



## **BUILDING A PLATFORM FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN DIFFERENT AGENCIES FOR TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT**

Panel Discussion and Brainstorming



**Edited by: Dr. Nupur Tiwary**

Associate Professor in Political Science and Rural Development  
Head, Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Tribal Affairs

**CENTRE OF TRIBAL RESEARCH & EXPLORATION (COTREX)**

(A Centre of Excellence under the aegis of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India)

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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## Introduction

Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi has been recognized as a Centre of Excellence (CoE) of Ministry of Tribal Affairs and is entrusted with the task to strengthen training and active research in various aspects of tribal welfare. The CoE is located at IIPA, New Delhi and named the Centre of Tribal Research and Exploration (CoTREX).

An important mandate of CoE is to organize discussions and debates on various tribal development concerns. As part of this, a panel discussion and brainstorming on **“Building a Platform for Dialogue between Different Agencies for Tribal Development”** was organized at IIPA on Thursday the 28th of February 2019. Several eminent personalities participated in the discussion and shared their knowledge that includes,

- ✚ Shri N.C. Saxena (IAS Retired, Former Secretary),
- ✚ Shri. Raghav Chandra (IAS, Former-Secretary National Commission for Scheduled Tribes),
- ✚ Prof. Ritu Priya Mehrotra (Professor, Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, JNU),
- ✚ Prof. Velayutham Saravanan (Director, Centre of Jawaharlal Nehru Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia),
- ✚ Prof. Ujjwal Kumar Singh (Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi),
- ✚ Dr. Ramesh C Gaur (Director, Library & Information in HAG Pay Scale & Head, Kalanidhi Division, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts),
- ✚ Dr. Nupur Tiwary (Associate Professor, IIPA; Head of the Centre of Excellence),
- ✚ Shri Urmilesh Urmi (Journalist, Former Editor of Rajya Sabha TV, presently Editor at The Wire),
- ✚ Shri Narendra Bastar (Writer and Social Worker), etc.

The following is the summary of the proceedings. Further proceedings of the panel discussion have been transcribed below:

### **Proceedings**

#### **DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

I request Shri N.C. Saxena Ji to give his views on this 'Building a platform for Dialogue between Different Agencies for Tribal Development' and also give some background on the areas which exist to be concentrated on.

#### **SHRI N.C. SAXENA, FORMER SECRETARY**

Thank you very much Nupur for this opportunity. As we know, in India, there has been a lot of growth, lot of development, but not, unfortunately, for tribals. One finds that on all indicators, whether it is poverty or health and nutrition or education, that they have been far behind other groups. Even as compared to *dalits*, we find that they are not doing as well. Therefore, what are those factors and what needs to be done? Of course, the history of decades, if not centuries, of oppression of tribals, their total exclusion, we have very wrong policies, unfortunately, in forests, in displacement, in land alienation, and those issues have still not been sorted out completely. I recall, some time in 2000, when Mr. Vajpayee was the Prime Minister, I had made a presentation to him on tribal issues where I listed five problems of *Adiwasis*, tribal land alienation, oppression by forests, displacement, bad governance, etc. and within fifteen days I found that a new Ministry had been set up, and I was very happy that my presentation led to formation of a new Ministry. But ten years later when I went to the Ministry to find out what they were doing on those issues. I was very surprised and disappointed that the Ministry had taken no action at all on a large number of issues and I said that 'Look, what have you done on forestry?' and they replied 'No, Sir, it is not our subject; it is with the Ministry of Environment.' Then I asked 'What have you done with land alienation?' and they seemingly replied 'We do not deal with this; it is Rural Development Ministry's subject.'

They were concentrating only on giving money to NGOs and looking at *Ashram*' schools etc. and not on all those issues which concern tribals. So, if we really analyse why *Adiwasis* have not done so well, I would just focus on two issues. One is that the Government departments, both at the State level and at the Government of

India level are very weak and they do not monitor a large number of problems, whether it is land alienation or displacement or lack of rehabilitation or poor governance etc. All these issues are left to the respective Ministries. So, they are not being monitored and these departments are very weak, posting in Tribal Development is considered to be a punishment posting, no one likes to go there, etc. etc. Therefore, that is one side where governance itself has been very weak.

Unfortunately, even from the side of tribals, if you compare tribals with other groups, what happens is, in India, whenever any group has a problem, they agitate. They would take out a procession, whether it is Gujjars who want to be included in the Scheduled Tribes list, whether it is the Jats who want to be given affirmative response, or whatever be the issue, we find that people would then agitate, they would take out a procession, they would, maybe, *gherao* the Collector, maybe, there will be some violence, etc. So, agitational politics in India has been very successful. Unfortunately, when you look at tribals, you find that they suffer in silence. Whatever oppression takes place, they do not agitate at all, or they take to guns. The middle path of agitational politics is totally alien to tribals. And that is one of the most important factors that we have to keep in mind that the path of violence which the Naxalites are following, is not the solution. The solution is agitational politics. You come out in the open and tell what you want and what has not been done, and that can be assisted and that can be helped only when you have the

The two issues:-

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relevant data. So, civil society I think has a very important role to play in giving the information that look, on these issues how Government is failing, whether it is education or health or nutrition or whatever field you may have. When we have this data, then people should agitate and put pressure on Government, ask questions in Parliament, ask questions in legislature. That is the path that we need to follow. Unfortunately, that is not happening and that is why we find that the tribals have remained totally neglected and they have not done so well.

I will just show you a few slides and then perhaps open up for discussion. As you all know, the main problem is in Central India where we have concentration of tribals. More than 70 per cent tribals are in these States which are also Scheduled V areas. There are also the areas where we have natural forests. Therefore, interaction with forests is a very important subject that we need to study. These are also the areas which are full of mineral wealth. It is very interesting that India is the only country, I think, where there are areas which are richest in terms of natural wealth, both in terms of forests and mineral wealth but which are also inhabited by poorest people. So, poorest people are living in the richest area. So, it is very unfortunate that the local people have not benefited from mineral wealth or from forest wealth and the reasons we all know are lack of education, lack of empowerment, etc. etc. For instance, if one looks at the poverty decline in the last 18 years - we do not have figures after 2011-12 – one finds that the poverty decline has been very slow of *Adiwasis* as compared to other groups, even as compared to Scheduled Castes. And mind you, this is for the entire Scheduled Tribe population. If you look State-wise, you find that Maharashtra, which is the richest State of India, there the poverty level of *Adiwasis* is 60 per cent. Sixty per cent of tribals in Maharashtra and more than 60 per cent in Odisha are below poverty line. Similarly, in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, the number of tribals who are below poverty line is more than 50-55 per cent. In Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Leh etc., they may not be doing so badly but it is Central India where we need to really concentrate upon.

This is the map of Census assets. As you know, Census defines three assets as Census assets. These are: bicycle or motor vehicle, telephone or mobile phone, and radio or TV. So, these are the areas in Central India where more than 50 per cent families do not have either a cycle or a radio or a mobile phone. We are claiming that in India, every one has a mobile phone, but you go to Mandla, you go to tribal areas and you find that almost 40 to 50 per cent families do not have even a mobile phone. Therefore, lack of deprivation is very very acute in tribal pockets and although Naxalite violence may have come down a little bit in the last few years but still there are pockets, as we know, in Jharkhand, in Chhattisgarh, in Telangana, in Andhra Pradesh, there are still pockets which are unapproachable, where development has not reached, and these are the areas where even PDS does not work very well, roads are not there, teachers' absenteeism is very high, and the most important point is the last one which I have said that the path of agitational politics is the real path for *Adiwasis*, for their leaders, for a civil society. The path of armed insurgency will just lead to nowhere and that is totally counter-productive. If we do not learn this, then we would never be able to do justice to tribal people.

Then, of course, this is Central India where tribals live; there are also areas where agriculture is very poor. Because of semi-arid regions, there is no irrigation, undulating fields.

Then, land records are in a very bad shape. Unfortunately, throughout history we find that because these have either been princely States or plateau areas or for a variety of reasons, land records have not been well maintained, because of which even today you find that there are all kinds of issues. In fact, the Supreme Court's order is primarily because of the fact that tribal occupation of forest lands has not been recorded in the land records and even in FRA also, as I will discuss later, justice has not been done. So, there are all kinds of issues and forest is certainly one important issue. But there are other issues also

which we need to address and this would require primarily dealing with water harvesting and soil conservation. So, that is very important.

Luckily, in tribal areas we have two advantages. One is that communities are very cohesive. Therefore, factionalism which you find in other areas of India is not there and then there is also strong presence of NGOs. So, we should take advantage of the civil society's presence there and really ensure that in these areas agriculture develops and water harvesting is done so that ground water also is not over-exploited.

This is a slide somewhat similar to the slide I had shown to Mr. Vajpayee in 2000 which led to the formation of the Ministry. These are some of the issues which have been totally unaddressed in the last six decades and, unfortunately, even today I cannot say with certainty that much has been done on these issues. And as I said, the Tribal Affairs Ministry does not even monitor that what happened to this project when people were displaced ten years back, whether they have been rehabilitated, whether they have been compensated. All these kinds of data which is necessary is just not there, because of which one finds that these problems have continued, and as I said, the Tribal Ministry and the Tribal Departments in the States do not deal with these issues. In fact, even when I was formulating the Forest Rights Act in 2005-06, I saw to it that in the Act we say that Forest Department has no place and this programme would be monitored and it would be supervised by the Tribal Department. But when I used to go to the fields after five-ten years to see how FRA has functioned and whenever you call a meeting of the State Government, there is a Tribal Development Secretary and Forest Secretary and the CCF, all these functions would come only from the Forest Department, although if you look at the Act, it says 'Gram Sabha, SDM,

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Collector, State Government'; there is no role for Forest Department, But in actual implementation, everything is being done by the Forest Department, because of which, as you know, out of 40 lakh applications, only 18 lakh applications have been cleared and 22 lakh applications have been rejected, which has led to the unfortunate Supreme Court's order. So, all these issues have continued because of the weak Tribal Department. To give some examples, when I was Secretary, Rural Development, I got some studies done which showed that in Schedule-V districts - Khammam, Adilabad, Warangal, these are all Schedule-V districts - more than half of the tribal land has now been occupied and registered in the name of non-tribals, despite there being a Land Alienation Act to prevent land alienation. Similarly, in Odisha, the study showed that 56 per cent of tribal land has been lost over 25-30 years period and this is because of indebtedness, land mortgage, encroachment, all kinds of factors that are there, because of which I have described it as 'lost land'.

As I said, tribals' land records are in a bad shape. Let me also give an example. I was Secretary, Revenue, in U.P. and at that point of time, in 1980, Uttarakhand also was a part of U.P. and there was a large number of Bhoksas and Tharus tribal population there. So, I got a new law formulated and passed by the Assembly also. We said, we will not go to the court. If any non-tribal occupies tribal land, he will be just thrown out. Therefore, you do not have to go to the court. It says – I will just read the first para – which “Non-tribal can be thrown out by use of force”. So, we will just use force and throw him out and it is only when he occupies it again that we can go to the court. Therefore, we had given this power. Unfortunately, not a single acre of land was given back to tribals. Mr. Zail Singh was the Home Minister and at that point of time Tribal Development was part of the Home Ministry. Mr. Zail Singh was very unhappy with this particular law and non-tribals who were very rich people, who had come from Punjab in the *tarai* area of U.P. in Nainital District, they all went to the court and stay order was taken The State Government took no interest, the Uttarakhand Government also took no interest. So, today, all those Bhoksas and Tharus being very poor or they have also migrated to

Bahraich and other places, nothing has happened. Therefore, what I am trying to say is, it is One of the things that have happened, when land records are not in good shape, is that in Odisha, tribal land which is occupied by tribals was recorded as Government wasteland and Government thought that this land is getting eroded, so they established a Cashew development Corporation, gave that land to that public sector unit and tribals were displaced. So, tribals went up the hills. After some time, the Cashew Development Corporation found that they could not make profit, so they gave it to private sector. So, in a way, I call the tribal land reform as reverse land reforms, that is, tribal land goes to a Government corporation and from Government corporation it goes to a private corporation. So, that is what happens. Unfortunately, this programme was called 'economic rehabilitation of the rural poor'. So, that is an extreme sort of oppression, the extent of indifference that has been shown by various governments. When I was Secretary, Planning Commission, I decided to include it in the Ninth Plan Mid-term Review which I had written.

As we all know, displacement is another very big issue - we all know this, so I do not have to read it out – and they have not been rehabilitated. In fact, one-time compensation is not the answer. We need to really rehabilitate them. As you can see in this chart, in Andhra Pradesh, of those who have been displaced, 76 per cent were *Adiwasis*. Because these areas are also, as I said, full of mineral wealth, therefore a lot of *Adiwasis* get displaced and then they are not properly rehabilitated. Although the 2013 Land Acquisition Act has certain good provisions but unfortunately, in many States like Maharashtra and Gujarat, this 'consent' clause has been diluted in the last three or four years, on which someone should need to go to court that how can the State law not follow the

The lack of political will, lack of administrative will which is responsible for the state of affairs where a lot of land has been lost by tribals.

Displacement is another very big issue- one-time compensation is not the answer. We need to really rehabilitate them.

guidelines given in the Government of India's Act. So, it is a legal issue also which we need to consider.

I was part of the Land Acquisition Committee headed by Mr. Jairam Ramesh and I had suggested many things. Unfortunately, he did not agree with my suggestions. First of all, the procedure of the Land Acquisition Act has been very complicated. Today, even if you want to acquire one acre of land, you cannot do so and the Collector cannot do so. It has to go up to the Chief Secretary. Therefore, if the procedure is very complicated, what happens is, today, the Act is not being used at all! People have started buying land through direct negotiations. These kind of direct negotiations – willing buyer-willing seller transactions may work very well in Punjab, Haryana or Western U.P. but it cannot work at all in tribal areas. Tribals would be again exploited and middlemen will be there, mafia gangs would come there and, therefore, we need to really see that the procedures are simplified.

Then, I have suggested that in all cases when tribals are displaced, at least the tribals should get land in all projects and also in irrigation and hydroelectric projects.

There are many other suggestions which I have given. For instance, if land is sold in a project area and then A sells to B, B sells to C, every time sale takes place, 20 per cent of the difference must go to the original land owner. The idea was to make land owner as a stakeholder. But that has not been done.

Then, the last point is that there is no law in India for paying compensations when common lands are resumed. Now, it is very interesting that the British had a law. When they were constructing railways from Calcutta to Delhi, the farmers in U.P. protested saying that common lands we are using for grazing purposes. So, they had a law called Wasteland Claims Act, 1859. That law provided that even if you are resuming lands which are Government lands, the people who are using common land would be rehabilitated. Unfortunately, we have repealed that law and there is no such provision now. Therefore, you can resume lands, you can take forest lands and give it to industry,

and those who are using that forest land or common land will not be compensated or there is no such provision. So, this is one lacuna which still continues.

I have two or three other important points on forests and tribals. Unfortunately, our forests happen to give plantations. They have continued to be timber-oriented and there is no focus on ensuring that production of gatherable biomass increases. Tribals and forest dwellers are interested in gathering biomass. If you look at the Madhya Pradesh plan of those days, they were advocating in writing that ‘we would clear our natural forests, we will have mono-crops of tea and the whole focus was on plantations. Now, I was Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 1985 and we started working on the New Forest Policy. This is the kind of plantations we have, although what we need to have is natural forests, we need to have regeneration, and we need to have in the same area many species of different ages and with lot of gatherable biomass. That should be the main focus. That all is provided in this so that people can gather *saal* leaves and they can use them for their livelihood etc. This is all provided in the New Forest Policy. If we read section 4.3, it says “Tribal needs are the first charge on forests”. Unfortunately, it has not been followed. In the last 30 years you find that all these provisions which are there in the New Forest Policy have remained totally unimplemented because of which we have today a situation where forests are more timber-oriented. Although deforestation has been checked but its impact on forest dwellers has been rather very tragic. If you look at the old Forest Policy of 1952 and the New Forest Policy, there is an undulated difference between the two. But where it was not implemented, we had to have PESA in 1996 and then in 2006, we had introduced the Forest Rights Act.

Now, as I said, the main problem is gatherable biomass production is going down and even if there is something to gather, there are all kinds of laws and rules which prevent tribal access to those produce. For instance, in Tamil Nadu, there is a law that you cannot convert procipous into charcoal. So, we need permission. Therefore, all these kinds of laws come in the way of tribals and forest dwellers gathering biomass and benefit from that.

I visited Orissa in 1995 and I was shocked to see that women had been prosecuted for keeping brooms in their houses. For keeping brooms in their houses, women were arrested and sent to jail and all their brooms had been confiscated because at that point of time, there was a law in Orissa that you can collect hill brooms but you cannot process it, you cannot sell it in the open market and you cannot store it in your house. Then I said, what is the point of being in the IAS if I cannot even change this law? I kept on writing to the State Government and to my friends to please change this law, but nothing happened. Ultimately I had to do what everyone does to change policies in your favour. I had to bribe. I bribed a Chief Minister. When I was Secretary, Planning Commission and when he came to Planning Commission for funds, I said, 'Sir, I will give you Rs.50 crore extra. I gave him a bribe of Rs. 50 crore! I said, Rs.50 crore extra this year and Rs.50 crore next year provided you change this law. So, that is how in March, 2000 – he was himself a tribal, Giridhar Gomang, at that point of time in 1999 - he changed this law. Therefore, what I am trying to say is that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has not even studied to find out which are those laws and bylaws and rules and by-rules which are still there, which are coming in the way of people's access to such gatherable biomass.

There is no policy of minimum support price for tribals.

If you compare forest with agriculture, you find that in agriculture, farmers are free to sell their paddy or wheat to anyone they like, but they like to go to Government because the Government gives them higher price. Now, in forestry, either we have control that *tendu* you can sell only to Government, you cannot sell it to anyone, or we totally withdraw and say, you do with it whatever you like, which leads to exploitation by middlemen, by markets, etc.

The other point is, even when this law was changed, it did not help tribals at all because unfortunately if you compare forest with agriculture, you find that in agriculture, farmers are free to sell their paddy or wheat to anyone they like, but they like to go to Government because the Government gives them higher price. Now, in forestry, either

we have control that *tendu* you can sell only to Government, you cannot sell it to anyone, or we totally withdraw and say, you do with it whatever you like, which leads to exploitation by middlemen, by markets, etc. There is no policy of minimum support price. Of course, two-three years back it has been introduced but if you look at the budget for minimum support price in the Tribal Department, expenditure has always been only 10 to 20 per cent. Therefore, that whole idea of buying from the tribals, giving them a remunerative price has not been followed. Therefore, the last point that is written here that policy for foodgrains v/s policy for NTFPs is something that we really need to consider that why are we not promoting the minimum support price for all the tribal gatherable biomass etc. etc.

Coming to Forest Rights Act, as you all know, Forest Rights Act is a very simple Act. It says 'recognize whatever is the present situation'. If they are in agriculture, recognize that, if they are managing forests, recognize that. Therefore, it is recognition of the situation as on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2005. That is what very clearly it says. Unfortunately, you will find that the Community Forest Rights Act provisions have generally remained totally unimplemented or they have been implemented on paper, but real management has not been given. Also, in many cases people are also not very keen to have CFR. So, the focus has been mostly on individual forest rights, the IFRs, and there we find that hardly two per cent of forest lands have been settled with the people so far. So, if you look at the forest documents of the 1980s and 1990s, Forest Department has always been saying that ten per cent or 15 per cent forest land is under encroachment but all that encroachment by the tribal and forest dwellers has not been recognised. Actually, as I said, historically, people were cultivating forest lands but their possession was not recorded and when the Forest Department came, that whole area got declared as forest land. Or in some case, the Forest Department themselves invited tribals to come and settle down in that area. They said, 'we need your labour and we will give you some land here to cultivate but we will use your labour for forest plantations etc. So, all kinds of factors were there which led to people cultivating forest lands but their possession was



not recorded and, as I said in the last line, you find that out of 17 million hectares, only 1.7 million hectares have been recognised as the individual forest rights. Out of 42 lakh applications – I saw the latest figures of November, 2018 which say that only 18 lakh

applications have been cleared so far. This is the overall picture of individual forest rights. As you can see, Andhra seems to have done quite well. Thirteen per cent of forest land has been settled with forest dwellers. But on the whole, only 2.4 per cent of the total forest area is as individual forest rights. I have also separately calculated that although they are entitled to have ten acres of forest area each, holding can be of ten acres or four hectares but actually the minimum comes to less than three acres. So, even that has not been done.

So, there are all kinds of problems. The overall possession has not been recorded. The non-tribal OTMDs need to have a certificate that they have been there for the last 75 years. That certificate has not been provided by the Government to them. Then, even when some land has been given to them, there is no linkage with NREGA or other such programmes. Therefore, the productivity of that land has not been improving. Therefore, all those issues which Tribal Development Department should have been highlighting, unfortunately, are not there. I chaired a committee on the Forest Rights Act in 2010 - the report is available on the website - and I found that the FRA's implementation has been very poor and post-claim issues have been neglected, and very little progress has been made in States like Bihar, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Interestingly, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh were both with the Congress Party and I told Mr. Jairam Ramesh, who was the Minister that looks, in the Congress States themselves, there is hardly any progress. Even today - this was 2010 – even in 2018 if you see, hardly any land has been settled with the tribals and forest dwellers in many States. As I said, the area settled is much less than there are

occupations. Boundaries have not been demarcated, rejections are very high, no linkage with NREGA funds, OTFDs, who require a certificate of 75 years of residence, they have not been provided those certificates, no assistance in marketing of minor forest products, and the spirit of CFR has been totally neglected. In some States like Gujarat or Maharashtra, on paper we find lot of land has been settled as CFR but that is only for collection of minor forest products. Actual management has not been given to forest dwellers except in some pockets like Gadchiroli etc. where good work has been done, but on the whole, CFR has remained totally neglected.

Finally, friends, I am coming to the end with last one or two slides. As I said – and this is the main point I would like to highlight – the Ministry should itself get its entire Ministry evaluated that how are they functioning. What I find is that the Ministry has centralized control over its schemes. Therefore, if you compare Tribal Development Ministry with, say, Rural Development, in Rural Development, projects are not sanctioned by the Ministry, not even by the State Government, not even by the Collector; they all are sanctioned at the level of the *Gram Sabha*. But in Tribal Development you will find that for all the schemes that they have, the State Governments have to come to Delhi and get their projects sanctioned. Therefore, they are wasting their time in over-centralisation of projects. They should spend more time in monitoring, in finding out how other Ministries are functioning, and that is what is not happening. Interestingly, some years back when I went to study how the Ministry was functioning, so, as I said earlier, when I asked the Secretary what about this, what about that, he said, ‘Sorry, this is not my subject, this is being dealt with by Agriculture, this is with Rural Development, this is with Education etc.’ During those forty minutes I spent with him, there were many telephone calls for giving grants. Therefore, recommendations were coming to him for giving grants to NGOs and, I am sure, many of those NGOs were fake NGOs. So, the Ministry is surrounded by

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fake NGOs which are wasting Government resources Therefore, this centralization needs to be given up and we should do more of monitoring, more of finding out how other Ministries are functioning. So, it should focus on knowledge-based advocacy and not only spending the allocated funds.

So, why is bureaucracy not improving or changing the tribal policy? It could be ignorance or unwillingness to face challenges, vested interests, collusion, and also conviction that markets are superior and markets will help. But unfortunately, markets do not help tribals, as we know from past experience.

This is my last slide that this is what needs to be done. We need to strengthen Tribal Development Department. We need to see that these Acts that they have passed, whether it is PESA or FRA, they are implemented and without monitoring, without measurement of how schemes are functioning in tribal areas, we will not be able to give. And most important is that our forests must improve. We must find out what the overall production of gatherable biomass is and how that production can be improved. So, the typical issue, unfortunately, is, neither the civil society nor the IAS Forest Secretaries have the practical knowledge and that is why they leave it to Forest Department and, therefore, the production of gatherable biomass is not increasing and that is the main reason why tribal incomes are not increasing fast enough.

Thank you very much.

### **DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

Thank you Saxena Sir for highlighting issues of governance for tribal development and many of the areas which have been ignored rather, especially PESA and minor forest products, Forest



Rights Act. There is some controversy on those issues. I am sure, this Centre will be taking up some of those issues along with all the other stakeholders that we have.

We can have interaction after two more presentations. More than presentations, it is the experts who are speaking on their specific areas. So, I call Prof. Ritu Priya Mehrotra. She is heading the Centre for Community Medicine. She is an MBBS, has expertise on medical and health sectors. So, on tribal health what are the areas that have to be taken up and how we are going to take ahead, she will be an important part of the Centre guiding us how to take us further.

### **DR. RITU PRIYA MEHROTRA**

*Namaskar* and thanks to IIPA and Nupur for having me here. She called last afternoon to say one could also make a presentation. So, I have something together but I hope those thoughts will trigger off more discussion.

Nupur had wanted me to talk on IEC – Information, Education and Communication – and I really felt that we cannot talk about that for tribal areas without knowing what it is that they know. In the last slide that Shri N.C, Saxena showed, he raised so many extremely important issues with his own experiences, I believe. The fact is why all those provisions for how community should be involved have not actually taken off. My submission would really be that it is also about the politics of knowledge. The fact of not recognizing that they have valid knowledge and understanding of their own surroundings, of hills, of the world, is something that unless we think about that and are ready to correct that, I do not think any of these is really going to take us too far. But I will do this through my area which is health systems, and in that, therefore, tribal health, how one looks at that, when I am arguing this as a conclusion.

This is just to take through what most of us would already know that the poor state of health of tribals and STs in all datasets that we have is the worst. Of the two recent committees which give us data, one is the High Level Expert Committee of 2014, the XaXa Committee which set out the three sets of health problems for us: Under-development which means malnutrition, communicable diseases, maternal and child health problems; diseases which are particular to ST population sickle cell anemia, animal bites and accidents, what they are more prone to because of the conditions in which they live; as well as diseases of modernity which are coming up, and surprisingly for many of us, they are higher in tribal population in many parts of the country than in the non-tribal population. So, in fact, in Bilaspur, people working in community hospitals have said that 40 per cent of diabetics in their area are undernourished people, while diabetes is seen as a problem of obesity. But in those areas we are actually finding a large number of severely undernourished people having diabetes. So, these are all problems that are new even to the medical world and will have to be examined differently. The data also shows that IMRs, for example, are three times more than in Scheduled Tribe population. There is an improvement but as we can see, the rate of improvement of IMR is much lower among ST population as compared to others - ten per cent reduction over six years, while it was 25 per cent on an all-India basis. So, with that as the problem context, these are the kind of services that the Government is providing, This is based on the XaXa Committee as well as further endorsed by the report of an Expert Committee on Tribal Health which came out with this report just at the end of last year, set up by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Tribal Affairs jointly. They said that—

Major Health issues found in Tribal Population:-

- Under Development / Malnutrition
- Communicable diseases
- Maternal and child health problems
- Sickle cell anemia
- Animal bites
- Accidents
- Infant mortality
- SURPRISINGLY Diabetes.

- In more than half of the States with sizeable tribal population, healthcare infrastructure was 27 per cent to 40 per cent deficient in numbers, which means the number of Sub-Centres and PHCs and so on which should have been there, they are short by this. But in 50 per cent of the tribal-dominated areas, they do exist as per the norms.
- Shortfall of health manpower which is there across.
- The current healthcare delivery system is incompatible with tribals' cultural and belief systems, leading to low rate of acceptance.
- The organisation of public health service delivery in tribal areas suffers from serious design flaws that affect its efficiency, efficacy and update and, therefore, those are issues to take on.

“A contentious but important issue is how to accommodate the indigenous medical system, the providers and therapies, without sacrificing scientific principles and methods of public health.”

The XaXa Committee had also, in its overall statement of principles and findings said that the tribal community is

not against development but it wants development with a different model of development. So, in health again - that is what I am reiterating - it is actually a different model of development of healthcare itself that is required and not only for tribal areas. My issue would be that we actually learn from tribal areas for something that the world itself is requiring.

Why is the crisis of healthcare? The U.S. itself, with all its economy, has not been able to handle its healthcare system and we know the problem that Obama and Trump have been having with that. So, it is from those economies onwards that we have a healthcare problem. The healthcare model today is just too expensive and unaffordable for the world and it is from communities like these that we today need to learn when they are talking

about sustainability and sustainable development. I have just picked out these two principles from the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Tribal Health saying that we need appropriateness and acceptable and cultural sensitivity. They are saying that a uniform model will not work. The contentious part of it is this number (5) which says: “A contentious but important issue is how to accommodate the indigenous medical system, the providers and therapies, without sacrificing scientific principles and methods of public health.” This, to me, is the crux of the problem of tribal development and, therefore, it gets highlighted in the healthcare dimension as well, and that is where we can actually look to some attempts that have been made in different ways by civil society and some government and semi-government organizations, and I will just briefly talk about those.

The Health Planning document of the Twelfth Five Year Plan talks about tribal medicine and the need for enhancing it. The report of a study that we had conducted when I was Adviser, Public Health Planning at the National Health Systems Resource Centre in 2010, showed us the importance of local health traditions in how people were accessing healthcare and thereby recommended the setting up of district and State level resource centres for local health traditions because these cannot be a national level thing; they are so context-specific. Therefore, you need district level resource centres which can actually document validity support and so on. These recommendations, of course, remain on paper.

The other dimensions like, as I said are (1) healthcare as a problem and (2) sustainability as a problem, and (3) issues of biodiversity and sustainability which several people have written about, coming from communities like tribal and *Adiwasis*. This is just to show the fact that the global community itself also recognizes it. The lower court is from Dr, Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO saying that “Time has never been better and the reasons never greater for giving traditional methods in place and addressing many ills that face all our modern and our traditional societies and, therefore, the need for the world is looking for answers”, and I think this is the place where we have it. I have just

argued it a few days ago with Chhattisgarh Government and the Health Minister that that is the stage which can actually pioneer developing a new model for the world where we try and see how modern knowledge can be linked and brought together in a framework which is provided by local knowledge. Therefore, there is need to promote tribal medicine. Three purposes are:

- (1) creating a sustainable and empowering healthcare model;
- (2) Promoting the legitimacy and use of traditional understandings of healthcare; and
- (3) livelihood benefits to *Adiwasi* communities which come once the medicinal products that they get from forests and so on can become marketable products.

I will not go into this at all. It is talking about the significance of traditional medicine again. It is just reiterating that for people who are skeptics about traditional knowledge. We need arguments there if anybody wants them.

The major issues that I see from the need for promotion of tribal medicine are: one is the fact that they have been reduced because of the politics of knowledge from colonialism onwards, from being knowledge generators to being raw material collectors, and that is all that the health system sees them for that they will collect the raw products and bring it to the market, and Dabur and other market industries will buy it from them, or a local produce and it will go to the grocery shop.

This it is a complete refutation of what Charak it acknowledges and there were famous quotes from Charak which say that it is the forest dwellers and the shepherds who know

Three purposes of promoting tribal medicine are:

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about the medicinal plants. We systemise it and, therefore, we become the experts, but they are the ones who know the plant. So, from there onwards, the research need, as I understand today, is to understand the Adiwasi methods of how did they develop that knowledge, how do they know this plant is for this medicine. They do not have a lab that the modern medicines have. How did they develop that knowledge? What is their understanding of health and disease so that they are able to relate it to the local plant and say this plant does this? That is the way that we need to learn from them and that mode of knowledge generation.

Similarly, we need to recognize that they are still, even today, innovating. As conditions change, they still change because they change with the context and with the need. Therefore, what is their mode of innovation today, how are they innovating with their knowledge-base and how are they making sense of whatever is reaching to them as model, and then how do they link between the modern and the traditional, how do they understand these two together because they are having to do it in their lives and in their mind? How does their mind bring together this very different knowledge system which expects something very different from them?

The second kind of challenge is a market-driven challenge which says loss of plants and the threat of extinction of those plants in their areas and, therefore, how do they practice the knowledge that they know if the plants disappear.

To do different kind of research which would be about how to cultivate the plants that are required and that the industry wants, rather than they go extinct from their natural habitats.

With that come the issues of access and benefit sharing under the Biodiversity Act. For the first time, the traditional knowledge has been recognized as something which can be knowledge-owned because in this world today, knowledge is owned by people and not as tribals do. It is something for everybody's good and it is for collective good. And in the name of that collective coming, the colonial government would take all knowledge away

free of cost and use it as they like. But today, in IPR context now, the WIPO - World Patent Rights Organization - is attempting to bring about an international law to see how they can be benefit-sharing with traditional knowledge holders. In the process, they want to bring them under IPR kind of regime which is completely against the philosophy, as I understand it from people like Narendra and others, the philosophy of the tribal communities themselves and, therefore, are they conducive to that? There are a whole lot of even practical issues but this is a whole area which we need to be looking at also in national interest and in seeing the interests of these communities because there is the industry which is going to get an international law in their favour and then they can take it away with no acknowledgement of where the knowledge came from and, therefore, is it that they want financial benefits to reach the tribal communities which creates the whole kind of havoc of who can be called the owners, if it is a whole community? We had the experience from Kerala where the Kanni tribe was given this kind of benefit-sharing mechanism created by the public sector Botanical Garden which took some of their knowledge of the medicinal plant and transferred it to the Coimbatore Ayurvedic Pharmacy and then it got into patent with industry and so on and tried to create a community mechanism.

For how the tribals could be given 50 per cent of the benefits that came out of that product so that it go back to the community.

The major issues for the need for promotion of tribal medicine are:

- One is the fact that they have been reduced because of the politics of knowledge from colonialism onwards, from being knowledge generators to being raw material collectors, and that is all that the health system sees them for that they will collect the raw products and bring it to the market, and Dabur and other market industries will buy it from them, or a local produce and it will go to the grocery shop.
- The second kind of challenge is a market-driven challenge which says loss of plants and the threat of extinction of those plants in their areas and, therefore, how do they practice the knowledge that they know if the plants disappear.

They create a community welfare society run by the community itself. So, ten years down the line, a review that I see of that evaluation of what happened to that experiment is that there are four jeeps which are now lying without maintenance and, therefore, lying in the courtyard of that welfare society and it has created conflict and dissension within the community. Therefore, are those the ways by which *Adiwasi* communities can actually do benefit or do we - when I say 'we', I mean, as a national government it will have to be argued internationally - want a knowledge commons to be created to do a knowledge sharing on equal basis? If industry wants to use that knowledge, it will have to acknowledge the knowledge where it came from, acknowledge the source of that knowledge, and acknowledge the cultural moorings of that knowledge. For example, just as you have a warning on a cigarette packet, can every packet of the drug produced by that, say, this came from the *Kanni* tribe of Kerala or such and such. That starts changing the whole dynamics of knowledge if you start actually doing that. Therefore, every hearing that happens, a huge contingent of the US comes there and argues against this kind of a mandatory acknowledgement of source of knowledge, and that is the big battle that seems to be on now for 15 years. Therefore, the bracketed portions of the draft continue to be like that. Constantly, in every six months, there is a sitting but now for 15 years, there is almost a standstill and any time US might push a try to get this through. So, there are very different areas from which we need to look at this politics of knowledge issues. But I think it is completely central to many dimensions of rural development. This is just to say that even among the traditional knowledge that is documented, we need to recognize the systems of Ayush, which is Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, etc., and then this kind of folk knowledge which is undocumented and orally passed on because even within the Ministry of Ayush, this hierarchy is very very obvious and palatable. Their interest is in Ayush and not in protecting the folk knowledge and in promoting the folk knowledge. In fact, in the last few years that I have known, they have withdrawn programmes which were supportive and folk medicine and withdrawn funding from it. But people have been able to get them to create a North-East Institute of Folk Medicine. That Institute has an IAS Director but no work has taken off



the ground  
for the last  
five years  
because  
even  
though  
they are

similar to the laws which are there, but they do not get off the ground. So, this kind of community knowledge, community rights just do not seem to be taking off.

There was a report of a Task Force set up by the Ministry of Ayush with Prof. Ranjit Roychoudhary as the Chair, which recommended documentation of traditional health practices and practitioners in all districts and States to operationalise a programme, for which a pilot has already been done, for voluntary certification of traditional healers so that they have some kind of a legitimacy and when they are being caught as quacks and negative people, there is a backing for them as well as to ensure that misuse is not made of that knowledge as well. And then the constituting of this kind of State Resource and District Resource Centres is again something they reiterated.

Subsequently, there has been the Quality Council of India. IGNOU and the Ministry of Ayush created a whole mechanism by which there could be a voluntary certification of traditional community healthcare provided by practitioners, and it was piloted. IGNOU has now withdrawn and that department has been closed down in IGNOU but Quality Council of India and the Ministry are not only piloting but they have initiated this in the North-East. The Ministry has given funds for certifying 200 healers and, therefore, there is this kind of a semi-official stamp. They are still a little hesitant about it and therefore they said, okay; try it in North-East where Ayush does not really exist in traditional form. Therefore, that is going on. But Quality Council itself is working with State Governments to start it and Chhattisgarh is one government which has shown interest in it. This seems to be one of the ways forward in this direction.

Bio-prospecting etc., I have talked about. So, I do not need to spend time on it except to say that we do need a national law for protection of traditional knowledge because international law will come in this. At this point, US have a law and we do not. So, where international arbitration happens, they have a national law, so that applies, and we have nothing. Therefore, that is where I would think that tribal interest should also take that up. And there it is traditional knowledge; it is not only health knowledge, and therefore all kinds of traditional knowledge, whether it is of agriculture or food cultivation or forest. Any such would all come under that traditional knowledge.

Some suggestions that I thought with a mandate like COTREX could work with. These are—

- 1. There is so much material out there from anthropologists, from even the Central Council for Ayurvedic Research which had, in the 50s and 60s, done a lot of field work of documenting this kind of folk knowledge from Adiwasi communities as well. But yet it lies completely unknown to health researchers and to public health, and public health people are completely oblivious of it because our official data collection mechanisms, like the National Sample Survey Organisation, have called all this 'untreated' in their category of data. If you do folk killing, that is untreated disease. So, this kind of invisibilization of this has happened. So, just putting together the material that is available as review papers would be in itself a quick step that one can take, which would help in then setting the agenda of what are the gaps and, therefore, need to move forward.*
- 2. A survey for documenting traditional health practices and practitioners is very much needed if we want to do what we keep on talking about. When we say primary healthcare approach and so on, we want a bottom up planning. Bottom up planning would require what is it that households and*

*communities are doing for their health today? Today, we do not know because in the past it was folk medicine but we have entry of modern on a very large scale and, therefore, what is the mix they are making of it today and what is their sense of where they would go forward is something that we need to do as a large study across the country. We do not have data on that; we have small studies.*

- 3. This could feed a bottom up planning exercise, it would help design action research and co-production of knowledge because when we are talking of action research today, there is a whole lot of methodological ways of doing co-production of knowledge with communities and I think that is the way forward for an organisation like COTREX to take on.*
- 4. To design IEC material, which is what Nupur, had really started asking me to do? I do not feel equipped to do IEC material till I have the knowledge of what they know and they do. Only then would IEC become meaningful. So, that, therefore, is the first step.*
- 5. In an action research mode, can we, in some areas, with some State Governments, try out having local District Health Resource Centres and what work they should do and so on? That can be an action research agenda.*
- 6. A seminar bringing together relevant persons on the research agenda for Adiwasi healthcare itself specifically and in longer term. Once we have some material going and so on, then a larger conference because there is material like I said. Once we have these earlier steps, then a larger thing to bring focus to this whole area and to highlight it; and*

*7. Popular media to popularise the area of community tribal medicine.*

I find that many of the people around this room are really those who would be really supportive to this. So, it is very interesting that we actually have a dialogue going with people here in the room. Thank you.

**DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

Thank you, Dr. Mehrotra. It was really sharing all these years' experience with us. I now invite Shri Raghav Chandra Ji, who was heading the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes as a Secretary. He is an IAS officer from 1982 batch. He has been really into very massive changes when he was working in many of the Ministries as Secretary and also in the National Commission. I request you, Sir, to just guide us and tell in what areas this National Commission and other structures of the Government can be roped with specific reference to tribals.



**SHRI RAGHAV CHANDRA, FORMER SECRETARY, NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCHEDULED TRIBES**

Shri N.C. Saxena Sir, various other distinguished delegates, Nupur Tiwary Ji. The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, as you are aware, has been constituted under the provisions of the Constitution of India where a specific role has been delineated for the National Commission to investigate all matters pertaining to the development and to the welfare and policy making for Scheduled Tribes. It consists of a Chairperson who, from time to time, has been given the rank of a senior Minister in the Government, in this particular case given the rank of a Cabinet Minister. It has four other members, including a Vice-Chairperson and, of course, it has a secretariat, but a very small secretariat. The Commission, on an average, gets something like three to four thousand complaints about either atrocities or grievances of Scheduled Tribes from various parts of the country. So, I am just going to mention some of my observations about the working of the Commission, its effectiveness and how the Commission can be involved in the process of building a platform of dialogue with the COTREX.

As I mentioned, the Commission has a very lean and thin staff comprising of a Secretary, a Joint Secretary, A Director, a Deputy Secretary and several Investigators. Historically, the Commission has been largely concentrating on administrative grievances of Scheduled Tribes, say, somebody has missed the promotion, somebody has been suspended, somebody has been removed from service, and the Commission gets involved. Such people usually pursue their cases very very strongly at a very personal level and the Commission members have historically been inclined to give a lot of consideration and spend a large part of their energies towards these cases.

Going to the extent also of cases where Scheduled Tribe candidate's petrol pump has been suspended by the Indian Oil Corporation, the Commission has agitated itself and passed orders to say that his petrol pump has been wrongly suspended and should be restored to him. Invariably the courts have got involved in this and invariably the courts

have passed some comment that this should not have been done. So, when I became the Secretary, I insisted and clarified and made it very very clear to the Commission that we would look at personal complaints of promotions, DPCs, cancellation of allotment orders or commercial matters only very fleetingly, and only when it is absolutely imperative, would we look at it, otherwise we would not look at these cases and the Commission should largely confine itself to policy issues to deliberating on what is happening in the country for the Scheduled Tribes, travel around, have a direct antithetical understanding with the Scheduled Tribes. So, I think in the last two years that I was there, I am happy to say that the Commission traveled to every State of the country, members I think were spending 80 per cent of their time traveling, meeting Scheduled Tribes in different parts of the country. No doubt, this also involved a lot of ceremonial meetings with bodies such as schools, colleges or NGOs etc. but they were traveling, they were meeting and they were concentrating on building an understanding of policy issues which plague the development of the Scheduled Tribes. So, that has been, I think, a systemic, ideological shift in our working from the previous years and which I think will go a long way in creating more depth in the working of the Commission.

There must become an autonomous third party different from the Government and cannot be the voice of the Government.

This has to be the voice of experts who have been chosen dispassionately to support and to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Tribes.

Commission receives its funding. Despite an earlier order which said that this would be treated as a department of the Government, I do not know where this went wrong and it began to be treated as an adjunct body, whereas the constitutional mandate says that it can even call for records of the court and it has got. It does not say high Court or Munsif Court or Supreme Court. It says it can even examine papers before the court. So, it is a very powerful and a very important Commission. We tried to put our foot down and we wrote to the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister and we said that this should be treated as a completely autonomous body which it is and funding should be separate. It should have a separate budget of its own, cannot be in the budget book of the Ministry of

Tribal Affairs and thereby that every small expenditure has to be vetted by the Financial Adviser of the Tribal Affairs Ministry. So, we brought about a considerable clarity on that, not completely, not convincingly, but it became clear that we could undertake our own expenditures and only very important items would have to go to the Financial Adviser. But I think that transition is taking place and I will be hopeful if that does take place because that is critical. A body which is autonomous, like the CVC, for instance, or like the Election Commission must have its own budget, must have powers to spend on its own, to employ lawyers because one important role that I envisage for a body like the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes is that it must play a stellar role in all judicial matters where the Scheduled Tribes' interests are involved. It must become an autonomous third party different from the Government and cannot be the voice of the Government. This has to be the voice of experts who have been chosen dispassionately to support and to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Tribes. So, for instance, if it is a matter pertaining to the Forest Rights Act which is in the Supreme Court or a matter pertaining to atrocities, the Commission should be able to hire the best lawyers and to put forward and intervene on their behalf and be able to take an ideological position on such issues, which has not been happening historically, largely because again the issue arises and the Financial Advisers and all have always advised that no, you must go through the Government lawyers, first your case must be put up to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs which will back it. All this I thought was very dilatory. In fact, twice or thrice I went and met the Attorney-General also on the issue of caste certificates. It is a different matter that our plaint was not filed because they asked for more papers and all that, but the point is that such Commissions should have adequate funds to be able to marshal the best lawyers to protect the interests of the Scheduled Tribes on policy issues where it perceives that either a private or a governmental interest is not adequately safeguarding their interests. Staffing is another big issue and it is a very skeletal staff. Again it is connected with the budget and this needs to be dealt with.

One problem which is there before the Commission is that because of the fact that it is not legally intervening, because it does not have a separate budget, because it does not have even an adequate enough office space.

Then, the Commission is supposed to produce, from time to time, reports which it submits to the President of India. So, if you have a look at the historical reports of the Commission, they are very repetitive. Ninety per cent of the report is

only about the structure, functions, constitutional provisions, etc., only 10 per cent will deal with the complaints and the grievances which have come before the Commission. Hardly has any policy issue been raised in them. So, one change that I have introduced is that the Commission will not talk about the structure, funding, historical facts, etc., we will just deal with policy issues and those policy issues we were able to chapterise and see thematically that this is how it should be. I hope, the report that is being produced will be in that mode.

We dealt largely with policy issues, some of which I will mention.

One problem which is there before the Commission is that because of the fact that it is not legally intervening, because it does not have a separate budget, because it does not have even an adequate enough office space. So, we said like give us space in the Ambedkar Bhawan, but that did not happen. Such offices today require an autonomous arrangement for adequate space because a lot of petitioners can come and they should be holding conferences, dialogues, discussions etc. But space is a constraint. So, we tried to move forward on that. The point I am making is that as a result of this, there has not been adequate debate and dialogue on various issues of interest to the Scheduled Tribes. For that, a body such as the COTREX can play a very important role in providing the raw material which can help the Commission make policy recommendations.

Some of the policy recommendations that, for instance, we looked at, just to quote an instance, Sir, because you brought out this Paper on the Forest Rights Act, was that in our understanding, the Forest Rights Act has not tackled the problems of the Scheduled

Tribes adequately. Why? Because, the Act very clearly prescribes the role of the *Gram Sabha* whereas the role of the *Gram Sabha* has in most cases not been followed. We did not get any clarity that all applications were looked at by the *Gram Sabha*. There have been committees created involving the *Gram Sabha*

but most of them have been at the *Panchayat* level. The *Panchayat* level and the *Gram Sabha* level are two different levels and are sometimes counterpoised to each other. So, the crux is to look at the *Gram Sabha* as the most stellar institution. It is mentioned clearly, it has a place for itself in the Constitution. It is not a subordinate body to the *Gram Panchayat*. It has an independent or autonomous role and that role must be delineated and highlighted. So, this point we were able to make across and the Commission accepted it in our recommendations

Then, we said that all Forest Rights Act cases of the Scheduled Tribes where the *Gram Sabha* has not been involved and yet they have been rejected, those claims should be restored and should be reviewed.

Then, we said that one of the reasons that the Forest Department's approach to the tribals has been antithetical. The Forest Department treats the forests as its turf because of the historical colonial legacy where they used the forests for timber. So, they want to only have concentration on the working plan, on forest protection, as a result of which, today, the Forest Department has not done justice to the implementation of the Forest Rights Act. So, we said, either you create a separate service for the tribals - today, there is no National Tribal Service. But then the issue arose that if you have a National Tribal Service, tomorrow someone will say you have National Scheduled Caste Service, National Jat Service, and people get embroiled in this thing and nothing will happen. So, we made a recommendation through the Commission. We said that make the Forest Department officials more sympathetic. Give the role of tribal development to the Forest

Despite the fact that the Constitution mandates a National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, there is no Act for the development of Scheduled Tribes, despite their being an extremely fragile and vulnerable community.

Department officials. Make him not just the Indian Forest Service Officer, make him an Indian Forest Service and Tribal Development Officer so that at least he should realise that his role is also not just towards the forests but also towards tribal development.

Today, despite the fact that the Constitution mandates a National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, there is no Act for the development of Scheduled Tribes, despite their being an extremely fragile and vulnerable community. There are many Acts and laws to protect the forests which are inanimate and ultimately forests are for the benefit of the humankind. How can the human ecology be ignored? So, we said, you must have an Act for the development of the Scheduled Tribes. People said that you have the Atrocities Act and STs are mentioned there. But the Atrocities Act is for dealing with atrocities, not to safeguard their regular development. When you have somebody who has been historically a resident, a native of the forest and of this land, who has been exploited historically over thousands of years, you need a special provision to safeguard his interests, not just atrocities against him. So, we have suggested a National Tribal Development Act. We clubbed it and we said that there should be a fund for the development of tribals because though tribal development has a budget through the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and there is, what is known as the Tribal Sub-Plan, but the way the Tribal Sub-Plan

is dealt with, often we come across instances where departments have been given a TSP, have been loaded, shall we say, or allocated or forced to have a TSP, they are not able to



utilize that fund. The Ministry of Transport says that we have a Rs. 2,000 crore TSP but we have not been able to utilize it and we do not know how to utilize it. Whatever roads were to be constructed in the Left wing extremist areas or in tribal areas, those have been constructed; now what should we do? We will have to either surrender it or divert it. Like this, most of the departments, whether it is Space or something, Niti Aayog just sits in their office and they make budgetary allocations and hey say this will be your TSP, two per cent, one per cent, half per cent. So, all this money should, we said, if it is not being utilised, rather than lapsing, should go to a National Tribal Fund, a revolving fund, which should be non-lapsable and any Ministry which requires a special project for tribal development, should be able to apply to that National Tribal Fund, which should have members of the National Commission as part of that Steering Committee, and based on the merits of the case, you allocate funds to them. This way the funds will not lapse, you will not force departments to fictitiously spend those funds or play around with them. They will be used and they will be used for tribal development issues. Today, there are many schemes for tribal development which require special funds, like, Madam, you talked of doctors. So, for instance, why not give special salaries to people in tribal areas for health? Why should they get regular salaries only? If a tribal PHC is there in an interior area and if a regular non-tribal doctor is getting X salary, I do not see why this fellow who is serving the tribals should not be given more so that he does not seek a transfer out because most of the time people are seeking a transfer out. We found that about 50 per cent of the tribal schools and PHCs were without teachers or doctors. That is one of the banes of the tribes that they do not get people to stay on consistently because they want to run away to, as they say, a community development block from a tribal block. So, a person will get posted there under some scheme, stay there for six months or a year and the moment he gets an opportunity, he will get himself transferred from, say, Patakot or Jhabua to Indore or Jabalpur. So, you require incentivising them and the National Tribal Development Fund should be used for incentivising tribals or people to work in tribal areas to perform better. So, we have come up with a large number of such recommendations. That is the direction in which we need to move and a body, such as the

COTREX and such like, need to provide raw material for being able to agitate a body such as the National Commission for Tribes to make policy recommendations which can go to the President of India from where they can become instruments of policy making. Even today, when our reports go to the President of India, they are supposed to be laid on the Table of the House. There is an Action Taken Report which the Departments are supposed to respond to by putting up ATRs and the coordinating Ministry is the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. But we found that even when the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Tribal Affairs called us for a discussion on the previous year's report, frankly speaking, they did not find time to go deep into it. The moment the Secretary, Tribal Affairs started making a presentation showing what development programmes they were conducting, they were more interested in knowing which Eklavya Schools are being built and where, what new programmes are being launched. No one was interested in seeing whether the report had been seriously implemented or not. All these require a body such as COTREX to examine those reports, to see how much of it has been implemented, to analyse them and to be able to make presentations through National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and directly sensitise Members of parliament and such like, to be more serious about protection, safeguarding and welfare of the Scheduled Tribes. Thank you.

**DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

Sir, as you have said that you are submitting your reports to the President. Can you have something done at the level of the Governor also because you know that at Governor's level it is somehow not working? So, with your intervention, can that be taken up?

**SHRI RAGHAV CHANDRA**

One of the recommendations we made was that Governors are not taking their role seriously despite the powers they have been given under the Schedule, even to make laws retrospectively. Of course, there are some procedures which have not seen the light of the day. Our experience was that most Governors are taking their role in a very lackadaisical manner and they are just not interested in tribal development. So, we said that they must

have a Tribal Advisor and they must also Chair the Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) because today, willy-nilly, the Chief Ministers have expropriated that role and I have found from my experience, for instance, of Madhya Pradesh, that Chief Minister just lauds over that meeting. The meeting is held at 6.30 p.m. or 7.00 in the evening when everyone is tired, there are lots of biscuits and snacks. Of course, it is a large meeting and to do justice, they do spend two hours or something there in that meeting, but Governors should actively involve themselves. I think more than the Chief Ministers, the Governor himself must Chair the meeting of the TAC because that will lend a different complexion, at least where he will be able to question the working of the Government on tribal matters because Chief Ministers will only ask their officers and their Ministers on what is happening. They will sensitise themselves but they will never question their own decisions.

**SHRI N.C. SAXENA**

It was highlighted in the Press also.

**DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

Thank you, Sir. Now I invite a very eminent person after hearing from all academia and others. He has written volumes on social work and other areas and that is why he is also called 'Bastar'. His name is Narendra Bastar but everyone calls him Bastar. What is the story behind that, I do not know. I welcome you Narendar Bastar Ji. Please share your experiences of those areas with us, since you have worked in that area for more than forty years.

**SHRI NARENDRA BASTAR**

*(Original in a mix of Hindi and English – Hindi Portions are translated to English)*

**Do** I have permission to keep shifting between Hindi and English?

**DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

Surely.

### **SHRI NARENDRA BASTAR**

First of all, as far as my name is concerned, my name is not Narendra Bastar at least. But names are always for others; one does not choose one's own name. So, friends call me Narendra Bastar, beginning with Ritu and Vijay. First they started calling me by this name and it caught on. I have not really spent, as you said, 40 years, but a substantial part of my life. It is about 30-plus years, not continuously living there but first few years continuously and thereafter once in a month there, once here or somewhere else. I may seem to you a little contentious but please forgive me for my being like that. Whatever I am saying is coming purely from experience. So, I am ill-informed in matters which pertain to knowledge systems or academia and so on and so forth. So, I do not tread their territory. Whatever has been my experience, I will talk about that.

? The first thing is, for the word 'tribal', where does the reference come from? Does it come from the *Adiwasi* understanding of things, which means his landscape, the modern world for ecology? But it is a very political word and so, I will try and keep away from it. So, does the reference come from his landscape – and I will speak a different vocabulary also – or from the rhythms and flows of life that he lives in, or from the setting of the dense wilds of Abujhmad wherein you cannot figure out where does the human contour ends and the nature's contour begins? Abujhmad is sitting beside a bush, for example. It is difficult to distinguish where did the contour of this *Adiwasi* end and where did the contour of the bush begin. It is difficult to be distinguished by an untrained eye. So, where does this reference come from? Just now Ritu was talking about knowledge system. So, of which knowledge system is this word *Adiwasi* and what do we understand by it? Is the understanding only ethnic that because he is born in an *Adiwasi* family, so he is an *Adiwasi*? If that is so, then even the Chief Minister of Jharkhand was also born like that, and all those people who are living in the villages around highways and other roads of Bastar, they are all using mobile phones, they are all having TVs also.

So, who is *Adiwasi*? There was an elderly *Adiwasi* there whose name was Banda, which means stone. See, where the names are taken from. They are taken from rocks, from jungles, from living creatures, from environment. So, Banda means ‘*chattaaan*’ (rock). Once I asked him, because at one stage I was also involved in the arguments as to who is *Adiwasi*. Sometimes I was thinking that a person who is ethnically an *Adiwasi*, he should be called *Adiwasi*, or we should go by the definition of *Adiwasi* that we have provided – by ‘we’, I mean the outside world. So, he said, a person who loves jungle is an *Adiwasi*. So, it is the language (metaphor) of love. I will change my vocabulary because I cannot talk of *Adiwasi* in the typical modernistic language or word systems. So, it is the language of love. We will have to see on what premise are we standing and what is that mode of understanding by which we address the *Adiwasi* issues or *the Adiwasi*, is he a part of our own universe system, our research system, our institutes? I was associated with a research institute for many years. I had gone there with a research project in 1980. It was a five-year project in Abujhmad. You all have heard the name of Abujhmad. When I reached there, after first six months it was very clear to me that this project will not work here because the title of the project that we had given sitting in Delhi was ‘Tribal Perceptions in the Modern World’. But he does not understand the word ‘modern’. He does not even know the outside world, forget about the modern world. He is moving only with a loin. There is no hunger, there is no disease, there is no livelihood, no preoccupation, economy is unstable, etc. So, I realised that words like ‘justice’, ‘equality’ will not work there. That is the reason why I was talking about language and vocabulary. Anyway, I will come to that later if time permits. So, I realized that this will not work here. But I got an opportunity to live in Abujhmad. At that time, permission had to be obtained from the Government for living there and that permission also was oral because there is no written law anywhere that you cannot live in Abujhmad as a citizen of India. But there is a convention since 1932. There was one William Reardon who was Commissioner of Bastar. He had made this convention that let Abujhmad remain as Abujhmad; no outsider is permitted. This was an oral order and it sticks on to till the coming of the Maoists in 1980s. So, all these things, by which we sustain the modern

society, are not there. We have a model of governance, parliamentary democracy and so on and so forth. We have an economic system, a judicial system, an ever expanding huge economy - ever expanding but never delivering, that is another matter – in which we have our livelihood, our self-esteem, and our other activities. Nothing of these sorts is there. But he is very lively. He laughs, he plays dances, sings, there are no gender issues, and words like discrimination are not there. As I said, even the word ‘justice’ is not there. So, I thought this was an opportunity for me to live there and to do research on my own society. Then, for the first time, I realized that it is my society which is in grave crisis. This was in 1980. I stayed there from 1980 to 1985. Since in 1985, my tenure of five years to stay there had expired, so I started living in the area contiguous to that. So, this sort of questions arose that there is no such system, no mode, and that is not a knowledge society. These are the requirements of the modern society. Knowledge, systems, processes, institutions, these are our requirements because without there we will not survive. Actually, even with these we are not surviving. We have a huge crisis and let us not shut our eyes to that - every kind of crisis, political, economic, cultural, relational, everything. There is nothing left that is not in crisis now. This raises the questions, such as, what is our language when we talk of the *Adiwasi*, what is our vocabulary when we talk about him, what are our sensitivities. Is our language only legalistic? It is very unfortunate. Languages are never legalistic, but they have become legalistic. So, what happened is that it changed the definition of *Adiwasi*. We started talking about him in such languages, and that is going on increasing also, that he does not look like an *Adiwasi*. He or she looks like yet another caste of the Indian social system. So, we need to keep fundamentally in mind where does our reference come from when we talk of *Adiwasis*? Does it come from our own systems which I delineated a while ago or from elsewhere?

When I went to Abujmad, I found that they look better in many other ways but there is no health tradition there. So, in that respect, they seemed to me to be very backward. I also had the same vocabulary, backward, forward, a binary sort of thinking. But as I

continued to stay there, I realized that they do not have a health tradition because they do not fall sick. So, the more is the south health tradition, the weaker is the society, the more sick is the society. The more are the words and treatises like this, whether they are of Marx or of someone else, on equality, unexploitative societies, and the poorer is that society. So, how language reflects our own social, political, intellectual, poverties? I am talking of my own society. So, the absence of a health tradition shows the prosperity of that society rather than reflecting its backwardness. We will have to turn the tables a little bit. From economic indices, we judge well-being and progress. If we look from their side, then we will have to change our own indices because all our things have not led us anywhere, and in the process, these have not led them also anywhere. All our Acts, all our laws, all our policies, I dare say, have not led us anywhere. So, our faith in these things was lost. When I was in my twenties, I was having faith in these things but now, when I am going to cross 60; my faith in these things has been lost that these things do not lead us anywhere. These Acts, these laws, these policies, these plannings, these are some other issues, and the answer to them lies in Abujhmad or in other remote or interior areas like that. I am talking about these things because this pertains to today's thematic that our research institutes pertaining to *Adiwasis*, our knowledge systems pertaining to *Adiwasis*, our agencies engaged in the task of developing and changing *Adiwasis*, there is a lot of input required in these institutions and agencies as to who are *Adiwasis* Also, we will have to create some realization in them that it is not they who are in crisis, it is you who are in crisis. Even today if we do not accept this, then nothing can be done about this. But we should turn the tables a bit. There is need for us to retrospect as to what we are doing. What have we done to the entire landscape, landscape which defines the mind, which develops the mind, we have destroyed that! We have not spared the landscape. We have cleared the jungles of Bastar. When this FAR came, I objected to it that this is a way for the *Adiwasis* to sell the land which is given to him. He will destroy his jungles also, he will consume his minerals also, and he will do every such thing. Today, he will do all this because he has been associated with a global economic grid such that he has no other alternative but to cut down the jungle. He has no other way out but to pollute the river or

to sell its water, just as we do not have any other way out if we do not do any job or business. So, he has been sucked in such a system in which he was not there till 30 years back. He was part of his landscape which formed his lifestyle, his consumption habits, his health systems or the absence thereof, his institutions or absence thereof. So, since he has been sucked in such a system, then he will have to cut down the jungle now. What else will he do otherwise? He will be selling the fish, earlier he was eating it, he will kill the lion and sell its skin; earlier he was worshipping it, he will fell the trees and sell them in collusion with the local officials or local powers that be. He will do all this. There are so many *Adiwasis* of Bastar whose children are studying in New Zealand. They have set up a *dal* mill or a saw mill or other things there. There is no fodder left for his cattle. What will he do then? Now he says when you are having a mobile phone, why should I also not have it? Now he is caught in a logic, whose victims are we people, what he was earlier describing as his crisis. Now he is caught in logic, so, he will have to send his children to New Zealand. So, all these things raise the question as to where we heading for? We have very few mirrors left in the modern world, which is the global world now,

Let us no longer under-estimate our crisis. It is acute and it becomes more acute when we destroy the mirrors of those societies, those communities which can reflect to us that how ugly have we become. The mirrors have been broken.

with all its political, economic and other ramifications. We have decoyed our mirrors in which we could see our own image. So, how will we see the image of the *Adiwasis*? Will it be reflected in the saw mill, in the *dal* mill that this is what the *Adiwasi* is? But this is exploitative. He does not make the payment of wages to the other *Adiwasis* who are working under him as

his servants in his saw mill. He has been sucked in in that system, of which we are not the beneficiaries, we are ourselves the victims. Otherwise this meeting would not have been held today or other meetings that are held elsewhere would not have been held. So, we will have to question ourselves what do we understand about the *Adiwasi* and where does it come from. When we talk about him, what is his language? I am not talking about Hindi or English, what I mean is what is the metaphor we use when we talk of an

*Adivasis?* So, there are many other questions like this which will be coming to light when the time comes.

I just want to conclude with one thing. Let us no longer under-estimate our crisis. It is acute and it becomes more acute when we destroy the mirrors of those societies, those communities which can reflect to us that how ugly have we become. The mirrors have been broken. I am living in Delhi, so Delhi seems to me as the best place to live. Although I am facing problems also here but I do not find any other place to live because I do not know any other better place than this. When I went to Abujmad, it raised many fundamental questions before me.

One last point and then I will wind up. Often I think of the Constitution of India, about which I do not have any complaint, why it has never been written in *Gondi* language, why it has not been written in *Halbi* language or in any other dialect which is there, such as, *Maithili*, *Bhojpuri* or others in different parts of the country, why it has been written only in the language of power, whether it is English or Hindi. First thing is *Gondi* is a dialect; I will not call it a language, linguists call it a language. Those concerns are not there which are highlighted by the Constitution. They did not even require those concerns. We have made those concerns as their concerns also. Now, when we talk about the Constitution, he does not even know what Constitution is. Neither he has his own Constitution, nor he has read this one, and if I tell you honestly, even I have not read it till today, nor did I ever feel the need for reading it. So, this whole thing is a subtle play of powers. Whatever will be talked about them, that will be talked in a particular language,

Whole thing is a subtle play of powers. Whatever will be talked about them, that will be talked in a particular language, that is, either hindi or english or constitutional or legalistic.

that is, either Hindi or English or constitutional or legalistic. The proverb in which their ancestors are mentioned, in which that ambience comes in which it becomes difficult to distinguish between those images. He is indivisible from his wild. As I said, it is difficult to distinguish between a bush and an *Adiwasi*. So, he is

indivisible but he never makes a claim on it. This is a very fundamental question about the idea of property and ownership on which the entire capitalism is based. He is a part of that and still he is not visible and does not even make a claim on it. What is this lifestyle? What is this outlook of non-ownership? Our research institutes, our policy makers, our planners, our academia at large and this type of a platform can give them this type of inputs. Thank you.

### **DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

Thank you, Narendra Ji. We will use your in-depth knowledge.

The last presentation is by Dr. Ramesh C. Gaur Ji. He is heading *Kalanidhi* Division of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

### **DR. RAMESH C. GAUR**

Thank you Dr. Nupur Tiwary for inviting me for this very important discussion. Before telling more about libraries and resource centres, let me just give you an overview of what activities and programmes we are doing at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, related to tribals in India. As you know, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts is a national centre responsible for preservation of Indian cultural heritage, and the Division which I am heading is a resource centre in which we have a library, we have manuscript repository, we have visual archive, we have cultural archive and then we have a number of programmes and projects. Just in the last one year, we have taken a number of important initiatives which you people may be interested in knowing how we are helping in preservation of cultural and other aspects of tribal community. Just last month we had a big event. We invited Dard Aryan community from Laddakh. It was a five-day festival and during that festival we invited about 32 artistes, those local community people from that region. First day we had the inauguration of an exhibition. So, there was an exhibition based on the material collected from those places in Laddakh region and also some photographs taken by even my colleague, and then next day we had a seminar.

There was a seminar, which was inaugurated by the Tribal Affairs Minister Mr. Sudarshan Bhagat. We had about 18 Papers on different aspects of cultural traditions and other areas and most of these Papers were from the people from that region, either from the community or the researchers working in that area. Then, we also took them to JNU. We organized interaction with faculty there. Everyday we had cultural performances, we had special lectures and also last two days we took them to this *Mahakumbh*. First time they traveled to that place. I will not take more time on that because I have some other topics to cover in this. It was given a big media coverage and even a Parliament Question was raised on various issues concerning that. This is not just the end of it; we are moving ahead with various programmes. We have helped them in setting up two community museums and even a dictionary of their spoken language is in the process. Also, we are planning to have an event some time in October-November to help them further preserve their cultural traditions.

Besides that, we have recently started a project. Prof. Ritu Priya talked about the importance of tribal medicine. So, we have started a project 'Survey and Documentation of Healers in North-East States. That project has already been started. There is a faculty from JNU, Dr. Sunita Reddy, and Anthropol Foundation. So, the work is currently going on in three States of North-East India. We have a plan to cover all the nine States in three phases. Later also we have a vision to take this as a national level project. Special focus is on all kinds of traditional medicines, both Ayurvedic and tribal medicine. The first phase report will be ready by July and we are planning an event in August to discuss more about that.

I am a member of the International Advisory Committee of UNESCO Memory of the World Programme. Under that project, we have started mapping of archives in India. So, that project is also in the process, I am under taking that project, because in India, you do not have any directory or a kind of portal which gives you information about different kinds of archival material available. We have about 30-page questionnaire by which we are surveying what are their resources, accessibility, preservation issues and also talking

about different kinds of disaster risk reduction programmes in that. So, that will also be completed this year.

From time to time we have organized a number of festivals. Actually, from 2011 to 2018, I went to JNU on deputation. But prior to that, we organized a big event with the help of Prof. Devi in Gujarat. It was on different aspects of tribals. At that time, I collected a lot of literature on various tribal languages, which was collected in IGNCA.

There are a number of other events also. We have a *Jan Sampada* Division. Dr Mauli Kaushal is heading it. A lot of other resources are also available within IGNCA during these programmes and festivals or exhibitions organized from time to time.

I was in Hyderabad last week. There was a conference on language, literature and culture. Vaguely, the focus was on indigenous languages. In that seminar, with the help of UNESCO, we had proposed a consortium for promotion of indigenous languages and focus will be also on the indigenous languages. So, that is another initiative. Next week we are meeting to give a shape to that particular consortium. We are looking for a stakeholder and I will be definitely happy to request you to join that consortium as a stakeholder for this particular proposed centre. The next meeting we are having on 12<sup>th</sup> March in Delhi in IGNCA. So, we will invite you for that.

Apart from that, we are also working on a lot of ancient scripts. After coming back from JNU, I have started a PG Diploma in Manuscriptology and Palaeography where we are teaching all those ancient scripts, *Brahmi, Sharda, Pali, Prakrit*, because we need to preserve these ancient scripts. Only then we can preserve the resources available in different parts of the country. So, this is some background of what I have been doing and IGNCA is doing.

I have a proposal, if you all agree that definitely we need to have a good resource centre where researchers can work. In this connection, I was discussing with Prof Mauli Kaushal that we can think of having a section in our library on all these tribal languages

and also certain vernacular languages and, to begin with, we should procure all the best sellers of very good books from all these places and create a resource centre within *Kalanidhi* in IGNCA. One purpose is to provide literature to the researchers working in Delhi or nearby, at one location because now we are proposing in IGNCA a library to be opened round the clock. Maybe from first of April, we are creating a 24x7 reading room in *Kalanidhi* so that people can come anytime and on Saturdays and Sundays also.

Another idea was that there are a number of these language books which are not known to people who do not understand these languages. So, we can do some kind of translation in English or Hindi, of this literature so that it reaches to world-wide community. That was the second idea. The third was if copyright permissions are given, then we can think of creating a digital library of all this literature. I am sure; most of these Government institutions working in these areas can easily help us in granting permission. So, a kind of online digital library for the literature will be available on that.

One more important area is there is need for training. Like, many people want to develop the archives or resource centre on tribal literature or any kind of literature. So, training is one issue. In May, we are proposing one training workshop with the help of one U.S. University and also some experts from India. It will be a one-week training programme. If somebody from your 23 research centres is interested in attending that training programme, we will not be charging any fee. We can get it sponsored from IGNCA and from other stakeholders. So, these are certain things to which I feel we can contribute.

This is one of the mandates of IGNCA to work on these issues and from time to time we keep organizing programmes. So, any kind of further collaboration you feel IGNCA can be helpful, we shall be happy to help you.

I just came to know about two days back from you that this will be a panel discussion. So, I have not prepared any structured presentation. These were some unscattered thoughts in my mind, so, I thought it is important to share them with all of you. Thank you very much.

### **DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

Thank you, Dr. Gaur, for sharing some of the cultural aspects of the IGSCA with us. I look forward to having collaboration with your institution.

So, this brings us to the end of the last presentation. But we have other eminent people also sitting here who have many years of experience in their specific areas. So, to reflect some of the ideas that we have gathered here in this platform, I request Prof Ujjwal Kumar Singh from Political Science Department in Delhi University to share his thoughts with us

### **PROF. UJJWAL KUMAR SINGH**

I am thankful to you, Dr. Nupur, for inviting me. I, on the other hand, clearly have learnt so much from very diverse kinds of presentations. I do research on State and actually what I see State speaking and the way we look at. So, I am not going to talk about tribals.

I should not be taking much time. I read some of their works. I tell you that we do have topics on different Commissions. We do not get any literature, any monograph on Scheduled Tribes Commission and such are probably the reason which came from you. So, our M.A. students are really deprived of in the sense that we do have a topic in our M.A. syllabus and B.A. syllabus and commissions are truly important. You were part of this formulation of FRA and the scholars have done the PhDs. and they are working on that. When I came here to actually learn about constitutional imagination of tribals, I want to do some research on that, I do not know after your talk. What I do and analytically what I look at in terms of presentations, let me become a political scientist over here, is certain category of State which is coming up and very briefly, its level of abstraction, but I do have

The model which we all know, not just people who have done political science but otherwise also we know that this is an Austrian model of centralized administrative State operators, and it is not just institution, it is aspiration of the State to talk in terms of aggregate power

both explanatory and normative issues to bring about over here.

What we get is, we are talking about agencies or departments and it is so important that among the best of persons who framed rules and policies, and a practitioner, Mr. N.C. Saxena, what you get the firsthand voice is there are a disjunction between the tribal and the forest department. I think that is the serious crisis, not for just department and the State but, above all, for the tribals. Coming from the best of mind who actually has planned is something very serious. How to handle it, what will be the role of COTREX, at least we need to bring about that way, not just about showing the crisis but some harmony, some synergy because the dialogue is not happening there, dialogue is not happening at the grass-root level. So, that is one of the issues. When we think of agencies, we need to locate as a part of wider understanding of State theory. The model which we all know, not just people who have done political science but otherwise also we know that this is an Austrian model of centralized administrative State operators, and it is not just institution, it is aspiration of the State to talk in terms of aggregate power. So, it is very difficult to question that. And what we are getting over here - I wish this was actually my M.A. class - from the firsthand policy makers and practitioners is that members, the political community which makes the State operators, they need not speak with one voice. There is actually a disaggregate structure which is there and which helps the society. So, in both the presentations what you get is, there is discomfort about what is happening and why it is happening, I mean, to the extent that you actually have to push the agenda in the sense of coaxing a Chief Minister to bring about that minor change in the rules which affects lakhs and lakhs of tribals. That is missing. So, we need to look at both in terms of larger State theory where you have the aggregated State power and then you can also think in terms of disaggregated. It is not a big thing to understand. You have layers and layers of State. So, I do not have to tell you, you all know that local tribals look at the forest officials as the State power whereas actually Tribal Ministry would probably have some other imagination as such. So, let us look in terms of disaggregated State power because people are represented at that local level, immediate

Supreme Court says, you started the process, you started for the claims, and you are not implementing it seriously.

So, it is actually a challenge of state capacity where the enumeration process has not taken place.

level, in terms of PDS which they get, in terms of education which they are not getting, in terms of health policy which they are getting. So, let us take a look in that sense.

The next thing is the whole idea of State capacity we know that traditional definition is when you convert power into authority. But remember, given the different landscape when you convert your aspirations and emotions also into authority. That could be done and that is done because how do you map those emotions and aspirations? You need to have some institutional structure, some framework to translate into that carrying the Supreme Court judgement, because I thought that is something real crisis which we are talking about in terms of evictions. To be honest enough, you have different kinds of information coming from different States. What you have in terms of data, say, in Andhra Pradesh. 60315 claims have been rejected. So, what you get in different States proportion of rejection of claims from tribals and from non-tribals are different. But remember, that will be empirical flow when we actually start dividing among them because the Forest Rights Act actually identifies forest dwellers. Tribals is something which we are looking at but remember, if it is done in terms of one putting against the other, non-foresters who are there now in tribal areas. So, you have different kinds of data coming from different States. Proportion of claims which have been rejected by non-forest dwellers in some States is very high but overall the claims of tribals have gone down. They have been rejected. What is the crisis? Even court is saying that the orders are not being implemented. That is what courts are saying. Now, all of a sudden what happens is, all political parties are coming together and they are saying, let us file an appeal challenging that - all political parties, all groups, including RSS. They have passed a resolution. Two Left wings also passed a resolution that it should be done. The real challenge is that of State capacity, lack of enumeration. But because you do not have that mapping, as a result, one branch of the Government is

bringing another thing, another branch another thing. Supreme Court, remember I am not making Supreme Court as a villain over here. That is what happens in these kinds of crises. Ultimately Supreme Court is a villain. But it is not. It is basically saying, you started the process, you started for the claims, and you are not implementing it seriously. So, it is actually a challenge of State capacity where the enumeration process has not taken place. For example, if you have different norms for expecting the claims of the tribals, which, I believe, there is, but they are unable to produce record, which they cannot. Many people would do understand. So, there, the entire enumeration process is wrong. Therefore, you need to re-look into your State capacity. See, in certain respects, State is pretty powerful. When it comes to Adhaar, the petition in the court is really 98 per cent people have been enumerated in the Adhaar. If that could happen there, why can't it happen over here? Hence, I bring a normative question. We need to ask the right questions over here that State capacity to what end? And it is very clear with this group over here that the normative question is, it is not suited to the end of tribals. So, you need to re-raise the questions. As such. Not immediate but I would say immediate intervention is required and probably because COTREX will do the mapping work rather than interventionist work, so, there it is a looming crisis. Whether they go to the courts or not but remember, work does not stop because the next hearing would be probably in July – July 24th is what they asked for. But nothing is going to stop till then. At least that is what is mandatory as per law. So, somewhere probably we need to map out these things and find out in the past but at least in the future, what is the resettlement plan because, trust me, not everything is going to stop. It is a process which is going to unwind itself and there will be displacements, as it is in the past. So, the minimum is the knowledge about who are these categories and what plans do you have because interestingly in this, eviction notices are there but there

We know this is a challenge, but remember, if you keep on saying Mizoram is an insurgent area and Nagaland is a civil war area and these central areas are red-corridor, then obviously the images would be remembered. Think of the younger people - ten years, 12 years, 15 years, and 20 years old. Their imagination is, these people are actually violent, which is not true. So, we need to rethink

is no resettlement plan for any State Government as such. I am not a policy maker in that sense, I am not aware of it, but I could see the gap over here. My own interest is in constitutional imagination which tribals have. After Narendra Ji has raised a big question, I do not know what constitutional imagination is, but I believe they are things which are there. Rather I would say, whether it is written in *Gondi* or not, why it is not available in *Gondi* because we see a whole lot of Pattalgarhi taking place where the putting up the provisions of the Constitution on the stone slab is the kind of their aspirations.

We keep on using categories like red-terror. One is, we are completely denying the agency, another is, and we are completely making them like a kind of internal enemies. So, the Government does it. We know this is a challenge, but remember, if you keep on saying Mizoram is an insurgent area and Nagaland is a civil war area and these central areas are red-corridor, then obviously the images would be remembered. Think of the younger people - ten years, 12 years, 15 years, and 20 years old. Their imagination is, these people are actually violent, which is not true. So, we need to rethink. I know you have two days seminar coming up on Red Corridor. So, probably the categories, the languages are absolutely important Just a general request to you. Thank you so much.

### **DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

Thank you Ujjwal ji. Now we have two more questions one is from Shri Urmilesh Urmi. He was formerly Chief Editor of Rajya Sabha TV and presently he is also doing a special programme with the WIRE. He studied at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He has probably left.

Then, the next we have is Prof. Velayutham Sarvanan. He is heading the Centre for Jawaharlal Nehru Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia.

### **PROF. VELAYUTHAM SARVANAN**

Thank you very much Dr. Nupur for inviting me to speak something. We have heard 4-5 interesting presentations. We expected that the Scheduled Tribes Commission will solve the problem but we heard that the Commission itself has a series of problems. The second major presentation was on various policy interventions and how they are unsuccessful. These two are the wide range of factors. Another presentation was on need to record and document the traditional knowledge and the fourth one understood the State and related issues, whereas I am going to present something interesting and that is that why the tribal issues arise. It has a lot of historical background. We have morning tea and, of course, coffee also. Some of us will mix both tea and coffee and drink. But the establishment of the tea and coffee plantations was started around 1820. That is the Lord Bentinck formed a committee to cultivate the tea plantations in lower Assam and around mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, we had brought something like eight lakh acres of land for both tea and coffee plantations. The tea plantations are largely found in lower Assam or in the northern parts of Bengal and coffee plantations are extensively found in southern parts of the country, particularly in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, to some extent, in Andhra Pradesh and, to some extent, in Kerala. All these plants were developed in the highlands where the tribals used to live. We never had any kind of account of how many tribals were displaced and what kind of compensation mechanism was provided because there was no such provision at that time.

The second major intervention is very very important because several speakers pointed out the importance of land records. You know very well that in this country, the land was surveyed and settlement was made between 1871 and 1873 invariably in different districts of the country. First we have surveyed, we have given the ownership rights and then the rest of the land was notified as Government land or wasteland, whereas in the tribal areas it did not happen. For the tribal areas, based on the 1875 Indian Forest Act, the Forest Department notified the entire forest area, and then asked for the claims. Without consulting the tribals, we have just notified the entire area as the reserve forest where the fundamental problem is that of land rights. At that time itself we did not ask

how much area they had owned or controlled. That became the historical injustice for making this new Act in 2006. So, I have pointed out that the non-tribals should be removed from their occupied area. I remember that in 2005, I wrote a small piece, I think in the *Mainstream*, that why forest right, why not land?

Another important point is that look, when Jawaharlal Nehru formed the *Panchsheel* Policy for the tribals, the very clear idea was to integrate them with the mainstream. That is the agenda or the central point of the Policy. Instead of doing that, now we are sending them back to the forest, instead of integrating them. We failed because in various policy interventions during the post-Independence period, the SC is a part, maybe, 10 per cent, 20 per cent, of each and every programme

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Another important point is that, when Jawaharlal Nehru formed the *Panchsheel* Policy for the tribals, the very clear idea was to integrate them with the mainstream. That is the agenda or the central point of the Policy. Instead of doing that, now we are sending them back to the forest, instead of integrating them.

component. Then we realized during the Fifth Five Year Plan that we needed to have a separate plan for the tribals. That is why the concept of Tribal Sub-Plan has come, under which we started the integrated tribal development projects, maybe 193, or other 253 modified area development projects or another 74-84 primitive tribal group kind of things, depending upon the population, area, all these things. We have developed infrastructure facilities in the tribal areas in terms of roads, hospitals, schools, but what is the net result? The net result is that wherever these infrastructure facilities have

developed, the non-tribals intruded in those areas. Till 2006, the major core allegation is that the non-tribals were exploiting the tribals. Political intervention, political agenda of vote bank popular politics came in 2005 and the non-tribals who were being criticized for the last 40-50 years for the plight of the tribals, now became a forest dwelling community. We criticized the non-tribals as the main responsible for the... of the tribals now became the forest dwelling community and rights are given to them.

I want to make another important point that how politically it is very important? Look at the Parliamentary electoral research. From 1956 to 1970s, out of the 40 seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribe community, the Congress used to gain more number of seats. Once they felt that the vote bank was going somewhere else, they formed the tribal sub-plan. Then they got more seats. They continued to gain more seats. But in the 2004 elections, the Congress won only four seats or five seats. Then suddenly the party realized that okay, we have to resort to retain their bank. So, the point that I am trying to make is that look at the different phases of intervention by the external force, by the policy makers. See, what kind of impact all these things have made. Take, for example, Land Alienation Act. Look at across the country. The Tribal Land Alienation Act was enacted after the encroachments took place. There are several States like Andhra Pradesh. So, we have to see the field experience for three decades. What they need, we have to see from their point. We should not impose. That is what Jawaharlal Nehru also pointed out. But Jawaharlal Nehru waited for almost 7-8 years to understand the tribals-related issues based on the North-East region experience. Several times he pointed out that he did not know anything about the tribals. He gained the knowledge based on the experience, the local level experience. Then he decided the policy. So, we have to look at the need and requirement, the availability, and accordingly we have to design an appropriate policy to develop the tribal community because it a different socio-cultural set up. The policy for one tribe may not be applicable to the other. We have to see all these issues based on the field level experience. I hope that will give a kind of policy intervention which will, maybe, ensure some kind of positive development. Thank you very much.

## DR. NUPUR TIWARY

Thank you, Prof. Velayutham. Now, this is an open house. Any questions? Ashwani, you wanted to say something.

अगर जंगल आदिवासी का दिल है, तो जंगल की धड़कन आदिवासी है

## SHRI ASHWANI

मेरा नाम अश्विनी है और मैंने पिछले कुछ समय से, कुछ सालों से बस्तर में काम किया है।

वहाँ पर पिछले साल से परिस्थितियाँ कुछ ठीक नहीं थी। मैं अभी नोमेड्स कम्युनिटी जो हैं - नट, भाट, भोपा, कालबेलिया आदि हैं, इनके साथ अभी राजस्थान में काम कर रहा हूँ।

नूपुर मैम, आपका धन्यवाद कि आपने मुझे बोलने का समय दिया। एन. सी. सक्सेना सर, नरेन्द्र जी और अन्य सभी बाकी लोग जो यहाँ पर मौजूद हैं, मैं उन्हें धन्यवाद देता हूँ। मुझे लगता है कि आपने आदिवासी शब्द का एक पक्ष बताया है। दरअसल, जो हमारा आदिवासियों को लेकर विचार है, वह वही टूटा, फूटा, बिखरा हुआ है। जंगल और आदिवासी को हम अलग-अलग करके देखते हैं। वह बस्तर का आदिवासी हो, आन्ध्र प्रदेश का आदिवासी हो, अगर जंगल उसका दिल है, तो उसकी धड़कन आदिवासी है। यह उन दोनों की जुगलबन्दी है। आपने अलग-अलग कुछ पॉइंट्स बताए, अलग-अलग कुछ बिन्दु बताए। मैं इसमें एक-एक, दो-दो बिन्दु सभी पर लेकर चलता हूँ। अगर आप आदिवासियों की जीवन शैली को देखेंगे, उसकी पूरी जीवन शैली उसी पहाड़, उसी पेड़, उसी चिड़िया, उसी नदी के इर्द-गिर्द घूमती है। आपने कहा, डॉक्टर सर ने बोला कि वहाँ डॉक्टर स्पेशल पैकेज पर गए हैं। मैं बस्तर की हालत बताता हूँ। वहाँ स्पेशल पैकेज पर डॉक्टर गए हैं। दंतेवाड़ा हॉस्पिटल में गए हैं, कोई न्यूरो सर्जन है, कोई कार्डियो सर्जन है। वहाँ हीमोग्लोबिन की जाँच की सुविधा भी नहीं है। हमने वहाँ पर स्पेशल पैकेज देकर डॉक्टर्स को रखा है। यह हालत है।

मैं बीजापुर, सुकमा और दंतेवाड़ा के इर्द-गिर्द ही अपनी सारी बात रखूँगा। आपने आंकड़ों की बात कही। वहाँ आप जंगल में जाएंगे तो आपको पता चलेगा कि फॉरेस्ट राइट एक्ट आने के बाद उन लोगों के साथ यह हुआ कि अब आपको जमीन देनी पड़ेगी, जंगल के अंदर हिस्सा देना पड़ेगा, तो आप उनको जनगणना में शामिल ही न करें। दंतेवाड़ा का पूरा डेटा हमने कलेक्ट किया। मैं वहाँ कई साल चप्पे-चप्पे पर घूमा हूँ। वहाँ आधे लोगों का कोई डॉक्यूमेंटेशन नहीं है, उनका कोई आधार कार्ड नहीं है, उनका कोई राशन कार्ड नहीं है। वहाँ की पॉपुलेशन में वे लोग आए ही नहीं। आधे लोग तो उससे बाहर हो गए। फॉरेस्ट राइट या कहीं पर भी उनका कोई नामो-निशान नहीं है। वहाँ पर यह उनके साथ हुआ था। वहाँ पर जो रियल इश्यूज हैं, कोदो, कुटकी उनके लिए केवल अनाज नहीं है, जिस मोटे अनाज की आप बात करते हैं। कोदो, कुटकी हाइली न्यूट्रियश डाइट है। हमने पिछले तीन-चार साल में यह किया है कि वहाँ फूल की खेती करवा रहे हैं। यह पिछले चार साल की हालत है, दंतेवाड़ा, सुकमा और बीजापुर में। अब उस फूल को वह खायेगा थोड़े ही। अब वह क्लेम नहीं कर सकता, क्योंकि उसके पास जंगल का अधिकार नहीं है। उसका डॉक्यूमेंटेशन नहीं है, तो किसी के

अगर ऊँट के नाप का पानी है, तो कौन सी भाजी प्रचुर मात्रा में मिलेगी, यह आदिवासी को पता है। यह उनकी ट्रेडिशनल नॉलेज है। यह उनका ज्ञान है।

पास जाकर वह बोल नहीं सकता है। एक ओर जहाँ पर वह आत्मनिर्भर था, उसका पोषण था, लेकिन इस वजह से वह बीमारियों का शिकार हो रहा है। इस वजह से अपने जीवन में वह जिसका मालिक था, वह आदमी मजदूर बन गया है। वह फिर भी इस कोदो, कुटकी को लेकर कोई शिकायत नहीं करता है। जिस नदी की हम बात करते हैं, जो मैंने जंगल और उसके रिश्ते की बात की, इंद्रावती,

डंकिनी संखिनी, जो मेन बस्तर को रचती, बुनती हैं। उसका सम्मान क्या है उस नदी के प्रति, मार्च के महीने में अभी उनका एक त्यौहार आएगा। बेसिकली आप सभी लोग, कुछ लोग वहाँ के जानकार हैं, कुछ जानकार नहीं हैं, तो मैं बता देता हूँ कि बस्तर में आदिवासियों के चार समुदाय हैं। ये समुदाय गोंड, हल्बा, मुरिया और माड़िया हैं और ये गोंड के ही उपभाग हैं। कुछ-कुछ छुट-पुट हिस्से में धुर्वा और भद्रा हैं। ये कुल चार कम्युनिटी हैं। उनकी दो भाषाएँ नहीं हैं, बोलियाँ हैं, गोंडी और हल्बी। जो बोली दंतेवाड़ा की है, सुकमा की बोली उससे बिल्कुल अलग है। एक ही शब्द के लिए अलग-अलग है और बीजापुर में जाएंगे तो वही बोली बिल्कुल बदल जाएगी। यानी उनके तीन-तीन शब्द हैं। वे जंगल की बोलियाँ हैं।

नदी का अभी जो उन लोगों का फेस्टिवल है, तो मुरिया लोग क्या करेंगे, वे नदी के अंदर जाएंगे, क्योंकि इन महीनों में पानी ठहर जाता है। वे नदी में जाएंगे, तुम्बी होती है, जो लौकी का खोल है, उसी में वे लोग पानी पीते हैं। वे उस तुम्बी को लेकर नदी में जाएंगे और 21 बार उस पानी को ऊपर-नीचे डालेंगे कि वह पानी चलना शुरू करे और सात कदम वापस चलेंगे, तब उसको पीठ दिखाते हैं। यह सम्मान उनका नदी के लिए है। पानी किस स्तर के ऊपर है? अगर ऊँट के नाप का पानी है, तो कौन सी भाजी प्रचुर मात्रा में मिलेगी, यह आदिवासी को पता है। यह उनकी ट्रेडिशनल नॉलेज है। यह उनका ज्ञान है। तेंदू पत्ता किस कोण पर निकला है, उससे वह यह तय कर लेते हैं कि अबकी बार तेंदू पत्ता की फसल कैसी होगी और उस आधार पर वे अपनी झोपड़ी, घर को हटाकर 30 किलोमीटर दूसरी जगह पर चले जाते हैं। हम सोचते हैं कि वे लोग बेचारे हैं, गरीब हैं, वे झोपड़ी में रहते हैं। उनकी दीवारे मिट्टी की हैं और खपरैल या फूस की छत होती है। वह उसी मिट्टी में मिल जाती है। वे पर्यावरण को नुकसान भी नहीं पहुँचाते हैं। उनका यह ज्ञान सहज और उपयोगी है, जो उन्हें उनके पुरखों से मिला है और उसी को लेकर वे चल रहे हैं। यह उन्होंने किताबों में पढ़कर नहीं सीखा है। कहीं किसी की पीएचडी की डिग्री में या कहीं रिसर्च में उन्हें यह ज्ञान नहीं मिला है। हम वहाँ जाकर कहते हैं कि हम आपको सिखाएंगे, क्योंकि हम जानने वाले हैं, हमने उन्हें मॉडर्न एजुकेशन दी। हमने वहाँ पर ऐसी मॉडर्न एजुकेशन दी कि 6 साल पहले वहाँ पर पोटा केबिन शुरू हुए थे। कलेक्टर को प्राइज मिला था। उस पोटा केबिन में जो शिक्षक नियुक्त किए थे, वे बाहर के थे। जाहिर सी बात है कि किसी को गोंडी और हल्बी नहीं आएगी। एक भी सिंगल टीचर को 6 साल के बाद गोंडी और हल्बी बोलनी नहीं आती है। यह वर्ष 2017 का डॉक्यूमेंटेशन है। यह हमने मॉडर्न एजुकेशन उनको दी है। जो बच्चे जंगल में रहते हैं, उन्हें हिन्दी का एक शब्द नहीं आता है। मैं जंगल की बात कर रहा हूँ, बाहर की बात नहीं कर रहा हूँ। जिस एकलव्य और बाकी प्रोग्राम की बात आपने कही, आप जब उनकी हालत जाकर देखेंगे, जब उस भाषा से आपका कम्युनिकेशन नहीं है, तो आपने पढ़ाया क्या? आप मिसोपारा

में जाइए, डोंगरीपारा में जाइए, गाँव को वे लोग पारा बोलते हैं, डोंगरीपारा, डोंगरी के उस पार यानी पहाड़ी के उस पार का गाँव, मिसोपारा यानी बीच का गाँव है। ऐसे ही वे पारा को अलग-अलग अपनी डोंगरी से, नदी से, पहाड़ी से जोड़कर बोलते हैं। यह उनकी शिक्षा है। उसके नाम पर, हम मॉडर्न एजुकेशन पर वहाँ क्या नया कर रहे हैं, जो कलेक्टर वहाँ जाता है, वहाँ प्राइज लूटने का एक है, तो उन्होंने आईएस के टेंडर दिए हैं। दो

लाल चींटियों की चटनी को चापड़ा बोलते हैं, वे लोग उसे खाते हैं। उस लाल चींटियों की चटनी से उन्हें मलेरिया नहीं होता है। बोयलिंग आती है, वे उसे खाते हैं, एंटी मलेरियन ड्रग्स के तौर पर वे उसे यूज करते हैं। यह उनका सहज ज्ञान है।

करोड़ का टेंडर सुकमा में हैं, एक करोड़ का टेंडर दंतेवाड़ा में है और यह दो साल से चल रहा है। आईएस ट्रेनिंग इंस्टीट्यूट चल रहा है और उसमें एक भी आदिवासी बच्चा नहीं है। यह उनके सीएसआर के पैसे से चल रहा है। सीएसआर का पैसा दंतेवाड़ा का, सुकमा का है तो सुकमा का, उस पैसे में डेवलपमेंट पर हमने आईएस के टेंडर उनको दिए हैं, जबकि हमें वहाँ पर शिक्षकों की ट्रेनिंग करवानी चाहिए थी।

जिस ट्रेडीशनल मेडिसिन की बात आती है, शायद कोई विश्वास न करे, लाल चींटियों की चटनी को चापड़ा बोलते हैं, वे लोग उसे खाते हैं। उस लाल चींटियों की चटनी से उन्हें मलेरिया नहीं होता है। बोयलिंग आती है, वे उसे खाते हैं, एंटी मलेरियन ड्रग्स के तौर पर वे उसे यूज करते हैं। यह उनका सहज ज्ञान है। जब आप आदिवासी की जीवन प्रक्रिया, जो उसकी सारी जीवन प्रक्रिया उसके इर्द-गिर्द है, समय कम है, इसलिए मैं डिटेल् में नहीं बता रहा हूँ, जब आप उसके साप्ताहिक हाट को देखें, हमने उसे बाजार मान लिया, वह साप्ताहिक हाट है। कोई भी चीज न तोलकर बेची जाती है, न पैसे में बेची जाती है, जब आप डीप जंगल में जाएंगे वहाँ पर हमने दस रुपये की पर्ची लगा दी है ताकि वे इससे हटकर मॉडर्न मॉर्केट में आ जाएं, जो हमने बनाई है। मॉडर्न मॉर्केट में दुकानें यू.पी. की हैं, जो 50-60 दुकानें हैं। तीन होटल राजस्थान के हैं। यह आंकड़ा दंतेवाड़ा का है। जो सैलून हैं, वे आन्ध्र प्रदेश के हैं। अब वह मॉडर्न उसके अंदर कहाँ पर आएगा, वह वहाँ पर आकर मजदूर बन जाएगा। उनके सारे फेस्टिवल साप्ताहिक हाट से तय होते हैं। जंगल में एक आदिवासी यहाँ, दूसरा तीन किलोमीटर दूर है, तीसरा चार किलोमीटर दूर है। वे सारे सप्ताह में एक दिन ही मिलते हैं। इसलिए वह उनका त्यौहार है। कभी भी वे तैयार होकर नहीं आएंगे। जिस दिन वे साप्ताहिक हाट में आते हैं, उस दिन वे फूल लगाकर आते हैं, अलग-अलग फूल हैं, चम्पाकली है, वे सब नहा-धोकर तैयार होकर आते हैं। वह साप्ताहिक हाट उनके मिलने का उत्सव है। वे वहाँ पर आते हैं, तो उनके शादी-विवाह भी उसी साप्ताहिक हाट से तय होते हैं। एक मुरिया गले में ढोल टांगकर आएगा और वह सारे हाट में घूमेगा और वह बतायेगा कि किस पारे में किसकी किसके साथ शादी है। गाँव की जो उनकी सामाजिक व्यवस्था है, उसमें हर पारे के अंदर गुनी लोग होते हैं। जैसे अपने यहां सरपंच तो पॉलिटिकल हो गया, उनका सोशल इंस्टीट्यूशन है, उसका जो हेड होता है, वह गुनी होता है। जैसे कोई भी बाहर से पढ़-लिख दिया कि जादू-टोना, लेकिन वह गुनी जादू-टोना नहीं करता है। वह जाकर यह तय करता है कि फसल निकालने का समय हुआ है या नहीं, इमली तोड़ने का समय हुआ है या नहीं, आम तोड़ने का समय हुआ है या नहीं, तेंदू पत्ता तोड़ने का समय हुआ या नहीं। जो सार्वजनिक फसल को तोड़ना होगा, उसे कटला बोलते हैं।

उनकी शादी की परम्परा अगर आप देखेंगे, तो उनकी शादी में हर चीज तय है, क्योंकि उनका मातृ सत्तात्मक परिवार है, तो लड़की तय करती है। उस आदिवासी को, चाहे मुरिया हो या माड़िया, उसको उसके पारे में जाकर रहना पड़ेगा और पारे में जाकर उसको वह झोपड़ी बनाकर दिखानी पड़ेगी, उसको पत्ते तोड़कर दिखाने पड़ेंगे, पेड़ में चढ़ कर उसको दिखाना पड़ेगा, यानी कि एक महीने में उसको वे सारे क्रियाकलाप करके दिखाने पड़ेंगे, जो पारा में वहां रहने के लिए सस्टेनिबिलिटी के लिए जरूरी है। इसके बाद लड़की तय करती है कि मैं इससे शादी करूंगी या नहीं करूंगी।

उस कटला का दिन तय होता है। वह दिन वहां की साप्ताहिक हाट में तय होता है। वह एनाउंस करता है कि फलाने दिन हमारा कटला होगा। उस दिन सारे लोग इकट्ठे होते हैं। सामूहिक तौर पर उनको पत्ता तोड़ना हो या इमली लेना हो या आम लेना हो, वह प्रक्रिया सामूहिक तौर पर होती है। वह किसी एक व्यक्ति की फसल नहीं है। एक पूरा पारा मिल कर महीने में एक जंगली सुअर का शिकार करता है और पूरा पारा मिल कर उसे खाता है। केवल एक जंगली सुअर उसमें रहता है। ऐसा नहीं है कि हर दिन इसे किया। उसके अंदर भी जो

कमजोर है, वृद्ध है, उनकी अपनी व्यवस्था है, उसका भी हिस्सा उसके अंदर रहेगा।

उनकी शादी की परम्परा अगर आप देखेंगे, तो उनकी शादी में हर चीज तय है, क्योंकि उनका मातृ सत्तात्मक परिवार है, तो लड़की तय करती है। उस आदिवासी को, चाहे मुरिया हो या माड़िया, उसको उसके पारे में जाकर रहना पड़ेगा और पारे में जाकर उसको वह झोपड़ी बनाकर दिखानी पड़ेगी, उसको पत्ते तोड़कर दिखाने पड़ेंगे, पेड़ में चढ़ कर उसको दिखाना पड़ेगा, यानी कि एक महीने में उसको वे सारे क्रियाकलाप करके दिखाने पड़ेंगे, जो पारा में वहां रहने के लिए सस्टेनिबिलिटी के लिए जरूरी है। इसके बाद लड़की तय करती है कि मैं इससे शादी करूंगी या नहीं करूंगी। यह प्रक्रिया है। कोई दहेज की प्रथा नहीं है। पारे में उन्होंने एनाउंस किया, तो सारे लोग जानने वाले हैं या नहीं जानने वाले हैं, सब उस शादी में जाएंगे। कोई कोदो लेकर जाएगा, कोई कुटकी लेकर जाएगा, क्योंकि उसके पास इकट्ठा करने के लिए कुछ नहीं है। सारे लोग मिलकर वहीं रहेंगे। महुआ, सलफी जो भी उनका पेड़ का बना हुआ है, वे अपना पिएंगे, वहीं तीन दिन तक नाच-गाना करेंगे, यह उनकी शादी है।

हमने इसमें क्या किया है, पिछले साल से वहां पर सामूहिक विवाह हो रहे हैं। किसलिए सामूहिक विवाह, किनके सामूहिक विवाह? वहां तो दहेज का कुछ है नहीं, कोई खर्च तो था नहीं। अब उनको फ्रिज, कूलर दे रहे हैं केवल नाम चमकाने के लिए सामूहिक विवाह हो रहा है। वे लोग इसे हाथ भी नहीं लगाते। आप जंगल में जाकर देखिए किसी के घर पर आपको कूलर, फ्रिज नहीं मिलेगा। कूलर, फ्रिज होगा कहां पर? आप जंगल में जाएं, उनके घर में चार चीजें मिलेंगी, मिट्टी की दीवार है, छत पर फूस है, तुम्बी है, लौकी का खोल जिसमें लोग पानी पीते हैं, एक लुंगी पुरुष के पास है, एक लुंगी के दो टुकड़े करके महिला बांधती है। वे दूसरी लुंगी नहीं खरीदते हैं। उनका यह है कि डोंगरी जो उनका पहाड़ी देवता है, वह उनसे नाराज हो जाएगा जो उनके त्योहार हैं, उसमें डोंगरी है, पहाड़ी है, पेड़ है, नदी है। जब लड़की की शादी वाली प्रोसेस होती है, उसके पहले उसका जो प्रिय पेड़ है, उसको महुआ सबसे अच्छा लगता है, इमली सबसे अच्छी लगती है, आम सबसे अच्छा लगता है, तो उसके इर्द-गिर्द सारी रस्में होंगी। यानी कि अब उसका प्रेम उसके

साथ बन गया, तो अब वे जीवन भर उस प्रजाति के जो पेड़ हैं, उनकी रक्षा करेगी। सबसे चंचल जानवर सुअर है और जंगल के अंदर नदी सबसे चंचल है। हम यह तो कह देते हैं कि आदिवासी उसके ऊपर डिपेंडेंट है, लेकिन वह जंगल उससे ज्यादा उसके ऊपर निर्भर है। पेड़ों की जो अठखेलियां हैं, जो उसका घमंड है, उसे आदिवासी झेलता है। हर बार नदी रास्ता बदल देती है। कभी नहीं सुनेंगे कि इंद्रावती के अंदर बस्तर में बाढ़ आ गई और इतने लोग मर गए, क्योंकि हर साल वह जंगल के अंदर उसकी दिशा तय करता है कि पानी यहां-यहां जाएगा। यहां मेड टूट गई, वहां मिट्टी लगाएंगे। यह फेस्टिवल है, जो मार्च में चलेगा, तो सब लोग जहां से मिट्टी टूटी हुई दिख रही है, जहां से पानी निकलेगा, यहां से पानी जा सकता है, तो वहां सारे लोग मिलकर उसकी व्यवस्था करेंगे। कहीं पर भी आप उस क्षेत्र के अंदर बाढ़ नहीं देखेंगे।

जंगली सुअर के लिए वह क्या करेगा कि चारों तरफ से बाड़ा टाइप का बना देगा। जंगली सुअर उसी के चारों तरफ घूमता रहेगा। वह अंदर नहीं आएगा, किसी को नुकसान नहीं पहुंचाएगा। इन सारी चीजों को, उसके घमंड को, उसके गुरुर को, उसकी कलाबाजियों को वह आदिवासी झेलता है, वही उसको बनाता है। कभी भी अगर 10 या 5 फीट का कोई पत्थर गिरा हुआ है, तो उसको हटाकर साइड में नहीं पटक देगा कि इसका हटाओ, यह कोई काम का नहीं है, इसको हटा कर, साफ कर हम जगह बना लेते हैं। वह उससे घूम कर चला जाएगा। यह उसका सम्मान है कि कहीं न कहीं ये सारी चीजें जुड़ी हुई हैं।

तेंदू पत्ता और इमली की जो फसल हैं, ये अल्टरनेट फसल हैं। हर साल नहीं लगता तेंदू पत्ता कि हर साल उसी रूप में हो। इसलिए वह अपनी झोपड़ी को बदलता है कि यहां पर नहीं, तो हम दूसरी जगह अपनी झोपड़ी को लगाएंगे। जो चार सामान उसके पास थे, लुंगी थी, तुम्बी थी, पुलाओ जलाकर सोते हैं, उनके पास कोई बिस्तर नहीं है कि वे कोई कंबल या रजाई रखते हों। उनके पास कोई बेड, चेयर या मेज नहीं है। यह जंगल की सच्चाई है उस दंतेवाड़ा, सुकमा और बीजापुर की।

वहां हमारे कलेक्टर ने पालनार को कैशलेस विलेज बना दिया। उसमें सिंगल आदमी, आदिवासी के पास मोबाइल फोन नहीं है। उसको कैशलेस प्राइस मिला और मोदी जी ने सबसे अच्छा कलेक्टर का प्राइज वहां पर दिया। मैं ऐसा इसलिए कह रहा हूं, क्योंकि मैं दंतेवाड़ा के अंदर ही था और उसने अपना प्राइज ले लिया। यह ब्यूरोक्रेसी की स्थिति है, इसके ऊपर हम बातचीत नहीं करते हैं। असल दिक्कत तो यहां है। केवल प्राइज लूटने के लिए वह माध्यम है। पालनार को कैशलेस हमने कर दिया। बाहर तो यही इमेज जाती है कि पता नहीं वहां क्या-क्या हो गया, जबकि उसको पता ही नहीं है कि मोबाइल फोन क्या है और किसको कैशलेस किया, वह डिजिटल ट्रांजैक्शन कैसे करेगा?

हमने मिड-डे-मील स्कीम शुरू की थी। कोदो, कुटकी से अधिकार हमने लेकर फूल की खेती के लिए मिड-डे-मील चलाया। मिड-डे-मील में हमने क्या किया कि धुआं मुक्त स्कूल घोषित कर देते हैं बस्तर को और 1 रुपया 20 पैसा गैस का हर बच्चे के हिसाब से फिक्स कर दिया। जंगल में जो एनरोल बच्चे हैं, वे 8 से 10 हैं और आते 2-4 ही हैं, जिनको टीचर्स पकड़ कर लाते हैं। उनको उससे

कोई मतलब नहीं है। शिक्षा में वे क्या सुनेंगे? उनको भाषा तक तो आती नहीं है। उन चार बच्चों का एक रुपये बीस पैसे के हिसाब से गैस का पैसा वह शिक्षक कहां से लगाएगा? वह भी ठेके के ऊपर है। वह बोलता है कि हम भी इनके अंगूठे लगवा लेते हैं, मिड-डे-मील नहीं चलता है। यह सच्चाई है।

केवल प्राइज लेने के लिए कि यूनिसेफ का प्राइज है और धुआं मुक्त स्कूल का प्राइज है, तो वह प्राइज आपने ले लिया। वहां सबसे ज्यादा दिक्कत विवेकहीन निर्णयों की है। हमने सामाजिक सोच ही कुछ अलग निकाल ली। हम उसके सहज और उपयोगी ज्ञान के ऊपर नहीं जा रहे हैं। हम उसको अलग-अलग करके दो कैटेगरी बनाकर देख रहे हैं, आदिवासी और जंगल को लेकर। जब तक हम समग्रता में नहीं सोचेंगे, समग्रता में नहीं लेंगे, तब तक कोई हमारी पॉलिसी या नीति, हम बाहर से जितना भी कर लें, वह नहीं आ सकती है। जो मेन है, वही सबसे अलग है। हम उस पर पॉलिटिकल बात करते हैं, आर्थिक बात करते हैं। उनकी कहावत है कि हर आदिवासी को हर दिन जंगल में 14 कोस चलना है और वह जंगल में 14 कोस चलता है। उसकी डेली रूटीन ऐसा ही है। उसके बाद जो उसने अपने पुरखों का पत्थर लगाया है, उसके पास वह आकर बैठता है। उसके बच्चे साथ रहते हैं। जैसे बंदर बच्चों को चिपका कर इधर से उधर कूदता है, वैसे ही वे पेड़ों पर चढ़ कर ये काम करते हैं। फिर वह वहां पर एक से दो घंटा उस पत्थर के पास बैठता है। अपने पुरखों के बारे में बताता है कि उनका यह सारा बनाया हुआ है। उन्होंने कितना सहेज कर रखा है इस जंगल को, नदी को, पहाड़ को। वह कनवर्सेशन है। वह श्रम का संसार है, लेकिन हम आधुनिक समय में श्रम का सम्मान भूल गए हैं। वे श्रम का सम्मान करते हैं। वह कोई भूत-प्रेत या जादू-टोने की बात नहीं कर रहे हैं। यह लोक कहावत है। उसके अनुसार वे चलते हैं। यह थोड़ी-बहुत जानकारी थी, अभी ज्यादा समय नहीं है, तो उसके अंदर इतना ही आपको संक्षेप में बता दिया।

धन्यवाद।

### **DR. NUPUR TIWARY**

Thank you Ashwani Ji. Where have you gained so much knowledge from in such a young age! Many people are not able to acquire this much knowledge even after getting very high education. When we bring out our *Newsletter*, we will definitely give your article in that and we will definitely honour you. We hope that you will continue to be associated with us.

Anyone else who would like to add anything?

So, we shall conclude now. I would not call it a vote of thanks because we are not voting for anything. Of course, this whole programme will go on and on, I am sure. We had

such eminent people coming here, giving all those very experienced ideas which came. We are going to make a report out of it which will be shared with all of you.

So, formally I would like to thank Shri N.C. Saxena Sir, Shri Raghav Chandra Sir, Prof. Ritu Priya Mehrotra, Prof. Ujjwal Singh, Prof. Velayuham, Dr. Ramesh Gaur Ji and Shri Urmi Ji who was from Rajya Sabha T.V. Though he has left but probably he has given me some written material which will be very useful to you and all the learned scholars that we have all the Ph.D. scholars. We have eminent people also. They have spent many years in this research and I am sure that with your strength, the Centre is going to take it ahead.

I have called people from various fields. Narendra Ji, first of all, I would thank you I forgot to take your name. Now, instead of calling you as 'Narendra Bastar', we will call you as 'Narendra COTREX' so that you can share all your information with us. Ashwani, of course, as I said, has a plethora of information. He is a very bright, I would say, experienced scholar that we have here.

So, thank you all very much. This is a platform and I am sure this is going to take the whole tribal development affairs and exploration to further at least one step or a few steps ahead to what already exists. With your guidance, I think we will be able to take it ahead.

**(END OF THE PROGRAMME)**

NOTES





**Contact Us:**

**CENTRE OF TRIBAL RESEARCH AND EXPLORATION**

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