

Culture Change in a Disturbed Physical Environment: A Microlevel Case Study

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ABSTRACT A tribal village in the fringe of old Guwahati at one time had self-sufficient economy. The village were agriculturists and raised paddy in the fields. They collected from the forest and hillocks in the neighbourhood necessary articles like fire-wood, edible forest products leaves for silk-worm, medicinal herbs and materials for constructing houses. The pools of various sizes supplied them fish. Silk-worm was another source of protein diet. Besides, occasional hunting of small games and birds added to their protein intake. They prepared molasses from sugarcane that they grew and also mustard oil. The situation changed with the destruction of forest, filling up the low lying areas with earth carried from the hillocks for various purposes, converting the paddy fields to residential areas, etc. The change in physical environment disturbed their economic balance and brought several changes in their socio-cultural life.