

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The tribal population is identified as the aboriginal in-habitants of our country. They are seen in almost every State of India. For centuries, they have been living a simple life based on the natural environment and have developed cultural patterns congenial to their physical and social environment. References of such tribal groups are found even in the literature on the ancient period, right from Ramayana and the Mahabharata periods.

The 2001 census puts the Scheduled Tribes population at 83,580,634 constituting 8.2 percent of the total population of India. Among them about 80 percent live in the 'central belt', extending from Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west, and across the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Jharkhand and Orissa, to West Bengal and Tripura in the east. Most of the remaining 20 percent live in the north eastern states of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim and in the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep. A few of them live in the southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Andhra Pradesh has the largest tribal population among the southern states of India.

1.1 Meaning of 'Tribe':

The term 'Tribe' is derived from the Latin word 'tribuz'. Originally it was used to imply three divisions among the early Romans. According to the Oxford dictionary, "a tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor". The definition given in the Imperial Gazetteer of India runs thus 'a tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so'.¹

Ralph Linton gives his definition "in its simplest form the tribe is a group of bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in culture frequent contacts, and a certain community of interest". To Lucy Mair "a tribe is an independent political division of a population with a common culture". G.W.B. Huntingford maintains that "a tribe is a group united by a common name in which the members take a pride by a common language, by a common territory, and by a feeling that all who do not share this name are outsiders, 'enemies' in fact". To, L.M.Lewis "Ideally, tribal societies are small in scale, are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations, and possess a morality, a religion, and world-view of corresponding dimensions. Characteristically too, tribal languages are unwritten, and hence, the extent of communication both in time and space is inevitably narrow. At the same time,

tribal societies exhibit a remarkable economy of design and have a compactness and self sufficiency lacking in modern society”.

In the Indian context most accepted definition has been offered by D.N. Mazumdar, the noted Indian anthropologist, “ a tribe is a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous, with no specialisation of functions ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect, recognizing social distance from other tribes or castes but without any stigma attached in the case of a caste structure following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas from alien sources; above all conscious of homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration”.

According to L.P. Vidyarthi; the tribe is a social group with definite territory, common name, common district, common culture, behaviour of an endogamous group, common taboos, existence of distinctive social and political system, full faith in leaders and self-sufficiency in their distinct economy.² T.B.Naik has proposed the following seven criteria by which a tribe can be recognized;

- A tribe has the least functional inter-dependence within the community;
- It is economically backward;
- It is geographically isolated from other peoples;
- It speaks a common dialect which may however be subject to regional variations;
- A tribe is politically a unit under a common tribal authority;
- A tribe’s members are averse to change; and
- A tribe has its own traditional laws which often differ from those of the majority communities.

To be a ‘tribe’, a community must have all these attributes.³ However, if these criteria are applied to the tribes accepted as ‘scheduled tribes’ by the Indian Government, many would be disqualified. The Indian Government extends the privileges granted to the ‘scheduled tribes’ to those social groups which are not fully integrated into the Indian nation for reasons of economic handicaps, different ecological conditions, a different racial origin, and a different mental and religious world outlook and culture.⁴

The tribal people of India are differently termed as *Adivasi* [indigenous peoples], *Vanavasi*[forestdwellers],*Pahari*[hilldwellers],*Adimjati*[originalcommunities],*Jana-jati*[folk people]and the like. It is significant that each of the terms either denotes their ecological, economic, historical or cultural characteristics. Of all these terms the most popular one is *Adivasi*, which co-notate their aboriginality or indigenoussness while the Constitutional term for them is *Anushuchi Janjati*, the scheduled tribe peoples.⁵

The term ‘tribe’ have not been defined clearly anywhere in the Indian Constitution.While the term ‘Scheduled Tribes’ is of recent origin, which came into being with the birth of Republican Constitution of India on January 26,1950. Upto 1919 they were included along with other categories of backward classes under the head ‘depressed classes’. Under the present Constitution the tribals are Scheduled and are popularly termed ‘Scheduled Tribes’.⁶

The term 'Scheduled Tribes' is defined under Article 366 [25] as "Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups with such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of the Constitution". Article 342 prescribes procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of Scheduled Tribes.⁷

As these group are presumed to form the oldest ethnological sectors of the population the term 'Adivasi' ('Adi'=original and 'Vasi'=inhabitant) has become current among certain people. The International Labour Organisation has classified such people as 'indigenous'. According to ILO conventions the aboriginals or tribals have been defined as the "tribals or semi tribal groups of the independent countries deprived socially or economically and having their own customs, traditions and traits or they have their own special customary laws/conventions".⁸

The term 'scheduled tribe' can be better understood in contrast with the term, 'scheduled caste', whereas scheduled tribes have, for a long period remained in isolation with distinctive socio-economic and cultural mode of living, the scheduled caste though at the bottom of the social hierarchy have always lived as part and parcel of the so-called civilized society. While tracing the historical background of the term scheduled tribes, some members of the India's Constituent Assembly favoured the term 'Adivasi' in place of 'Scheduled Tribes'. However, the Committee Chairman, B.R. Ambedkar opposed the term 'Adivasi' and professed the word 'Scheduled Tribes, as widely supported by several distinguished scholars and other experts.

1.2 Concept of Development:

The concept of 'development' is neither a new concept nor old. Development is a continuously changing concept, as its nature in the present day differs considerably from that seen early in the 1950s, or from that in the 19th century. Many have defined 'development' in terms of increase in national economy, some others include social improvement in it and still others think of it in terms of increase in the capacity of a political system. Development is usually conceived as an aspect of change that is desirable, broadly predicted or planned and administered or at least influenced by governmental action.⁹ Thus, the concept of development consists of: (a) an aspect of change, (b) a plan or prediction, and (c) involvement of the government for the achievement of that planned or predicted goal. The term 'development' is also used for the process of allowing and encouraging people to meet their own aspirations.¹⁰

Development and modernization are not interchangeable terms as development results from proliferation and integration of functional roles in a community whereas modernization is a particular case of development.¹¹ The term 'development' cannot be used synonymously with 'growth' as well. Growth implies an increase in the gross national product. Its emphasis is mainly on economic aspect rather than on social, political or cultural aspects. Modernization

implies a systematic process involving complementary changes in the demographic, economic, political, communications and cultural sectors of a society. Thus it entails a change from the existing ethos, morals, values and norms. In the underdeveloped countries, development requires social and cultural change as well as economic growth i.e. qualitative transformation must occur concurrently with quantitative increase. There is infact, a reciprocal relation between the two and neither process is likely to continue for long without the other. Hence, development means change plus growth.¹² Development, therefore, includes growth, modernization, increase in social facilities, political awareness, etc.

According to ILO, Development involves 'humans' as distinct from material product. It is defined as a process which involves improvement in the quality of life of the weaker sections and a greater participation and involvement in the masses in the process of decision making in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the society.¹³

To Denis Gonlet "development is not a cluster of benefits given to the people in need, rather a process by which a populace acquires a greater mastery over its own destiny".¹⁴ Vidyarti observed that development means growth and change which includes both the material and human- the socio-cultural factors which are an integral part of the dynamics of growth. He felt, "while striving for the development of a group or an area, due emphasis has to be given to their traditional values and historical experiences".¹⁵ In fact economist like Schumacher has also observed, "Development does not start with goods; it start with people and their education, organization and discipline".¹⁶ To T.N.Chaturvedi, "it is a process which stands for transformation of society".¹⁷ In a seminal paper, Dudley Seers argued that development involved "the realization of the potential of human personality" and went on to suggest that this was best achieved through the "reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality".¹⁸

To, Ajit Kumar Singh, an anthropologist, development implies orderly movement of an organism or a social system from a lower level of functioning to a higher level of functioning and integration. The lower higher continuum may be stated in terms of certain quantitative values. On the other hand, however, it also implies some qualitative changes reflected in the capacity of a community to respond to the more complex and remote objects environment with a complex and varying response. Hence, the question of integration of various elements with reference to one another is therefore as important as the new differentiations of structure of maturation of the old ones. Thus it implies that the development is a product of unconscious maturation as well as that of conscious guidance through education, social controls and participation in organised life. While explaining the attributes of development he observes, that the concept of development has progressed through four different phases and a fifth phase is beginning to dawn at the horizon.¹⁹

1. **Development-Growth of Income:** Initially there was heavy emphasis on the economic aspect of development or the need of raising the per capita income, especially by the injection of outside investment and technology. The reference point and yard stick were the developed countries of the West and the strategy for

development was transfer of funds and technical know-how from developed to developing countries through aid-giving programmes.

2. **Development-Social Progress:** The economist realised that they did not have all the answers, and that development was far more complex than increase in per capita income. A large variety of variables measuring health, education, sanitary conditions, calorie intake, protein consumption, etc were therefore added into the equation. The reference point or yardstick remained in the developed countries. During this stage of evolution of the concept of development, a great effort was made to build up institutions to provide a wide range of social services to the rural poor.

The institutional approach involves that in a way the institutions becomes the point of reference. This approach brings in its wake the danger that those living at a certain distance from an institution, can profit very little from it. Development thereby begins to generate “centres of development” on the one hand and large tracts of untouched terrain on the other, and then a growing disparity between the two even at the regional or local level.

3. **Development-Integration:** In the above approach, development was seen primarily as something coming from outside, whether in the form of finance, capital or social benefits. The failure of the First Development Decade in the mid-60s proved that unless the process started within the poor country itself, it was unlikely to start at all. The problem was a highly unequal distribution of wealth, mostly being concentrated in the hands of a small minority, while the masses of the people lived in poverty and on the margin of society. The chief task of development therefore came to be seen as that of re-integrating the marginal people into the existing social structures. So attempts were made to broaden the latter and thus ensure a greater flow of benefits from those who had, to those who hadn't.

During this phase, the point of reference shifts to the developing countries themselves, to their metropolitan centres, their organised sectors of the economy, and the elite of the decision makers, who themselves are fashioned according to Western standards and values. Naturally enough, these persons, inspired with best intentions, view development of the ordinary people from their own angle, thus one gets planning from above. The strategy for development reaches out from the centres or institutions, in the form of projects and extension programmes planned at the centre, started through outside initiative, financed by the centre, through services manned by development workers who come from outside the community. This does not preclude the presence of self-help elements, but lip service is usually paid to this approach.

4. **Development-Liberation:** There were two flaws in the third approach. First, it presumed that the benefits of development could “tickle down” from the top to the bottom of the social scale and without making any changes in the existing social structure.

Second, it presupposed that the poor would gladly accept development as a gift from above. In this fourth phase then one reaches the opposite of what the original idea of development started out with which development can only start from below and the people at the bottom. The ordinary man at the grass roots became the point of reference and yardstick for judging whether development has taken place or not. Any development measure at whatever level it be taken, find its justifications to the extent that directly it helps marginal man in the third world to become more fully himself. The human aspect now takes precedence over the economic and technological. Economic projects and progress are very much relevant but to the extent that they result from decision making by the ordinary man in his own community, to the extent that they bring more equality and more participation in decision making.

5. **Development Dialogue:** Pointers are already at the horizon to indicate that the “development decade” has done 360 degrees and that in the near future, the so called “developed” groups will begin to discover that they can learn very much from the poor in matters of total and integral development, the equality of life, the warmth of human relations, the stability of family life. Once this fifth stage will have been reached, a real dialogue between the “developed” sectors and the “marginal people” on the basis of mutual respect for each others dignity can begin to take place. A.K.Singh observes that the advanced elite do not have much knowledge regarding this and should therefore not plan on the issue of development or liberation of the tribal people, without consulting them. This could be done only if there was a dialogue with the tribal people and a willingness to give a serious try to planning from below.

To A.K. Singh the basic problem of tribal areas, with regard to development is their low degree of absorption capacity for and development input. The reason behind it is that the tribal society is different from general society, but the latter has refused to accept this, and continues to try to develop tribal people according to its own image. This leads to failure, which the tribal is blamed. He is called backward again and again till a movement comes when he himself begin to believe that he is indeed so. The problem will not be solved till the planners accept the fact that tribal people are different so there has to be a dialogue with them so that tribals can question the values and presupposition on the basis of which the planners have assumed the responsibility of developing them. There lies a great communication gap between the tribal and non-tribal society. To speak in terms of transactional analysis, where “civilized” society tends to adopt the parent-child relationship when dealing with tribal people, rather than the adult-adult relationship. This stance vitiates all communications, and keeps the tribal people in a situation of inferiority.

A necessity for adopting a different approach to develop the tribal societies arose out of these experiences of culture contact. It was soon realised that only a constitutional provision was not enough. The active participation and developing the initiative of the tribal community were designed with this end in view. Mass literacy programme and

the problem of poverty first to be tackled to develop the social climate and mental atmosphere. Therefore, an approach was needed to knit together these activities into a coherent pattern. The emphasis on promoting better living conditions of the whole tribal community was designed to meet this end. Hence an individual project was not to be regarded as an end in itself. Actually the completion of project was only the beginning of the process of development that would cover all aspects of tribal life. It involved a simultaneous use of surveying, studying and providing the social needs of the tribal people as a whole.

The main aim of development is to increase national as well as per capita income and to raise the standard of living of the people and to secure justice, freedom, equality and security for them in the society. Since development cannot be discussed in terms of economic development alone as it is not possible to draw a line of demarcation between the economic, political and social components of development. All these components tend to come into play when development is seen taking place through the cumulative circular causation process. Thus the major dimensions of development are economic, social and political.

Economic development is essentially an important component of development. Raising national income, reducing poverty and more equitable distribution of wealth and income are all essential components of economic development. The World Development Report [1991] defines economic development “as a sustainable increase in living standards that encompass material consumption, education, health, and environment protection”.²⁰ Kindleberger uses both economic growth and development in economic discussion. To Kindleberger “economic growth means more output, and changes in the technical and institutional arrangements by which it is produced”.²¹

For the definition of economic development, Gerald M. Meier lays emphasis on three words “process, real national income and long period.” To him, (i) process is the operation of certain forces whereby real national income actually increases. As regards (ii) real national income, it refers to a “country’s” total output of final goods and services, expressed not in terms but in real terms: the money expression of national income must be corrected by an appropriate price index of both consumer and capital good.” Finally, (iii) long period of time implies the underlying upward trend in net national product. Meier concludes that a policy maker should be “concerned ultimately with the achievement of better nourishment, better health, better education, better living conditions, and an expanded range of opportunities in work and leisure for the poor peoples of the world”.²² In the context of tribal development, economic development aims at increasing the material aspects of tribal culture through better utilization of the environmental resources, i.e. forest, minerals, flora and fauna, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and industrial potentials.

Economic development in terms of an increase in per capita income is no longer regarded as the only development objective. As a matter of fact, it may pave the way for a substantial improvement in the quality of the people. Social development is a broad concept which is

quite close to economic development. In fact, in the process of modernisation both economic and social developments have to go hand in hand in a politically developed country. According to T.K.N. Unnithan, "Social development may be seen as a process of ushering in a new order of existence. The quality of life and the quality of social relations which exist would indicate the level of order of existences".²³ Social development, thus, means bringing about improvement in the social being of the people and as such lays stress on provision of health services, education, housing, cultural amenities, protection of children, a change in the status for workers and reduction of disease, poverty and other social ailments. All the tribals are not in the same stage of social development. There are some groups in remote and inaccessible tribal villages. On the other hand, there are some groups which have had the benefit of sufficient interaction with rural and urban population. There may be a third group of people who have made adjustment with the rural-cum-urban social environment and who are already on the way of assimilation into the larger complex. The fourth group comprises of those who have become a part of the urban and rural complex and as such are indistinguishable from the other population. A process of detribalization may be said to have been taken in their case. While it is generally agreed that sufficient time should be given to the first three groups to get them oriented to the Indian social life as a whole, there is a great deal to be said in favour of some of the important forms of tribal culture. It is evident that changes are bound to make inroads even into the hard core of the tribal culture as a whole.²⁴

The third aspect of development is the dimension of political development. It refers to the process of politicization that is increasing participation or involvement of the citizen in the state activities and in power calculations and consequences.²⁵ The political goals of development imply evolution towards democratic process and forms of government. The approach to different tribal groups would, however, depend upon the existing social organization and the tribal panchayats/councils, if any. Evolution of the political structure of democracy in tribal areas would mean that ultimately it would have to be linked with the larger framework of power politics in the Indian society. While in some areas, independent political parties from the tribal groups have emerged, it may be useful to draw up and abide by healthy communication among different political parties not to exploit the tribal groups politically. At the same time, interest orientation and politicization of tribal groups is essential.²⁶

With reference to development, Mahapatra has observed that real development should consider the needs, values and aspiration of the concerned population and local development are not likely to be in conflict with the national objectives, but at the same time, the local people's aspirations and potentialities should be honoured, respected and accommodated. He also felt that resistances to new programmes would be there if such programmes are not properly planned.²⁷

To Roy Burman, development activities particularly in the context of tribals should be concerned with,

- a) Satisfaction of minimum needs,

- b) Control and management of productive resource.
- c) Employment Optimisation.
- d) Broad based participation of the population in development process, and
- e) Socio-cultural and political aspect of national integration.²⁸

Further, he suggested that anywhere development would lead to the reduction of regional disparity and help in the creation of self reliant economy. Besides it would also lead to the redistribution of income, equalisation of distribution of development benefits, reduction of social stratification and resource mobilisation without affecting quality of life and physical environment.²⁹

1.3 Statement of the problem:

The administrators and planners devoted so much of time and energy for macro, meso and micro level planning to achieve sustainable development of Schedule Tribes. The government had spent thousands of crores rupees for various tribal welfare programmes. There is a lot of statistics which shows the huge expenditure for tribal development schemes but still tribal development remains as an enigma. Since the problems of the tribals are basically different in different regions of the country and in different areas of the region. There is in need for micro level analysis and immediate attention and essentially local solutions. There is a necessity to evaluate the tribal development programmes in the micro level for identifying the emerging issues, problems and changes after its long run implementation for the upliftment of the tribal people to integrate them in the mainstream. It is essential to know the economic, social and cultural needs of the tribal people, to fill up the gaps between their actual needs and incentives offered by the government.

It is against this background, that the present study has been undertaken in order to study the tribal development in Darjeeling district and the important role played by the Panchayats in bringing development on the life style of the tribals of Darjeeling.

O'Malley in his gazetteer of Darjeeling (1907) observed that there was "Babel of tribes and nations" in the district. He described the local populations as "exceedingly heterogeneous" and remarked that "together with these hill men are found denizens of the plains." The people of his time included what we call Scheduled Caste Hindus of the present day besides people following different faiths as also 'aboriginals' now known as Scheduled Tribes. Dash in his Gazetteer of Darjeeling [1947] differentiated plains Hindus from Scheduled Castes and mentioned certain sections of the populace as belonging to different tribes.

The following excerpts from the Annual Administrative Report for 1961-62 of Tribal Welfare Department would reveal the background of developmental work done among these people:

“Through long years of alien rule, this important section of people has been lagging behind in the march of progress and smarting under cold neglect. During the British regime scant attention was paid to these backward classes. Certain administrative measures were no doubt taken to safeguard the interests of the tribal people, then known as the aboriginals. With the attainment of freedom, the approach was changed and, apart from enlarging the scope and activities for the welfare of the backward classes, it was decided that the separatist outlook which had characterized the general policy of the British Government should be replaced by a board-based ideology consistent with the interest of national unity and the best traditions of these people. The Government also recognized that the evil legacy of backwardness must be liquidated as early as possible if India is to survive and grow in strength in the committee of nations. A policy was accordingly formulated with a view to bring these people to the level of the general population of the country through schemes aimed at their economic, educational and cultural development.

Although a special cell for tribals and backward classes was set up in the state in January 1949, a full fledged Department of Tribal Welfare began functioning only in 1952. In Darjeeling district the sporadic developmental activities intended to benefit these people were looked after up to that time by the normal agencies of the District officer. With an increase in the work load, a whole time Tribal Welfare Officer, appointed by the Department on the recommendation of the State Public Service Commission, was posted in the district in 1954 with headquarters in Darjeeling. The post, initially non-gazetted, became gazetted in 1963. But as touring and inspection work in the difficult terrain of the district covering four subdivisions was difficult, it was felt that there should be more departmental officers to look after the welfare of the backward people, who were broadly divided into those inhabiting the hills and the plains. To have the welfare work done more intensively, two more officers designated as Special Officers, Tribal Welfare – one drafted from the West Bengal Civil Service and the other from the West Bengal Junior Civil Service were posted in 1967 and 1966 respectively in Darjeeling and Kalimpong”.

Although many works has been done upon the tribals of this region, many of them were monographic studies like ‘Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal’ by Dalton, ‘Tribes and Castes of Bengal’ by Risley, ‘Himalayan village’ by Gorer, ‘The Meches and the Totos of North Bengal’ by Charu Chandra Sanyal, ‘Himalayan Lepchas’ by R.N. Thakur , ‘The Indo-Tibetans’ by Fr. Matthias Hermanns, and ‘A concise history of the Darjeeling district’ by E.C. Dozey, ‘B for Bengal T for tribes’ by Krishnapriya Bhattacharya. These works were mostly ethnographic description of the tribes. Lalan P. Gupta in his book “Tribal Development Administration.” has based his study on this region and he has tried to examine the role of administration in tribal development programmes between the years 1980-81 to 1990-1991.

The previous works did not make in-depth study on the course of tribal development with relation to grass root democracy in this study area. So in order to get a clear view of this issue, the study is an attempt to examine tribal development and its relation to the grass root democracy. This study attempts to look into the development of tribal community inhabiting

in the areas of Darjeeling hills and the role played by the Panchayats in the development in the life style of the tribals. The present socio-economic conditions of the tribals and the impact of the development programmes implemented through panchayats upon the development of tribals of the region are also examined. Attempts are also made to study the process of empowerment and the level of politicization influenced among the tribal through panchayats.

1.4 Research Questions / Objectives of the Study:

The study seeks to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the historical, economic, social and political background of the study area and the tribals of the study area?
2. What is the present socio-economic and political situation of the tribals in the study area?
3. What are the tribal demographic characteristics of the region?
4. To what extent the tribals are aware of their constitutional rights and privileges to which they are entitled?
5. To what extent the tribals of the region do have the knowledge about Panchayati Raj?
6. To what extent the Panchayats has been helpful in bringing political empowerment among the tribals?
7. What has been the nature of the participation of the tribals in grass root democracy through the institution of Panchayats in the study area?
8. What are the different Tribal Development Programmes implemented in the study area?
9. To what extent the tribals of the region do have the knowledge of the various development schemes for the welfare of the tribals?
10. What are the obstacles which are hindering the successful implementation of the development programmes?
11. To what extent these various development schemes have been successful or failed in bringing development in the lifestyle of the tribals of the study area?
12. Are Panchayati Raj Institutions found responsive to the development and empowerment of the tribal people of the study area?
13. Are the needs of the tribals of the study area are met?
14. What are the main problems still faced by the tribals of the study area?

1.5 Research Methodology:

(A) Research Design:

The research design in the study is descriptive as well as exploratory in nature.

(B) Universe of the study and the study area:

Darjeeling District has been selected for the proposed research work. Darjeeling District comprises of four subdivisions- Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri. Out of

the four subdivisions- Darjeeling Sadar subdivision and Kurseong subdivision were selected for study. Darjeeling Sadar subdivision includes rural areas of 50 Gram Panchayats under three community development blocks: Darjeeling Pulbazar, Rangli Ranglot and Jorebunglow-Sukhiapokhari; Kurseong subdivision includes rural areas of 20 Gram Panchayats under two community development blocks: Mirik and Kurseong. Darjeeling Sadar subdivision has been selected for study as it includes the highest number of Gram Panchayats, i.e. 50 Gram Panchayats among the subdivisions in the district and while the Kurseong subdivision has been selected for study as it includes the lowest number of Gram Panchayats, i.e. 20 Gram Panchayats among the subdivisions in the district as against the other two remaining subdivisions i.e. Kalimpong subdivisions which includes 42 Gram Panchayats and Siliguri subdivision which includes 22 Gram Panchayats.

From Darjeeling Sadar subdivision, Jorebunglow Sukhiapokhari Block was selected as it was found more rural than the other blocks i.e. Darjeeling Pulbazar Block and Rangli Ranglot Block. From Kurseong subdivision, Mirik Block was selected as it was found more rural than the Kurseong Block. The study was confined only to the 16 gram panchayats of Jorebunglow Sukhiapokhari Block and 6 gram panchayats of Mirik block. All the tribal household of the rural [Panchayats] areas of the two blocks– Jorebunglow Sukhiapokhari Block of Darjeeling Sadar subdivision and Mirik Block of Kurseong subdivision of the Darjeeling District comprised the universe of the study.

(C) Data Collection:

Data for the present study are collected from both primary as well secondary sources. For empirical work and collection of primary data, survey method was carried out in study area. The main respondents of the study were tribal households both beneficiaries and non beneficiaries and officials of various departments who are directly involved in implementing developmental schemes at the grass root level. Beneficiary refers to those tribals who have been benefitted from the Government sponsored welfare schemes implemented through panchayats whereas non- beneficiary refers to those tribals who haven't availed yet any benefits from the government sponsored welfare schemes implemented through panchayats. Field data was collected through interview which comprise of both close ended and open ended questionnaire. The numerical data collected from the field have been presented in the form of tables. Simple statistical methods of frequency distribution, percentages and mean calculation etc. have been followed.

Apart from the data acquired from the field through observation and interview schedules, the different records at Block and Panchayat levels are used for getting necessary and relevant information. The other secondary sources included official records and reports of expert committees, commission and working group. The information provided by Gazetteers and Census Reports etc and the published books, journals and periodicals and research articles having a direct bearing on the area of research was also used.

(D) Sample Design:

The method used for sample selection in this study is random-sampling method. According to 2001 census the total tribal population of Jorebunglow-Sukhiapokhari Block has been 6945 with 3336 males and 3609 females, while the total tribal population of Mirik Block has been 3136 with 1536 males and 1600 females. A total of 300 Scheduled Tribe persons of rural areas (16 gram panchayats) of Jorebunglow-Sukhiapokhari Block and rural areas (6 gram panchayats) of Mirik Block of the Darjeeling District constituted the sample of this study. Out of 300 persons, 160 (53.3%) tribals were beneficiaries of government sponsored welfare schemes, while 140 (47.3%) tribals were non beneficiaries. From the 16 gram panchayats of Jorebunglow-Sukhiapokhari 115 beneficiary persons and 100 non beneficiary persons were selected, while from the 6 gram panchayats of Mirik 45 beneficiary tribals and 40 non beneficiary tribals were selected for study.

(E) Reference Period:

The primary data were collected from June 1st 2010 to June 15th 2011.

(F) Organisation of the Thesis:

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The First chapter serves as an introduction with explanation of the meaning of 'tribe' and 'development', statement of the problem, objective of the study, methodology, universe and area of study, data collection and sample design. A review of literature related to tribal studies is carried out in the Second Chapter. A note on demographic particulars of Scheduled Tribe population in India, classification of Indian Tribes, and the policies, plan and programmes for tribal development in India since independence is sketched in the Third chapter. The situation of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal, Tribal Development and the role played by panchayats for tribal development in West Bengal is sketched in the Fourth Chapter. Fifth Chapter presents an insight in the historical, political and socio-economic background of the Darjeeling Hill and tribals of the region. The role of the panchayats in the development of the tribals of the rural areas of the Darjeeling Hills and the impact of various development schemes implemented through panchayats the upliftment of the poor tribals is also examined in the chapter. Finally the Sixth chapter provides a summary of the findings and conclusion.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1965. Vol. XV, Reprinted, New Delhi, p.256.
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7. Art 342 clearly states "(i) the President may with respect to any state or Union Territory, and where it is a state, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities, or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that state or Union Territory, as the case may be. And (ii) Parliament may by law include or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (i) any tribe or tribal community, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification."
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