

Tribal Situation in Dadra and Nagar Haveli Development and Transition

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ABSTRACT A brief field investigation was made in different places of the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, as a part of Rural Camp Programme of Tata Institute of Social Sciences in 1995. In this study several aspects of the tribal people, in general, were observed. Special emphasis was given on the multidimensional effects of industrial growth and other developmental works introduced in the area. Field observations and key informant interviews were followed by a piece of information collected from Government Official relating to developmental works in the area. Some of the prominent Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) working in the area were also taken into consideration. The outcome of the investigation was critically analysed and delineated in the report. Primarily the study was qualitative in nature and had micro level range of investigation.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'Tribal Development' attracts the attention of social scientists and social workers, not excluding the policy planners of contemporary age. In its most basic sense development means improvement in the quality of human life. Beyond material definition, development entails that there be social, political and economic systems that allow self esteem and realization of individual potentiality. In recent years industrialization has been introduced in several tribal areas of the country aiming at bringing in development. But this in fact has raised a lot of controversy among all sections of people who are aware enough of tribal life ways.

The parameters of policy for industrialization of tribal areas were spelt out by the Dhebar Commission (GOI : 1961) which says that there would be a consequent obligation to the tribals to see that the process does not sweep them of their feet. The Commission recognises that industrial development has its impact on the individual, the family, society and on the entire environment with consequent psychological, social and eco-

nomic consequences.

Despite such provisions to protect the interest of the tribal people the so called industrial development has done a great damage to tribal cultural life in the country. The Shilu Ao Team report (GOI : 1969) says that industrialization in tribal areas did not help in improving the economic condition of tribal communities—in fact, major industrial projects have since operated to their detriment by uprooting them from their homes and offering them no satisfactory alternative to the traditional methods by which they used to eke out a living in their old environment.

The evil effects of industrialization in tribal areas are criticized by different scholars. Sharma (1978) says that when imposition of industrial system on tribal ethos and socio-economic system occurs, the latter always suffers disadvantages. In the process of interaction, the tribal communities and individuals begin to wither in the confrontation which follows. Further, members of tribal communities cannot supply the skill and talent required for the new industrial ventures, and this requirement is met by immigrants. The greater the difference between the two system, the deeper will be the tribal recession accompanied with a correspondingly stronger tide of immigrants. Thus, the members of the tribal community become dispossessed of their lands, and at least the first generation is driven to near destitution, through lack of the prime source of livelihood.

GOI review team for tribal development in industrial areas (1978) observes that economic opportunities created by the establishment of industrial and mining complexes in tribal areas and the growth of large townships around them have bypassed the tribals as they did not have the necessary skills or entrepreneurship to exploit

these opportunities. The hinterlands of the industrial and mining cities have become more backward and poorer.

Regarding the ill effect of unplanned industrialization, Roy Burman (1988) writes—despite economic viability of industrial projects, given the archaic state of tribal technoculture, mere transplantation of industries in tribal areas cannot bring about desired change process towards development of industries and enterprises. Rather it may reduce large number of poor tribals to a status of unskilled wage-labourers. He further emphasises that to make development planning meaningful for the target people, planned investment has to be directed towards the development of local human resources for project base as well as general service requirement in the areas of professional and technical skill formation.

Anthropological approach suggested by S.C. Dubey (1968) sums up the direction that tribal policy planners in our country must adopt and then propose subsequent industrialization or non-industrialization to tribal population. He suggests :

- a) understanding of tribal organizations and values through sustained scientific studies,
- b) identifying the integrative force in tribal life,
- c) identifying the problems of tribes at different levels of technological, economic and cultural development,
- d) identifying the areas of minimum and maximum resistance to innovation in their culture, and
- e) recognizing vital linkage in their cultural fabrics.

The present study tries to reveal the positive and negative aspects of rapid industrial growth in Dadra and Nagar Haveli and impact of developmental programmes on the tribal people of the Union Territory.

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Dadra and Nagar Haveli is a Union Territory of India, situated between the parallels of 20°-0' and 20°-25' north and between 75°-50' and 73°-15' east. Total area of the territory is 489 sq km.

The Nagar Haveli area is surrounded by the ranges of Sahyadri mountain (Western Ghat). Except a small portion of plains in the central

and north west, the remaining area is extremely undulating and hilly. The principal river is the Daman Ganga with its three tributaries.

Nagar Haveli came under the Portuguese rule under the Poona treaty in 1783 as a compensation for a vessel destroyed by the Maratha navy whereas Dadra was handed over to the Portuguese by the Maratha ruler in 1785. Dadra was liberated from Portuguese rule on 22 July, 1954 while Nagar Haveli was liberated on 2 August, 1954. Subsequently, on 11th August, 1961 both Nagar Haveli and Dadra came to be constituted as a separate Union Territory.

Historical background of the tribal people shows that they lost their land to the landlords during the Portuguese rule. The Patels of the village were the revenue collectors. The administration had no direct relation with the common people and the Patels' declaration of the value of crops was accepted by the administrators. Thus there existed extensive exploitation of the local tribal people. The landlords could annex the land belonging to a tiller leaving the village being unable to fulfill the demands of the landlords. It is learnt that due to induction of British land reform system in the country, the Portuguese Government also started land reforms, and the situation improved a lot after the imposition of the 1870 and 1878 Acts. This measure forced the landlords to vacate the illegal land holding. After liberation the Land Reform Regulation, 1971, became effective in Dadra and Nagar Haveli on May 1, 1974 which helped the tribals to get back some of their erstwhile land.

The Union Territory (U.T.) at present comprises 72 villages. Census operation shows that there are 14 communities of which the Warlis, Koknas, Kathodis and Dhodias claim numerical superiority. The Warlis, Koknas and Koli Dhors are said to be the earliest known inhabitants in the region.

The census data of 1991 show that the total population of the U.T. is 1,38,477 out of which 70,953 are males and 67,524 females having a sex ratio of 952. Majority of the communities in the U.T. are tribals. Population growth trend is significant in the U.T. in that in last two decades the growth of non-tribal population in the industrial areas is around 137.35 per cent showing a large scale immigration from nearby states in

search of jobs in the growing industries as the local people to a great extent, cannot take advantage of them.

Literacy rate in the U.T. is 40.70 per cent of the total population out of which 53.56 per cent are males and 26.98 per cent female, showing very low literacy rate among the latter. At present there are 181 schools run by government as well as private bodies. But so far educational achievement is concerned, the outcome is not at all satisfactory. A study in 1983-84 shows that the proportion of dropout from primary school to secondary school is very high. Out of 2900 students enrolled in primary standard, 1712 reached Vth standard, and 447 reached Vth to Xth standard. In XIIth standard the number became 105 only giving a proportion of 29:1.

At present, forests cover nearly 40 per cent of the total land area of the territory. In recent years massive deforestation occurred in the area legally as well as illegally. Portuguese government did not have well defined forest policy for forest management as the British had. Teak and some other valuable trees are indigenously grown here. The Portuguese government declared sixty villages as forest village. The adivasis were allowed to collect the required Minor Forest Products (MFP), fire wood etc. But the Indian Government had imposed restriction on forest collection after the entire forests were declared as reserved. In this move a lot of land used by the tribals also got converted to reserved forest area depriving the tribals of privileges of the traditional use of land.

It is learnt that the set-up of industry in the U.T. was primarily meant for providing job opportunities to the tribal people who eventually ran short of arable land and also were debarred from having benefits of forest products. Thus several incentives were announced by the U.T. Government to attract the attention of industrialists from outside to set up their industries in this undeveloped area. The first industrial estate was started at Silvassa in the year 1967-68. At present there are 600 industrial units in the U.T. But it is worth mentioning that the participation of the local people in entrepreneurship development is few and far between.

The tribals of the territory are pre-eminently cultivators; they are also attached with allied

activities. Their staple food includes the cereals like *nagli*, *jowar* and rice, pulses of *tur*, *urad* etc. Alcoholic drinks are enjoyed by almost all the tribal people of the area irrespective of sex.

Dancing is a part of their traditional life. Musical instruments are of both wind and percussion type. Once their tradition was rich in art forms—graphic arts, wall paintings, tattooing etc. Warli paintings were famous for their unique nature of depicting stories. The tribal folk dances include *Bhowada*, *torpas*, *dhol tur thali* etc. The main festivals observed by the Warlis, Koknas and Dhathodis are *Shun Barash* and *Bhawda*. *Diwasa* is celebrated by the Dhodias. The tribal people also celebrate some of the Hindu festivals.

DATA COLLECTION

Collection of data was made possible in two ways—from direct observation in the field and from Government and NGOs personnel. The places visited for data collection were Silli and Randha in the east, Silvassa at the centre and Khanvell and Dudhani in the south. Field observations were followed by discussions with the Government officials related to various development schemes.

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNION TERRITORY

Government agencies and a few NGOs are involved in different development work in the U.T. aiming at improvement of tribal life. The prominent NGOs are the Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram and the Indian Red Cross Society. The Government Agricultural Department, the Rural Development Agency, the Forest Department and the Health Department are all related to tribal development in the area. The workings of some of these organizations are briefly described here to make an assessment of their activities.

(i) *Agricultural Department* : The traditional agricultural practices and the techno-culture of the people have improved to some extent by the joint efforts of Rural Development Agency and Agricultural Department. Some of the measures taken by the Agricultural Department to inspire the people for better production are :

- supply and distribution of high yielding variety of seeds,
- supply of chemical fertilizer,
- subsidized insecticides and pesticides,
- training to the progressive farmers for transfer of technology,
- soil testing and suggestion about know how to the local farmers,
- promotion of cash crop with special emphasis on horticultural gardening.

These facilities are complemented with irrigation facilities in certain areas enabling the farmers to grow horticultural produces and to cultivate winter crops which is a non-conventional practice among these people.

(ii) *Soil Conservation* : Denudation of hilly lands occurred due to extensive deforestation. The consequent soil erosion is now a great concern to the administration. But Government's effort to minimize rapid soil erosion is not yet gaining satisfactory results.

(iii) *Forest Department* : After liberation of the U.T. the Forest Department had launched several people-centered schemes as a part of their scientific forest management. The entire forest areas were declared as reserved under the new Forest Policy, cutting short of tribal people's right and privileges over forest land and forest products. Realizing the grave state of the forests, the administration has put in moratorium on commercial felling of trees up to the year 1995-96. The forest department has kept provision for providing the tribal people with woods for house construction at subsidized rates, and free wood for ten years. The social forestry programme has created a lot of employment opportunity among the tribal people. But there are also certain constraints faced by the forest department. Local people cut down the branches of trees that are planted in their land and burn down the leaves on the ground to ashes that are spread over the land for sowing seeds—a practice called *adar*. They also use small plants to fence their household boundary. Recently, the Department is taking interest in Joint Forest Management.

(iv) *Health Department* : Health care facilities reached the people through Community Health Care centres and 36 Sub-centres in the Union Territory. The government hospital is situated in Silvassa. It was informed by the health department that it had achieved 60 per cent im-

munization. Infant mortality rate came down to 81.7 per 1000 live-birth in recent census period. The most common method of Family Planning is sterilization. There are Block Extension Workers to co-ordinate the activities with Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife (ANMs) Anganwadi workers. The Red-Cross Society in Silvassa is also involved in providing health care facilities in the area to some extent.

Investigation has shown that the local tribal people are obsessed with traditional methods of health care and healing. Traditional priest and the medicinemen have considerable importance in the society, and people opt for modern health care measures only after traditional means of healing fails.

(v) *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (Randha and Khanyell)* : This is an organization that follows the ideology of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha (RSS). It aims at all round development of the tribal people of the area. The organization has a nationwide network aiming at constituting an integrated *Vanvasi Samaj*, free from all sorts of exploitation, having self dependency and elevated and progressive notion developing on the strength of their own moral and patriotic leadership. The Ashram runs Balmandir, hostels for *Vanvasi* boys and girls, Primary and Secondary schools, Health Centres and Industrial Training Centres.

The Ashram has started an action Project called "Surya Niketan" which provides training for workers of the Ashram and other volunteers willing to serve the tribal people in different parts of the country. The Ashram has a "Research and Development Wing" which is now in the developing stage aiming at scientific study and analysis of the local tribals' problems and prospect and creation of self-awareness among them.

(vi) *The Red Cross Society (Silvassa)* : Affiliated to Indian Red Cross Society (IRC), the branch at Silvassa was established in the year 1985. Most of its activities are implemented in collaboration with Rural Development Agency of the Union Territory and Government Health Department. Some of the basic programmes it has launched are :

- free health care facilities,
- mid-day meal programme to school children,
- vocational training programme,
- immunization,

- family planning programme etc.

FINDINGS

The outcome of the investigation is delineated as follows :

1. The land holding of the tribal people varies sharply across areas. In rural tribal areas the land holding-size is very low and the people are in short of cultivable land. The tribals are living a hard life in most of the areas. The imposition of new Forest Laws has deprived the tribal people of their traditional means of livelihood.
2. Having an attachment to traditional belief-system, the people practise traditional treatment in case of disease and seek help from priests and medicine men. They come to the health centres only after the non-working of traditional healing methods. People are found to be emotionally attached to their cattle, and they keep them in the same house where they eat and sleep. Thus there seems to exist risks of spreading diseases. The people prefer to sleep in the corridor of the house exposing themselves to harmful insects.
3. Exposure of the tribal people to the urban life-ways had great impact on their traditional cultural life. As a consequence of such exposure the people are losing emotional interest in many of their rites and rituals. Influence of Hindu traditional also had certain effect on tribal people's socio-religious life. It was observed in Randha, a semi urban area, that tribal gods and traditional Hindu gods are worshiped in the same place. In recent years a mass conversion occurred in the Union Territory among the tribal people to "Swami Narayan" and "Hari Om" (Asha Ramji Bapu) sects. The impact of such conversions seems to be harmful to the tribal culture. The only good service the new religion rendering is the advice tendered to the people to abstain themselves from drinking liquor. In fact the mass conversion to other religion has resulted further detachment from traditional cultural practices pulling the tribal people off their unique identity.
4. As a consequence of the job opportunity in the social forestry and soil conservation programmes and more importantly in industrial sectors and construction work, people are getting cash in hand. So far as our data are concerned, people differentiate between money earned from agricultural products and from daily labour. They (specially the males) spend daily wage money in drinking liquor and obtaining luxurious things. Thus, traditional liquor becomes a commercial commodity as the tribal labourer indulges in drinking while on his way to and from the workplace. Thus traditional liquor like *Mahua* and *Tari* is no longer an item of honour to entertain guests and propitiate deities. It was seen in the field that now people prepare another kind of liquor from *Jagri* (molasses) for sale, which is very strong in terms of alcohol content. During entire field work period, males were seen here and there indulging in drinking *jagri*. It is a common scene in the village shop keeping a big weighing balance in front of it along with an axe indicating the sale of molasses. Liquor is sold in the villages and also at those places where construction work for industrial setup goes on. People with a container of liquor and people in a drunken state are seen even inside the S.T. Buses.
5. Extensive dropout of students from schools was reported from all the areas visited. It is also revealed from the data shown elsewhere in the report. One of the reasons of extensive dropout viewed by several people in the area is that there is lack of sufficient number of Marathi medium schools in the U.T. Only 20 Marathi medium schools stand against 144 Gujarati medium schools when 65 per cent of the population speaks Marathi as their mother tongue. Thus at primary level, students find it difficult to follow the language and they are also burdened with farm and domestic works by their parents during planting and harvesting seasons. After a careful investigation it also came to light that young people like to join industrial works. As petty jobs are easily available, they prefer job involvement to higher education. There is also evidence of parents' desire and inspiration to children to engage them in wage-earning right from early childhood ages. In the villages it was also noted that

- parents set out for wage-earning outside the village leaving behind elderly children to look after the younger ones thereby causing irreparable loss to them in the very prime of their life.
6. The impact of industrialization on tribal women appears to now be worse than pre-industrial days in that now most of them are becoming subordinate in the family as bread earners. Relative devaluation of forest- and agroproducts as the means of subsistence and opportunity for cash earning in the industrial complexes have opened up vista to men for superior power in decision making. Female's homeboundness has created relatively lowly status among them. Thus there appears social hiatus at micro-level relations between the genders. This is a major setback in tribal tradition where traditionally females get considerable amount of authority in the matter of decision making.
 7. Critical observation also shows that liberal policy of industrialization has not benefitted the tribals as such. Tribals are nowhere in the sight. They are merely converted into daily wageearners living under non-tribal capitalists' mercy. Hardly is there any grassroot level tribal entrepreneurship in the Union Territory. There is total lack of manpower planning in the U.T. In an area where rapid industrialization is going on, the local people must be equipped with required technical knowhows to cope with the demand of labour force. But it is surprising to note that the only Industrial Training Institute in the U.T. is seen lunge the tribal students. The data for the year 1984-85 show that there were 38 ST/SC students in the ITI in Silvassa as against 164 seats. The proportion of tribal trainee to non-tribals is indeed low. It gives clear picture of defective manpower planning in the U.T. There is no higher technical institute in the U.T. to make people efficient for technical jobs. It is seen that the jobs offered by the industries at present are temporary as the people are involved in construction works only. As production starts the industry recruits skilled hands. Obviously the tribals are treated as misfits, and they are thrown out of their jobs.
- People involved in tiles industries are simply unskilled labourers. Due to lack of techno-cultural knowhows among the tribals, they are unable to plant any industry in the area and the opportunities go to people the coming from non-tribal regions. Thus it seems that industrialization did not help the tribal people in a desired way. The tribals are expedient to gain in the field of power and authority over the production and management spheres. The ignorance of potential indigenous resources in developing industry is the crux of the tribal problem.
8. Further on account of the lack of co-ordination between the industrial policy makers and the Rural Development Agencies, it is observed, the tribal people are selling their lands to industrialists at attractive prices. But the tribals who are not adept in fruitfully utilizing money, simply spend the whole lot of money in buying luxury goods due to which the people are again overtaken by dire poverty.
 9. The relation between forest officials and tribal people is never cordial as a consequence of uncongenial forest laws imposed by the Government. The symbiotic relationship between forest and tribal people is now badly affected. The notion of individual ownership of land was almost absent till nearly eighty years back. Forest and arable lands were corporate holdings. Towards the ends of the Portuguese rule and especially after liberation, the corporate lands were encroached upon as government property and in the process the tribals were the looser. This process of transfer of authority over forest lands was never understood by the tribals, and they wanted to continue their traditional use of forest. But they were restricted. Their urgent and indefinite need donot permit them to wait to get permission from forest department because they fell trees whenever need arises. Encroachment of tribal land by forest department is one of the main reasons why people fell trees planted by forest department under social forestry scheme. People are worried about the fact that if trees grown in their cultivated land, in near future they

might loose control over their own land.

10. A clear loophole between developmental planning and implementation of it is seen in some areas of the U.T. It was found in Randha area that irrigated water through pipes was not properly used by the local people due to the fact that in most of the cases the farmers remained unaware of water pumping time. In some cases, the pipes get blocked, and water never flow. On the whole, it is seen that basically the irrigation facilities are used by the progressive farmers who are the descendants of former landlords and *Sahukaras*.

The agricultural department is giving incentive to the people to plant thorny cactus plants on their land to protect crops from stray cattle. This is a good idea the people can accept. But it is not a well organized scheme till now. Most probably, the forest department can collaborate with agricultural department to make such effort meaningful. It was also found that people use to cut valuable plants in the forest to make sight-proof fence around their houses. This could be avoided by providing the people with some other variety of plants for fencing their household boundary. Moreover, the most frequently spoken problem faced by the agricultural department in motivating the people for winter crop is the problem of stray cattle. People set free their cattle after summer harvest. No official effort has so far been successful to keep the people away from this practice. But a lot of our informants expressed the view that if they get suitable place to graze their cattle on with sufficient fodder, they are ready to control their cattle. Infact growing fodder would not be impossible if forest and agricultural departments combine their efforts. Thus it seems that a clear understanding of the

problem can be helpful to solve it out.

CONCLUSION

It was felt during investigation that the people in the area are at a juncture of traditional and modern world. This is the most critical time to decide which way the people should move—should they leave their colourful traditional identity and become a by-product of the so-called development or should they adhere to that line where they do not loose their basic identity and status and development mean for them all round development—social, cultural, economic, psychological and emotional.

The foregoing statements are the outcome of the interpretation that was made after admixing the observation and reasoning. It covers a holistic view of the existing situation. The author is very thankful to those people, government officers and NGOs who helped a lot to make the study a success. It will be fair to hope that in near future some of our young social scientists will be taking interest to start their projects or professional work in the region where the social scientist and social workers have a lot of scope to grow, and to help the needy tribal people.

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