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BOOK REVIEWS

Georg Pfeffer and Deepak Kumar Behera (eds.). 1997. *Contemporary Society : Tribal Studies Two Volumes.* New Delhi : Concept Publishing Co. Vol I 359 pp; Vol. II 404 pp. Rs. 600 each (cloth)

Contemporary Society: Tribal Studies comprise two volumes of essays compiled in honour of Prof. S.N. Ratha The twenty-five essays in Volume I appear under the collective title of Structure and Process. The thirty-three essays in Volume II are presented under the title Development Issues, Transition and Change. Each volume opens with the same introduction by the editors. Volume I is divided into five parts: Structural and Ethnic Issues; Women; Aged; Ecology; and Ideology. Volume II comprises Development Issues; Transition and Change; Education; Economy and Interaction. They had the onerous task of discerning five key themes in what are apparently disparate contributions.

Whereas the Introduction addresses those interested in theoretical issues, the contributions are descriptive, (historical, anthropological or sociological), unsolicited policy recommendations, textbook material, or examples of concerned journalism. Surprisingly enough, no paper discusses the relationship between "Structure and Process" or "Structure and Development".

All fifty-eight contributions find common ground in their underlying axioma that culture is separated from society, so that the human agency can act purposeful and pragmatic in bringing about change. None of the authors, perhaps with the exception of Shaila Weil, considers culture as comprising society and thus "human action in the world is to be understood by the cultural design" (Sahlins, 1976:55).

In Volume I only three papers make interesting reading. Shalva Weil analyzes the "double" conversion of certain "tribal" peoples who live in the Indo-Burmese border lands - a conversion from an Indigenous religion to Christianity and second conversion from Christianity to Judaism. Professor Weil rightly states that "the significance of the phenomenon far outweights the actual conversion statistics" (I,85). This well researched paper concludes that "the reasons for converting to Judaism are undoubtedly complete and relate to the structure and belief of Indigenous religion which is being invoked in order to effect the double conversion but also turns to the modern, yet perhaps older, identities of ethnicity and nationalism in order to explain the latest, apparently bizarre religious transformation in the direction of Judaism" (I, 96,97). Professor Weils contribution stands out in the two volumes not only because it addresses such topical issues as identity, ethnicity and nationalism, but also because it provokes thinking on the relationship between world-view, structure, life-style and change in the context of a process of transition.

Among the eight chapters of Women's studies the one by Indira and Shanthi stands out as well researched and well written. The authors' observation that "Whatever the subject of focus may be almost all studies have pointed out the existence of glaring gender inequalities in our society. While law has removed practically every hurdle to the establishment of gender equality, in practice, gender continues to be a stumbling block for women's development", (I, 170), should have led them to a comparative study of world-views and value systems. Such a study, if using the holistic approach, would have placed the observed "gender neutral socialization process" (I, 173) in a different light. One cannot lift this process out of context. Like elsewhere it is linked with the economy of the society. And thus the opposition is not tribe, caste, but a forest based economy versus an agricultural/industrial based economy. The Jenukuruba women are not more free than Hindu women belonging to the castes of the plains. The freedom of both categories of women is differently laid out and expressed. Both the "tribal" and Hindu caste marriages are a socio-economic contract. The difference being that in the case of caste Hindus a religious sacrament is added. The authors conclude that "modernising influences have harmed women's interests and posed a serious threat to their status and survival" (I,178).

The third interesting contribution to Volume I is Buddhadeb Chaudhuri's. He offers a definition of "tribe" which distinguishes "tribe" from "caste" in only one aspect, namely "having a common territory". One wishes, further, that Chaudhuri's balanced insights were translated

into a diversified policy for forests taking into its account the degree of "tribal" expertise in forest maintenance.

The Introduction (I, xiii) promises to contributions on world-view and belief system. It is a pity that world-view is treated in isolation from the empirical studies. But when the reader at last comes to page 309 (s) he is confronted with only one description of a shamamistic dance and one description of a burial rite. Although these are interesting by themselves, they are not papers on world-view.

Regarding the other papers of Volume I a few comments have to be made. Brown's and Bailey's are postmodern contributions, but do not at all fit in this volume on Tribal Studies as does Suzikis paper on tribals in the USA. The presence of Brown's postmodern critique on colonialism can equally be applied to caste Hindu approaches to "tribals". Colonial attitudes can be seen elsewhere in these volumes. For example Ray speaks about primitive tribe (I, 180) and Borthakur about menfolk and womenfolk implying he is not "folk" himself.

There are a few fine empirical studies such as those of N.K. Das (on land rights of the matrilinial Khasis and Garos) and Parthasarathy (on the Birhors and ecology of Chotanagpur). These studies deserved more space, while the journalistic prose of B.M. Mukkerjee and Mondal/Begum could have been left out. On the whole volume I suffers from incongruity in approach, topic and quality. It contains lots of words about "tribals", but we still do not know what is meant by "tribal". Most contributors have carried out serious field work, but hide axiomas and eschew "tribal" views and perceptions.

The two best articles of Volume II are the first two chapters written by Professor Kate Currie. The first presents notes on the Subaltern project known to historians, but less known to social scientists and the second analyzes the Madras Famine of 1876-1878 from the vantage point of "intervention". If the "Challenge to the elitist approach" (Ch1) and the concept of "colonial intervention" (Ch2) were taken to heart by the editors, none of the following papers would have find a place in this volume. Professor Currie's messages are loud and clear: tribal cultures need to be studies as subaltern studies and intervention into tribal culture has to be placed in local historical perspective too.

What follows, however, are endless collections of statements, descriptions and good intentions of caste Hindus (equivalents to the "white man's burden of yesteryears) as well as policy recommendations. None of these is based on a thorough understanding - not mere knowledge - of the tribal cultures.

Why does a seasoned anthropologist like B.K. Roy Burman (II, 56) not investigate whether the tribals he studies have their own concept of development? Is P.K. Bhowmick (II, 109) not aware of that excellent study Roots of Crisis by Satish Saberwal (Sage, 1996)? And what does Peter Nas' paper (II, 345) on Indonesian material do in this volume? Are there no scholars who could write on wild-life sanctuaries, tribals and tourism in India?

In this Volume too there is a scholar who writes about primitive tribes (II, 71). But wait, worse is to come. According to Dr. V.N. Rao (II, 241) the tribals need "mental health inputs"!

I wish to say a few words on some of the other papers. Fernandes interesting paper on displacement of tribals needs some extension regarding the relationship between tribals, their movements and NGOs which fight on their behalf. The outcome could be surprising considering his insight and touch with the field. J. Chakraborty's paper on kinship among the Siddis of Saurashtra is too short. Kinship and marriage systems, like staple diet, tend to change extremely slow over time and are thus ideal topics to gain insight into migration, acculturation and transformation. It is hoped that the author continues his research among the Siddis and includes their oral tradition.

It is, of course, laudable that the editors have taken the initiative to bring together various so-called tribal studies. Most authors have produced articles based on data personally collected during field work. It is heartening to know that so many Indian scholars take a serious interest in the study of tribal populations. It is the more disheartening that their often interesting data are analyzed so poorly. This seems due to a lack of theoretical orientation through which the data could be meaningfully interpreted. This may partly be due to the use of outdated theoretical works such as the following found in the

references: W.H.R. Rivers 1924; R. Linton 1936; R.H. Lowie 1947; T.B. Bottomore 1962; B. Benedict 1968; M. Sahlins 1968; L. Mair 1969; R.M. Kessing 1976. personally conducted field work in Karnataka. The so-called "tribals" deserve better.

Perhaps I may end with a suggestion. Pfeffer's tirade against Dumont does neither do justice to Dumonts insightful analysis of Hindu civilization nor does it put Bailey's solution of the "tribal question" in the right perspective.

The point is that the distinction between tribe and caste is only of importance for government policy. Tribes, recognized as such by government, can claim protection and benefits. Many criteria have been used to differentiate tribes from castes such as territory, language, religion, economic position. Under the impact of River's study of the Todas Marcel Mauss had already pinpointed the weakness of rigid divisions. Many tribes show Hindu influences. See for example Elwin's oppose contact with the larger Hindu society, but at the same time its shaman is always fictitiously married to a Hindu of the world of spirits.

The volumes under review would have benefited enormously if the editors had made the contrasting theoretical positions of Dumont and Bailey clear. Bailey's starting point is that of the socio-economic differences which are expressed in terms of strata. He evolved a kind of continuum from egality to stratification (hierarchy). Egality for Bailey is associated with tribality and hierarchy with caste. His main criterion is access to land. The point then is how did the people get access to land: through membership of a tribe or through a dependency on the dominant landowning caste? The problem is that the dominant caste itself shows horizontal segmentation: independent families within the dominant caste put pressure on dependent castes, so that the unity is contradicted. If Bailey's theory could be made operational, Indian society could be organized with more clarity if not better. The question then is: how does a tribe become a caste? According to Bailey through an increased access to land. But here the theory is weak, for this is not a typical Indian problem.

By contrast, Dumont focuses on specific Indian conceptualizations. In his view a tribe does not become a caste through access to the means of production (land), but through recognition of values as articulated in the varna theory. According to Dumont tribes and castes cannot be put in a single continuum, because tribe and caste belong to different orders. Dumont explains the irrelevance of "access to land" by pointing out religious aspects of tribe and caste. A tribe which had accepted the values of the varna theory, showed this in its cults. Thus, Dumont leaves us with two hierarchies, namely the economic (based on land) and the religious (based on the concepts of purity/impurity of the varna theory).

Modern Tribal Studies should take serious note of these theories as also of their shortcomings. Bailey's theory is impossible to implement for its is incomplete. Dumont's theory runs haywire where he sees the religious hierarchy as encompassing all the rest.

It is amazing that Professor Pfeffer who has consulted the Contributions to Indian Sociology (CIS) old series as well as two works by Dumont, has apparently not consulted his Homo Hierarchicus (1966 and 1980) and the CIS new series, particularly Vol. 5 pp. 43-47 of 1972 in which Dumont's theory had been reviewed. For it is here that we find Heesterman's widely accepted correction on Dumont (as well as in his book of 1985). For Dumont the Momentum of Civilization is the secular kingship whereas for Heesterman it is the brahmins withdrawal from society leaving the king behind with all kinds of social/sacred functions. Power (king - "sacred") and authority (brahmin - "secular") are thus separated in the indigenous theory. In other words, the core is not a encompassing whole, but the contradiction of a complementary opposition. The king needs the brahmin's authority to vindicate his power, but the brahmin has to refuse the king's gifts.

In a certain way, the sect is a possibility of adjustment to the two spheres. Its starting point is not its position in society but the doctrine. The doctrine is propagated by the renouncer, the founder of the sect. For his livelihood he creates a laity. The laity of the sect, then, becomes a caste.

The groups who are conventionally called "tribes" have apparently not accepted the

brahmin's authority. Neither have they produced renouncers as their founding fathers.

Various scholars have observed that Indians perceive society in terms of intertwining domains (Galey, 1983; Oster, 1984; Brouwer, 1997). The western perception of society in terms of separated social, economical, religious and other domains is not part of the Indian Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Tribal studies would, therefore, gain enormously if focused on the respective tribal perceptions of power, authority, priesthood, and kingship, and how these concepts are visible in categories and their linkages.

Once this understanding is reached, the empirical data presented in the two volumes gain significance. It is hoped that the scholars who presented their papers here will continue field work and will return to us with fresh interpretations.

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Mochmann, Ekkhard and Uta Gerhardt (eds.)1995. *Gewalt in Deutschland - Soziale Befunde Und Deutungslinien*. Munich (Germany), R. Oldenbourg Verlag.

The book under review contains an introduction plus six papers. These are based on presentations in an inter-disciplinary seminar. Four papers presented there were selected for revision and publication. Another was prepared later on by one of the participants. A sixth paper was invited for inclusion in this volume. The book deals with the diverse aspects of violence against foreigners in Germany. Attempts have been made to ascertain whether it has something to do with the events during and immediately before the second world war.

Adolf Hitler suppressed the minorities in his country with an iron hand when he was in power (1933-45). After unconditional surrender in the war, the new constitution provided certain safeguards least such things should go on again. Thus individuals facing persecution in their own countries were to be provided political asylum in Germany. As time passed, this provision was frequently misused. Apart from the genuine sufferers, some persons seeking greener pastures circumvented the spirit of the constitutional provisions by putting forward fake claims for seeking political asylum. Especially after re-unification of the two Germanies in 1989, anti-foreigner sentiments began to increase. Incidents of violence raised eyebrows abroad and at home, least the spectre of Hitlerism should appear once again. The book under review shows that serious attempts are being made by scholars and policy-makers with a view to understanding and explaining the nature and causes of what is going on in that country.

Let us look at the various articles one by one. Max Kaase has analyzed the social conditions giving rise to violence as well as its political consequences. By and large, the general public rejects the use of violence. As yet, the state has the monopoly of its legitimate use. However, these days there is a tendency to tolerate violence against persons and things in certain situations, and as means for achieving certain ends. Immigration from the eastern Europe due to the economic difficulties there is not so problematic as that of the non-whites from Africa and Asia. Reporting by the electronic-and print-media creates an unrealistic virtual reality.

In his article, Jean Albern shows that there is considerable resentment against those with darker skin-colour, cultural gap, and social distance. The sjubjective evaluation of aliens is more adverse among those in a relatively deprived situation. Politicians try to use the discontent to

their own advantage, with a view to mobilizing votes and support for themselves. Alber stresses that the mobilization of national conciou sness by re-defining the re-unified Germany as a cultural state instead of a citizens state has created cognitive dissonance, and a crisis of identity, thereby legitimizing aggression against the unwanted strangers from abroad.

Michael Kunzcik points out that is it not a fair to blame television for all the ills of society, including voilence. Survey data show that except when they are neurotics or immature kids, the viewers are able to differentiate between what they hear and see on the television sets and what they observe directly. Blaming the mass-media alone distracts from the real causes of violence, like poverty, unemployment, drug-abuse, hopelessness.

Karl Ferdinand Schumann draws implications from the reports of the German and the U.S. government commissions for understanding and control of violent behaviour. The U.S. commission came to the conclusion that apart from the socio-economic problems, like poverty, unemployment, underground markets, broken homes, and helplessness, the genetic factors too appear to have a hand in causing violence. In USA, violence and racial affiliation are associated together. However, race is a spurious variable, because of the widespread discrimination in the economic, the legal and the educational systems. The German Commission saw vandalism and riots as less of a law and order problems and more of a social work problem. Apart from the material situation of the parents, improper socialization was held responsible for violence by children and juveniles. For dealing with the politically motivated violence, it was recommended that apart from improving political socialization in schools, political participation and citisens' initiative may be encouraged. Schumann wants us to recognize the fact that due to their bias against violence, the media of mass-communication dramatize and pathologize it. Scholars have to carry on their studies objectively.

Survey data analyzed by Ekkehard Mochmann and Ingvill C. Oedegaard show that indignation against the asylum-seekers as well as violence against them are rising.

Reunification, with a number of adverse effects at the macro-level (unemployment, inflation) has led to the building-up of a number of subjective assumptions at the micro-level. Such effects have been projected on to the asylum-seekers, legitimizing violence against them. During the last few years, there has been a lot of change in values. Instead of being rooted in ethics and morals, individual decisions are being made in terms of cost-benefit analysis. Mochmann and Oedegaard ask us to recognize the fact that a postindustrial society is different from a pre-industrial society. In the long run, violence and its brutality have infact gone down. However, as it disappears, its remnants become more intolerable.

Peter Mutschke and Ilona Renner have analyzed data about the researchers on violence and their pulications during 1984-2. They have identified laxical configurations and inter-personal networks. For this purpose, they have made use of powerful computer programmes, recently developed in Germany and France. The results show weak networking. Seminars/conferences and more job opportunities have improved the chances for mutual cooperation. However, several individual scholars are working in small teams. Even though a separate scientific community in this field hardly exists, the scholars are anchored in the neighouring disciplines. Open discourse is going on through citation of each other's work in publications. However, by itself violence is not an independent academic discipline.

It appears that we cannot adequately expalin the anti-foreigner wave in Germany in terms of remnants of Hitlerism, like racialism, nationalism and anti-semitism. The government is not sleeping over the matter. They have no intention of annoying the international public opinion. By and large, it is now a peaceful country. To the extent that it exists there, violence can at least partially be attributed to re-structuring necessitated by re-unification. They are trying to sort out the problem amicably.

This is a good book. The contributors are competent scholars. They are well-versed in the techniques of empirical sociological research, aspecially the textual analysis, and the analysis of data from large scale sample-survcys. They are at home in the theories of political sociology. The book under review is recommended

for purchase by the libraries of the law enforcig agencies as wel as the academic institutions working in this field.

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Khagen Chandra Mahanta (ed.), 1997. *People of the Himalayas: Ecology, Culture, Development and Change*. New Delhi : Kamla-Raj Enterprises, pp.353, US$ 70, Rs.750/-

Human resource development in India is definitely an appetite for intellectual diet other than unrelieved resources. Above all human resource plays vital role in all aspects of socio-economical development considering the inter-link between the human race and climatic sustainability. In this, various strategies of development such as westernization, urbanization, industrialization, and modernization intervene into the traditionalistic society. The Himalayas is even not spare from this kind of intervention. In some instances these strategies have generated the sources of better living condition, and in others these have adversely affected socio-ecological life pattern.

It is noteworthy to mention that the latent profit-motive market oriented development intervention delinks the relationship between man and environment. Definitely this causes all sorts of societal problems which are being encountered in present days. Hence, multi and interdisciplinary approaches to human resource development would be of immense help as to revamp the societal life alongwith ecological assurance. The edited volume under review makes a humble attempt in this direction.

Some of the papers in the volume including Mahanta's preface (Introduction) are exceptions. In his introductory note Mahanta provides elegant picture of the Himalayas and its peripheral ecological resources. His approach to bring the six broadly classified issues related to cognizance of Himalayan physiographic features is a scholastic efforts as this highlights the need of collaboration between interdisciplinary research activists and the developmental agencies in tribal dominated areas in general and Himalayan region in particular.

The volume has been divided into six sections comprising of forty two papers. In the first section "Ecology and Developmental Concepts" Ghose, Kandar and Bhattacharya attempt on linking the biology and culture of mankind through developmental changes at macro level of the Himalayan area. In another piece Baiping raises the impact of human factors on physiogeographical features of this region. The second section "Geo-environmental Problems" highlights the environmental pollution and its sustainable solution. In one paper Das asks for Industry-University interaction to find a suitable chemical (binder) for the ecofriendly use of the slug of ETP. Another highly appreciated paper contributed by the editor himself focuses on the latent cause of the present day situation in the state of Assam. Some other features like non-indigenous entrepreneurship, prodigious profiteering motive which lead to environmental metamorphosis and the deprivation of people from their basic needs have also been highlighted in this section.

The third section deals with "Bio-diversity and Eco-development". Sharma and Nath's paper though shows the lack of people's awareness on conservation of biodiversity and for the extinction of important species, yet it does not speak on the procedural aspect of creating such awareness among the people. The work of Bordoloi's comparative account on the replacement of the indigenous tree species shows how the flavour for oriental adaptation generates various problems.

The forth set of papers speaks on "Eco-Historical Perspective". Baruah in her article focuses the influence of the ecology on the cultural and historical development as well as the dynamic scenario of the state of Assam. Nath, Kalita, and Grist write on their respective paper on the historical events in analyzing the ecological dimensions.

The fifth section highlights basically on the cultural life of the people and the material components of the Himalayan region. Borang shows how work on the jhumming practise among the Abore tribes for 10 to 16 years cycle is useful to them both ecologicaliy and economically. The last section of the book focuses on the impact of developmental forces in Himalayan region and thereby advocates the importance of the indigenous pattern of adoptation in all kinds of interventions.

It is a point to note that a few articles in the volume are without any underlying analytical discussion. The presentation of references is not systematic. However, all these minor shortcomings can be overlooked keeping in view the overall intellectual content of the volume. On the whole the editor needs to be congratulated for drawing a methodically sound framework for the organization of chapters in the volume. Considering the interrelated issues presented here, this book is recommended to students and researchers of social sciences, practitioners associated with developmental activities and planners engaged in the field of human resource development.

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