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## **Tribal Development in India: A Scenario of Contemporary Times**

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*The meaning of development perhaps remains unrealized and insignificant when a section of the population remains away from that development process and hence does not become a part of the mainstream society. The tribals in India are found to be the most deprived section of the whole population who often face severe financial adversities and socio-cultural disabilities. They are largely haunted by poverty, ignorance, malnutrition, underdevelopment, unemployment, exploitation, alienation, discrimination, deprivation, exclusion, etc. Lack of education and low level of literacy are seen drastically adding to their plight over the years as they fail to catch up with the non-tribals in terms of having access to opportunities for favourable change for improvement in their socio-economic conditions and political goal. In view of the fact that the tribals form an integral part of India and outnumber the tribal population of any other country in the world, the issues concerning their development assume enormous significance vis-à-vis the overall scenario of development of the country. However, the objective of development among the tribals in India has not yet been realized even seven decades after independence. Malnutrition, migration, displacement and loss of tribal identity have increasingly been the core issues in the contemporary discourse on tribal development in India. The growing phenomenon of Hinduization is now being seen severely damaging the very tribal ethos, thus impairing the spirit of belongingness and causing increasing isolation and indifference among the tribals towards their own cultural tradition. When the country is moving far ahead in the path of development, the tribal population is lagging behind the process of development. The present paper attempts to explore and examine various factors which are usually attributed to development in order know how far they have been helpful in shaping tribal development in India. The data used in the paper are entirely from secondary sources.*

*[Key Words: Tribal development, alienation, deprivation, exclusion, migration, industrialization, modernization and Hinduization.]*

### **Introduction**

The tribals inherently form an integral part of Indian society. Their population is seen to be larger than that of any other country in the world. They make their presence remarkably visible from the foot hill of the Himalayas to the lands tip of Lakshadweep and from the plains of Gujarat to the hills in the

North-East. According to 2011 census, the numerical strength of the tribals in India is 104 million i.e. 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country. At present there are 830 tribes spread all over the country, with the majority being concentrated in the forest and hilly areas. There are some states and union territories in the country in which the largest share in population comes from the tribals such as Mizoram (94.75 per cent), Lakshadweep (93.15 per cent), Nagaland (87.70 per cent) and Meghalaya (85.53 per cent). Although the tribals in these states and union territories form a major part of the population, their contribution to the total tribal population of the country is quite negligible. On the contrary, when some states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhatisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Bengal, Rajasthan and Gujarat together account for 83 per cent of the total tribal population, the non-tribals constitute the overwhelming majority of population in these states (en.wikipedia.org). The tribals are conspicuously distinct from the non-tribals on the basis of their ethnic characteristics, primitive traits, geographical isolation and backwardness. They have been widely classified into various groups in terms of the present scenario of development and the living patterns (Patel 1992:31). They are highly heterogeneous as they live with varied socio-cultural and economic aspects of life mostly determined by the ecological conditions and ethnic components. The tribal economy in India has generally been characterized as food gathering, pastoral, shifting hill cultivation, handicrafts, cultivation, trade in forest products and labouring activities (Choudhury and Choudhury 1982). Even now this economy continues to dominate the tribal life at large. Although the forces of industrialization, urbanization, migration, technological advancement and modernization have remarkably impacted the Indian economy, the tribals have not been so much influenced by these forces. Development emanating from these forces has not reached to the tribal communities. They remain backward and underdeveloped even today with the country achieving remarkable economic growth. The change from the subsistence economy to capitalist economy with the emergence of world market against the local market although has widened the scope for more development, it has not done justice to the poor tribals as the distributive system of benefits has not been in pace with the accelerated growth the nation has attained over the years. When the nation is being industrialized rapidly and modernizing its agriculture at a greater rate, the majority of the tribals are found deprived of the basic requirements of life. It is the non-tribals and the tribal elites who are the most beneficiaries of any planned development in the country. In one of the studies conducted on the Bhils, it is observed that the majority among them fail to secure even the bare necessities of life. The Bhils have been regularly subjected to indebtedness, discrimination, exclusion, exploitation, alienation and dispossession of land, migration and labour mobilization among them.

It is argued that dispossession of tribal land and exploitation of the tribals have increased over the years due to the modernization of transportation

breaking the tribal isolation and accelerating the access of the non-tribals, who are the outsiders, into the tribal areas (Desai). This view has been substantiated by Breman (1985), who observes that there have been continuous dispossession of land and growing exploitation of the tribals by the shopkeepers, money lenders and the distillers. His main argument is that with the increase in development, the tribals have lost their land and found their economy highly diversified. Moreover, the modernization process and the forces of protective discrimination have induced the relatively educated tribals for non-farm occupations. This seems to be increasing the trend for leaving agriculture, intentional dispossession of land, and the alienation of the tribals from their land in the recent time.

Tribal development in India has been examined and understood in terms of the worsening condition of agriculture, increasing processes of industrialization, urbanization and migration with their resultant effects, displacement of the tribals from their homeland throwing them out of their traditional and forest based economy and the emerging trend for Hinduization.

### **Agriculture and Tribal Development**

Agriculture and tribal development are much interrelated. Today tribal development suffers great setback due to the prevailing practice of shifting cultivation, which is an age-old method of cultivation on the slopes of hills by preparing a patch of land after cutting the trees and bushes, and then burning them to the ashes. This method of cultivation is not productive and hence sustainable as it yields very little and ends in every two or three years of time. Thus dependence on this method of agricultural production as a means of sustenance among the tribals proves to be outdated and irrational in contemporary situation. As per the estimate of the Taskforce on Shifting Cultivation set up by the Ministry of Agriculture, about 9.95 million hectares of land in tribal and hilly areas of the country fall under this practice. Almost 223 development blocks in 62 districts of 16 states have been impacted by shifting cultivation. Known as Jhooming in the hills of North East India, shifting cultivation is commonly practiced as a farming system among the tribes there. Nearly 4, 92,000 are dependent on shifting cultivation stretching over an area of 24, 94,000 hectares in the entire region of North Eastern Hills. This method of farming is also known as Podu Cultivation practiced in certain areas of Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh (Singh & Kumar 1994:16-30). There are in total 109 tribes in India which are entirely dependent on shifting cultivation at present. But the irony of the fact is that this method of cultivation is no more found to be supportive as the duration of cultivation on any patch of land has substantially dropped from 30 to 40 years in the past to merely 2 to 3 years today, thus resulting into restless search for new patches of lands with low productivity and out migration owing to the higher growth in population. Keeping in view constantly growing rate of tribal population in India, the shifting cultivation as a traditional method of agriculture has totally failed to contribute to the tribal economy for sustainable development. The contemporary

scenario of development of the country rather demands the tribals to change their traditional mode of agriculture to more modern and rational practice supported by science and sophisticated technology supplemented by continuation of traditional occupations pursued with some innovations. Besides, the tribals need to educate themselves for grabbing the new opportunities for better paid occupations offered by the industries unprecedentedly proliferated by the rapid process of industrialization.

### **Poverty and Indebtedness**

The goal of tribal development remains far from being realized due to the incidence of poverty and indebtedness. The greater the poverty the more is the indebtedness and vice-versa. The tribals are endlessly enmeshed in the vicious circle of poverty and indebtedness. An overwhelmingly majority of the tribals are yet below the poverty line. Poverty among them is attributed to the elementary nature of occupations based on the most primitive technology. Even most of the occupations pursued by them relate to hunting, gathering and agriculture. In addition, the continuity of the unskilled and unclean occupations becomes a setback for their development as these occupations keep them intact within the vicious circle of poverty. Moreover, the kind of economy characterized by shifting cultivation never produces the required quantum of foodstuff in order to meet the daily necessities of the tribals. It rather lessens the per capita income of the tribals and continues to retard the process of overall development among them. This drags them to the situation of abject poverty and indebtedness. The money lenders, the sahumars and the zamindars present there take the advantage of these poverty-stricken and helpless tribals, and lend them money against mortgage of their lands which later on are sold out to the money lenders due to their inability to repay the debt on account of heavy interest. This situation leads to most horrible nature of exploitation at the hands of these outsiders. Besides, one of the dehumanizing aspects of poverty and indebtedness is the growing phenomenon of bonded labour among the tribals as reported from the states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana (Govt. of India 1990). Under the worst circumstances, the tribals are forced to sell their family members for meeting their requirements. Tribal development cannot be realized unless the forces behind exploitation of the tribals and discrimination against them are prevented. In order to prevent such phenomena the tribals themselves need to become sufficiently literate, educated, and aware and remain alert.

### **Education among tribals**

Education has potentials to produce socio-psychological changes and influence productivity and economic development among the people in society. It is for this role of education that it has been considered as a major investment in itself (Rao 1966). Education can better influence knowledge, organizational and administrative skills, health, and the state of mind and the morale of the people in realizing the goal of development. Recognizing the potency of

education in development, Myrdal (1968) viewed education as a key factor of investment. Education serves many functions simultaneously. For example, it socializes the children, helps them in the development of human personality, influences social mobility, occupational attainment including change in occupation and career mobility, rise in professions, political and social awareness (Dube 1968), as well as productivity and economic development (Strumilin 1924, Young 1967, Schultz 1963, Denizion 1964).

The educational level of the tribals is a matter of great concern (Reddy 1989). The socio-economic development of the tribals retards owing to their low level of education. Therefore, education now assumes an enormous importance for the socio-economic development of the tribals. Not only the education of the tribals proves to be a supportive force for their socio-economic development, it also proves to be a powerful weapon against their exploitation by the government officials, money lenders, landlords, traders and other agents with vested interests. Education, especially basic education, is a life saver and a compound catalyst in the development of tribals as it boosts their confidence to tackle the people of superior groups ([indiatoday.intoday.in](http://indiatoday.intoday.in)). Education, which has so vital role for tribal development, has not yet been discernible in tribal setting in India. Compared to the rest of the population of India, the educational scenario of the tribal people is very disheartening. More than 50 per cent of them are illiterate. Even the tribal women's situation is more worsening. They have the lowest literacy rate in the country.

As education is one of the key factors of development, emphasis has been laid on it for the socio-economic development of the tribals. The Government of India, the State Governments, the Christian Missionaries and the voluntary organizations have started running schools in the tribal areas. In addition, the Government of India has introduced the Special Central Assistant Schemes providing for grants under the provision of Article 278 of the constitution to establish residential schools in various tribal areas in order to make education reach to one and all. Besides, numbers of Ashram schools and vocational training centres have come up in tribal sub-plan areas as a part of Government's educational programmes. School uniforms, books, stationeries, scholarships, stipends and reading materials are also provided to the tribal children to induce their enrolment. Separate hostels for boys and girls have been built up in order to arrest their interest for education. However, with enormous efforts taken by the Government, the tribals still remain largely illiterate and uneducated. Some believe that various measures, stated above, to promote education among the tribals are not adequate to increase their enrolment. It is even said that most of the measures simply remain as symbolic and ritual rather than becoming effective and implemented. Moreover, the hostels for girls and boys, class rooms and other infrastructure are not sufficient to attract more students. Some argue that Government's scheme to educate the tribals fail as the content of education taught to them stresses on bourgeoisie values and inhibits the upsurge of radical consciousness against oppression, discrimination,

exclusion and exploitation of the tribals. Apart from all these, the tribals become indifferent to education due to the long cherished myths and superstitions. Poverty which is persisting among many of them over the years is seen as biggest hurdle for education. It becomes a routine for the tribals to send their wards to work rather than to school. Most of the tribal children are also deprived of their right to education as they live in the most interior parts or remote areas which become inaccessible to the teachers to go there to teach from outside.

### **Industrialization, Urbanization and Migration**

The process of industrialization and urbanization does not seem to be encouraging for a sustainable development among the tribals as they impose themselves on the tribal land. Increase in the processes of industrialization and urbanization have affected the adjacent villages and the tribal communities by grabbing their land and stripping them of their traditional economy. The mining activities which go on constantly have taken hold of larger areas of tribal lands thus throwing the tribals out of their own habitation. Migration has increasingly become a contemporary trend among the tribals in India. The process of industrialization and urbanization is believed to have initiated the trend for tribal migration. Besides these twin processes, there have been a cluster of other factors which are very much conspicuous in accounting for tribal migration to the urban localities. The prominent among them are the dispossession and alienation of tribal lands, increasing access of the non-tribals into the tribal areas for extraction of tribal resources, exploitation of the tribals and the economic non-viability of small patches of land for cultivation. All these work as push factors to drive the tribals out to the industrial cities and urban centres for survival. These tribals who move out to the cities and urban centres are found to be engaged largely in the unorganized sectors. In a study conducted in Dungarpur and Banswara districts of the state of Rajasthan, few of the tribals mostly the Bhils who have migrated to the urban centres are seen joining works in factories, hotels and business establishments. Others are seen taking to household activities like sweeping and cleaning the utensils and doing many other small tasks (Doshi 1978). Migration of Bhils to the urban centres never had a history. It has been a recent phenomenon due to the paucity of land and the prevailing dispossession and alienation of land among them. Moreover, the migration of the Bhils is not an answer to their problems as their problems get more complicated in the new situation.

India and many other countries, have found modernization, particularly in terms of industrialization, as a means to economic growth. It is implicit in the growth of industries that has resulted into opening of new employment avenues with a guarantee for higher regular income for the tribals who join such industrial works by drifting away from their traditional occupations. But at the same time the factors which drag the tribals out to industrial and urban centres for their survival clearly indicate that they in general become unwillingly mobile due to the process industrialization. The change from agriculture to

industry by way of joining industrial occupations has brought about significant changes on the material life of the tribals. This has caused much stress and strain, dissatisfaction, strife and conflict in their family life. Despite earning relatively higher income the tribals are unable to pick up the habit of saving and planning for future. Instead they inculcate the habit of spending more money on consumption of liquor, different kinds of intoxicants and narcotics, and gorgeous clothes, thus increasing the burden of debts on their head. Their basic tribal attitude, social life, cultural values, religious behaviour and style of living have undergone tremendous changes under the process of industrialization (Das and Banerje 1962). A similar trend is seen emerging from the growing process of urbanization. In a study conducted on some tribals such as Mundas and Oraons, urbanization is seen bringing among them changes in several aspects of their life viz., the changes in their social relations, customs, habits, values and beliefs, and on the whole their social structure (Vidyarthi 1964). A study on Mahadeo Kolis, the tribals of Maharashtra largely occupying the hilly regions of Poona, Ahmednagar and Nashik districts, shows that these tribals have come across many changes in their life and culture owing to migration to the urban centres. Though they have improved over their standard of living and adopted material culture, the social cohesion they exhibited in the village has weakened drastically under the impact of the urban forces. The tribal values they once adhered to have got eroded and given way to the new modern values. The family system of these tribals has gone many changes, with small family size, late marriage, stress, strain and tension, and divorce increasingly becoming the regular phenomena witnessed by them in the urban society. There have been also changes observed in their social associations, relations with close friends and neighbours, customs, beliefs and practices (Gare 1976).

The tribals face tremendous problems due to their migration to the cities. They face increasing problems of adjustment which results into losing their independence. They are deprived of an informal neighbourhood, a close and well-knit social group and traditional family life. Their movement to cities brings them lot of congestion and makes them face a very deteriorating housing condition and environmental pollution. It causes much loss to their traditional bonds and solidarity (ibid). Low agricultural productivity and lack of availability of non-farm activities compel them to move away to the cities and urban centres. But since they are illiterate and unskilled they are deprived of better employment opportunities and thus restricted to low grade jobs (Naidu 1976). The industrial projects opened in the tribal areas have resulted into mass displacement of tribals, making them more migratory and thus getting disconnected and disintegrated. Migration has caused devastating effects on tribal life by destroying the tribal economy. In the cities and urban centres, the tribals are destined to live in slums and dragged to a culture of extreme fragmentation and heterogeneity (ibid). No doubt, the processes of modernization and development have generated new opportunities for the tribals, but at the same time they have been responsible for driving them out of

their native place (Joshi 1998). The tribals have never been able to form a part of the mainstream society. They are completely away from the economic, political, social and cultural mainstreams of the nation. Their assimilation with the national mainstream has never been possible due to the fact that they find much problem of adjustment when come in contact with the urban people. Their inability to become a part of the mainstream society is also due to the inferiority complex they have been suffering from since long (Joshi 1999).

### **Indian Constitution and the Tribals**

Taking into account the seriousness of many problems confronted by the tribals, the founding fathers of the constitution of India have made special provisions for their protection and development. Some of the provisions kept in the constitution include promotion of educational and economic interests and protection from social injustice and all forms of discrimination and exploitation. The constitution has also made provisions for protecting the rights of the tribals like any other citizen of the country and permits the States to provide them reservation for jobs in government services. Under Article 330 and 332 of the constitution of India seats have also been reserved for the tribals in the Lower House of the parliament and state assemblies. This has seemingly increased their access to politics of the country in getting realized the goal of development of their community. Setting up of separate departments in various States and the National Commission at the Centre has been a big step towards promoting tribal welfare and safeguarding their interests under the provision of the constitution. Special provision for administration and control of Schedule Areas and grant-in-aid to the States to meet the cost of such schemes of development for promoting the welfare of the tribals has also been guaranteed under the provision of constitution. The laws such as the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989, have also been enacted in order to protect them against any crime (en.wikipedia.org). However, despite many constitutional provisions for the welfare and protection of the rights of the tribals the socio-economic conditions among them have never improved over the years. There is still a greater feeling of insecurity among them about their future in the country.

### **Government Initiatives for Tribal Development**

Economic development and welfare of the tribals and protection against their exploitation have been given utmost priority by the Government since long. In order to ensure that all the constitutional provisions which are translated into various policies and programmes are implemented and put into action, greater emphasis on tribal development and welfare has been given in various Five Year Plans commencing with the First Five Year Plan, 1951-1956. While adopting various schemes for tribal development and welfare in recognition of their social, psychological and economic problems, efforts have been made to understand their culture and traditions. Tribal development in India was in fact initiated in the year 1951 when the Government of India introduced the national extension schemes in order to intensify the block level



development programmes for the tribals' improvement in their standard of living. This step was taken for realizing the fundamental rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy mentioned in Article 46, which says that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the population, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation" (Cit. Singh and Vyas 1989: ix). Later on the Community Development Projects started and the Tribal Development Blocks were introduced during the Second Five Year Plan in order to supplement and speed up the works for tribal development. In addition, during the Fourth Five Year Plan six pilot projects in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha were set up to realize tribal development. Thereafter, each project operated under a separate Tribal Development Agency established by the Government. The Commissions and the Committees appointed by the Government to review the tribal situation never found the percolation theory working in favour of the tribals in getting them their due share of development. They acknowledged the fact that still much is needed to be done for bringing the tribals at par with the general population ([www.google.co.in](http://www.google.co.in)).

Besides these schemes and programmes, the Tribal Integrated Development Project and the Tribal Sub-plan Scheme for Tribal development were taken up in 1972. The Integrated Tribal Development Projects and the Integrated Area Development Programme started operating under the Tribal Sub-plan Scheme for tribal development almost in all States (Vyas 1989: 53-54). Much of the work on tribal development in India has been done by the Non Government Organizations in late 1960s and 1970s (Sen 1999). Though many in numbers, the important ones which seem to have significantly contributed to tribal development in India are Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) and the Navinchandra Mafatlal Sadguru Water and Development Foundation from Gujarat. These NGOs plan and implement village-level water resource projects, alternative biogas energy systems and reforestation activities, regularly making the beneficiary people a part of the whole process of planning, operating and maintaining the activities of development. One of the very important aspects of these NGOs is that their development programmes have gradually been integrated into rural development and used in Five Years Plans for rural and tribal development in India (Ebrahim 2001, Shri. Sadguru Seva Sangh Trust 1978, Government of India, 1978). The Central as well as the State Governments, and the NGOs have been constantly working for the tribal development in terms of providing them with the basic infrastructural facilities like educational institutions, health care centres, roads, banks and co-operative societies, etc. Awareness camps, medical check-up camps, soft skills and training camps are organized at regular intervals. Self help groups have been encouraged in the tribal areas with the basic objective of saving, extending credit for micro-economic activities and women's empowerment with the purpose that all these will aim at realizing tribal development.

## **Hinduization of Tribals**

Hinduization as a process of cultural transformation through the adaptive acculturation of the tribals influenced by the dominant caste Hindus started long before in much unorganized way. Over the past several decades there has emerged a growing trend among the tribals in India to get inclined to the Hindu fold of life and subsequently absorbed in it, gradually imbibing the distinctive traits of caste (Mazumdar 1944: 96-108). In India, there are numerous castes which either have evolved from various tribes or have moved away from their initial status (ibid). Many lower castes of the present society owe their origin to different tribes. The lower castes are believed to have been subjected to transformation from tribes following the process of acculturation. While in terms of acculturation some tribes like Raj Gonds of Madhya Pradesh and others are recognized as having fairly high status in Hindu society, the Gandas and Pankas are looked down upon as untouchables in many areas; the Kolis have become Hindus, the Kadars have been treated as depressed category and the Pradhans, Ojhas and Nagarchis of Central Provinces have been Hinduised and treated impure (Elwin 1941, 1944). Griffiths (1946) finds Hinduization making the tribes to form a caste system within the tribe. He argues that the Kol tribe by following the process of Hinduization has formed a miniature caste system within the tribe, desired to become a part of the Hindu social system and integrated into its lower strata. Hinduization of two Oraon villages of Chotanagpur has made them Hindus who have accepted Hindu Gods and Goddesses, adopted Hindu rituals and ways of worship, and have abandoned eating beef (Sahay 1962). A similar view is seen in the Panch-Pargana area of Chotanagpur where the Mundas require the services of the Brahman priest and barber to perform the funeral rites, worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Krishna, Ram, Mahadeva, Parvati, etc. The Juangs of Central Odisha, basically found to be the hunters and food collectors, have gradually submitted to their Hindu neighbours and adopted new occupations. By adopting the Hindu economic system, the Juangs are in the process of forming a new Hindu caste. They have been into the process of caste formation by adopting many Hindu rituals in their culture and gaining the appearance of a Hindu caste by bringing about the needed reforms (Patnaik (1964).

Hinduization is now being seen having tremendous impact on the life of the tribals, thus making them abandon certain rituals and social practices unique to their culture and traditional way of living. Most of the tribals in India are seen adopting the values, beliefs, rituals and practices of the dominant society which they seem to be helping them for their adaptation, absorption and assimilation into the mainstream society. The Todas of Nilgiri who were the pastoralists and known for a powerful ritual based on the buffalo and dairy, and for the buffalo sacrifice during funerals, and having a history of female infanticide, polyandry and wife capture, now have extensively undergone the process of Hinduization. The Todas are changing with their increasing interaction with the mainstream Hindu-Tamil culture (Walkar 1986). The way Hinduization is taking place now,

the impetus seems largely from within the community, particularly from the younger members.

Hinduization in contemporary society is gaining momentum as a process to achieve the objective of Hindutva. With this philosophy, Hinduization is rather emerging as a movement taking place in more systematically planned and organized way to Hinduise the adivasis and therefore counter the proselytizing activities of the Christian missionaries (Kanungo 2008). Some organizations such as Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Ramakrishna Mission have been trying very hard to Hinduise many aboriginal people and other non-Hindus in India who do not fall within the domain of caste. Though the non-Hindus and the tribals are brought under caste system by the process of Hinduization, they get a caste position at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. The organizations involved in proselytizing the non-Hindus and the tribals are also seen launching schools, dispensaries and community service centers for them to keep their promise for educating them, providing them with better health and development facilities (Sikand, Katju 1994). The development and welfare measures which are accompanying the process of Hinduization now have also resulted into breaking of the tribal isolation and alienation, and made the tribals become a part of the mainstream culture and society, gaining access to many development avenues in an atmosphere of freedom and security.

### **Conclusion**

Tribal development in India has been viewed differently by different people. When some view that considerable development has taken place among the tribals in the country through the extension of constitutional provisions and various schemes implemented for them under different five years plans, others are of the view that tribal development has not yet been reckonable to the extent it should have been. Tribal development in India faces the challenges of modernizing the tribal economy and integrating the tribals into the national economy without disturbing their environment, socio-cultural characteristics and traditions of socio-economic equity and innocence (Sharma 1989: 27-33). With the development paradigm being shifted to the economic liberalization and civil society, the challenges for tribal development have become more conspicuous, thus making the efforts for tribal development more complex and precarious (Edwards 1994, Escobar 1995, Fisher 1998, Guhan 1988, Ruttan 1989, Sukhatme 1989).

The policies of liberalization and modernization, considered as the new trends of development, have permeated the world economy thus uniformly shaping the economies of all the nations of the world regardless of their degree of development and preparedness to accept such policies. A similar notion of development is noticed when it is argued by Gunnar Myrdal that "Development has implicitly been based on a series of modernization ideals or values" (Cit. Szirmai 2005:7). The period that commenced with World War II saw development increasingly associated with modernization theory and grading the

states as developed, less developed and developing (Gardner and Lewis 1996: 12, Watts 1993: 259). Though modernization theory emerges as defining characteristic of development, it is not yet free from certain criticisms.

The concept of development needs to have a manifest goal to improve the quality of life of the people in society. The necessity of development is very important and hence it needs to be inclusive for all sections of the population even at a minimum level of its requirement for ensuring them a relatively better quality of life in society. However, development is not realized by only making strategies for resource generation by using appropriate science and technology but by seeing that it reaches to the poorest of the poor in the society. Thus the concept of exclusivity which used to dominate the sphere of development once, now finds no place in the narrative of development in contemporary times. Despite many plans and their implementation for tribal development, the tribals still remain backward and underdeveloped.

The scenario of tribal life in India is different from what it used to be 70 years before. With the attainment of freedom in 1947, India has achieved remarkable development in social, economic, political and cultural fields. But the benefits of development do not seem to have reached to all the sections of the society equally though India has adopted a socialist republic and democratic structure. Even with the Directive Principles of State Policies very much constituting the core part of India's constitution and with well defined fundamental rights, human rights and special rights for the backward communities including the tribals in India, the tribals in general have not achieved any significant and reckonable change and development in their life, barring perhaps those especially in the North east region and a few here and there in other parts of the country. They still continue to remain in the lowest strata of the society and suffer from servitude, poverty, exploitation, alienation, discrimination, exclusion and misery over the years. Their areas of habitation are yet to be developed by all forms of infrastructure including well developed system of communication and other physical facilities.

Though industrialization, urbanization and migration are seen as the necessary factors contributing to development, they have not been effective in achieving the goals of tribal development in India. The tribals in fact have been compelled to move out of their homeland and involuntarily get associated with the occupations made available to them by the industries and the urban centres for their survival. The occupations taken up by the tribals in the industry and in various urban centres are highly unskilled, manual and hence low paid. Therefore, there is very little or no scope for their development in such occupations. Moreover, the tribals are unnecessarily driven away from their homeland and made to be detached from their culture, tradition, values and social practices they cherished for years.

Tribal development in India now needs right kind of approach. Some argue that Hinduization can be a step towards achieving tribal development as it aims at detribalizing the tribals and bringing them under caste system for

making them entitled to all such facilities of development which are usually availed by the caste Hindus. In addition, awareness of tribal people about the importance of change in their socio-economic, political and cultural life is highly necessary for their development. But this awareness cannot be generated among the tribals unless they are adequately educated and literate. Without education it is beyond imagination to overcome the challenges of tribal development. Besides, the tribals need to have a positive mindset, determination, and strong need for achievement motivation for realizing the goal of development. However, the efforts of the Government and the Non-Government Organizations cannot be underestimated in understanding the goal of tribal development in India.

Tribal development in India, on the whole, should focus on raising the level of productivity of the tribals and development of human resources among them through providing them with adequate education, skills and training programmes. The focus for tribal development should also be on making the tribals free from exploitation, alienation, and retaining the possession of their lands. The tribals also should have freedom from the clutches of all types of oppressors such as the money-lenders, zamindars, sahkars and the contractors for realizing the goal of development.

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