



PANEL DISCUSSION
ON
ATROCITIES IN RED CORRIDOR AND LEFT WING EXTREMISM

Venue: Conference Hall, IIPA

Date: March 12, 2019

CENTRE OF TRIBAL RESEARCH AND EXPLORATION
(A Centre of Excellence under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India)
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NEW DELHI

INTRODUCTION

Shri. Prakash Singh, the Former IPS officer chaired the panel discussion organized by CoTREX on 12th March, 2019 from 12:00 pm. The panelists include Shri. Ram Niwas (Former IPS Officer), Shri. Rakesh Ranjan (NITI Aayog), and Brig. Harinder Walia (National Security Guard).

Shri. Prakash Singh (former IPS Officer) with his eminent knowledge and experience briefed about the topic as Red Corridor- An area affected by tribal violence. It has been countered for more than about 50 years. It all started from an unknown village at located at borders of India, Nepal and Bangladesh. A report from Ministry of rural development in which an expert group went into questioning Private individual, derelict revenue officials including deputy commissioners lawyers enemies of tribal community themselves have all joined hands to deprive the tribals. The process of restoration of land to the tribal people has worked against the tribals.

Shri. Ram Niwas spoke about the system of the tribals comprise of long culture and traditions. At the time of India independence act (1947) when India got independence the section 61A dealt with the states, there were 11 states at that time and section 61B dealt with princely states, and section 1C dealt with the tribals. The colonial rule also separately mentioned the tribal groups.

Brig. Harinder Walia noted the major reasons for the spread of LWE and red corridor as Social inequality, Low literacy rates, failure of Forest and tribal rights, and Gender inequality. He suggested that Social work intervention can help to resolve this issue of socio-economic imbalances.

Shri. Rakesh Ranjan briefed on what the government has in its mind? The government has mandated a very large sum of budget to improve the situation of tribals. The government had launched initiatives to check the most backward of districts in the country. The result showed about 67 districts in 3 states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. Also note that these areas are most affected by

Naxalites. He suggested that we can introduce a system of competition among the officers who do not perform their jobs sincerely, we could also provide house to house scheduled checks to maintain index of administration in the districts. We need to choose proper monitoring indicators to measure the development, we can also use the technology to facilitate effectiveness of the administration, involvement of the community is quite necessary.



PROCEEDINGS



DR. NUPUR TIWARY: Good morning. I have very senior dignitaries on the dais. This is a two-day programme under the Centre of Excellence for Tribal Research and Exploration. This has been commissioned by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the basic mandate is to look into the systematic training and action research for various schemes of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs which are running at present – concurrent evaluation and third party evaluation. One very important area is the tribal exploration where we are looking into the atrocities and Left wing extremism, and we are also adopting some districts as per the mandate given by the Ministry. So, we just organized this two-day programme. First day were Paper presentations where we had a number of academia coming from all over India and some young scholars and also some scholars coming from very interior areas who represent the tribal population. It was a whole-day programme Chaired by very eminent people and eminent faculties who have been into this tribal development. Today, it is two panel discussions that we are having. One is on ‘Atrocities in Red Corridor and Left Wing Extremism

and its Impact on Tribal Development and Tribal Traditions’, and the second panel will be on ‘Tribal Development and Tribal Traditions and also Cultural Expressions’ where we will have professors and also the activists coming from the field. I will just read out the names of the dignitaries sitting on the dais—

- ✚ Shri Prakash Singh Ji. He is a former IPS officer
- ✚ Shri Ram Niwas Ji. He is also a former IPS officer, DGP, Chhattisgarh.
- ✚ Shri Rakesh Ranjan Ji. He is an IPS officer and is from Niti Aayog
- ✚ Ms. Maja Daruwala. She is not here, and
- ✚ Brig. H.S. Walia. He is DIG, Training Centre of National Security Guard

The whole theme here is to deal with atrocities and this Panel is being chaired by Shri Prakash Singh Ji. I will just read out a few lines about him.

Prakash Singh Ji is a retired Indian Police Service officer who rose to the highest rank of Director-General of Police. He has served as Chief of the Border Security Force (BSF), Uttar Pradesh Police and Assam Police. He is considered as one of the best police officers for his role as key architect for police reforms in India. After his retirement from service in 1996, he filed a Public Interest

Litigation in Supreme Court of India. The landmark verdict of this PIL came in 2006 in which the Supreme Court has given specific directions to the Central and State Government to carry out structural changes in the police with a view to insulating it from extraneous pressures and making it accountable to the people. This is a very small profile I have read but every one knows him and people watch him on TV. For various programmes, his expertise is there. He will be chairing the session and the modalities will be designed and devised by him.



SHRI PRAKASH SINGH: Thank you, Dr. Nupur. It is a pleasure to be here and talking to, I would say, I suppose some members of the faculty of the IIPA itself and distinguished scholars from different walks of life. We are here to express our views on the impact of violence in the Red Corridor. Actually, there is nothing like Red Corridor but for our understanding, let us say areas affected by Naxals violence on tribal development and traditions - that is the subject.

“There is nothing like Red Corridor but for our understanding, let us say areas affected by Naxals violence on tribal development and traditions” – Shri Prakash Singh

Now, talking of violence, whose impact we are going to examine, we have been witnessing Naxals violence for the last more than 50 years now. Starting from a small village, almost an unknown village, at the tri-

junction of India, Nepal and what is now known as Bangladesh, the movement gradually, in ever-widening circle, spread to large areas of the country and it is amazing how a movement starts from one village and then, at its peak, it affected 220 districts in 20 States of the Union,. But that was the peak time in about 2010 or so. Since then, due to the massive deployment of security forces which were ordered by Mr. Chidambaram, the then Home Minister of India and the result of successful counter-insurgency operations, the movement has now shrunk to about 90 districts in 10 States of the Union only. The Government of India’s spokesmen have been claiming – I mean the Home Minister himself – that the movement is on its last legs and within another couple of years we will see the end of the movement. Not that I agree with this assessment but this is what the Government of India’s spokesmen have been claiming. Now, without going into what is the future of the movement that is

beyond the scope of our discussion today we are going to discuss the impact of whatever violence the Naxals movement has resulted in. It is a violence which has resulted from both sides, I mean, the Naxals have perpetrated acts of violence to spread their ideology and to bring about, as they said, a democratic revolution in the country, and the State Government has also perpetrated violence to put down this movement because they think that it is a challenge to the authority of the State and that violence could be countered by violence primarily and then the State violence has to be supplemented by socio-economic measures to address what was thought to be the grievances or the root causes which had led to the growth and spread of this movement.

“The movement is on its last legs and within another couple of years we will see the end of the movement”- Mr.P Chidambaram

So, what has been the impact of this violence? It is a very wide spectrum but

An official database of persons displaced by projects is not available. However, some unofficial studies, particularly by Dr. Walter Fernandes pegged this figure at around 60 million”

I am sure, the distinguished panelists here would throw light on the different aspects of this violence. I will just flag some of the more obvious manifestations of violence in the region, I would again repeat, violence from both the sides. One, you could say, it has led to displacement of large populations. When there is violence, I noticed particularly during the Salwa Judum area, when villagers were grouped and stationed in particular areas; they were uprooted from their habitats. There has been massive displacement of population, partly because of violence and partly because of certain development works undertaken in the Central Indian States, I mean, you are raising a dam, you are building a power plant or you have given mining leases and all that, also it includes development. All that also led to displacement of population. Unfortunately, there is no authentic estimate about the displacement of population, but in 2008, Government of India’s Planning Commission appointed an

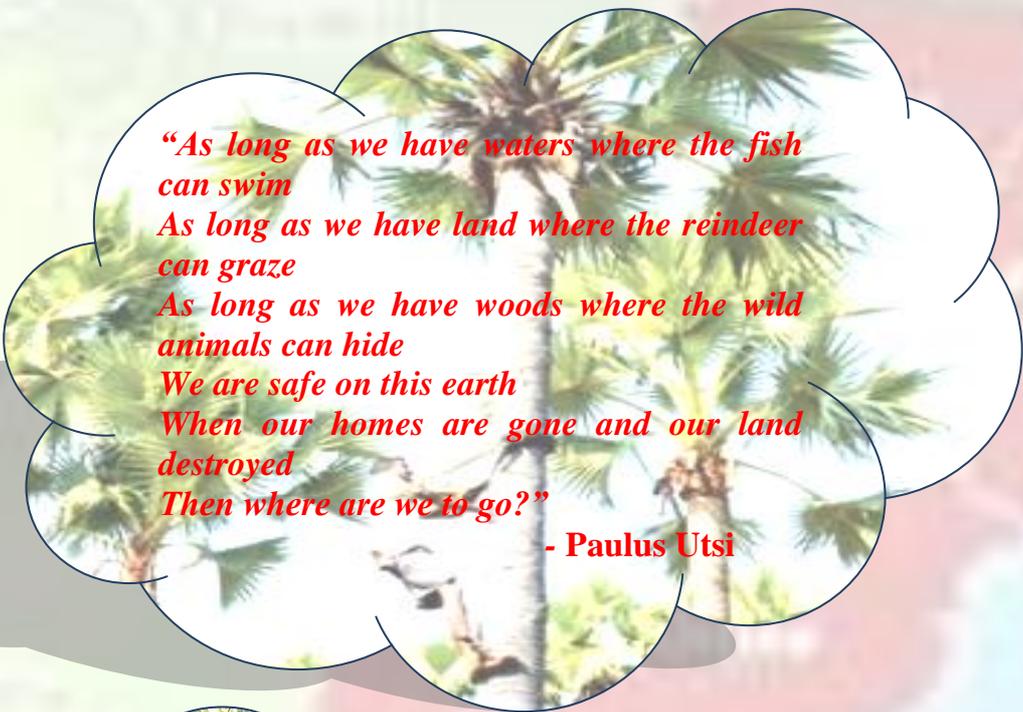
Expert Group, of which I also happened to be a member, and not that I came to this figure but in our report we mentioned it. It says: *“An official database of persons displaced by projects is not available. However, some unofficial studies, particularly by Dr. Walter Fernandes pegged this figure at around 60 million”* –mind you that is a huge number, six crores people being displaced between the years 1947 and 2004. It goes on to say, *“Out of this total displaced population, 40 per cent of the total displaced affected persons are tribals.”* Though they constitute only 8 per cent of the population but when it came to displacement, they are 40 per cent. So, that shows one of the more horrific manifestations of impact of violence, the huge displacement which has taken place.

Then, there is a question of land alienation. Now, land alienation is both the cause as well as the effect of the movement and the violence which has taken place. Basically it is more of a cause but it is also the effect. On the question of land alienation also, the picture is very heartrending. Here again, I have a report prepared by the Ministry of Rural Development. It was an Expert Group which went into the question. The paragraph is so heartrending, their findings. *It says, “In the process of alienating land from the tribals, it seems to the Expert Group as if private individuals, derelict Revenue Officers, including Deputy Commissioners, unscrupulous lawyers ignorant civil courts and*

even the better-off tribals themselves have all joined hands as it were to deprive the tribal communities of their land.” - mind you, he is blaming the entire system, from Deputy Commissioner downwards everyone is hand in glove in this process – “....and what is worse, the long arm of the State and the forces of the rule of law have failed to prevent their degradations”. Then, the second paragraph is also very moving. It says, “The process of restoration of the land of the tribal people, even when claims for restoration were filed, smacks of utter apathy and injustice. Indeed, the Expert Group finds that the process of restoration has worked against the tribals. A process that has left the tribal people totally exhausted” and you can note these words: “totally exhausted, impoverished and traumatized”. So, this is another terrible phenomenon that we have been witnessing.

About forest rights, I think the speakers will throw light on that, but how in the implementation of that, the Supreme Court recently ordered eviction of tribals whose claims had not been substantiated. Of course, the order has been stayed. On this, I will just read out a poem which I have recorded in my book on the subject also. The poet is Paulus Utsi –

I do not know which country he belongs to; I think some Latin-American poet. It is something like this, talking of the plight of tribal—



*“As long as we have waters where the fish
can swim
As long as we have land where the reindeer
can graze
As long as we have woods where the wild
animals can hide
We are safe on this earth
When our homes are gone and our land
destroyed
Then where are we to go?”*

- Paulus Utsi



So, this is the plight of tribals which we are witnessing in the areas affected by Naxals violence because when our homes are gone and our land destroyed, then where do we go and what do we do?

Apart from these manifestations, the Naxals violence has led to aggravation of poverty, it has meant low levels of literacy, it has meant very poor health facilities being available, it has also meant that some of the primitive tribal groups or the PTGs, as they are called, which were facing extinction, they are being pushed further towards

extinction.

That also is something which should cause us worry.

Naxals violence has led to:-

1. Aggravation of poverty
2. Low levels of literacy
3. Very poor health facilities
4. Facing extinction
5. Conversions into BAL SANGHAS
6. Presence of women in the Naxals

Another phenomenon which is happening under the garb of violence is conversions are also taking place. This is also a very terrible impact. There are child soldiers, *bal dastas*, *bal sanghams*, which have been raised by the Maoists. Ostensibly they will act as runners, couriers, watch boys, but actually these boys think that after this period of apprenticeship, as they grow up, as they become adults, they will be recruited in the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army. So, these large number of child soldiers - it was estimated some years back that their number is about 2,500 – are forcibly taken away from their families. Families are told that they have to contribute one child. So, these *Bal Sanghas* is another thing.

Then, there is the presence of women in the Naxals movement. This is also a very disturbing factor. The last estimate which I read was that about 40 per cent of the Naxals cadres are women and they are in the forefront of the fight. In almost all ambushes, there are some women who are participating in ambushing the security forces, and once you have large bodies of women, then a whole lot of other complications also happen. There have been any number of instances recorded by the police officers - I think Mr. Ram Niwas would be able to throw light on that - when these women came out with stories of their sexual exploitation and all that, stories to which the senior party cadres did not take action and things were just pushed under the carpet.

We are talking of impact of violence on tribal development and tradition. The point is what do we understand by development? I think we need to be clear about this concept; I hope other speakers will also throw light on this. Unfortunately, development today means better roads, more electricity, it also means perhaps a McDonalds outlet, availability of pizza,

“The attempts to make Adivasis part of the mainstream are attempts to destroy their culture that is driven by hard work, collective action and cooperation.”

malls, etc. These things also mean development. I was reading an article on *Mainstreaming Adivasis*. It appeared in *Indian Express* of 5th August, 2018. I will just read out:

• *“Whose development are we talking about, how much share of this development does a citizen enjoy, how much is the share of agricultural workers and laborers, this is ambiguous. At the foundation of this rapid development lie exploitation, oppression, dominance and inequality.”*

Is this the kind of development that we are trying to bring to the tribals? Again it says:

“The attempts to make Adivasis part of the mainstream are attempts to destroy their culture that is driven by hard work, collective action and cooperation.”

So, what is meant by development, I think that also needs to be understood. Here, I will make a brief mention of what Jawaharlal Nehru said, He is generally criticized these days but I think he came up with some very splendid enunciations in 1957. I will just read two sentences of his:

“People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage, in every way their own traditional arts and culture.”

And then in the next sentence he says:

“Tribal rights and land and forests should be protected.”

This he said as far back as 1957. Now, *whether they should be allowed to develop as per their own genius, as per their own traditions, as per their own culture or should we impose, not even Indian culture, I would say, Western culture on them? We are already getting sold out to Western culture in so many diverse ways.* So, this is also something that needs to be discussed. In this context, I will make a brief mention of a Declaration made by the United Nations in 2007. It was a Declaration on the rights of indigenous people. This Declaration set out the individual and collective rights of indigenous people as well as their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and other issues. The Declaration emphasizes the rights of indigenous people to maintain and strengthen – maintain and strengthen what – their own institutions, cultural needs and aspirations.

So, these are some of the points I have flagged and, I am sure, we will have a lot of useful discussion. The fact remains that violence has disturbed the tenor of life in the so-called Red Corridor areas or States which are affected by Naxals violence. It has caused some kind of turmoil in the tribal society. What kind of society will finally emerge - let us hope it happens one day – once peace is restored and normal life is resumed? But the child soldiers, the women who, instead of tilling the field or doing a folk dance or

engaging in some fine arts, have taken to fighting. They are part of the People's Liberation Guerilla Army. So, there is, as I said a lot of turmoil in the tribal society, in the areas affected by violence and it has definitely disturbed the tenor of their life. Their old traditions are gradually getting obliterated. Particularly the Christian converts among the tribals are against the old traditions and the old traditions are gradually, partly as a result of conversion but more as a result of the violence, getting obliterated. Weekly markets were such an integral part but in several areas, the weekly markets are no longer taking place. So, as I said, I have flagged these issues and I look forward to a lively discussion and presentation of views by the very experienced gentlemen that we have. Mr. Ram Niwas has firsthand experience of Chhattisgarh. He was DGP there. During one of my visits, he was good enough to take me to some of the interior places. Then, Mr. Rakesh Ranjan is there. He has a very strong economics background. He is presently with the Niti Aayog. Then, we have Brig. Harinder Walia. I was happy to learn that he is doing Ph.D. in Left Wing Extremism. So, we have very knowledgeable people and I look forward to their presentations.

I think we can take 12 to 15 minutes each and then leave at least 15 minutes for questions and answers at the end. Shall we start with Mr. Ram Niwas?



SHRI RAM NIWAS: Thank you very much, Sir. We were lucky enough to have the guidance of Sir in Chhattisgarh also when the deployment of forces was there and all actions and reactions were also there. We had a very excellent guidance and blessings of Sir also during that time. It is a very vast subject, covering all the things, so I will take a few points. If you go to the plight of the tribals or the system of the tribals, it is a long culture, from the ancient civilization up to this phase. If you go to the Indian Independence Act, 1947 when the country got independence, in section 6(1)(a), it is given how the States will be handled - there were 11 States at that time - then section 6(1)(b) dealt with the Princely States or *Riyasatein*, and then section 6(1)(c) was dealing with the tribals. So, it was such an important subject in the minds of the foreign rulers, the Britishers also that a specific mention was there to have separate constitutional guarantees and constitutional rights for the tribals also at that very time. Out of the 11 States, seven States came to India, two States went to Pakistan, and the remaining two, that is, Punjab and Bengal were bifurcated, and also 564 *Riyasatein* were merged with India. For the tribals also we have

three types of constitutional provisions, that is, for NEFA, for Baluchistan and for the Central India. So, for tribals in the Baluchistan area, tribals in the NEFA, Assam and North-Eastern area, and then tribals in Central India, three types of reports were submitted having different types of traditions, what types of culture we have to maintain, and then the Fifth Schedule came into the Indian Constitution. It is also a long story that how the reports were submitted and hurriedly they were submitted and they were accepted and then they were changed, whatever immediate political ramifications were there. Then, we have this Schedule V which deals with autonomy for the tribals. But I cannot understand what type of autonomy they were mentioning and what type of autonomy we are having. Till now we are unable to understand what our Constitution makers and the framers were thinking about that.

Now I will come to the general view of the tribals. In the tribal areas, eco system is there. We have the tribals, we have the forests, we have the minerals, we have the Naxals and we have the Government machinery.



Whatever residuary things may be there, the main things are tribals, forests, minerals and Naxals. Naxals are part of the Tribals. Our policy framers provided for the type of development we want in our police administration and in general administration also. Now, one thing is also there sociologically that if some tribals join, as we say, the mainstream, the tribal leaders and the tribal boys who come to the general scenario, they come to the services, they get higher education and then they also become part of the general society. They are not having interest in perpetuating their old tribal culture. They become part of the Western model and they also become part of the system that we should implement this model. So, this is a very sad scenario that whenever we come from that eco system, we also become part of the other side and we presume that they are also saying the same thing that if they come to the administration, they will say, we should also have hospitals and this type of things, just like AIIMS or just like a hospital in Raipur or any other place. The

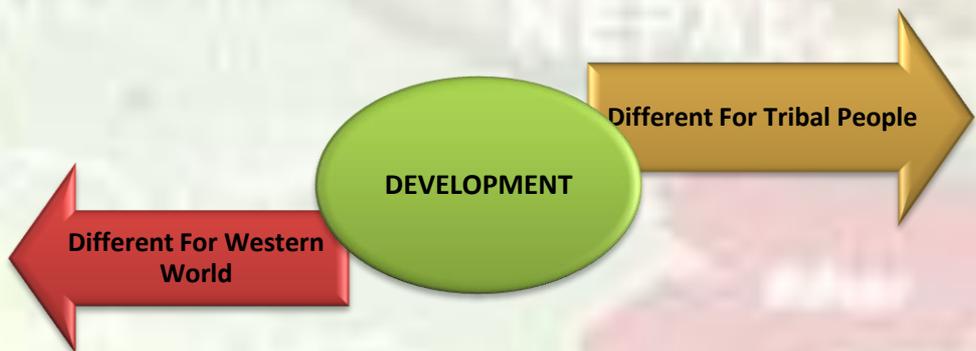
tribals are having their own medicinal plants and the old medicinal system. So, this is a general phenomenon which we observed during our time of the service in the tribal areas.

So, one thing is with regard to minerals and forests. In Jharkhand, all the policy makers say that all the minerals are there, whatever type of minerals we think. So, in Jharkhand or in some other States, the tribals are there, the forests are there and that is why the problem is there. Now, we have the old story that if a hen can give a golden egg, we can have daily one golden egg. But the hen owner is saying that why to have one golden egg a day, I can have all the golden eggs only in one day. That is the main problem for the tribal areas.

I can just give one example. In Bastar, Tatas had got 10,000 acres of land and SRS got 6,000 acres of land. They got it in 2003. Till now they have not done anything. Now, this Government came. I am not saying anything about any political party or about any government, but we can think that in tribal areas, the general people, other people, cannot own the land. If anybody wants land, he or she cannot get it, but how can the Tatas and the SRS and the Government does that? So, we can manipulate our laws and the rules as per our convenience. And they have not done anything in

that area for the last 15 or 16 years and the land has been given back to the tribals.

Sir has mentioned about the alienation of land. It is a very emotional issue. The person, who has not passed through this phase, cannot imagine the feelings of that person who was born on that land, who has tilled that land, who has acquired some fruits from that land, or who has watered that land. It is an emotional bonding. I have seen the same thing in Khargone district. When Narmada dam was constructed, 282 villages were submerged and then there was a big agitation for that. The new generation says okay, we have got the money and we can shift from that place, but the person who was born on that land and who has basically grown on that land, his emotions are different. So, this is the general view of the tribals. So, there is a reaction. Then we can say it is exploitation or we can say it is a reaction, we can say we have not developed. It is not the question of development. Development is a relative term. Whatever we may call as development, it may not be development for the Western world or it may not be development for the tribal area; it is a relative term.



It may be development for us; it may not be development for others. But the feeling in the tribal areas, as Sir has also mentioned and everybody says, is, there is a policy as to what is exploitation, it should not be there, we should stop it, it is the duty of the Government machinery also. We should take minerals but it should be done in an ecological manner. It should not be that we have all the big factories and the big plants, whereby the whole ecological system is disturbed. So, this is one point. We should take tribals and Naxals as one and the same. But if we want to control the Naxals, we have to take other factors also into account. Naxals are not our enemies. We are fighting with our own people. I will quote one example. When we carried out an operation in Narayanpur district in Abujhmad area, we deployed 4,000 people and many IPS officers and at least 105 senior officers, and that operation went on for 21 days. We had coordinated which party will pass through

which range and then they will cover the entire area. We covered nearly 75 per cent of the total area. At that time, Mr. K. Vijay Kumar was the DG, CRPF, who is presently Adviser to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, and I was DGP at that time. We went to receive the forces. Deployment of such a large number of Forces was a learning experience for me also. A few tribal boys were caught and the forces brought those boys with them. I asked one of the boys who had come with the Forces to please sit there. We offered him a cup of tea. He had traveled with the Forces during the last two and a half days and the Forces provided food and other eatables to him also. Then we asked him, 'What is your opinion about the Forces? Are you happy with the Forces because they have taken care of you during the last two and a half days?' His reaction was that 'They are our enemies. Even though they have given me food etc. but I will not have any regard for them'. See his revenge, his voice, the expression on his face in spite of the fact that he was given food and his was given every facility. It is not his fault because over the years the Naxals have brainwashed their mind that these people are our enemies. So, this type of continuous brainwashing is also there in that area. We should openly accept that it is the failure of the Government machinery also because whenever there is violence, everybody shifts to the towns and every State official shifts to the district headquarters -

forest guard, *patwari*, police constable and every other Government machinery. So, basically it has become a vacuum for the Naxals to act as per their choice. So, this is one thing which I would like to share with you.

The exploitation theory is also a relative term that sometimes the Government officials are doing their best but the other party is thinking that it is their exploitation. So, it is also a relative term. Government machinery is also trying their best but sometimes the people's expectations are also very high that they should get this thing and that thing and that thing. I will quote one story here. When I was IGP, Surguja, there was one Naxalite, Mandeep. He was lodged in the Surguja jail. I was also alone, so, I had talk with him in ten meetings. I asked him, 'Why don't you come to the normal life?' Then he was explaining so many grievances. Slowly and slowly, my DGP met him and then His Excellence, the Governor also met him and ultimately his opinion changed and he came back to the mainstream, and then he was instrumental in bringing the Naxals' violence down in that area. Ultimately it took us six to seven months to bring it down.

My second point is that the tribals' view is entirely different and we should respect their views, that is, the natural world view of the

tribals that whatever they are thinking, we should respect their thinking, their emotions and their feelings.

Then, the third point is the policy makers from the capital of the country, from the capital of the State and from the district to the *Tehsil* headquarters. In Bastar, generally we have the opposite view. Some of our friends, when we interact with them in Bastar and those areas, they say ‘the cultural arrogance of the Raisina Hills’. They quote this statement that in Raisina Hills, they think that everything is run from this place and whatever they think is correct, and not the feelings of the North-East, feelings of the Central India tribals or feelings of any other people. So, this point is also relevant because it may be my best thinking at this place, but if you go to the field for the implementation part, that may be a separate one. So, I will request the policy makers that if they can have interaction with the feelings of the people at that place, that will be helpful.

So, this is a very general view of the tribals. Then, the tribal world view, then, the policy makers’ view and how to implement it, that is also practical. Sometimes we have the best scheme but the implementation part becomes very difficult. At Salwa Judum - I will take only one minute - everybody says that in Delhi whoever I met, everybody said it was this thing or it was that thing. So many

opinions were there. But there was no other option with us except to implement that thing. That was the only way by



which we could control Naxals movement. Otherwise we were unable to enter into this. There were so many fall-outs of Salwa Judum. Because it was a police operation, so, so many casualties, so many bad things and so many other things were there. But it was a necessary evil. Sometimes if we have to operate the cancerous part, some part we have to lose. So, Salwa Judum was a necessary evil.

So, thank you very much, Sir, for giving me this opportunity. It is such a long subject but whatever points I have made, I think our learned scholars will think over them. Thank you very much.

SHRI PRAKASH SINGH: Thank you, Mr. Ram Niwas. May I now request Brig. Harinder Walia to express his views on the subject, 'What kind of impact violence is having on the social life and the cultural traditions of the tribals'? Brig. Walia.



BRIG. HARINDER WALIA: Thank you, Chair, and thank you Dr. Nupur for giving me this opportunity to be here this afternoon amongst you all. Within the parameters of the topic for the panel discussion, that is, the atrocities in the Red Corridor and Left Wing extremism, I will try to dwell upon certain socio-economic imbalances - we all understand what all is the problem but on certain social-economic imbalances - that are persisting and which are driving the atrocities and which are driving the movement. I will also like to say a few things about how social work interventions can help in overcoming these imbalances, thus helping the national effort towards reducing and eliminating Left Wing extremism.

Ladies and gentlemen, you are aware, you have been discussing this, and you have been studying this as to what are the root causes over the past fifty years', ever since the Naxalbari incident happened, how this movement has grown into such a big thing. You are also aware that in the past one decade or so, with various measures, schemes and acts that the Government has undertaken, for example, the Atrocities Prevention Act of 1989 etc., the

situation has come down and is well under control, as the hon. Chair has said. However, how to eradicate it or how to make the situation more conducive is what we need to put our heads together on?

Some of the factors - I will not dwell on all the causes but some of the socio-economic imbalances - that I talk of, first is social inequality. You are all well aware that when inequality in any society reaches a certain point or a threshold, that is where it is no longer acceptable and it leads to widespread unrest. Now the tribals have been facing this social inequality, indignity at the hands of others, whether they are the land owners or as they perceive against the established authorities. Unless these perceptions are removed, and those perceptions will only be removed when they find that their requirements on ground are being met, this problem of social inequality is not going to change. We have abolished the *zamindari* system. Fine! But we still have upper class people, especially in Central India, totally exploiting the poor and the landless. So, this is something which is one of the main causes and needs to be addressed in the right earnest.

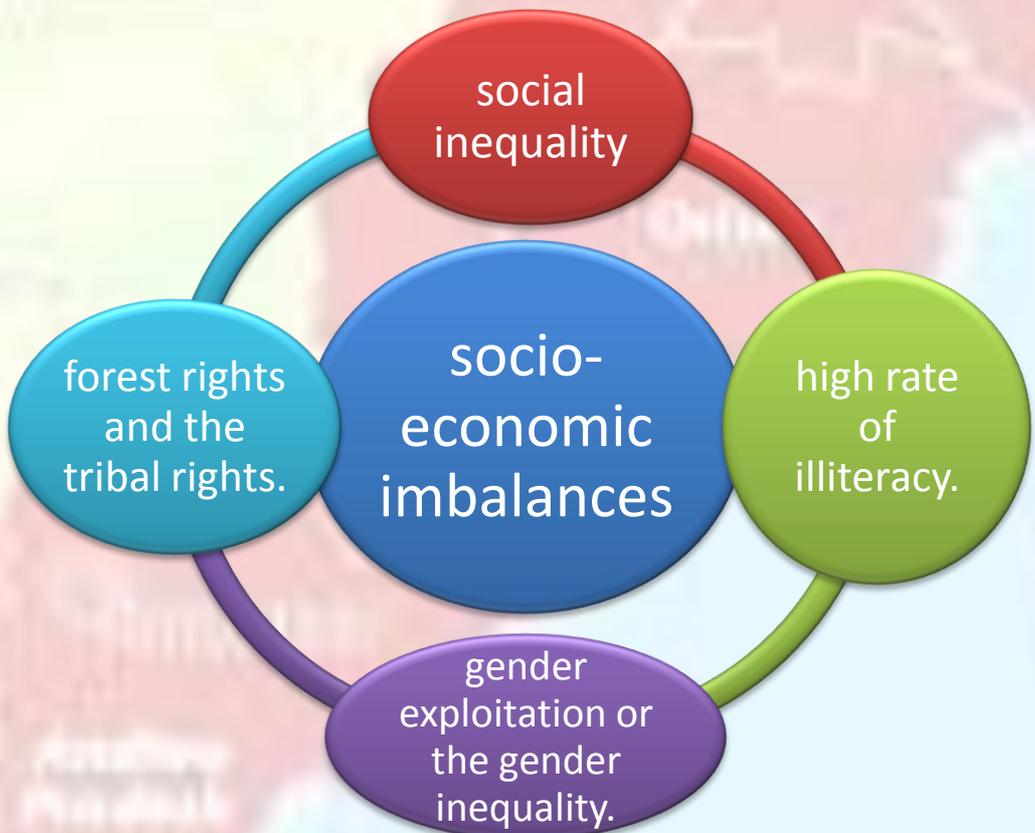
The second factor I would like to dwell on is the high rate of illiteracy. While national statistics are showing that our literacy rates are improving, however the literacy rates of the tribals and the

downtrodden are not rising as they should have risen along with the other privileged classes. Now, if you are not literate, if the tribals or the poor or the landless do not have education, simply they are failing to take advantage of the opportunities that the development in the country is affording. So, this is the second thing which needs to be addressed. We all understand it but again it has to be addressed in the right earnest.

The third thing that I would like to dwell on – of course, it has already been covered in a big way - is the forest rights and the tribal rights. Now, gentlemen, the problem is that the tribals perceive that whether it is the Forest Act or the draft forest policies etc., they perceive these as if these have been made to protect the forest wealth from the forest dwellers, that is, themselves. They perceive it that way. They feel that these policies and these Acts are primarily meant to protect the forest produce etc. from the actual owners or the actual forest dwellers and not from the unscrupulous contractors who are actually taking all the benefits, whether it is transshipping those forest produce and selling them in a big way with huge profit margin or whether it is deforestation etc. So, unless this is set right, I am afraid, the Forest Acts and the forest policies are not going to help in the way that the nation is looking at.

Shri Prakash Singh mentioned about the forced displacement. That is a very big factor which is leading to alienation of the tribals, the *Adivasis* and the Scheduled Castes. Now, whether this is for earning better livelihood, whether it is to live with dignity or whether it is forced displacement, this is one major factor which is alienating these people, forcing them to support the Naxals and forcing them even to join the Naxals cadres.

The last point that I would like to make again is a well-understood point but it is the gender exploitation or the gender



inequality. Now, whether it is exploitation of the women by the people who are the haves, by the upper class people, by the people who have money, sometimes even by the people who are the fossils or very rampant by the Naxals cadres themselves. Unless we address this gender exploitation, I am afraid; the problem is not going to end very soon.

Having said all this, which, to my mind, are the basic factors of social and somewhat economic imbalance, what do we do about it? We are all aware of so many schemes which are there. The Governments have pumped in schemes after schemes and, of course, they have had lot of benefits. However, the problem is implementation.

Unless the schemes get implemented and benefit the right people who are supposed to be the rightful targets, they are not producing the desired results. We all understand what the problem in implementation of these schemes is. To my mind, it is sincerity, of course, and also accountability. So, to that one thing that I have been thinking of and which can be of real help is a very intense social work intervention. Now, trained professional social workers can really help in this regard. We all understand what community development is. Trained professional social workers can be very good interface between the tribals, between the downtrodden,

between the poor and the local bodies, the *Panchayats* and the district level administration, they can help in raising the awareness level of the people, whether it is about population control measures, whether it is about gender protection, whether it is about the various schemes that they can make use of. Apart from raising their awareness, they can also help in guiding the people to make the best resource utilization. The resources are there, the schemes are there, so, social work intervention.

There is another thing which is already on but is not happening. We were discussing it today. I have seen so many self-help groups being formed but they are formed and after one or odd years, this is allowed. But if social work intervention is taken in the correct manner, these kind of self-help groups can really succeed. They will firstly tell the target population what is to be done and how to run the projects. Secondly, they will act as *de facto* monitors and they will also act as forces which will force the officials to perform where they have to. If this is done, gentlemen, I think these are the efforts that are needed for eradication of Left Wing extremism, which, in turn, will happen when the atrocities and the perceived deprivation of the tribals and the *Adivasis* and the Scheduled Castes end.

I think if these kind of steps are taken, we will move towards our aim of having our country, our nation free of Left Wing extremism sooner than later. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

SHRI PRAKASH SINGH: Thank you, Brig. Walia. May I now request Mr. Rakesh Ranjan, a former police officer, an economist, and presently associated with Niti Aayog, to throw light on the dimensions of the problem, particularly the economic and the social dimensions.

If social work intervention is taken in the correct manner, these kind of self-help groups can really help succeed..

- 1. firstly tell the target population*
- 2. will act as de facto monitors*
- 3. act as forces which will force the officials to perform*

SHRI RAKESH RANJAN: Good afternoon to all of you. May I start with two personal notes? The first is that when Nupur said that I have to get invited, I said who all are coming? She said Prakash Singh Sahib will Chair it. So, I said, fine, I will come because I am a great fan of him and I think we see him as a role model in police service. So, I came to this seminar. The added advantage was when she said that lot of very intelligent people; good scholars are coming to hear me. So, it is a matter of challenge as well, but I said, fine, let me take this opportunity to speak.

The second one, which is again very personal, is that my own brother runs an NGO in Kanker district, and his wife, who is a tribal leader in Chhattisgarh, looks and works for forest rights. If I take the words of Ram Niwas Sir, it somewhere represents, what is known as, the arrogance of Raisina Hills. So, I think we generally have a huge debate with each other. One day my sister-in-law told me that 'In Dindori district, you are making a tiger reserve which is largely a Baiga reserve. Baiga tribe people are saying that in our reserve tigers are being looked after but Baiga tribe people are nowhere. So, what is more important for you, tiger or Baiga tribe? That is question number one.

In this brief interaction with you, I would like to be very provocative because I think all of you are aware of the problems involved in this and whether we look at the problem from an angle that can we provide some solution or not? So, I will, for first four or five minutes, behave like a Government spokesman and will tell you what the Government is doing and after that I will raise some of the issues because we are somewhere in between. Our Home Minister has taken a view that within two or three years, Naxalites may be on their last leg or something like that. I do not think Prakash Singh Saheb has said exactly that that he is not agreeing that the situation is completely under control, but at the same time, he raised some very fundamental issues and I want this particular

august gathering to take a view on this matter that what exactly we mean by development, what have we done, have we done nothing on this or do we have to do something and who will have to do? How long are we going to be a very paternalistic kind of thing that we will provide, or from Delhi or from Raipur or from Ranchi, who will provide for, what is known as, tribal development and all these things?

Let me first speak like a Government spokesman what the Government has in mind. *Their exists in the Budget, what is known as, the*

Their exists in the Budget, what is known as, the Tribal Sub-plan. Government of India, in its wisdom, has mandated a very decent percentage of the Government Budget that they should be ordinarily spent on the areas which are tribal-dominated.

Tribal Sub-plan. It is never written in newspapers, sometimes only it comes what are SC/ST Sub-plan and Tribal Sub-plan. The fact remains that the Government of India, in its wisdom, has mandated a very decent percentage of the Government Budget that they should be ordinarily spent on the areas which are tribal-dominated. Now, the question is, and that is the question with the people who look after the media and look after the Constitution of the nation, there is hardly any reporting on this kind of thing because year after

year, Ministries have to look at this thing that just after the third quarter of the Budget, what happens is that most of the Ministries will say that they have not been able to spend this money and, therefore, some kind of exemption is taken. Why is it that it makes no national news at all? It does not make any news that why the money meant for the budget where we wanted to have an alignment to the direction to the tribal areas could not be spent.

The second one is I will take you to an example. What the Government of India recently tried was that let us look at the most backward districts, around 110 to 120. This exercise we did in Niti Aayog where we used data, and the result came which is not surprising to most of you but it was surprising to many of my superiors. Around 67 districts fell in three States of India, out of the 100 most backward districts. They were Bihar, U.P. and Madhya Pradesh. Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh also contributed quite heavily in this particular thing. Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs has now identified 35 districts out of 99 or something, which they feel that these are the districts which, in the last five years, have either seen the violence of the Naxals or are still affected by the threat of the Naxals. So, the Naxals-affected. Influence zone is somewhat stronger than that and have a particular programme for this, which is the successor of Integrated Action Plan where some kind of money is provided to the district

administration which comprises of the District Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police and the District Forest Officer, and to provide some kind of local work. It is not governed by Delhi that what work you are supposed to do, it is supposed to come out from the ground that what work you are supposed to take up, and this is the money, around Rs.30 crore or something per year. We attempted a particular programme, what we call Aspirational Districts Programme in which finally these 35 districts from the Left Wing extremism and we picked up around 80 districts, so, 115 districts, and we felt that these are some of the poor districts in India, so let us try and improve their governance structure because in our view, money is not a major constraint, it is the failure of the governance in these kind of pockets which creates problem. Now, the issue that Dr. Prakash Singh has raised is what exactly you mean by governance? Let me see my proposition to this. I think, Sir, we can disagree on this but let us have this proposition. What we did was, we said, look, what matters to people is, let us say, health, nutrition and Education. Ram Niwas Saheb has said that education is one of them. School education is there because it is in our greatness that we have right to school. What we have done is that we have ensured that children have reached school but what we have done is which almost looks like the cost of that, which we have not been able to improve the learning outcome the way we

wanted to improve. It has not improved at all. In think in PESA, we came around 72 out of 73. Kazakhstan was probably the last and he also protested. In our *Pratham* ranking, we keep on having the kind of very sobering data pertaining to the learning, like in class V; more than 50 per cent of the students are not able to read the class II textbooks of their own mother tongue. This happens quite regularly. It comes in every two years, the *Pratham* thing. So, what we attempted was that we said, look, we will take around 49 indicators having 81 data points. We spoke to many people. They said, perhaps the most important thing is health, nutrition and education; sixty per cent of the weightage we will give to this particular thing. There are a large number of indicators. Then come agriculture and water resource management, financial skill and financial inclusion, skill development, and some of the basic infrastructure. We created this particular matrix and requested around 115 District Magistrates that you fill up your data. The first you will be surprised what came. Why I am flagging this issue is that if we want to improve something what is it, what template of governance that we need to pick up. This makes some hint to it. One of the indicators is how many women have either the aided delivery or the institutional delivery. That is the first indicator. This came to us initially 700 per cent, 500 per cent, some districts around 100 per cent, 120 per cent, and we said this is a statistical absurdity. But they said, look, the

persons who estimate the births in our district are different people and the persons who record the people who have arrived at the hospital or have the aided delivery are different people. So, that does not match. Therefore, we are having around 500 per cent of the institutional deliveries in a district. Now, the question that we are trying to say is that slowly, in the course of around 10 to 12 months, we have been able to rationalize this particular kind of the data that is being generated by the district administration. Of course, we are helped by the Tata Trust and Gates Foundation and they are doing this survey. They are going to the households and asking them, look, is there any improvement in the health, are the *Aanganwadi* workers coming to you four times? You must have ante-natal check four times. That is what the Government scheme says and that is what the nutritional experts tell you. Most of the deaths that take place, of the child as well as of the mother, are on the day of the birth. So, that can be handled if we have four ante-natal visits by the ANM workers. Now what we are doing is that we are requesting the District Magistrate that they are on a competition with 115 of yours. We are telling them that their percentage is this much; their region's percentage is this much, which is better than theirs, and the national percentage is this much. This has led to improvement. I am not saying everything is hunky-dory because, as I said, first five minutes I will tell you as a Government

spokesman that what is being done. You may take a position that by *development we mean that we have to ask the people and we need not have an ANM visit, we need not have immunization but it has happened that in many of the villages that we have seen, there is a large amount of resistance from the people that they do not want to get immunized because they say that immunization creates some problems for them.* I think there is a long-standing tradition of their not getting immunized or there is a strange kind of medical belief, and I think in many of them not very correct, that immunization may be detrimental to them. But the fact remains that all over the country we have seen that immunization makes difference. So, if it is that immunization makes a difference, let us pose this question that if a group of tribals feels that they must not get immunized, what should we do because that is the question? Is that a development or that is not a development? Do we push it or do we not push it? Therefore, in our limited view, what we feel is that there are some broad indicators which are good for the human beings, which we can ask the tribal people. I mean, it is something that if I want to live longer, in our assumption, it is good for human being. If I want to live a healthier life, if I do not want the children to die, it is good for human being. If we want to believe in this particular logic, it is possible. If we want a good learning outcome, it is good for human being. If we want to come to this kind of thing,

it is still possible to draw a dashboard on which you can look at that these are the things. We maintain the tradition and nobody is questioning the tradition. The question that we are asking is, are there certain advantages of the modern civilization which we must extend to tribals or not? That is the question that we are asking. I leave it to you to take a view on that. There are certain things which are beneficial to every human being. If we pick the indicators like that and try improving the governance, on the basis of that, try name and shame the people. A District Magistrate, who is not doing his work, let us name him. I always say Mewat district, which is having a large number of population from the Muslim community, turned out to be the last in our assessment. When we did the assessment in Mewat district, we lost Mewat among all the 150 districts that we have taken, and this has led to major thinking and churning in Mewat that why health, nutrition and education are in such a poor state? So, the governance tool, in my opinion, is that try choose correct monitoring framework which is correct indicator and after that try make the people compete with each other. Fund is not a difficulty because there are a good number of funds which are available to many of the areas. In a district, on an average, Rs.400 crore fund flows. I do not think fund is a major issue in improving the situation. But the point that I am trying to make is that it is the question of who chooses the correct monitoring indicator. If you

choose the monitoring indicator, there is a problem. If you bring the arrogance of Raisina Hill and say that these are the indicators that you have to do, then I can

We attempted to make police effectiveness index where we said we will have two aspects that we may take.

- The first aspect is what resources have been provided to the police because police cannot operate in vacuum?
- The second one we will say is that what is the interface

understand there is a problem. Ask the local people, ask the local district administration what do you think is the correct thing. Make a dashboard and please compete with others. The same thing I would say about police. Ram Niwas Sir was saying exactly the same thing in the room that one Chief Minister says this is my best SP, the other Chief Minister says no, this is my worst SP. So, the question is where is your rational basis? So, why don't we create an indicator for the police effectiveness? Once in the meeting, Sir, we attempted to make police effectiveness index where we said we will have two aspects that we may take. The first aspect is what resources have been provided to the police because police cannot operate in vacuum? The second one we will say is that what is the interface with the people? I mean, they take how effective is the police or how good is the police vis-à-vis public. I mean, if somebody does the atrocities, their index should go drastically

down. If some of the district administrations or the Chief Ministers are not providing vehicle to the police, their things would go drastically down. Sir, we have created an index. I have sent it to the Home Ministry but the Home Ministry is taking its own time to look into this. But the idea will be that choose the correct monitoring indicators.

One point which Mr. Walia said and I am entirely in full agreement with that, is that in our governance structure, there is one major lacuna. At the last mile connectivity, I do not think that we have been doing wonderful things. You talk to the BDO and try telling him or you talk to a local teacher or a District Education Officer or look at the Block Education Officer and speak to him and say that in your school no work is done. He will look at you surprisingly and say, yes Sir, this school is not good. It will never come to him or her that something has to be done to improve it. Now, there are two methods of doing it. One is that use technology to do that. This present

Government has a lot of faith on technology that by doing geo tagging, by tweeting, by twisting, we can shame

- One is technology that can definitely allow us to handle some of the problems that we feel at the cutting edge level.
- The other is the involvement of the community.

the teacher, we can do this, and we can do that. That may be a good thing to do; I am not saying it is not good. So, one is technology that can definitely allow us to handle some of the problems that we feel at the cutting edge level. The other is the involvement of the community. As a block level government, I do not think you have the kind of wherewithal to go to everybody. I can have a competition-based system but then what will happen is, the Inspector will go and ask the ANM worker that look, if you do not show four visits, then your district will go down in the competition. So, what you do is that you show four visits. So, if you push certain things and try reward the district or try reward the people on the basis of performance in terms of competition, the problem of fudging of the data starts. So, the question that I ask, and the question is from the scholars from the civil society, from others, is, why don't we create the index, why don't we report this index, why don't we name and shame the district, if there are atrocities, why don't we write and write and write against it? There are people who are there to look into this. So, I do not think we have raised enough heat on this. We do not have a rational basis. A beginning can always be made. In Aspirational Districts Programme, we have done this beginning for the district. I am sure, other people have also tried, but this time we are trying with much greater vigor. As a Government spokesman I say that. But at the

same time, I feel that it is possible to improve the governance with the given resources only if we put our system correct.

That is all, Sir. Thank you.

SHRI PRAKASH SINGH: Thank you, Mr. Rakesh Ranjan. We have heard three valuable presentations. We have heard Mr. Ram Niwas talking of his experience in Abujmad, telling us how tribal children get brainwashed and even when they are looked after by the security forces, they still consider them their enemies. He was absolutely bang on target when he said that we must respect the thinking of the tribals on different issues. In this context, he also drew attention to, and I think very rightly, what people in the field consider cultural arrogance of Raisina Hills. Sitting here in Delhi, in North Block and South Block, people do not really get to understand the problems of the tribal areas. Recently somebody told me that Sir, just see, this person is working as Joint Secretary, Tribal Affairs in the Home Ministry and till today he has not seen any State affected by Left Wing extremism. He has never gone on the ground and he is working as Joint Secretary! This is how the Government is running the administration. Anyway, I just listened to him. I am not part of the governance now, so, I just took note of it.

About Salwa Judum, I did not speak at length but I had the occasion and the opportunity to study this on ground and I felt that it was a genuine movement which is maligned by the human rights groups. The fact of the matter is that the NHRC had commissioned a study on Salwa Judum and they praised it as a people's movement against the Maoist movement. It is an established principle of counter insurgency that if there is insurgency, then apart from whatever measures you take at the force level, at the Government level, at the administrative level, people must be with you, people must rise against the forces of insurgency. Once that happens, then the insurgency is going to be knocked out, and Salwa Judum was an attempt to mobilize people against Naxals violence. But human rights groups have maligned it and the Supreme Court, I am sorry to say, played into their hands and they said no, this has to be abolished.

Brig. Walia drew our attention to socio-economic imbalances and he made pointed references to inequality, illiteracy and gender exploitation. These factors are definitely valid but I would say that the causes of Naxals movement go much deeper because we have these problems in, I would say, even a place like Eastern U.P., which is very backward. We have inequality, we have illiteracy but then you do not have Naxals movement. Some more additional inputs are required for that. I would not have time to go into the

details of it. But he was absolutely right when he said that some kinds of monitors at the field level are required, provided we appoint them properly because here all appointments get vitiated. We know how difficult it has been to recruit even a constable by a transparent process. In U.P. it became an industry. I mean, the people in power then, not the present Government, but the people then made it that okay, you will have to pay Rs. four lakh, or okay, you belong to our caste, so paying Rs.2 lakh also will do. So, if you take Rs.2 lakh, Rs.3 lakh or Rs.4 lakh from one candidate like this and if you are recruiting 20, 30 or 40 thousand people, then you just calculate and see how many thousands of crores of rupees scandal it was. So, appoint of monitors can be helpful but the point is what kind of monitors we have, who is going to ensure that they are good monitors? It is a huge problem. See, even *Lokpal* is not getting appointed. Everyone thinks that if the *Lokpal* is to be appointed, he should be our man. In State Security Commission, Supreme Court said you take 50 per cent from the civil society who are honest, who have had an unblemished record, and half you take from the Government. Now, those who are being taken from the civil society, they are the ones who have been sycophants of the Government. So, the matter ended there itself. Then where will the objectivity come from? So, appointment of monitors is theoretically a good concept but how do we go about it?

Mr. Rakesh Ranjan educated us about the Tribal Sub-plan. He talked about the Integrated Action Plan. Integrated Action Plan really worked well on the ground. I am aware of it. If we have a dedicated team of District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and the District Forest Officer, they were given funds and they were told 'You have to develop your area with this fund'. There was no difficulty. They had got the money. Three persons were sitting and between the three, they balanced each other and the money was properly utilized.

Mr. Rakesh Ranjan raised a very pertinent point that which aspects of civilization should be extended to tribal areas. Now, this is a subject on whom there can be long discussion as to which aspects of modernity or civilization or progress, as we call it, should be extended to the tribal areas. I will just give a small anecdote from my own experience. I was in the interior areas of Jharkhand and I was talking to a group of tribals. It was a PTG group which is generally on the verge of extinction. I talked to them at length. They were talking in Gondi. Of course, I had a proposal with me. This is a long story but I will cut that long story short. the sum and substance of that man who was talking to me said: "Sir, see, we do not want anything else, we just want a school and a hospital, school so that our child gets education there, and hospital because, he said, Sir, see, when someone in our family falls sick, what we do is we

lay him on a cot, four persons lift him on their shoulders and then take him to the nearest hospital. Sometimes we keep walking till evening but we are not able to reach the hospital. Then we spend the night in some village and next day again we start moving. Often it so happens that by the time we reach the hospital, that person has died. For two days we have been walking with that man on our shoulders and by the time we reach the hospital, that person has died. So, if not a hospital, at least a Primary Health Centre can be there so that we get at least some first aid, some treatment, and some medicines.” I mean, these two aspects every villager wants. He is not bothered about other aspects of development that he should get a mobile phone also and electricity also. Without that also they are able to manage. They are able to manage with a lamp or whatever solar light they get during day time that is sufficient for them. During night they can sleep without that also. They have no night life, they don't have to attend some party during night time and they do not have to have some liquor party during night. Of course, they take liquor but they drink it at home and then they go to sleep. Even that does not go beyond a limit. I remember, once I was in a village when I was in Nagaland for four years. Incognito I went to that village because if they knew who I was, probably I would not have come back alive. In the night they offered me *madhu* (rice beer). What I understood there for the first time was

that your mug of madhu cannot remain empty. I thought let me finish it and then get rid of it. But hardly had it been finished that the girl filled the mug again. I was in a great difficulty. I did not know what to do. I was told that they cannot keep the mug half empty. Then I started taking sips slowly and somehow escaped from that situation. So, what I am telling is, *madhu* is taken everywhere. Anyway, actually, I was talking of which aspects. So, education and medical facilities are two things which people really want even in the most interior areas. Yes, then we should have some index. Just as we are monitoring different districts on *Swachh Bharat*, why can't we monitor different districts on police or the administration as a whole that this is a good administered district? It may be difficult to say that this is the best administered district but we can say that this district is in A band or A category – top level – this district is in B category, which is lower than A, and this district is in C category, which is still lower than B, so that at least you can say with a sense of pride that 'I belong to A band or A category of districts'. This sort of thing can go a long way.

Well, we have heard these learned speakers. Now, I would say, the subject is thrown open to discussion. You can ask any question on the subject. You can name the speaker or you can just mention it that whosoever wants can address it. But be very brief. Let it be a question and not an expression of your views on the subject because then we would not have time for others.



QUESTION HOUR

QUESTION 1: Thanks a lot, distinguished Panel, for enlightening us. I have two things to know your opinion on. One is, how about

having Government interlocutor, like we had recently a former IB Chief for Jammu and Kashmir? Like that, we can have a Government interlocutor for Left Wing extremist areas.

Second thing is you have Cobra Battalion for resolute action in such areas. How about having the same kind of force for peace-keeping or developmental activities?

SHRI PRAKASH SINGH: On interlocutor, let me tell you, at different periods of time, efforts have been made to have peace talks with the underground extremists. I remember, in the undivided Andhra Pradesh, in Hyderabad, two rounds of talks were held. A friend of mine, also a police officer, K.V. Ramarao, was part of the negotiating team from the Government side and the Naxals had also come and there was a lot of hype over the meetings between the two groups. But at the end of it, Ramarao told me personally that look; we kept on cornering them that you specify your demands, what are your demands. They would just go round and round that we want a democratic revolution. But what do you mean by democratic revolution? You tell us one, two, three; what exactly you want. The only point they came down to was 'land reforms' that land reforms should be there. Yes, land reforms should be there. There is no doubt about that. But what exactly should be the land reform? How much should be the land holding,

what should be the pattern. Ultimately they came to the conclusion that they had come to peace talks just to buy time. For some time there should be ceasefire so that their underground workers come over-ground, they should have some breathing time and in the mean time they should be able to collect some more funds and recruit new cadres. Then they looked for an excuse. There was an encounter between the police and the Naxals. So, they said, “No, you are not serious about peace talks, so we are walking out”. By that time they had enough breathing time. When Mr. Chidambaram was the Home Minister, he also made some overtures to the Naxals. He said, you tell me and within 48 hours I will respond. There was no response to that also. Basically, their intentions about peace talks are always suspect and as someone who has served in the Government, who has dealt with insurgent groups in different parts, in Nagaland, in Assam, Punjab Kashmir, I would say that the only time which is ripe for making an offer for peace talks is when you are dominating. When you are dominating, then if you make an effort of peace talks, then it has credibility and there is a chance of their genuine acceptance. If it is a one-all kind of a match or both sides are at equal level - today we have killed, tomorrow you have killed, then we ambushed and then you killed our four persons, if it is going on like that - then you take it that they will be non-serious. And if they are dominating, then they will never come for peace

talks. But I have always said that this is the right time to take sincere initiatives to have some kind of an interaction, some kind of peace talks. But somehow, there does not seem to be any such initiative from the Government side. There should be some initiative from the Government side. I had written an article on this very issue that this is the right time to extend the olive branch and let us see what their response is. But the Government also is in a stage of complacency. The Home Minister has been tutored. He is a simple man. Whatever the bureaucrats say, he accepts it. If they say 'Now it is a matter of three years, Sir, and they will be finished completely, what is the need for talking to these people', so, the Home Minister also says it will be over in three years. It will never end. I can give it in writing because I have been following this movement not from today but since 1967. When I was a young officer in IB, I was given time to study this movement, and since then I have been following it. Twice there were occasions when the Government thought that the movement is finished, we have squashed it, demolished it, finished it, disintegrated the movement. Twice it happened so. Government was twice under that illusion but both the times the movement got resurrected because we did not address the root causes of the problem. Those remained. Security forces alone cannot solve the problem for you. They can give you a breather, they can create a situation where you can go to the root of

the problem and then be done with it. But the problem is, in the Government also – I am sorry to say this because I have been part of the system – I know there is so much intellectual dishonesty, what to say अभी थोड़े दिन पहले मैं एक टी.वी. शो देख रहा था। ऐसे ही एकदम से मेरी टी.वी. पर नजर चली गई। झारखंड के गोड्डा में अदाणी का पावर प्लांट लग रहा है। टी.वी. में यह दिखाया जा रहा है कि अदाणी के आदमी गाँव में गए हैं, एक गाँव वाले से बात कर रहे हैं और यह टी.वी. ने कैप्चर कर लिया है। जो बातचीत है, वह कुछ इस तरह से है। अदाणी का आदमी कह रहा है कि तुमको जमीन देनी पड़ेगी और अगर जमीन नहीं दोगे तो हम तुमको जमीन में गाड़ देंगे। वह ऐसी धमकी गाँव वाले को दे रहा है। वह गाँव वाला बाद में रो-रो कर टी.वी. चैनल वाले को अपनी गाथा सुना रहा है। ऐसा क्यों हो रहा है? अब यह हुआ कि अदाणी के आदमी को तो झारखंड के मुख्यमंत्री भी नहीं रोक सकते। एक तरफ तो झारखंड में सारंडा फॉरेस्ट है, सारंडा फॉरेस्ट को, उन दिन यूपीए की सरकार में जयराम रमेश जी थे और जयराम रमेश जी बार-बार सारंडा जाते थे और उन्होंने बहुत भावुक बयान दिए थे। उनका एक बयान बहुत अच्छा था और वह दिल को छूने वाला बयान था। उन्होंने शायद यह कहा था कि जब मैं मरूँ तो मैं चाहता हूँ कि यहीं पर मुझे जलाया जाए। ऐसा कुछ बयान उन्होंने कहा था, **So, he got so involved with Saranda.** सारंडा को सिक्युरिटी फोर्सेज ने ऑपरेशंस करके क्लियर कर दिया। क्लियर करने के बाद होना क्या चाहिए, **administration should move in.** एक वैक्यूम था, जहाँ एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन जाए और गवर्नेंस इम्प्रूव करे। गवर्नेंस और डेवलपमेंट, दोनों में कनफ्यूज मत करिएगा। हमें 24 घंटे, 365 दिन अच्छी गवर्नेंस चाहिए। अच्छी गवर्नेंस से मतलब है कि सरकार ईमानदार हो। अभी मैंने आपको **child alienation** का एक गवर्नेंस का नमूना बताया, जहाँ डिप्टी कमिश्नर, पटवारी और बीडीओ सभी को प्लानिंग कमीशन का एक्स्पर्ट ग्रुप चोर कह रहा है। अगर गवर्नेंस ठीक हो, संवेदनशील हो, **I mean it should be sensitive, it should be responsive, it should address people's grievances.** If that happens,

then these things will not happen. मुझे क्षमा कीजिए। पीस टॉक से कहाँ हम पहुँच गए? पीस टॉक्स होनी चाहिए, पर उसके लिए अभी गवर्नमेंट की तरफ से कोई इनीशिएटिव नहीं है और नक्सलियों की तरफ से कोई पहल नहीं है।

QUESTION (SHRI N.V. SINGH): Mr. Chairman, you made very thoughtful observations. Do you think that the real solution would come from the civil society rather than from the Government? The real solution can come only from the civil society. You rightly referred to the Salwa Judum movement that developed and you appreciated that it was a very positive and hopeful instrumentality, but it was spoiled by the Government by co-opting Salwa Judum movement leaders as police officers. The Government tried to policise it, if I may use the word, the Government tried to turn the movement into police force and the Supreme Court rightly stopped it. You criticized the Supreme Court for stopping it but the Supreme Court rightly stopped the governmentalization of the civil society organization. The Supreme Court did not condemn the Salwa Judum; it only stopped the Government from making them police officers, which was an absolutely wrong step. I am saying it because I was in a school that was in an interior village in Bihar, which was set up by the local community. The local community managed the school and it became such a good school that even the parents from district town started sending their children to the

school hostel in the Government took it an absolutely useless

SHRI PRAKASH

question was whether from civil society. I

you. We need genuine, sincere, enlightened citizens who understand the nuances of the problem. If they come forward, there is a fair chance that their efforts would make a dent, would make a headway whether finally peace prevails or not, it is difficult to say. We had a very enlightened retired IAS officer, Mr. Shankaran. There was a committee of concerned citizens formed in Hyderabad. He was heading that committee. But at one stage he also got disillusioned and he told me while talking, Prakash, I think they were 'using' me – using within quotes. But nevertheless, the fact remains that initiative from civil society has a greater chance of success than by use of force.

The fact remains that initiative from civil society has a greater chance of success than by use of force.

village, and once the over, it has become school.

SINGH: Your first initiative can come entirely agree with

About Salwa Judum, I would reserve my comments because it is a different subject by itself. I will just very briefly, in one sentence, tell you that Salwa Judum had its inherent value. It was a good counter-insurgency measure, but unfortunately, members of the Salwa Judum started abusing their powers and that brought

them into disrepute which was exploited by the human rights lobbies to tarnish their image, and the Supreme Court then banned it. I leave it at that.

QUESTION: *Jai Hind*, Sir. According to NIA report and the Government multi-disciplinary group fighting back Naxalism, it is stated that the Naxals leaders or the Maoists' leaders own large properties in lakh and cores of rupees. So, is it not something like the Naxals groups have turned towards a political tool today in our country?

Secondly, Sir, why don't we look out for the intermediaries who are providing latest arms and ammunitions, like mortars, etc. to these terror groups in India, and Sir, what have we done so far to counter our officials? It is true that corruption is the root cause that we are not yet succeeding, instead of making false statement that in the coming two years, three years or four years, let us say, infinite years, we will be able to achieve success.

QUESTION: Sir, one last question is that we are doing enough for the tribals in South Africa in competition with China. So, why are not we doing that thing which we are doing in South Africa for tribals, for our tribals in India?

SHRI PRAKASH SINGH: It is a fact that the vast funds collected by some Naxals leaders have corrupted them and they are sending their children to expensive schools, they have bought real estate. It is true of Hurriyat leaders also; it is true of all insurgent movements. Once you have a lot of money, there is a human tendency to divert it and siphon it for personal aggrandizement.

Intermediaries, yes, action should be taken against them. We should be able to identify them.

Corruption, yes, it is one of the causes which is detracting our effectiveness in tackling the problem. Corruption is a cause and it also affects our attempts to resolve it.

About South Africa, that is a different picture. अब वहाँ जाकर तो आप गलत काम नहीं कर सकते, साउथ अफ्रीका आपको निकाल देगा। वहाँ तो आप ट्राइबल्स की भलाई के लिए ही काम करेंगे। अगर यहाँ भी ट्राइबल्स की भलाई के लिए सरकार ईमानदारी से काम करे तो हालात सुधर सकते हैं।

QUESTION: सिक्थोरिटी फोर्सज के atrocities को कैसे रोकेंगे?

SHRI PRAKASH SINGH: देखिए, सिक्थोरिटी फोर्सज अट्रॉसिटीज यदा-कदा जरूर करते होंगे, लेकिन यह अट्रॉसिटीज ज्यादातर तभी होते हैं, जब उनका खुद का कोई न कोई जवान बुरी तरह से मारा गया है या उसके साथ बहुत बुरा व्यवहार होता है। फोर्सज में बड़ी camaraderie होती है, एक भाईचारे की भावना होती है। अब जैसे उनके अत्याचारों की बात सुनिए। एक आदमी को मारकर

उन्होंने जमीन पर लिटा दिया, उसके बाद उसका पेट चीरकर उसमें Explosives डाल दिए और उसके पेट को सिल दिया। उसको ऐसी पोजिशन में लिटा दिया, उसे पेट के बल लिटा दिया कि जैसे ही कोई उसे उठाने आएंगे, घिसने और उठाने की प्रक्रिया में वह एक्स्प्लोसिव फूटेगा और जो उसे उठा रहा है, वह भी मारा जाएगा। अत्याचार दोनों तरफ से होता है, लेकिन मैं अत्याचार को जस्टिफाई नहीं कर रहा हूँ। Our security forces have to be held accountable. There should be in-built mechanisms and whatever complaints are brought to the notice, they should be taken cognizance of and duly inquired into because security forces cannot afford to indulge in atrocities, especially when you are fighting with your own men, your own people. So, they have to be disciplined and they have to fight within the limits of law and they have to be held accountable as and when anything goes wrong.

QUESTION: My question is to Rakesh Ranjan Sir. Sir, you said about indicators. What is your view about democracy index – it is an indirectly related question – where we can register all the protests and the demonstrations because agitation politics is also a part of democracy, so that agency-wise, territory-wise or State-wise we can specify it? What are your views, Sir?

SHRI RAKESH RANJAN: So far it is quite a challenge to make an indicator. Index is not an easy thing to do. First, it involves the kind of objective and whom you want to do what. Our view at present in Niti Aayog is that let us identify some of the very

important key players in the governance set up. I entirely agree with Prakash Singh sahib that development and governance are two different things. Let us identify the most important thing which is there. We felt that health, water, school education, ease of living and development of the backward area, these five or six, in our opinion, are very important indicators where the incidence of competition - because every indicator gives rise to competition - may fall on the officers or on the institution which is in a position to react. Suppose you make the incidence fall on District Magistrate. District Magistrate can definitely change his or her style of functioning or the kind of prioritization of the functioning to make a major change. My answer to how do you stop police atrocities is that if you try to provide a dashboard and provide an indicator that every atrocities put your district down considerably, I think there will be in built mechanism to at least discourage. We cannot look at the passion-based kind of atrocities where my own men have been killed and I go and do a lot of things in the village. But a good number of atrocities will stop indeed. So, on democracy, it is a very vital subject.

QUESTION: Restricted to only health and education, that is what I am asking. You said in 35

We dream of a day when data is collected at the ground level in a better manner and gets configured at the Central level. It is only then that you can use all the modern tools of technology, which is like artificial intelligence

districts. There are other districts and other areas also.

SHRI RAKESH RANJAN: We do not have the data for the district. We have a long journey to make. Many matured democracies say that if your data is collected at the ground level, it configures at the national level, or at the federal level in our case. But in our case what happens is that over the years what we have found is that a good number of data collected remain at the district level or remain at the block level and do not get configured. We have to institute surveys, like on national health and family welfare survey or, for that matter, census. So, from time to time, we institute surveys. But we dream of a day when data is collected at the ground level in a better manner and gets configured at the Central level. It is only then that you can use all the modern tools of technology, which is like artificial intelligence and all these things. You need to have a horizontal and vertical data for that. So, that is the point. So, for any index, like democracy index, like my friend has created, what is known as the governance index, the question is, I put a governance index and say, look Bihar, you are very poor in governance. They will say so: Yes, we know that we are poor in governance. But if I tell them that look, on the matter of conservation of water or on the matter of ground level water treatment, you are very poor, and then I think the action is far more direct on that. So, it is not a very great idea of having a very large

set of index. Otherwise, UNDP always has human development index, why don't we look at that?

CHAIR QUESTION: One last question. My question is to Mr. Rakesh Ranjan. The question is in two parts really. One is, how would you respond to the criticism that there are actually far too many policies which are reactionary and not proactive, and the second is, is there anything in the works, say, something similar to the 2006 Draft Tribal Policy that is being envisioned by the Niti Aayog or by any other body that you are aware of, which is in the form of perhaps legislation and not policy?

SHRI RAKESH RANJAN: If you are saying that we have far too many policies, tell me the example. I do not think that we have a problem of coherence of policy. The problem is how we implement at the ground level. It is that. Do we have a contradictory policy, I mean, except for the Supreme Court case on the eviction of the tribal which I can see that both sides have a very contradictory and adversarial position? But other than that, do you think that we have a kind of incoherent policy? If you make out there is an incoherent policy, please write to us or to the Tribal Affairs Ministry. They should be able to change that.

QUESTION: Sir, my second question was on the Draft National Tribal Policy.

SHRI RAKESH RANJAN: The basic assumption that we know answers to all the question is wrong. Had I known the answer, we would have done this thing.

CHAIR: Absolutely. The last question now.

QUESTION BY A LADY PARTICIPANT: Sir, we have many policies, programmes and schemes from Central and State Governments as well. After listening to Rakesh Sir, it was like yes, there are many things and if it is implemented in these ways, okay, the problem can be sorted out? But if we are talking of international things, don't you think it is like moving to the shoot, instead of moving to the root?

ANSWER: If I want you to dream, what is it that you will dream? Suppose you are the goddess and whatever you do, happens. What is it that you want to happen in this world in terms of aborigines? If you can say that and you say that our policy is not coherent with that, then I think we can have a starting point. But why do I bother about international recognition of anything?

LADY QUESTIONER: No, we often talk about international. So, why don't we concentrate and find solutions and ways to implement it at our level, instead of just moving out and seeing what the world is doing?

SHRI RAKESH RANJAN: I am not saying international.

LADY QUESTIONER: You are not talking but currently we are talking that these things are there. Yesterday we were dealing with this topic. That is why I am asking this.

DR. NUPUR TIWARY: You can always mail to us and find it out. I will forward those things to you.

So, it was a very interactive and very informative session, I would say. Shri Prakash Singh Sir and all the dignitaries sitting as Panelists, Ram Niwas Sir, Rakesh Ranjan Ji and Harinder Walia Ji and also the participants took very keen interest in listening and reacting to that. The other day we had called N.C. Saxena Ji for some programme. He is also somehow associated with the Centre of Excellence of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and he was sharing some of the views how displacement is more of an emotional cause, like in many of the tribes, in Gond tribe and all, a girl, before she is married to a boy, is actually married to a tree, like *mahua* tree or some other tree, and that she takes the pledge that she will save that tree throughout her life. The other thing is we were talking of medicines. The Centre is also working on tribal medicine. वास्तव में मॉडर्न मेडिसिन की बहुत जरूरत है। अगर आप झारखंड में जाएं, तो जैसे वहाँ ये लाल चींटियों को जलाकर खाते हैं। ये इनके लिए बहुत न्यूट्रिशियस होती हैं। उसके अलावा यह मलेरिया में बहुत असर करता है। इस तरह की चीजें हैं। We also talked on governance

issues, how sensitive those are. Of course, as you have talked about Raisina Hills, we have been dealing with all this. पेसा एक ऐसा कानून है, जिसके लिए बी.डी. शर्मा जी ने अपनी नौकरी भी त्यागी और पूरी लाइफ वे बस्तर में रहे। काफी मेहनत के बाद, बहुत सारे लोग थे, भूरिया कमेटी थी, बी.डी.शर्मा थे, मुंगेरकर कमेटी थी, राघव चंद्रा, आदि सात-आठ कमेटी रिपोर्ट्स इस पर आयीं। वर्ष 1996 में यह पेसा कानून आया। जितने सारे आप प्रश्न पूछ रहे हैं, Whatever that you are asking about cultural and educational, for all these *.gram sabha* is the most popular place. It is just the provisions of Panchayat Extension to the Scheduled Areas Act. We are not talking all about *panchayati raj* system, elected representatives; we are talking of *gram sabha*, absolute direct democracy. But today, after 20 years also, no State has the audacity to implement it even partially. अभी उसमें नेशनल कमीशन ने सिर्फ पाँच प्रोविजन्स लिए, जिन्हें प्रेसीडेंट की रिपोर्ट में डाला गया, लेकिन उस पर भी कोई कार्यवाही नहीं हुई है। **Yes**, it is an important issue because this revolt or whatever it is, is not a new thing. 1831 Kol mutiny, 1850, these are just names that we are talking of, in 1835 Khonds tribe, Santhal, Bhil, lots of things are there. This is not something that is happening today. It first started around 1757. The most important thing that I wanted to ask was, Sir, that how do you identify a person is a tribal or a person is a Naxals? Of course, we do not have as much experience as you have but from the studies that we have conducted for four years, five years, we went up to Indrawati river, Dantewara, Bastar, Khunti, Arki, Arania, we went to all these places, but how do you

identify whether this man is a tribal or a Naxals, and how Government is finally repatriating those tribals or those Naxals who have surrendered? There are many issues which have not been taken care of. जहाँ सैटलमेंट हुई थी, जहाँ पर सरेंडर कैम्प में गई थे, वे खुद प्रिजनर्स की तरह ठहरे हैं। एक छोटा सा कमरा दिया जाता है, जिसमें पीछे खिड़की नहीं होती है और आगे वह कमरा एक हाल में खुलता है और 15-20 परिवार एक छोटे से हॉल में रहते हैं। उनके बच्चे वहीं होते हैं, पूरी लाइफ वहीं रह रहे हैं। यह बहुत बड़ी बात है कि उन्हें पुलिस में जगह दी जाती है, लेकिन वे वापस अपने गांव नहीं जा सकते हैं, क्योंकि उन्हें मार दिया जाएगा, because the moment they are out of the camp, they will be shot down. They are not incentivized enough. Maybe, I may not be the right person to say that but whatever little experience I have got, these things came to our notice. So, सिविल सोसाइटी ट्राइबल्स में बिल्कुल ही डेवलप नहीं है। किसी जमाने में यह हुआ करती थी, अभी के समय में यह बिल्कुल ही नहीं है। At a certain different level, maybe these are the important issues. But I thank all of you for sharing your experiences with us. Even your coming here is a big privilege for all of us. Thank you.

(Mementos were presented to Shri Prakash Singh, Shri Ram Niwas, Shri Rakesh Ranjan and Shri Harinder Singh Walia)



NOTES



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