonies which will be exclusively of jack-fruit and mango etc. There would be ample fruits in those plantations which will attract them to live in the vicinity. These plants grow very easily in our hills and do not require much nursing. The tribals should be given the freedom to eat the fruits.

Fifthly, jhumia tribals have an unfailing relation with small brooks which are called 'Chherra' in local language. As the tribals of those interior parts of hills have an inextricable relation with the 'Soras', and as they have been brought-up with the music of those brooks, the colonies may be set-up beside such brooks or soras.

Sixthly, the important point which deserves the attention of the planner is that, the tribals who live in the vicinity of tea plantation areas are seem to have developed the art of plucking in a tea leaves. The male tribals are seen in spading and other unskilled work while the women are seen in plucking, grading, winnowing and cleaning work. Except managerial, mechanical and technical sides, the rest of the work in a tea plantation are

easy & unskilled. The tribals of Tripura can easily perform the jobs. The soil of Tripura is congenial for tea plantation and such tilla lands which are suitable for growing plantation are found abundantly. So, if tea plantations are grown by Government efforts, preferably under public sector near the tribal colonies or tea plantations are grown first and the tribals are given settlement in those plantations, the problem of employment will be tackled to a considerable extent. The jhumia tribals, it is expected, would probably like to live there because, besides employment throughout the entire seasons, the bulk of the labour force will be there constituted by the tribals. The amount which is allotted for such settlement scheme can thus be experimentally diverted to plantation. Government will be able to develop industry, create more employment and have a source which will fetch more income for the people and the State. This may solve the problem of unemployment of the tribals to a great extent and solve the problem of their rehabilitation too. Although the State shall have to invest more in the initial years yet there is probably nothing to hesitate as it will pay more dividend.

Seventhly, the part which the personnel play in a colony is no less important. Sufficiently qualified and experienced staff may be placed in the colonies with higher salaries. Agricultural personnel may be adequately trained to tackle agricultural problems in the colonies and if possible, Gram Sevaks may be preferred for posting in the colonies or otherwise, the colony supervisors may be trained in agriculture. Such persons are expected to not only tackle the day to day problems pertaining to 'Jhumias' daily lives but also to realise the matter in their true perspective. Many of our ventures may be nipped in the bud if our work are incongruous.

Few more considerations in the light suggestion made by the Study team on Tribal Development programme may also be kept in view while dealing with the colonisation Scheme.

i) The lands should be properly reclaimed and developed before allotment to individual families. The area allotted should be sufficient to maintain an average tribal family. It should also be ensured that the lands allotted are of a reasonable quality.

ii) In the employment of labour for the clearance of land, construction of houses, wells, approach roads and irrigation

works, preference should be given to the settlers who should be paid wages.

iii) There should be proper demarcation of land.

iv) Simultaneously with the allotment of land necessary formalities regarding registration in the names of the tribals or issue of title deeds in their favour should be completed. This is necessary as in the absence of rights of ownership, the inmates of the colony will not be in a position to utilise the facility for obtaining loans from Government for Agricultural and other productive purposes to which they would normally be eligible. They should on no account be compelled to seek the assistance of the money-lender to meet their credit needs.

v) The allotment of land should be followed soon after by the free supply of bullocks, agricultural implements, seeds fertilizers etc. The assistance should, as far as possible, be in kind. Where, however, the payment in the shape of grants is envisaged, care should be taken to ensure that the grants are actually utilised for the purpose for which they are given. There should be a proper system of follow-up to ensure that the facilities provided are availed of by the tribals and that they are not exploited by others.

vi) Adequate subsistence should be paid to the settlers till such time as they are able to raise the first crop on their fields. There should be provision for subsidiary occupations during the 'off' agricultural seasons.

vii) Adequate irrigation facilities should be ensured. While selecting sites for the colony those within the command of water-sources should be given preference.

viii) Colonies should be located preferably near forests. In fact, a patch of forest may be marked as village forest to meet the occasional requirements of the tribals. The management of the village forest should be made the responsibility of the inmates of the colony.

ix) The tribals advisory council/Board and the leaders of the tribal communities intended to be settled should be consulted in the selection of sites, layout and design of houses. If facilities are needed for the setting up of tribal deities or for the performance of traditional rites and rituals, necessary funds may be provided for the purpose to enable them to perform these rites.

x) Ownership and pattern of utilisation of land before colonisation should be taken into account to avoid conflict between the families settled and the others having interest in the land or living in the neighbouring areas.

xi) It is important to study the social customs and habits of the Tribal Communities proposed to be settled.

xii) The tribals of this territory are divided into different religious groups and hence, socio-religious difficulties might occur in circumstances when tribals of different religious groups are recklessly settled as close neighbours in the colonies. Although there is hardly any difference in their way of life still it is expected to give good result if tribals of similar tradition - either religious or social, or settled as neighbours.

xiii) Selection of families to be settled in the colony should be judicious and care should be taken to avoid settling at the same place traditionally hostile tribes or with history of inter-ethnic rivalries.

xiv) State attempt to provide all these things is surely encouraging but the saddest feature of the thing is that the facilities such as community centres, drinking water sources etc. which are already provided have hardly been exploited by the inmates. The reason for such a thing appears to be the want of social education and sanitary knowledge among the tribals.

xv) The tribals resettled in colonies should have common amenities like drinking water-supply, health centres, community houses, educational institutions, multipurpose cooperative societies, veterinary aids, etc.

In conclusion, we may express our hope to go deep into all the affairs of the jhumias and landless tribals in this territory.

There is regional variation of the problem. Such variation is again experienced among different tribal communities living in different parts of the State. We hope to study the problem as it is explicit in different regions and sectors in our next phase of research.

Our present suggestions are constructed from the hypothesis we formed by the secondary data and hence, they may be found useful or useless depending upon the validity of our hypothesis.

