

## **Industries and Tribal: Erosion of Their Ethos**

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### **Abstract**

Tribal issue is a matter of global concern. In India around 8.8% of the total population consist of tribal. They are of primitive human civilisation of India. The major tribes in India are the Gonds, the Bhils, the Santals, the Oraons, the Minas and the Mundas. Eighty percent of the tribes are found in the central region of India. If we look back in the history of pre-independent India, the tribes' position was not in much privileged; they are intended for the laborious job, a kind of slaves under the British colonials. Later on, a decade of independence, unfortunately there are virtually no alterations in the present socio-economic scenario of the tribe's conditions. Tribes are treated as outsiders and unwanted in their own homeland by the modern capitalist's society. In the process of national development tribes and their cultural identity is badly affected as compared to any other community as the *second Five Year Plan* was modelled on the idea of *either industrialisation or perish*, providing the front seat of debates and decision only to the economic issues. Tribal areas have been comprehended as the heaven of natural resources by the industrial houses and investors. As a consequence, thousands of industrial projects are installed by the investors in or near these tribal areas for the rude fabrics of the yields. And the tribes were disowned from their lands and homes; forced to migrate from their traditional sources of livelihood – *Jal, Jungal and Zamin*, leaving their culture, tradition and identity to a critical stage. This paper concentrates on the impact of industrialization in the tribal regions and their economic and social inclusion in the mainstream resulting in their dichotomy of existence and alienation.

**Keywords-** Tribal, Colonial, Industry, Project, Development, Inclusion

### **Introduction**

The British rule for 150 years in India left us with social, economic and political breakdown. As soon as they left, there is an urgency for industrial ointment to compensate the socio-economic damages. This intention of introducing industries was certainly a noble approach for the rehabilitation of the domestic markets during colonial rule, but the motive eventually changed after independence, as industries became the venture of the upper classes. There was an immediacy for the industrial development to shape the of concept of nation. For this reason, there was a huge expulsion of industries across the country, mostly the tribal areas were targeted for the land, labour and raw

materials. Industrial works need skilled labourers but the tribal people rarely possess these skills and thus they remained at the periphery of the industrial structure. Ironically, the tribes sacrificed their livelihood along with their cultural identities and ethos for the national progress, but, when it comes to the responsibility of the nation to look after their needs, they are being abandoned. But now-a-days government are taking affirmative initiatives to include the tribal into the mainstream of economy and socio-politic of the nation such as the PESA Act for the Scheduled tribes and other rehabilitation policies. NGOs are also playing crucial role in the field of preserving their rights, identity, and cultures. But 90% of the tribal people are actually not benefitted by these policies.

It is well known that tribal are very primitive inhabitants of our nation usually living the areas surrounding natural resources. They are completely depended on the nature for foods, medicine and clothes. Their livelihood is very simple and natural kind different from the so-called civilised societies, practitioners of different customs and culture. In a way, jungle is home and kingdom for them; a world of security and self-identity. The harmonious lives of tribal are disturbed when the forest act came into force abiding them to move out from their home land (forest). Along with forest act, the traders and farmers started infiltrating into their lands, and the huge amount of farming causes the destruction of the forests which is ironically essential for the cause of financial prosperity of the nation. In this way, tribal are gradually losing the originality of their lifestyle and cultural identity.

It is evident that after independence extreme progress was achieved in the industrial sector leading to an economic upsurge of the nation. In the second Fifth Year Plan, policies were based on the economic purpose without concerning the loses of humanity and cultures. And this process, affected tribal communities in several ways. Tribal areas became the main targets for the industrialists and corporate sectors because of the easy availability of lands and labourer at a nominal cost. The lands occupied by tribes are enriched with natural and mineral resources that are used as raw-materials in productions of the industries. So, the more industries are established in or near the tribal locals the more tribes loss their lands and homes.

The case of migration mostly happened in the states of Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh as the tribal people are proved unsuitable workers while dealing with machines and devices. The skilled and educated people of non-tribal communities are enjoying the job opportunities produced by the factories, depriving the actual owner of the lands. So, they left their places of origin in the search of new livelihood in the areas of agriculture and started working as a field labourer. As they are the forest- dweller their culture was forest oriented, thus, being far from the forest they started living in such a socio- cultural space which is alien to them.

The quest for acquiring the status of 'developed nations' enroute us towards a capitalist culture. Thus, the tribal invariably loses the ability to determine life and destiny when deprived of the right to think (conceive) of themselves as the director of their own actions. In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1932), Karl Marx expressed the *Entfremdung* theory—of estrangement from the self. In this book, Marx identified four types of alienation that arise to the worker labouring under a capitalist system of industrial production – Alienation of the worker from their product; Alienation of the worker from the act of production; Alienation of the worker from their *Gattungswesen* (species-essence); Alienation from the other human beings. To define the first aspect of alienation theory of Marx, the product produced by the industries are neither determined by the worker nor by the consumers, but by the capitalist classes, who gains the control over the intellect and the labour. Thus, the workers have no control over design and production of the product that they themselves created. In exchange of their labour, they are paid wages which is at the lowest possible rate. In a capitalist mode of production, the second type of alienation occurs when a worker's labour

and creativity is reduced to labour-wage system where the worker gets little psychological satisfaction and appreciation for his/her job. The worker is alienated from the act of production because his efforts were reduced to few numbers of monetary benefits. Thirdly, “species-essence” means psychological dynamism, where an individual engages in activities which are essential to promote mutual human survival and psychological well-being, by means of emotional connection with the society. Fourthly, the idealised promise that industries would certainly provide a better living standard to the working class from their primitive lifestyle, has actually widen the void between the classes and even created a demarcating line in between the individual.

If we consider Marx’s theory of alienation in context of Indian tribes, the situation is almost identical as they became worst sufferer of industrial acceleration. Their lands were taken and they were left with new job as a factory worker. They have no clue what they were producing and for whom they are doing so, but remained silent wage labourer, serving the capitalist. They were compelled to work for the industries because of surviving in a capitalist structure they need money for their families. Now they cannot directly ask nature to help them for survival, as, they have to via their demands from the industries. The promise for better living conditions was no doubt provided to the tribes but at the cost of loss of self-identity as they left home and migrated to a different place for sustenance and work. Thus, the industries and government policies juxtaposed for a better future, but this, unknowingly uprooted their ethos, values, and culture and positioned them in such a social structure which is unfamiliar to them. And this put them in socio-cultural alienation. Their lost ethos and injustice committed on these communities are reflected in the poems of Jacinta Kerketta (writer and journalist)

“Leaving behind their homes,  
Their soil, their bales of straw,  
Fleeing the roof over their  
Heads, they often ask,  
O, city!  
Are you ever wrenched by the  
very roots

In the name of so-called progress? (**O, city!**)

After independence, in 1991 with the introduction of globalization, erosion and marginalization of tribes were increased as the number of industries was growing in the tribal area. According to Dungdung in Odisha state only more than 90 memorandum of understanding (MOUs) has been signed with the corporate house and more cases of National human Rights violations were recorded. The same scenario is seen in the state of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

Any Suppression and exploiting that goes beyond the limits of endurance give birth to revolting social movements; tribal community also revolted against the injustices and deprivations done to them. Such as Kol Revolt, Bhumiji revolt of 1832 and Santal revolt in 1855 and Birsa Munda Movement of 1895, to name a few pre-independent tribal social movements. All these movements arose as opposition of the land acquisition bills and against the too much pressure of taxes. The aim and objects of the movements were to assert their right to lands and ensure food security and safeguarding of their cultural identity. Some movements have a strong relation with the protection of forest and natural phenomenon.

The new colour was added to the tribal movement when it is collaborated with the movement of Naxals. Tribal movement never went against the states before it involves in Naxalite movement. There are many similarities between Naxalite and Tribal movements as both of them fighting for lands opposing exploitations of upper classes. No doubt that the emerging Naxalite movement has many positive points and tribal found the ray of hope and reliability in Naxalist who proposed to provide the tribes the security, shelter and food. But after the government suppression and banning on Naxal movement Naxalites were disarrayed and gradually moved from their real motives by hiding themselves in tribal areas. Now the Naxalists involved in abduction and loots for money for their survival. They force tribes to support them at the gun point and if they refuse, they get killed. Presently, tribal are living in a dual problem - they lost their homeland in the hands of the capitalist and their values in the hand of Maoist or Naxalists. If the tribes ignore the Naxalists they are being killed and supporting them will cause police arrest. They are the victims of both state and the rival of the state.

A nation is always responsible for the wellbeing of its citizens. So, government has taken many projects and policies for the inclusion of tribes to the mainstream. First of all, government body took initiative to establish the right of land to the tribes and start a process of rehabilitation. Reservation act was brought for the Scheduled tribes and government passed an Act that tribal peoples' land cannot to be occupied by or transferred to the non-tribal.

Since Independence many commissions were set up for the investigating issues and hindrances faced by the tribes. In 1960, the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission under the chairmanship of Shri U.N. Dhebar, called Dhebar commission and allotted the task of investigating and reporting on the problems of the Scheduled Tribes under Article 339 of the Constitution. After getting the Dhebar commission reports Government has sanctioned *The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996* or PESA. It is a law enacted by the Government of India for empowering the Gram Sabhas towards self-governance, particularly for the people living in the Scheduled Areas of India. PESA was viewed as a positive development for tribal communities in Scheduled Areas who had earlier suffered enormously from engagement with modern development processes in independent India. The loss of free access to forest, land, and other community resources had increased their vulnerability. Extensive land acquisition and displacement due to development projects had led to large scale distress in tribal communities living in Scheduled Areas. On 18th July of 2002 the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes, under Article 339 (1) appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Dilip Singh Bhuria to find out the existence gaps in the Dhebar commission for the betterment of Government policies made for the welfare the tribe.

Apart from policy making Government has also implemented some job-oriented projects for the backward classes that are proved beneficial for the economic support to the tribes living in rural areas. *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005*, with an objective of enhancing the *livelihood security of the people* is one of those rural development projects which give the guarantee of works for tribes along the whole year. To develop the skills and to bring capability of factory worker in tribe, present Government has launched *Skill India Project* where tribes can be trained by proper trainers and get job placements. *Pradhan Mantri Koushal Vikash Yojana* under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship can also be used to develop the working ability of tribes. *Stand up India*-this scheme was recently launched to boost the spirit of private enterprise among the most vulnerable scheduled caste and scheduled tribe groups and women of the society. Under the umbrella of this scheme every single branch of a public sector bank is asked to support one entrepreneur each from women and SC/St. category.

## Conclusion

India's dream of becoming a super-power nation can be realised only if this most backward section is pulled out of the chaos, on the economic front through creating job opportunities, higher levels of health, education, safe drinking water, shelter etc. States laws for minimizing social, cultural and individual alienation of the tribes need to be reformed to cover the gaps and insufficiencies in them. With the accelerated urbanization and industrialization, tribal land-holdings in urban areas experience great pressure for transfer. As The Dhebar Commission said, "We feel that they should be regarded as "heritage groups" and have argued in this Report that the policy to be, formulated for them should be such as enables them to move in the direction that they decide, on the terms which are their own and at the pace they wish to advance." Economic progress is crucial for the development of a nation, but the spread of capitalism is parasite to these tribes. Including them to the mainstream is essential but cannot be obligatory at the cost of individually alienating them from their culture and ethos. There should be a space for harmonious amalgamation, unity and mutual respect for each other's cultural values. Dayamani Barla, a tribal journalist from Jharkhand, provides a beautiful perspective from a tribal viewpoint that "for us tribal, the forest is sacrosanct. It is where we are born and nurtured, and our culture and identity are shaped. The tribal is connected to the forest with an umbilical cord".

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