

Chapter-9

CONCLUSION

The Mal subdivision of Jalpaiguri district is highly inhabited by the different tribal communities. The immigrated tribal communities i.e. the Oraons, Mundas, Santals, Malpaharias, Lohars, Mahalis, Kharias are majority in the tribal society of the Dooars. Except a few GPs, almost in all GPs the tribals possess a significant share of population. In every GP most of the tribal communities inhabit. Such habitation of tribals as well as other non-tribals in same villages has created a unity in diversity in Dooars.

Tribes are economically backward in every corner of the country like India. In the perspectives of Mal subdivision of Dooars region, tea garden based tribal economy and society has the solidarity in all India phenomena. Here indigenous and immigrated tribes face a new challenge of their survival from subsistence to market economy. They are mainly engaged in tea gardens as labourers. In spite of their high workforce participation rate, their income is very low. Those who are agriculturalists are landless agricultural labourers. Over the years, they have remained labour or worker and have not done much to effect occupational diversification. A considerable amount of tribal people steps in western provinces of the country to earn more money. Several times, the tribes are cheated by the middle men and civilized people. The tea garden workers expend their time in very pathetic conditions when the tea garden remains closed for several months to several years. The economic lives of the tribes of Dooars as a whole are in very distress conditions.

The tribals have rich cultural heritage. The women enjoy higher status in the society. In most of the tribal dominated GPs, women sex ratio is very high. The rich social values, language, religion, magical belief and practices, food habits, styles of dress, patterns of habitation are important features of their life which make them distinct from the non-tribal people. They are the most deprived sections in education and health care provisions. Among the tribes of Dooars school dropout rate is very high mainly for boys due to engagement in economically productive activities. The cause of comparatively lower dropout rate for girls' is due to respect to girls and women in the tribal society. Boarding school has been set up to teach modern education in the Dooars by the Christian missionaries. The tribes as a whole are not much different from their Scheduled Caste counterparts in terms of such socio-economic indicators as land ownership, per capita income, or incidence of poverty.

With the introduction of modern technology and globalisation, tribal arts, crafts, customs and values have been changed gradually. But their traditional values are gradually squeezing. The rich ethnic cultures of tribes are thus dying. In the Dooars area the tribal cultures are not so much influenced by modernisation as they have lost their own identities due to their own traditional practices. Modification due to modern technology has occurred in economic sectors, but it is very limited for the tribes. In their occupation, there is very limited change incorporating modern means of technology. In agricultural sector sum short of influences is there by adopting modern means of technology in agricultural field. So, it can be said that modern technology has played a negative role to change tribal society but upon the economy it is very insignificant.

The tribes of Dooars are carrying so many problems from the colonial period. They have been feeling cries of losing their lands, ethnicity, cultural heritage and freedom of identity for centuries. The rich culture of different tribal communities has been demolished. Rituals relating to marriage, worshiping to God and nature have been gradually lost due to assimilation with non-tribals. Starvations, mal-nutrition and deaths are very common phenomena in tea garden areas mainly when the gardens remain closed for a long period. Due to illiteracy and lack of awareness the tribals cannot reach to Government for different developmental schemes laid down for them. Most of the male members of the tribal families expense their earning in drug addiction.

All the tribal groups are not in similar socio-economic conditions. There are variations of believes, traditions, cultures and transformations. Intra-regional and inter-community variations are noticed in economy, education and other spheres. Tribes of the tea-garden based GPs and non-tea garden based GPs behave differently.

However, in conclusion it may be recommended that tribals of Mal subdivision require more income, more job securities and above all economic development. Alternative job opportunities can improve their earnings. Education can be a tool for their development. Growing education can remove different bad habits of the tribal people including drinking habits. Tribal language based school education is essential for them. A closely knit, public distribution system has to be developed, covering every interior pocket of the tribal areas. The development practices should be based on the cultural characteristics, environmental peculiarities and traditional skills of the tribal people. This is necessary to prevent out migration of tribals towards other provinces. In implementing the development schemes the local political leaders and administration should have good will to serve the poor tribals, otherwise the benefits will not reach up to the root level.