

Rural Transformation and the Changing Ecology of Tribal Domain: A Study among the Tribes in Assam, India

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ABSTRACT Rural transformation (RT) has been a relatively new approach to rural development. It talks about the multidimensional development of the rural population in the desired direction. Being a welfare state, the Government of India has strategised the transformation of rural societies as a new development strategy. However, studies reveal that tribal societies exhibit reluctance and incompetency in accepting and coping with the change process. Pieces of evidence also reveal that the development projects and industrialisation, in most cases, do not result in the desired change in tribal societies. The paper examines the positive and negative impact of the Petrochemical Complex on the tribal people in the Dibrugarh district of Assam, India. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observation among the project affected tribes. The findings indicate that the tribal people have not benefited as expected from industrialisation. Rather, many have lost their means of survival, and substantial aspects of their traditional culture have been affected. No planned effort is visible toward rural transformation in the study area.