

Chapter - 1

Introduction : The Problem and Theoretical Framework

Tribal Development in India : A Comparative study of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar District : 1992-2002

CHAPTER - I

1. Introduction : The problem and theoretical framework.

The tribal groups are presumed to form the oldest ethnological sector of National population. The term 'tribes' derives its origin from the Roman word "tribus" meaning three divisions. Firstly, the term tribe commonly signifies a group of people speaking a common language, observing uniform rules of social organisation and working together for common purpose. Secondly, the typical characteristics of a tribe include a common name, a contiguous territory, a relatively uniform culture or way of life and tradition of common descent and thirdly, a tribe is generally used to denote a group of primitive or barbarous classes under a recognised chief.¹

The Anthropological term 'tribe' has a variety of meanings. In general, it was applied to people who were considered primitive, living in backward areas, and did not know the use of writing. Sometimes it was considered synonymous with the term race, which in scientific uses, has an entirely different meaning. According to Huntingford G.W.B. that the 'tribes' as a group united by a common name in which the members take pride by a common language, by a common territory, and by a feeling that all who do not share this name are outside. Western writer Ghury G.S. regards that 'tribes' as an ethnic group. Geographically isolated or semi-isolated, identified with one particular territory and having distinct social, economic and cultural traditions and particular.²

According to Notes and queries in Anthropology (1960) : A tribe may be defined as a politically or socially coherent and autonomous group occupying or claiming a particular territory.³

According to International Encyclopaedia of the social science, the word 'tribe' is taken to denote a primary aggregate of people living in a primitive or barbarous condition under a headman or chief. The unnecessary moralistic overtones that this usage implies can be provided or minimised by the use of the expression 'tribal society' which is to be preferred to such synonyms as 'primitive society' or preliterate society. At the same time, the word 'tribe' need not be discarded. Indeed it has become a technical term denoting a territorially defined political unit, a usage that recalls the original use of the word for the political division or patrician orders of Roman state.⁴

In Indian context most accepted definition has been offered by Majumder, D.N. According to Majumder, a tribe is a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous, with no specialisation of function, ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect, recognising social distance with other tribes or castes, without any social obloquy attaching to them, as it does in the caste structure following tribal traditions beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas from clean sources above all conscious of homogeneity of ethnic and Territorial integration.⁵

Another important definition is offered by Naik T.B. that is :

1. A tribe to be a 'tribe' should have the least functional independence within the community;
2. Tribe should be economically backward which means that is the full impact of monetary economy should not be understood by its members. Primitive means of exploiting natural resources should be

used. The tribes economy should be at an under-developed stage and it should have multifarious economic pursuit;

3. There should be a comparative geographic isolation of its people from others;
4. Culturally, member of a tribe should have a common, dialect, which may be an influential institution;
5. A tribe should be politically organised and its community panchayat should be an influential institution;
6. The tribes members should have the least desire to change, they should have a sort of psychological conservatism making them stick to their old customs, and
7. A tribe generally has customary laws and systems of dispensing justice.

Sir Harbert Risley point out that, Tribe may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families, bearing a common name which as a rule does not denote any specific occupation, generally claiming common descent from a mythical or historical ancestor and occasionally from an animal, but in some parts of the country held together rather by the obligation of kinship; usually speaking the same language and occupying, professing, or claiming occupy a definite tract of country.⁶

Tribal communities also identify themselves by various Markers. Professor N. K. Bose point out those tribal societies divides into hunters and gatherers, animal herders, shifting cultivators and settled agriculturists. Similarly, other divisions can be made on ecological, social, linguistic or religious basis. However, in spite of the fact that tribes in India represented an assortment of communities, different in size, mode of livelihood and social organisation, certain features characterised almost all tribal societies. All the tribes have been generally homogeneous, undifferentiated and unstratified societies compared to the mainstream zones. The tribes have also had a relatively low level of technological and material base. But the Anthropologist would seek to classify on the basis

of: mode of production, extent of distance from mainstream civilisation, geographical spread, language, ethnic roots, religion, kinship network and occupational structure. The relationship between the tribes and the mainstream has taken mainly three forms: isolation, interpretation and absorption. The tribes located at the periphery and not surrounded by a non-tribal presence in any proximity, remained untouched by any kind of interaction with mainland. Their relationship with others was marked by an almost complete isolation. Various other tribes survived their basic feature but incorporated some of the social practices of the mainstream cultures as a result of long period of interaction. Similarly, it has been found that many tribes of Rajasthan and Gujrat have no separate language of their own, but speak the language of the region where they are located. These tribes obviously lost their languages and adopted the language of the region as a result of interaction with the main stream. But the adoption of new language did not lead to the loss of their tribal identity. Likewise, adhering rigidly to endogamy has been feature of almost all Indian tribes, though it is not a universal characteristics of tribes elsewhere. Endogamy is a trait which Indian Tribes share with the Indian non-tribal mainland, though it will be difficult to argue that this common trait has removed their difference.⁷

Yet another model of interaction has produced the absorption for the fusion of the tribal identity into the dominant religion. This happened the tribes affected by this form of interaction are the ones in the interior hill and forests where the influence of civilisations other than Hinduism was absent. The Bhel, Munda, Santhal, Juang and various other tribes fall into this category. It is important to note that these absorptions did not completely efface the tribal identity but altered and redefined it significantly. The formation of tribal identity has acquired a new impetus in modern times, specially after 1950 when the Indian constitution was adopted. It included a list of the scheduled tribes which was revised in

1976. With the official acknowledgement, the tribal identity has acquired a definiteness and a cohesion which it did not possess earlier. Also the dividing line between certain tribes and caste groups which was quite blurred in past has now become sharp and clear. More over the constitutional initiatives, the legal order and the political incentives (reservation in job, etc) have also helped in the revolution of all Indian tribal identity of various tribal groups geographically distant from one another.⁸

Tribal communities also identify themselves by various Markers. Each tribal community in general has one identification marker. North-East India stands out in the respect, compared to other areas. A Flag is the identification marker of Khasi Khyneixian of Meghalaya; Nagakabui of Nagaland, and Dalva communities of Orissa. Central India uses tatfoeing more frequently as a mark. Tatfoeing of males is reported among Nara, Gonda, Naga, Bhil-Bhilala, Oraon, Pasinara, Lavara follow practice of tatfoeing females. North-Eastern India has a large number of communities with female dress as the identification marker.

The tribal groups are presumed to form the oldest ethnological sector of the National population. Tribal population of India is spread all over the country. From the official source, the Madhya Pradesh registers the largest number of tribes (73), Arunachal Pradesh (62), Orissa (56), Maharashtra (52), West-Bengal (38), Andhra Pradesh (43). The vast variety and number of Indian tribes and tribal Plateau region are considered to be of the Kotarian stock.⁹

In India, there are almost a continuous belt of high tribal concentration in Northern and North Eastern India. It covers Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram, Eastern Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Tarai areas of Uttar Pradesh and the Mountainous west Bengal. Another tribal concentration is Central India. It

covers West Bengal, Southern Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra, Santhal Parganas, Hyderabad and Gujrat and another tribal concentrated area is South Western India. It covers Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu groups have always been a matter of great social and literary discourse for the past several decades.¹⁰

In India the tribes belong to three stocks; the Negritors, the Mongoloids and the Mediterranean. The Negritor believed to be the earliest inhabitants of the Indian peninsula who were unable to defend themselves and were gradually forced to recede before the invading hordes of Indo-Aryans, Mongoloides coming from the North-West and North-East. These tribes took shelter in the mountains and thick forest where a considerable number of them are still found and have been estimated to be about fifteen million. The Mongoloid race is represented by the tribal people of Sub-Himalayan region. They may be divided into two categories, namely - the Palaco Mongoloids and the Tibeto-Mongoloids. The Palaco Mongoloids are represented by the tribes living in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur. The Tibeto-Mongoloids are represented by the tribals living in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. They have typical eyes and facial features, they speak Mon-Khmer and Tibeto-Burmese dialects. The Mediterranean people form the bulk of the tribal population and are generally known as the Dravidians. Dravidian is, however, the name of the language group spoken by these people and has no ethnic significance. The tribes believed to be belonging to Dravidian race are found in the Chhotanagpur Plateau, Rajmahal hill region, Aravalli ranges. The Mundas, Santhal, Oraons and other tribes inhabiting Chhotanagpur.¹¹

In Northern and North Eastern India there are numerically the strongest tribe is Mizo, Koch, Bodo, Khasi, Garo, Dimasa Kachari, Naga, Tharu, Bhotia, Kabui, Gangte, Zarak, Pawis, Lakhers, Kinner etc. In central India most of tribes belong in this area that is, Bhumij, Gond, Ho, Oraon, Munda, Santhal, Bhil, Chero, Parchaiya, Asur, Anal, Chiru and Konkanas,

Koitors, Lodhia etc. In South Western India numerically tribe is Chenchus, Irulas, Kadars, Ketas, Kurumbas, Jedas, Lambadi, etc. In this context, also discuss the major features that are the basic feature has been follow :¹²

Koch:

Koch, Koch-Mandia, Rajbansi, Paliya, Desi, a large Dravidian tribe of North Bengal. Colonel Dalton, describes the Koch of that country as having flat square faces, eyes black and oblique, hair black and straight, in some curling; nose flat and short; cheek bones prominent; bear and whiskers rather deficient; colour of skin in most instances black. Kochs trace their origin to Rasan Mukprak Tarl. From here by migrated to Hajo. Hence they followed the course of Sonapur, Kersumbala and Garo Hills.

Bodo:

A Sub-tribe of the Kochh tribe in Northern and Eastern Bengal. It is the largest and major plain tribe of Assam. It believed that they were actually the ruling-sovereigns of India along with Dravidians during Pre-Aryan era and subsequently pushed to the North-Eastern region by the Aryans- get frequent references of these people in all ancient Hindu scriptures either as "Kiratas, Danavas or Asuras.

Khasi:

The Hill Tribe Khasi lived in Khasi and Jaintia hills. They belong to Mon-Khmer group of languages of Austro-Asiatic linguistic group. The most interesting feature of their dialect is that they retained their Linguistic Purity and it has no influence of neighbouring dialects. Prior to the British domination they ruled over the powerful Jaintia Kingdom.

Garos:

The homeland of the Garos is the Garo hills district of Meghalaya. The belief that before setting in the present habitat they settled in the Brahmaputra Valley. They speak language of the Bodo group of the Tibeto-Burma family. They are divided into Nine sub Tribes out of which Megam Sub-tribe is totally different from the rest.

Mizo:

The Mizos inhabit of Mizoram. They belong to Mongoloid group. They speak a dialect of Tibeto-Burman origin. Linguistically they are close to Kuki-chin group of Tribes. The Mizos are fold of five tribes : Lushei, Ratte, Hmar, Paitee, Pausi.

Bhutia:

The tribal territories of Munsiairy and Dharchula tehsils of Pithoragarh district are known as 'Bhutia'. Thereafter the famous Trans-Himalayan traders-- the Bhutias. Bhotia are divided into two sub-group: (1) Migrated from Tibet and Tibetan dialect that is Bhutias of, Byans, Chaundans and Darma Valleys in the upper part of Dhauli and Kali rivers. (11) Bhutias of Sohar Valley who speak Pahari dialect. They belong to Mongoloid group. Generally they are bilingual some times they are trilingual as well. They were good traders engaged in trading activiteson Indo-Tibetan border.

In India there are almost a continuous bet of high tribal concentration in Central India. In this area there are inhabitants of major tribes that is - Oraon, Santhal, Bhumij, Mahali, Kurmi, Lodhas, Maheli, Mech, Munda, Rabha, Chero. Their basic feature is :

Oraon:

Oraon/Uraon, a Dravidian cultivating tribe of Chotanagpur, classed on linguistic ground as Dravidian, and to be closely akin to Males of Rajmahal Hill. Physical characteristics of Oraon is the darks brown, approaching to

black to black; the hair being jet black, coarse, and rather inclined to be frizzy. Jaws and teeth, thick lips, low narrow foreheads, broad flat noses, are the features, which strike a careful observer as characteristic of the tribe. The dress of the Oraon consists of a long narrow strip of cloth carefully adjusted as a middle garment. The well-defined group are found among the Dravidian Oraons.¹³

Oraon	
Name of Sept.	Totem
Tirki	Young mice
Ekka	Tortoise
Kispofta	Pig's ontrails
Lakra	Hyena
Bagh	Tiger
Karjrar	Oil from kajrar tree
Gede	Duck
Khoepa	Wild dog
Minji	Ear
Chirra	Squirrel
Ergo	Rat

The religion of the Oraons is of a composite order the Oraons and all the cognates have always some visible object of worship. Through it may be but a stone or a wooden post, or a lump of earth. There are few Oraon who have embraced Christianity.

Santhal :

A large Dravidian tribe, classed on linguistic grounds as Kolarian, which is found in West Bengal, Orissa, Bhagalpur and Santhal Pargna. In point of

physical characteristics the Santal may be complexion varies from very dark brown to a peculiar, almost charcoal like black, the proportions of the nose approach those of the Negro. The inter structure of the Santhal tribe is Singularly complete and elaborate. The well-defined groups are found among the Dravidian Santhal.¹⁴

Santhal	
Name of Sept.	Totem
Munda	Nilgiri
Hansda	Wild goose
Marndi	A kind of grass
Besra	Hawk
Hemrom	Better palm
Saren	The constellation pleindes
Sankh	Conch shell
Sankh	Conch Shell
Gua	Areca nut
Kara	Buffalo

The communal Organization of the Santhals is Singularly complete the popular gods of the tribe at the present day. Marang Buru, Mor, Ko, Jair Era, Gosain Era, Pargana, Manjhi however each family also has two special gods of its own - the Orak Bonga or household god and Abge-Bonga or secret God. The names of the Orak-Bongas are Baspanar, Deswali, Sas, Goraya, Barpahar, Sarchawdi, Thuntatura. The Abge-Bongas are the following - Dharasanda, Ketkam Kodra, Champa-denagarh, Garhsinka, Lilachandi, Dhanghara, Kudpachandi, Bahara, Duarseri, Kerdraj, Gosain Era, Achali, Deswali.¹⁵

Bhumij :

A non-Aryan tribe of Manbhum, Singbhum and West Bengal mainly on linguistic ground as Kolarian. In 1850 Hodson published a short vocabulary. Prepared by captain Haugton, then in political charge of Singbhum, but most of the words in this appear to be merely Ho. The most recent observer Herr Nottrott, of Gossner's Mission, say that the Bhumij resemble the Mundas most closely in speech and manners but gives no specimens of their language and does not say whether it differs sufficiently from Mundari to be regarded as a separate dialect. The internal structure of the Bhumij is:

Bhumij

Name of Sept.	Totem
Salrisi	Salfish
Hansda	Wild goose
Lengh	Mushroom
Sandilya	A bird
Hemrom	Betel palm
Tumarung	Pumpkin
Nag	Snake

A step higher in the social scale, according to Hindu estimation the Bhumij of West Bengal and Orissa mark an early stage in the course of development by which a non-Aryan tribe transforms itself into a full blown caste, claiming a definite rank in the Brahmanical system with the exception of a few resident of outlying village bordering on the Munda country of Chotanagpur proper, the Bhumij have lost their original language Mundari and now speak only Bengali.¹⁶

Mahali :

A Dravidian cast of labourers, Palanquin bearers and workers in bamboo found in Chotanagpur and West Bengal. Mahali are divided into five sub-castes like Bansphor Mahali – who makes baskets and all kinds of bamboo work, Patar Mahali – who makes basket and cultivation, Sulunkhi Mahali – who are cultivators and labourers, Tanti-Mahali who carry Palanquins and Mahali Munda. Mahalis marry their daughters both as infant and as adults. Mahalis affected indeed to worship all the Hindu goods, but they have not yet risen to the distinction of employing Brahmans, and their working duties seem to be Barpahari and Manasa. They believed that their original occupation is basket making and bamboo work generally. But now a days the impact of industrialisation and globalisation Mahali lost their original occupation.¹⁷

Munda :

A large Dravidian tribe of Chotanagpur chassed on linguistic grounds as Kolarian and closely akin to the HOS and Santhals and probably also to the Kandhs. They are spread over Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa. The Mundas are divided into thirteen sub-tribes such as Kharia-Munda, Mahali-Munda, Oraon-Munda, Bhuinhar-Munda, Manki-Munda, Khangar-Munda, Karanga-Munda, Kol-Munda, Konkpat-Munda, Munda-Manjhi, Nagbansi-Munda, Sad-Munda and Savar- Munda. They speak Mundari language and also speak the languages of the region like Bengali, Oriya, Hindi and Sadri.¹⁸

Mal Paharia :

A Dravidian tribe inhabiting the Ramgarh Hill in the Santal Pargana. They are spread over West Bengal and Orissa. The Mal Paharias are divided into two sub-tribes. Mal Paharia proper and Komar Bhag. They believed that jhum tillage and hunting to be their original occupation and a large

proportion of the tribe still adhere to these primitive modes of livelihood.¹⁹

Chero :

A non-Aryan cultivating tribe of Behar and Chotanagpur. Chero are spread in West Bengal. The Chero are divided into two sub-castes that is Bara-hazar and Tera-hazar or Birbandhi. The religion of the Cheros is still recognised in a state of transition and they observe a sort of dual worship. They believed that their original occupation is Agriculture and petty trade, working on roads in each mines. They have never forgotten that they were once a great people and that their descent was an honourable one.²⁰

Mech :

A Mongoloid cultivating and labour tribe of Goalpara district of Assam and the Himalayan Terai. In North Bengal the Mech are divided into two sub-tribes – Agnia-Mech and Jati-Mech. Judged by the Hindu standard, the social status of the Mech is extremely low. They eat pork, fowls, all kinds of fish, lizard and the impu silk worm. However seems to be that there is a considerable strain of Nepalese blood among the Mech, and other facts may be mentioned which go to confirm this view. Husbandry by the jhum method is regarded by the Mech as their original occupation but of late years many have taken to settled cultivation as raiyats of jots in the Terai. The rearing of the impu silk worms, which spin to silk used in the chequered cloths worn by the Mech, was at one time a regular industry but has fallen off notably within the last generation.²¹

Rabha :

A Mongoloid groups belong in West Bengal mainly Duars and Tarai Area. The most important character of the Rabha is brachycephalic head, a broad face, a short, wide nose, very low in the bridge, and extreme cases

almost bridgeless, high and projecting cheekbones, and eyelids peculiarly formed.

So as to give the impression that the eyes are obliquely set in the head. According to Dr. Buchanan Hamilton Rava migrate to this stat from Assam.²²

Kheria or Kharia :

A Dravidians cultivating tribe of Chotanagpur classed on linguistic grounds as Kotarlan. The Kheria divided into four sub-tribes : Dhilki-Kharia, Dub-Kharia, Erenga-Kharia and Munda-Kharia. The religion of Kharia as the nominal head of their system we find Bārpahar. The working duties of Kharia Pantheism are the Dorbo Dubo, Nasan Dubo, Giring Dubo, Jalo Dubo, Pat Dubo, Dong Darha, Mahadan, Gumi, Agin Darha, Kara Sarsa. The occupation of Kharia or Kheria are fair cultivators. In their persons the Kharias are very dirty seldom, if ever washing themselves. Their feature are decidedly of a low character. Not unlike the Bhumij, but there seemed to be an absence of any strongly-marked type in their faces or build, such as enables one to know a Santal and even a Kurmi, at a glance.

Kharwar :

A Dravidian cultivating and landholding tribes of Chotanagpur and Southern Bihar speaking of the Kharwars of Shababad. The social position of the tribe also varies greatly. Chero and Kharwar are intermarriages have taken place. The Kharwar are divided into seven sub tribes that is in Palamua – Patbandha, Daulbandh, Kairi, and in Southern Lohardaga – Deswari – Kharwar. Bhogta, Raut, Manjhia. In West Bengal Deswari Kharwar. Bhogta, Rout, Manjhia are inhabitants. In matters of inheritance Kharwars follows tribal customs of their own. The main body of the tribe are particularly belong to the Landholding class.

Lepcha :

A poor agricultural labours of Nepal are obliged to conform the Hindu laws of that state. In matter of inheritance and succession the Lepchas follow a tribal custom of their own. Most of Lepchas at the present day profess to be Buddhists. In the belief of the average Lepcha, mountain and forest, rock and stream represent ill defined but formidable power who threaten mankind with a variety of physical ills and require to be constantly appeased through the agency of Bijuas or exorcists.

Gond :

A non-Aryan tribe, classed on linguistic grounds as Dravidian, properly belonging to the central provinces. The Gonds of Bengal are divided into four sub tribes – Gond, Raj-Gond, Dhokar Gond and Doroa-Gond. The Bengal members of the tribe affect to be orthodox Hindus and worship the standard gods with the assistance of degraded class of Brahmans. Social Gonds are the Hinduised or semi Hinduised to be the least interesting of the great families of the aborigines of India. The physical characters of Gonds are short crisp curly hair. They are larger and heavier in build than the Oraons and Kols and with none of the graceful physical to be found in both these tribes.²³

Kora :

Racially they belong to Australoid group. They are distributed in West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa They migrated to West Bengal from Chotanagpur region of South Bihar. Though their language is derived from Mundari, it differs in different regions. Kora are divided into four sub castes that is Dhalo, Malo, Sikharia and Badamia. The social position of Koras is very low and they are usually classed with Bagdis, Bauris, Bunas and the other dwellers on the confines of Hinduism. Koras believe that tank digging, road making and earthwork generally to be their character istic profession.

Magh :

The popular designation of a group of Indo-Chinese tribes who describe themselves by the various titles of Maramagri, Bhuiya Magh, Barua Magh, Rajbansi Magh, Marma or Myam-ma, Roang Magh, Thongtha or Jumi Magh. At the present day the Magh includes three endogamous group the Thongtha, Thougcha or Jumi a Magh, the Marma, Myamma, Rong or Rakhaing Magh and the Maramagri. All Maghas are Buddhists of Southern School, are regard the Northern Buddhists of Tibet as wholly unorthodox. The Maghs are believed that cultivation and labour generally to be their characteristic profession.

Another a continuous bet of high tribal concentration in South-Western tribes are. In this are most of the tribes are-Chenchu, Lambadi, Koraga, Kurubas etc.

Cheuchu :

Cheuchu are mostly found in the district of Kurnool, Mahboobnagar and Guntur in Andhra Pradesh. Their main concentrations is in the Nallmalai forest located mostly in Cuddapah and Kurnool districts. There is a reference to Chanchus in Mamsmriti. It means a person who lives under a tree. They are divided into four branches Koya Chenchu, Konda Chenchu, Chenchu Dasarisi and Ura Chenchu. Earlier Ura Chenchu, Chenchu Dasarisi and Ura Chenchu. Earlier Ura Chenchu were known as Konda Chenchus. They are further sub-divided into as many as 26 gotras.

Lambadi :

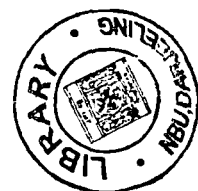
Lambadi inhabitants of Talingana region. They also found in Bihar, West-Bengal Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Mysore, and Orissa where they are called Banjara. The Lambadies of Mahboobnagar and Khammam call themselves Banjaras and they believe that Banjara, Lambada and Sugali are one the same rather they are synonymous, whereas many Lambodis of Chittor,

Anantapur and Kurnool districts are not aware of the name of Banjara and the existence of their counterparts in other parts of India.

Ptolemy, in his list of Indian castes, has made a mention of a caste Lambad tai which is considered to be same as Lambadi, Ferishta, a 16th century chronicler, also records Lambadis of Deccan. It is a general belief that Banjaras came to South or Deccan along with the Mughals. They are divided into four main branches; Mathuria Banjaras, Lambana Banjaras, Charan Banjaras, and Chori Banjaras. They are further sub-divided into three exogamous groups : Rathods, Pamhar and Chawhan. They speak Lambani or Lambadi language. In Telingana they call it Banjari. Different dialects of Lambanis are said to have been derived from Western Rajasthani group of languages. The Banjari dialect of Southern Indian is however, mixed with the surrounding Dravidian language. The most important subsidiary language spoken by them is Telugu.

Koraga :

Koraga tribe is found in Malabar area of Kerala state and throughout Tamilnadu except Kanyakumari and Shenocotta Taluk of Tirunelveli district. The Koragas are regarded as one of the most backward communities of South India until recently they led the life of agrestic slaves bought and sold with land. It seems that earlier they were rulers but were later reduced to the status of a slaves on being subdued by other communities is South Kanara. They are sub-divided into a number of sub tribes : Sappu Koraga wearing grass skirts, Kuntu Koraga – use kapalas, Tippi Koraga-wear ornaments of bones, Vanti Koraga were large circular earrings in their dilated ear-lobe, Kapputus-Koraga descendants of the army of Habashika, Bangaranna-Koraga – it is looked upon as a superior sub-tribe to others, Kumaranna Koraga, Munglanna Koraga. They are further sub-divided into 17 exogamous clans known as bali.



Kurubas :

In the early Sanskrit texts the Kurumbas or Kupubas, variously known as Pallavas, Kusumas, Kumanas and the Kupathas, have been described as the people of the Southern region. They were once a very powerful tribe in South India and occupied the territory, which comprised the modern district of Madras, Chingleput, North and South Arcot, Salem and South eastern portion of Mysore with Kanchi as capital. But after their downfall in about eight century A.D., they dispersed in many direction. Many of them fled to the hills of Malabar, Nilgiri Coorg, Liyanad and Mysore. In the Madras presidency, Mysore and in the Nilgiri Plateau there is a community of people under the name of Khumbaser Kurubas. One of their branches known as Kadu Kurumba, lives in the forests of Nilgiri Plateau and speak a Tamil dialect. Another branch of Kurumbas known as Uru-Kurumbas lives in the plains. They speak Canarese. Kadu Kurumbas are more akin to the Australoid group and their characteristic traits are mostly found among the wild and their characteristic traits are mostly found among the wild and forest tribes of the southern region. It seems that the modern Kadu Kurumbas are the descendants of the ancient Kurmbas.

Scattered Tribes :

Andamanese : The Great Andamanese were in reality ten tribes – the Cari, Kora, Jeru, Bo, Kade, Kol, Juwai, Pucikwar or Bojigyab, Bea and Balawa. Each has its distinct dialect. Out of these ten tribes 6 have become extinct now. The four existing tribes are also facing threat of extinction. These tribes can be broadly divided into two groups that are the Northern and Southern. The Northern group includes tribes like Aka-Chariar, Aka-Kora, Aka-Tobo and Aka-Yere. The Southern groups known as Aka Bajigugiji included Aka Juwai, Aka Kol, Aka Bojigyab and Bea tribes.

Tribes of Lakshadweep :

Tribes of Lakshadweep were known as Tarwadi and claimed their descent from the Namboodari and Nair communities of Indian subcontinent. Around A.D. 663 the entire population was said to be converted to Islam by Hazrat Wbaidullah. Presently, the Koya are distributed all over the island except Minicoy. The language spoken by them is Laccadive, i.e. Dweep Bhasha. The script used is Arabic.

Malmi:

The Malani caste from the Mukk evolved from the Mukkuvans, the fisher-caste of Malabar, but Mukkavans rank below Teyyars on the main land whilst Malmis rank above Melacheris in the Laccadives. They, as a rule, practise navigation and astrology. They are sub-divided into two sub groups: one is Odam- captains, and other in ordinary boatman. They converse in Dweep Bhasha and use Arabic script.

Raveri :

Thiyar of Malayalam who are settled in Minicoy came to be known as Raveri. Major migration of this tribe happened around A.D. 1000. The people were the Thiyar from Kerala, Buddhist from Sri Lanka and Muslim from Maldives. They speak Raveri language of Divebi group and use Thana script.

Society and Economy :

In the earlier I have discuss the Tribal identity and geographical spread of Tribes in India. In this section I will discuss tribal society and economy. From the beginning a point mention that it is very difficult to find a uniform social and economic structure for the large number of tribes spread all over the India. Each tribes has it own distinct social structure,

institutions, customs and religion. I would like to focus on some common features of tribal social structure and religious practices.²⁴

From the previous discussion it is point out that Tribes though, posses certain common characteristics which cut across the geographical region, yet there are some strong local variations. The factors which form the matrix of the social life are: i) Geographical environment. ii) Human resources. iii) Techniques of Production and economy, and iv) Kinship network.

These factors constitute the parameters for organised social life, based on these factors now examine the social set up of the Indian tribes.

Social Organisation of Himalayan Tribes (North Eastern & Central):²⁵

In North Eastern Himalayan region there are the Garos, Khasis, Jaintias, Hajong, Lakber, Kuki, Rabha etc tribes inhabiting for a long period. The society of the North-Himalayan region is 'michong' means 'Motherland'. In some ways it is different from a family. All member of a 'michang' claim descent from common ancestors. Michang is affiliated with a larger group known as Chatchi. Another social unit is the 'mahari', which is the effective unit within the clan-lineage tie. Among the Garos divided into exogamous clans and further to exogamous matrilineal families. Assam tribes also have a somewhat similar pattern. The Lutunges are divided into a number of exogamous clans, which are grouped into a number of clan-mahaxi. The Dimasa Kacharis of Assam have different clans for different sexes. In Assam there are in all 40 male and 40 female clans. They follow the system of double descent. The male child follows the clanship of father and the female child acquires the name of her mother's clan. Among the Naga Tribes clan is a continuation of the family unit on the paternal side. Several families united on paternal basis, forma clan 'Sango' clans belonging to the same tribe may be spread over several villages. A village is divided into a number of 'Sangs'. The boundary of the clan 'Sang' is fixes

and in the old days there were even walls separating them. The head of the clan is generally the head of the original family whose Sons and Paternal cousins constitute the clan. The head of the clan, which settled first in a village automatically, becomes the first head of the village.²⁶

In central Himalayan Tribes, there are the primary unit among the 'Tharus' is family. The number of families constitutes a Kuri clan. The clans are grouped together into the groups to create higher and lower 'meity' which finally form the whole group.

Social organisation of Central Indian Tribes:

The central Indian Tribes present a notable common Pattern with a few radically different types. In Bihar and West Bengal, Santhal are divided into 12 clans called Paris. Each part is divided into sub-clans or sub-groups. The Mundas, Oraons and Hos of chotanagpur have more or less the same pattern. They are divided into exogamous clans. For example, Mundas and Hos are sub-divided into 'Kilis' and Oraons into 'Gota'. In Bihar and West Bengal Bhumij is the most popular tribe. The Bhumij are divided into seven territorial division. Each of these divisions is regarded as a sub-tribe. In Prissa Khonds are divided into three Territorial division. Each of these divisions is regarded as a sub-tribes.²⁷

c) Western and South Indian Tribal Social Organisation:

In Western India, the major tribes are Bhil, Gond, Kokna, Dhondia and so on. The Bhils occupy a large area in central as well as Western India. Their social system may be described a polysegmentary with a number of successive narrow segments dividing the entire community into several Kindred groups. The basic principle of alignment is patrilineal descent. In South India the popular social units are clan and family. The clans are mostly named after the settlement or the territory and it is an exogamous group for all.

Religion of Tribals.

With their cultural and ecological condition, Tribes are present a colourful panorama of religion faiths. Religion of tribes was termed as various animism. Animism carries with it a belief in benevolent as well as malevolent spirit which are supposed to influence the destiny of man. Some tribal communities follow by the belief that the unseen world of God. Some of tribes belief the ancestral spirits is responsive only to the shamans. Some of tribes have now attempted to institutionalise their religion. The Munda and Santhal tribes also revived and institutionalised their religion which related to sacred grave called Sarwa or Jahera. It has become the symbol of solidarity of the tribes who were not converted to Christianity.²⁸

Although most tribal communities have their own God and Goddesses and their own legends and folk heroes, over the ages Hinduism and Buddhism have become important influences on tribal religion. The tribal belts of South Eastern Himalayas such as Sikkim, Meghalaya, and even Western Himalayas such as Spiti, Kinnaur, Ladakh are predominantly Buddhist area. Most of the tribes in India believed in the conversion of the deceased into a potential spiritual force. It is believed that after the death of a person the soul continues to remain in contact with the relatives of the deceased. Ancestral worship among many tribes seems to be the logical result of such beliefs. It is also believed by many tribes that certain objects are possessed by some spiritual powers and thus a sort of fetishism appears to be the guiding principle among such tribes. Worship of such objects contains an element of magic, which is further extended to the belief, and practices of religio-magical nature. There are a number of rituals which are performed at the time of marriage, festivals, onset of seasons and at sowing and harvesting times. The rituals are generally performed by the priests of tribes.²⁹

Another important tribes are Bhutias are a complex amalgam of Tibetan-Buddhism and Hinduism in their religious practices. Tharus are originally Hindu. They followed religion and customs of Hindus. They worship Mahadeva and Ma-Bhabani, and at time Brahma is worshipped toward off sickness. There is a strong belief among tharus in invisible power, which helps in controlling an epidemic, making rain, curing an ill person. They also practice Sorcery and witchcraft.

Another tribe is Oraon. Their pantheon consists of the supreme Sun God, Mother-Earth, presiding deities, nature spoils, ancestral sprits and village tutelary saints. Supernatural rites are directed towards happiness and security in the world, natural resources, crops and avoidance of sickness. They believed in reincarnation and transmigration of souls into various from of life : trees, birds, animals, etc. The panthom of Kharia consist of the supreme the Darhis, Nasan dudo, the God of destruction, the Sun, the Moon, Pat Dubo, Donga Darba etc. Kharia believed in their way of life is to move by the God. The panthom of Nagasia consists of the supreme God Sun, white Cocks, and sacrifice goals to Sikariadeota. But their chief God is said to be the tiger. In Jashpur they swear by the tiger, but do not worship him, and their chief god is Moihidhunina.³⁰

The popular designation of a group of Indo-Chinese tribes is Magh. Their pantheon consists of the Buddha. The wilder sections of the Thongchas, however, retain same vestiges of an earlier animistic faith, which bids them sacrifice cattle, goats, and swine, and make offerings of rice, fruits, and flowers to the spirits of hill and river. Among the Maramagris, the tendency is to follow after modern Hinduism, particularly in its Tantric development, and to add the gross worship of Siva and Durga. The Cheros pantheon consists of duel worship. For the Hindu Gods they employ Kanauja, Baghaut, Chenri, Darha, Dharti, Duknahi etc, and another is Duar Pahar, Purgahaili, Daknai etc.³¹

Another important tribe is Garo. They believe in a number of sprits, which act and behave like human being but have no shape. Their sprits fall into two categories. One is; spirit embodying natural forces: spirit of thunderbolt/power (Goera); spirit of wealth Susime etc and other is spirit which causes illness: causing body ache-Delwa; causing illness of children-Moila etc. The disease is supposed to be cured by keeping the sprits happy by animal sacrifices. However, Chakmas are Predominantly Buddhist, but they are also influenced by Hinduism and Animism in their rituals. They worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Shiva, Kali, Durga, Laxmi etc. They appease harmful sprits by sacrificing animals.³²

The Mizos believe that they are looked after by a good spirit Khuavang, while last looked after the animals. They also believed in some evil sprits called Ramhwai, who are responsible for the ills in the world. Another important tribes is Koch. Their pantheon consist of the supreme God Kali, Bisabari, Garmi, Tista Buri, Hanuman, Bindur Tūsi, Rishi Kishto, Penthani, Jogini, Hudum Deo, Bahastho, Balibhadra, Thankua etc. Koch believe that their supreme God influence way of life.

Tribal Economy:

Tribal Society in general, have very simple economic activities. The tribal population is characterised by a heterogeneous cultural patterns with variegated economic conditions and activities depending largely on ecology. Their socio-economic structure is markedly different from that of the non-tribes. It is almost obvious that the tribal communities in India is extremely backward and poverty stricken. It is very difficult to characterise tribal economy, large number of Tribes residing in India have diverse economic activities. In term of the economic activities, the tribes may be classified into following categories:³³

- i) Food gathering-hunting. ii) Pastoral. iii) Agriculturists and iv) Craft production and trading.

Many tribal groups have more than one economic activity and these divisions are not always well marked. A common feature of all these is the simple technological base which allows for limited generation of surplus. We consider the economic, without risk of tautology, as the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. It forms both a domain of activities of particular sort, like- Production, distribution, consumption of material goods and a particular aspect of all the human activities that do not strictly belong to this domain, but the function of which involves the exchange and use of material means. The tribal economic thus appears as a particular field of social relation which is both external to the other strata of social life and also internal to them, that is, as a part of a whole that is at once external and internal to the other part of an organic whole.

However, the economic relations among the tribals themselves are mostly based on barter and exchange. Money as a store and measurement of value and medium of exchange is not widely used. Institution like banking and credit are used only in dealing with non-tribal groups which depends upon on the nature and frequency of contracts with them.³⁴

The profit motive in economic dealings is generally absent. The role of an incentive is fulfilled by a sense of mutual obligation, sharing and solidarity. Co-operative and collective endeavour is a unique feature of their economy. The regular market as an institution along with its condition of market like perfect competition and monopoly is absent. The manufacture of consumer rather than capital good is common and the same are consumed, nothing being saved or exchanged in trade.³⁵

Some of the tribal societies are still hunting and food gathering societies in economic terms. A few of these are found in central India. Their main source of survival depends on their natural environment. Tribal economy is intimately connected with the forest and their economy. However, forest based their economy depends on hunting, rearing of cattle and cultivation

based on forest clearings. Forests also supplement the needs of predominantly agricultural tribes. Forest produces such firewood, leaves, fruits, honey, grasses etc. also help in generating extra income.³⁶

Hill based tribes are famous for their terraced agriculture that is Jhum or shifting cultivation. Hill sides are terraced vertically upward and sown with wheat hill rice, corn and potato. There are also several shepherd tribes whose economies are based on grazing cattle and sheep. At present, however, tribes of Kashmir, Garhwal, Himachal and Duars area have taken to commercial cropping of apple, orange and potatoes which has greatly improved their economic position. Similarly, a groups of tribes are also famous for weavers and other craftsmen have always occupied a special position in Duars area.³⁷

Wood and cane workers, metal crafts and stonework are also pursued by many tribal community in Jhargram of West Midnapore. White in some communities there is a division between in terms of tasks performed, the practice varies from tribe to tribe. For example, whereas in Kol, Bhil, Santal & Munda in West Midnapore and Purulia weaving and agricultural labour is done by women, in the Oraon, Bhumij & Cherro of Duars tea leaf collection from the tea garden is largely done by men who form a special caste within the community. Some tribal communities like Bhutias of West Bengal are also involved in trading activities.

The impact of industrialisation and economic changes has greatly influenced the tradition tribal economy. Deforestation, grabbing of tribal land, lack of infrastructure and technology has increased pressure on limited resources. The traditional and self-sufficient economy was greatly disturbed. As a result, large number of tribal were forced to look for livelihood outside. Now they are available for mines, factories and agricultural forms as labourers. However, the Bhutias were great traders and craftsmen. But they suffered a look after 1962 India - China war. Consequently, they shifted from their tradition occupation to government

job etc. Most of the tribes of Orissa, U.P. and West Bengal are agricultural labourers, wage earners in forests, mines and construction sites.

A detailed survey of the tribal economy and social organisation reveals that diverse forms exist but there are some fundamental characteristics of tribal economy. These can be overlie as follows :

1. Dependence on forest and natural environs.
2. Want of production, consumption and input of labour being the family.
3. Simple technological base.
4. Small profit base in economic dealing.
5. The community working as a cooperative unit.
6. Periodical markets and fairs at local and regional level.
7. Interdependence among various tribal groups.

At a conclusion, we may told that, tribal are generally considered backward in socio-economic institutions. They nevertheless, possess their distinct lifestyle and have their own set of ideas which may be distinct from the developed world. In contrast to the non-tribal economy, tribal economic structure is very simple and is governed by their ecological surroundings and environment. Accordingly, some tribes practise Jhum cultivation and some subsist on pastoral economy. A few indulge in trading activities while some are engaged in handicrafts production. A few tribes still follow hunting and follow gathering as basic economic activity.

Tribes and Development Policy in General :

I have already discuss tribal identities, their geographical spread and socio-economic structure in the previous discussion. In the present, I will discuss tribal problems and the efforts made by the government for the development of the tribes and the tribal areas and with thee constitutional safeguards provided for the protection of tribes.

The establishment of the British India Company in 1765. According to N.K. Singh - "The real gain from this (British) alliance was the acquisition of Dewani" (46) and in the 2nd half of the 18th century disturbed the existing land revenue system and law that is rent Act 1751, Regulation Act - VIII-1782. The new system adversely affected both tribal and non-tribal areas. The main thrust of British policies was to extract maximum possible economic benefits from the tribal regions. As a result their moves were resisted by the tribals leading to a number of rebellions leading to a number of rebellions. The most famous of these are Kol-rebellion (1820-1837), Santal-rebellion (1855), Munda-rebellion (1899).

After 1857 when India passed from the British East India Company to the British Crown several attempts to codify the laws and structure the administration of tribal areas were made. The British came into contact with tribal areas through the efforts spearheaded by missionaries in the early 19th-century. The British government created administrative zones called excluded and partially excluded areas and gave them separate political representation. These scheduled tracts were largely in the Himalayan region like Assam, Darjeeling, Garhwal etc. in central India, Chhotanagpur and Santal Pargana etc. in Western India - Panch Mahals, Mewar and in South India.

The problems of the tribes during the British period increased as a result of the expansion of the British system of law and revenue in the tribal region. The specific problems were related to new forest laws, and from the loss of their land as the combined result of British policies and the rapacity of money lending class.³⁸

Another problem faced by some tribes that is Birhors, Korwas, Baigas, Khonds, Bhumij, Oraon etc. who pursue shifting cultivation. But no attention was paid by the British Government to reserve some areas for the tribals pursuing shifting cultivation, nor was any attempt made to induce them to take to plough culture. Instead, tribal land used for shifting

cultivation was prohibited in most areas. The people thus, were forced to take to the kind of agriculture "unsuited to them". The law and administration of British proved disastrous to the aboriginals. It failed to take account of any special needs. British Government introduced such notions of land tenure that it made possible for easy transfer of land. The land was now to be regarded as transferable commodity. It resulted in loss of land to and supplanting of the tribal village headman by people from outside particularly in Assam and hilly region by people from the plains. These outsiders included cultivators, money lenders, traders and even land grabbers.

Another important subject is forest laws were very stringent. They were passed keeping in mind the British interests and did not suit these tribes. British Government excise laws made it illegal to brew rice-beer or any kind of spirituous drink to protect earnings. The tribal were now offered highly intoxicating liquor made in British territories. As a result they had to substitute distilled liquor for their rice-beer, which was a relatively harmless beverage. Opium and other drugs replaced liquor on occasions. It led to increased drunkenness and become a drain on meagre resources of tribesman. However, the new laws adversely affected the family and social life of tribes. There were large number of tribal who could not afford to marry on account of the practice of the payment of heavy bride price. Similarly, the fairs and weekly markets, which were begun to attract the tribals have reined them financially because of the domination of the moneylenders, traders, etc. from outside on the whole the British followed a policy of isolating tribal areas from the rest of the country. The result of these exclusionist policies was that the tribal tracts of India lagged behind the rest of the country. The freedom involvement in the country also left these areas largely untouched.³⁹

It was only after independence and not till the making of the constitution in 1950 that the attempts were made to integrate tribal population into the mainstream.

Under the constitution of India certain tribes have been listed as scheduled tribes. The constitution specifically mentions scheduled tribes under article 15(4), 46, 334, 338, 341 and 342. Article 335 mentions their claims to services and posts (49). Certain tribes, for instance, some nomadic tribes are not specified as scheduled tribes. As per Article 366(25) of the constitution, the scheduled tribes means such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be scheduled tribes for the purpose of this constitution. The scheduled tribes are declared specified by the president under article 342 through public notification. The parliament may by law, include or exclude from the list of scheduled tribes and tribal community or part thereof in any state or union territory.

However, our constitution provides a number of provision to ensured development and protection to tribal culture and society. The basic idea behind there was to ensure state support for less privileged sections of society. In our constitution Article 16(4) is wider than socially and educationally backward used in Article 15(4) and weaker section use in Article 46, SCs/STs are covered in all the expansion.

Article 15(4) :

Promotion of social, economic and educational interests : This article empowers "the state to make any special provision for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of the schedule castes and scheduled tribes". Under this Article Kaka Kalekar commission in 1953 and Mandal Commission in 1978 were appointed for investigate-condition of backward classes. However, this clause has been especially incorporated to prevent any special provision made by a state for the advancement of

socially or educationally backward classes of citizens from being challenged in the law courts on the ground of discrimination.

Article 16(4) :

Reservation in post and service : This clause empowers "The state can be provided not only by the parliament/legislature but also by the executive in respect of central/state services and by local bodies and other authorities contemplated by Article 12, in respect of their respective services."⁴⁰

However, there is nothing to prevent a member of a backward class for competing with general category people and to be appointed to non-reserved post if selected.

Article 19(5) :

Safeguard of tribal interests : While the rights of free movement and residence throughout the territory of India and of acquisition and disposition of property are guaranteed to every citizen, special restrictions may be imposed by "the state for the protection of the interest of any scheduled tribe". For example state may impose restrictions on owning property by non-tribal in tribal areas. In this context the Venkataswamy commission remarks that, the population of the state by religion, caste, and sub-caste and tribes protection of the interest and avoid the problems."⁴¹

Article 23 :

With this Article, traffic in human beings, beggar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited". This is a very significant provision so far as scheduled tribes are concerned.

Article 9:

Cultural and educational rights : According to this article a cultural or linguistic minority has right to conserve its language or culture". The state shall not impose upon it any culture other than the community's own culture".

Article 46 :

Article 46 also lays down that "the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social justice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 164 :

It provides for a minister in charge of tribal welfare in the states of Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. These states have substantial tribal population and special provision of a minister looking after tribal welfare is an evidence of the concern of the formers of the constitution for safeguarding the interests of scheduled tribes.

Articles 330, 332 and 334 :

According to these articles seats shall be reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in legislative bodies. There are provisions for reservations for seats in the parliament as well as legislative assembly for every state. Such reservations were cease to be effective after a period of 10 years from the commencement of the constitution but after every ten years its being extended through constitution or amendments.⁴²

Article 335 :

“The claims of the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes shall be taken into consideration in making the appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the union or of a state”.

Article 338 :

According to the article, it is says that there shall be a special officer for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to be appointed by the president. It shall be the duty of the special officer to investigation all matters relating to the safeguards provided to them under the constitution and to report to the president upon the working of those safeguards at such intervals as the president may direct and the president shall cause all reports to be laid before each house of parliament.

Article 339 (1) :

The president may at any time and shall at the expiration of 10 years from the commencement of the constitution by order appoint a commission to report on the administration of scheduled areas and the welfare of the scheduled tribes in the states.

Various programmes for tribal development :

The constitution of 1950 under the provision of article 343 specifies certain tribes and tribal communities as scheduled tribes. This list has been revised numerous times but the essential areas first specified by the British are still operational like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur and hill region of Dooars etc.

In 1958, the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru Laid emphasis on tribal development and suggest that : (i) Tribal people be encouraged to development their own cultural patterns rather than imposing outside cultural upon them. (ii) Tribal rights to lands and forests should be

respected and protected. (iii) Efforts should be made to prepare and train local people to take over the regions administrative tasks rather than assigning the responsibility to outside officers and agencies.

So, the Government of India emphasis the financial needs of these tribal areas were incorporated into India's various five-year plans. Until the 5th five year plan, tribal grants were located separately from the general budget but after the 5th plan, they were included in the general allocations. It was proposed that the tribal regions be placed under a special minister who would be responsible for implementing different special schemes for these areas.

The first plan (1951-56) concentrated on education, health, and economic development and the building of roads, and other communication services in the tribal areas.

The second Plan (1956-1961) emphasised on tribal economic development by specifying the sectors of agriculture, cottage industries, forest, co-operatives and special development blocks.

The third plan (1961-66) did not alter the priorities. The fourth plan (1969-74) and fifth plan (1974-80) introduced the area development programme approach where special areas were identified and selected for intensive development. However the sixth plan (1980-85) and seventh plan (1985-90 & 1990-92) emphasis on tribal economic development, cottage industry etc.

From the eight plan (1992 to 1997), the various programmes for tribal development can be divided into five broad categories viz. economic, educational, health and sanitation, communications and housing, socio-cultural and political. Special tribal development blocks have been created by the government at the state level to supervise tribal policy and programmes.

The state development boards also responsible for introducing more productive strains of cattle into tribal areas. Minor irrigation schemes like digging of well and small canals, which are extremely suitable for hill tribal areas (Dooars, Chotanagpur, Mizoram) also under these boards. Traditional handicrafts also encourage by the Government and often grants and loans are available for setting up cottage industries in tribal areas. There are also special provisions for starting handicraft co-operative in tribal areas. Expenditure on educational and health is also routed through state Development Boards. The special emphasis is given to universalising primary education among the tribal population.

On the other hand several voluntary agencies, social worker and social welfare agencies are also involved in the upliftment of tribal areas. On such federation of social service agencies for doing tribal welfare work in different parts of the country is Bhartiya Adimjati Sewak Sang started in 1948 under the president ship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. This organisations concentrate on solving the immediate problems of tribals and providing income earning and educational opportunities of Tribal people. Several other organisations such as the All- India Backward classes Federation and Indian Red Cross Society also deserve mention.

The portion of West Bengal from the Ganges on the South and Himalayas on the North is called North Bengal. In North Bengal there are two important District is Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar. Even a casual study of both district, the state largest Tribal people i.e. 6,42,688 inhabiting this district. This is so for the reason that Jalpaiguri not only contains the largest scheduled Tribes population of all the district of West Bengal but occupies the highest rank 18.87% in the state in terms of percentage of scheduled Tribes population to the total population also. However, state with lowest Tribal people i.e. 15,246 live in Cooch Bihar. It is also of interest to note that in no other district of West Bengal one will find conglomeration of such a wide variety of scheduled Tribe. There are

altogether more than 20-scheduled Tribes in this District. But in Cooch Behar the major tribes are 'Koch', Oraon, Santhal. Now a question arises that, why of the entire district Jalpaiguri contains the largest concentration and the widest admixture of scheduled tribes?

According to Sri S.K. Bhattacharya, the following factors contributed to interesting development of Tribes in this District.⁴³

First : The North Bengal District of Jalpaiguri are famous for Tea, Timber and Tobacco. And likewise the Cooch Behar famous for Bamboo and Tobacco. Since 1875 Tea plantation as an industrial level and more tea companies in Jalpaiguri came into being. The local people had plenty of land and were engaged in food cultivation. Local men were not available for the arduous job of tea plantation and these people did not like to experience of the life of a labourer in an industry. So, labour force had to be recruited from Ranchi, Chotanagpur, Santal Parganas and other tribal belts of neighbouring State.

Secondly :

Large forest area and hilly tracts. Hunting, fishing, collection of firewood and forest products played an important role in the life of tribal and was by far their most important occupations. Vast tracts of forest provided an excellent opportunity to tribes for pursuing these occupation. The forest also ensured for them undisturbed seclusion from the din and bustle of towns and village and the busy stream of general Indian life.

Thirdly :

Moderately heavy rainfall which is a pre-condition for Jhum cultivation. Accompanied by availability of vacant land in forest and slopes of hills attracted a good number of tribes. They use to shift their cultivation and homestead from place to place so as to derive the full benefit of the region soil.

Lastly :

Both the European and Indian tea planters had to do this. Formerly the labourers used to go home after the term of contract they were repatriated. But now they have settled in the Duars permanently.

Since, 1875 tea plantation as an industrial level as a result more and more tribal people migrated from neighbouring provinces and ultimately settle down in the plantation areas of Jalpaiguri. This resulted in a complete transformation of the composition of tribes and their distribution in the district. Thus while in 2001 census there was mention of 22 scheduled tribes were recorded in this district. It will appear from census report that Oraon, Santhal, Munda, Kharia and Malpaharia, who number of about 4,32,1711 of the scheduled tribes of the district, constitute numerically the most important tribal group. Similarly, 70 percent of Rabha and 90 percent of Meches of West Bengal are found on this district. The whole family of Toto, a tiny tribal group of the world comprising 1175. However, it is seen from the 2001cencuse report that most of the tribal a mainly concentrated in Alipurduar subdivision. In Malbazar subdivision we find a sizable population of tribes mostly in the tea garden of Malbazar, Nagrakata and Matelle police station. ⁴⁴

The 22 tribes that is Oraon, Santhal, Munda, Malpharia, Mahali, Kheria, Bhumij, Nagesia, Mech, Rabha, Kora, Hajon, Toto, Aseer, Chero, Gond, Badia, Lohar, Kherewar, Savar, Garo may be conveniently classified on the basis of their physical feature into two broad types – Dravidian and Mongoloid. The tribes Oraon, Munda, Santhal, Kheria, Mahali, Nagesia, Malpaharia, Kora labour may be tentatively put under the former group, while Mech, Rabha, Garo, Toto etc. may be classified under the latter. In the former type, describe H.H. Risely, “the form of head usually inclines to be dolichocephalic, but all other characters present a marked contract to the Aryan. The nose is thick and broad, and the formula expressing its proportionate dimension is higher than in any known race except the

Negro. The social angle is comparatively low, the lips are thick, the face wide and fleshy, the features coarse and irregular. The average stature ranges in a long series of tribes from 156.2 to 162.1 centimetres; the figure is squat and the limbs sturdy. The colour of the skin varies from very dark brown to a shade closely approaching black". The most important character of the Mongoloid is 'a relatively Brach cephalic head, a broad face, a short, wide nose, very low in the bridge and in extreme cases almost bridgeless, high and projecting cheek bones, and eyelids peculiarly formed so as to give the impression that the eyes are obliquely set in the head.⁴⁵

It is worth white to mention that the states largest numbers of tribes inhabitant in Jalpaiguri district. They are divided into various sub-tribes. The important tribal group Oraon are divided into 18-sub tribal group and their identity is Tiger, Tortoise, Vulture, Banyan tree etc. Similarly Santhal are divided into 12 lineage and their identity is goose, white breasted kite, Nilgai, Panta Bhat Chameleon, Pigeon etc. Another important tribal group is Munda divided into 13th lineage and their identity is Aind, Salt, Kusum tree, King crow, Cocoon etc. But a large Dravidian cultivating tribes Kharia is divided into 6th sub caste and their identity is red ant, elephant, Kula, Tiger etc.

The tribal economics of Jalpaiguri call for special measures for social and economic development in view of many structural weaknesses from which the economics suffer. In addition to such hurdles as difficult topography and cultural peculiarities of the tribal group, those areas have poor infrastructural facilities such as transport and communication irrigation, credit and marketing arrangement. The principal economic activities of the tribal have been restricted to a primitive form of shifting agriculture, traditional horticulture, a few small-scale and cottage industries thriving on the basis of local demand only and some forest based activities. It is to be noted that tea industry has substantially altered the way of tribal life in this district.

Since 1915 settled in Jalpaiguri mostly as tea garden labourers. Some among them have become brick-kiln-workers or farm labourers. While some have even become cultivators, the payment in tea labourers is generally on the hazira and ticca system. Through there is no standard hazira, the hazira rate for man, women and children in Dooars 30/, 20/-, 10/- respectively. The hazira is usually completed in about 8 to 9 hours. The hazira rate has not been altered for a good many years. Most of the gardens, have, however, reduced the task since 1974 when the left front government came into power.

In a tribal family in the tea plantation the wife and even adult children are also employed as a labours. According A.K. Das & M. K. Raha – “This economic self dependency’, on the part of able-bodies of the family is resulting in an attitude of the older generation by the younger generation and the traditional roles of the husband, wife and their children and the division of labour amongst the household members are generally no longer found to be in existence in the family the work”.⁴⁶

In Jalpaiguri most of the tribes have no property and they are living in company property (tea). So tribes are influence by the company law. However, since 1950 the system of law and administration has been changed. At present the land was now easy transferable. If resulted in loss of land to and supplanting of the tribal village headmen by people from the plains. These outsiders included cultivators money lenders, traders and even land grabbers.

Forest laws were very stringent. They were passed keeping in mind the British interest and did not suit these tribes. Excise laws made it illegal to brew rice beer or any kind of spirituous drink to protect earnings. The tribal were now offered highly intoxicating liquor made in Dooar territories. As a result they had to substitute distilled liquor for their rice-beer, which was a relatively harmless beverage. Beverage and other drugs replaced liquor on occasions. It led to increased drunkenness and became a

drain on meagre resources of tribes man. The state development boards are also responsible for introducing more productive strains of cattle into Dooars. Traditional handicrafts are also encouraged by the Government. However, the life and death struggle of many primitive tribes in Jalpaiguri and else where in consequence of adverse economic conditions had led to a moral depression and its effects have been disastrous on the vitality of the tribal stock.

There are various departments under the state Government to implement different sector development programmes for the benefit to people in general. A separate department of the state Government for the tribe named as tribal welfare came into existence in West Bengal in 1952, which mainly looked after the schemes of scheduled cast and scheduled tribes. The department's name has been changed as 'Backward classes welfare department since 1997. In Jalpaiguri, the district backward classes welfare department took play an important role for tribal development since 1992. The major activities of this department are as follows:

1. Look after the educational scheme of scheduled tribe and schedule cast.
2. Community development schemes, like funds for infrastructure development road, bridge, culverts, irrigation facilities etc. are received for implementation of schemes in schedule cast and schedule. Tribe concentrated areas under the special component plan (SEP), tribal special programme (TSP), LAMP grants for infrastructural development of tribes, family oriented programme and special programme for tribal development.⁴⁷
3. Problem :

The Government of India and West Bengal state Government through a number of policies and legislation has been reiterated its commitment to the tribal development. A number of schemes and programmes have been lunched from time to time for tribal development. In spite of all these

efforts tribal are still remain relatively backward and tribes were faced various problem. That is:

1. A major problem of the tribes in Jalpaiguri is illiteracy, ill-health, inequality, unemployment, poverty and lack of infrastructure still prevail.
2. Another important problem in the tribes are indebtedness among this district. In some cases more then 60 percent households are heavily indebted to moneylenders. This is a serious source of poverty and oppression in tribal areas.
3. The special problems were related to new forest laws and from the loss f their land as the combined result of the Government policies and the rapacity of money lending classes.
4. The tribal were now offered highly intoxicating liquor made in territories. As a result they had to substituted distilled liquor for their rice-beer, which was a relatively harmless beverage. It led to increased drunkenness and became a drain on meagre resources of tribesman.
5. Collapse of tea industries and frustration of the creative impulse, nervous and moral exhaustion from contact with the law is an important problem of the tribes.
6. Loss of land, loss of the freedom of the forest, disappearance of the ritual hunt, economic impoverishment and external contacts of tribal religion are an important problem in this district.
7. The work of Christian missions among the aboriginal tribes was largely the direct result of the penetration of their area by the British and their work was largely inimical to tribal life. This is an important problem in this district. This missionary influence has certainly tended to destroy the social unity of the whole. Defection to Christianity was largely the direct result of this penetration.
8. While the policy of making the sale of liquor a monopoly and a source of revenue to the state had extremely mischievous result for tribes, the policy of prohibition, advocated by the members of the Indian public life, is very likely to cause a tyrannical interference with their private life.
9. Another importance problem is the diseases, which are rampant among the tribes, are mainly malaria, yaws and venereal diseases. So,

the tribes were quite aware of the obstacles in the way of applying the treatment, leaving aside the cost of it to a philanthropic organization, in the form of their superstitious ideas.

10. Loss of land to and supplanting of the tribal village headman by Hindus from the plains, whether cultivators, moneylenders, traders, or mere land grabbers, as a result loss of means of subsistence and other evils and disintegration of tribal solidarity.

Tribes constitute an important segment of population of the country. The constitution of India 1950 under the provision of article 343 specifies certain tribes and tribal communities as scheduled tribes. This list has been revised numerous time. The general understanding of the Indian leadership of the period was that tribal Indian needed to be brought into mainstreams of development. The Government of India and state Government through a number of legislations and policies has reiterated its commitment to the tribal development. A number of schemes and programmes have been lunched from time to time. In spite of all these efforts tribes of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar still remain relatively backward.

This thesis has made an extensive study 'on the TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JALPAIGURI AND COOCH BIHAR DISTRICT. Significantly the THESIS PAPER has extended the study since 1992 to 2002

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