

Прегледни чланак

УДК 314.114:316.344.7 (540)

Review article

Mehar S. Gill**SITUATION OF TRIBAL POPULATION IN INDIA**

Abstract: The Paper attempts to analyze the obtaining situation of tribal people in India. It mainly addresses the issue in terms of its demographic, cultural, educational and ecological aspects. Significantly, the tribal people are not only getting marginalized in socio-economic terms, they are also undergoing a gradual dilution of their distinct identities.

Key words: tribal population, marginalization, India

Извод: Рад има за циљ да анализира ситуацију у племенском становништву Индије, пре свега, бавећи се тим проблемом са демографског, културног, образовног и еколошког аспекта. Посебно је важно истаћи да племенско становништво не само да бива маргинализовано у социо-економском погледу, већ постепено губи и своје идентитете.

Кључне речи: племенско становништво, маргинализација, Индија

INTRODUCTION

As per the 2001 Census, the tribal population of India stood at 84,326,240 constituting 8.20 per cent of total population of the country. These people belong to more than 400 tribes which in most of the cases differ markedly from one another in terms of various socio-economic characteristics. Whereas some tribes have achieved notable socio-economic progress in recent decades, many others are still struggling close to primitive stage.

Tribal people constitute a significant segment of India's population in respect of both their large size of population as well as their rich and varied cultural heritage. Their population was found all over India except in the states of Punjab, Haryana, and the union territories of Chandigarh and Pondicherry and the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi (Map 1). In four states and two union territories of the country, they enjoy heavy majority in population, while in seven other states, their proportion to total population was between 20 and 40 per cent in 2001, and in other 10 it was between 5 and 15 per cent (Table 1). However, in the two most populous states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and also in a smaller state, i.e., Goa, tribal people constituted less than 1 per cent of total population. Five of the states, and union territories, i.e., Punjab, Haryana,

Delhi, Chandigarh and Pondicherry had no tribal population in 2001. The highest share of tribal population was recorded in Mizoram (96.27 per cent) followed by Lakshadweep (94.51 per cent), Nagaland (93.73 per cent), Meghalaya (90.24 per cent), Arunachal Pradesh (69.68 per cent), and Manipur (50.68 per cent). All these states, except the union territory of Lakshadweep, lie in the northeast part of the country which, for centuries together, remained in isolation from the rest of the country.

Table 1. India: Proportion of Tribal Population, 2001

No.	Tribal Population	Total Population %	Rural Population %	Urban Population %	Population density (Persons/km ²)
1.	Jammu & Kashmir	10.90	13.83	2.05	5
2.	Himachal Pradesh	4.02	4.32	1.26	4
3.	Uttaranchal	3.02	3.81	0.73	5
4.	Rajasthan	12.56	15.52	2.87	21
5.	Uttar Pradesh	0.6	0.07	0.04	N
6.	Bihar	0.91	0.97	0.47	8
7.	Sikkim	20.60	21.19	15.86	16
8.	Arunachal Pradesh	64.22	69.68	43.39	8
9.	Nagaland	89.15	93.73	67.10	107
10.	Manipur	39.96	50.68	6.12	43
11.	Mizoram	94.46	96.27	92.61	40
12.	Tripura	31.05	36.48	4.66	95
13.	Meghalaya	85.94	90.24	68.31	89
14.	Assam	12.41	13.59	4.48	42
15.	West Bengal	5.50	7.16	1.21	50
16.	Jharkhand	26.30	31.02	9.79	89
17.	Orrissa	22.13	24.61	8.10	52
18.	Chhattisgarh	31.76	37.63	8.40	49
19.	Madhya Pradesh	20.27	25.79	4.93	40
20.	Gujarat	14.76	21.63	3.25	38
21.	Daman & Diu	8.85	11.09	4.90	125
22.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	64.24	74.94	19.45	279
23.	Maharashtra	8.85	13.42	2.65	28
24.	Andhra Pradesh	6.59	8.39	1.81	18
25.	Karnataka	6.55	8.41	2.95	18
26.	Goa	0.04	0.03	0.06	N
27.	Lakshadweep	94.51	95.62	93.12	1791
28.	Kerala	1.14	1.48	0.17	9
29.	Tamil Nadu	1.04	1.58	0.36	5
30.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	8.27	11.86	0.87	4
India ¹		8.74	10.92	2.71	28

Source: Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India (2005): Scheduled Tribe Atlas of India, New Delhi, The Controller of Publications.

¹ No tribal population was recorded in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh, and Pondicherry. N denotes negligible.

Table 2. India: Proportion of 0–6 years Population, 2001

No.	Tribal Population	Percentage of 0-6 years Population		
		Total Population 1	Tribal Population 2	Gap (Col 2- Col 1)
1.	Jammu & Kashmir	14.6	18.4	3.8
2.	Himachal Pradesh	13.0	13.7	0.7
3.	Uttaranchal	16.0	16.7	0.7
4.	Rajasthan	18.8	21.8	3.0
5.	Uttar Pradesh	19.0	22.1	2.1
6.	Bihar	20.2	20.5	0.3
7.	Sikkim	14.5	14.2	-0.3
8.	Arunachal Pradesh	18.8	19.6	0.8
9.	Nagaland	14.6	14.6	0.0
10.	Manipur	14.2	13.3	-0.9
11.	Mizoram	16.2	16.5	0.3
12.	Tripura	13.6	16.4	2.8
13.	Meghalaya	20.2	20.9	0.7
14.	Assam	16.9	16.7	-0.2
15.	West Bengal	14.2	16.7	2.5
16.	Jharkhand	18.4	18.9	0.5
17.	Orissa	14.6	17.6	3.0
18.	Chhattisgarh	17.1	18.0	0.9
19.	Madhya Pradesh	17.9	21.5	3.6
20.	Gujarat	14.9	17.6	2.7
21.	Daman & Diu	13.0	14.3	1.3
22.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	18.2	21.0	2.8
23.	Maharashtra	14.1	18.0	3.9
24.	Andhra Pradesh	13.3	17.2	3.9
25.	Karnataka	13.6	15.6	2.0
26.	Goa	10.8	15.9	5.1
27.	Lakshadweep	15.0	15.5	0.5
28.	Kerala	11.9	13.7	1.8
29.	Tamil Nadu	11.6	14.6	3.0
30.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	12.6	13.0	0.4
India ²		15.9	18.4	2.5

Source: Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India (2005): Scheduled Tribe Atlas of India, New Delhi, The Controller of Publications.

Map 2 shows that main clusters of tribal population are found in areas which had indifferent links with the densely populated parts of the country till the independence of the country in 1947. The following are the three main areas which recorded relatively high concentration of tribal people in 2001: (i) A long belt running in an east-west direction across the middle of the country which virtually remained a sort of buffer zone between North and South India till the

² No tribal population was recorded in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh, and Pondicherry.

end of the British rule in 1947; (ii) Northeast India where tribal population enjoys majority in most of the states; and (iii) parts of Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir adjoining Tibet region of China. It is worth mentioning that all these three areas have been through a very long period of isolation.

The proportion of tribal people is notably higher in rural areas as compared to that in the urban areas (Table 1). It is mainly attributable to the fact that these people have very low level of urbanization, i.e. 8.29% only in 2001, while the corresponding figure for the total population was 27.82 %. Among all the major segments of India's population, the tribals are the least urbanized.

With a national average of 28 persons per square km., the density of tribal population is also marked by wide regional variations. In 9 of the states and union territories, their density was above 50 persons km², and in 5 others, it was between 40 and 50 persons km². Very high values of tribal population density in Lakshadweep (1791) and Dadra and Nagar Haveli (279) need to be appreciated in the context of very small territorial extent, i.e., 491 and 32 km² respectively, of these two union territories.

Table 3. Scheduled Tribes Representation in Central Services

Group	1965	1971	1974	1994	1999
Class I	0.27	0.41	0.46	2.92	3.39
Class II	0.34	0.43	0.49	2.81	3.35
Class III	1.14	1.70	2.13	5.38	6.07
Class IV	3.39	3.65	4.84	6.15	7.00

Source: (i) Govt. of India, Planning Commission, Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002–2007, p. 456; (ii) Govt. of India, Planning Commission, Eighth Five Year Plan 1992–97, p. 419.

Table 4. India: Population Below Poverty Line (1993–94 & 1999–2000)

Category	1993–94		1999–2000		Change in Percentage	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	(Col. 2–4) Rural	(Col. 3–5) Urban
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total Population	37.27	32.38	27.09	23.62	(-)10.18	(-)10.04
Scheduled Tribes	51.94	41.14	45.86	34.75	(-)6.08	(-)6.39
Gap	14.67	8.76	18.77	11.13	(+)4.10	(+)3.65

Source: Government of India, Planning Commission: Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002–2007, Vol. II, New Delhi, p. 455.

Table 5. India: School Drop-out Rate, 1990–91 and 1998–99.

Category	Classes (I–V)		Classes (I–VIII)		Classes (I–X)	
	1990–91	1998–99	1990–91	1998–99	1990–91	1998–99
Total Population	42.60	39.74	60.90	56.82	71.34	67.44
Scheduled Tribes	62.52	57.36	78.57	72.80	85.01	82.96
Gap	19.92	17.62	17.67	15.98	13.67	15.52

Source: Government of India, Planning Commission: Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002–2007, Vol. II, New Delhi, p. 454.

The proportion of 0–6 year population is notably higher among the tribal people (18.4 per cent) than that among the country's total population (15.9 per cent) in 2001 (Table 2). In other words, tribal population has higher fertility rate which points toward their being located in the early phase of the second stage of demographic cycle at present. The lowest proportion of 0-6 year population among tribal people was recorded in Andaman & Nicobar Islands (13.0 per cent), while the highest value in this regard (22.1 per cent) was registered in Uttar Pradesh. Significantly, the proportion of population of 0-6 years age group among these people follows closely that for the total population of the country. With the exception of three states, namely Sikkim, Manipur and Assam, all other states and union territories of the country had recorded higher proportion of tribal people in this youngest age group as compared to that for the total population. The differential between these two segments of population was found to be highest in Goa, i.e., 5.1 percentage points (Table 2).

Table 3 shows that tribal people have registered notable increase in their share in Central Government Services during the last about two decades; the major spurt in this regard have occurred since mid-1980s. A perusal of Table 3 yields the following two main points in this regard: (i) In none of the categories of jobs, the tribal people have attained participation equivalent to their proportion in the country's total population, i.e., 8.20 per cent; and (ii) their share in this regard has gone notably higher in lower-rung jobs (category III and IV) as compared to that in the elite categories (Class-I and II) indicating that tribal elite section is quite thin at present.

Like that of the total population of the country, the proportion of tribal people living below poverty line has also gradually declined over the years (Table 4). As is generally the case for most of the segments of population, the incidence of poverty among the tribal people was much higher in the countryside than in urban areas. Significantly, rural-urban gap in poverty of the tribal people has become even wider during the 1990s. Similarly, it becomes clear from Table 4 that the tribal people have lagged behind the total population in terms of poverty alleviation over the years. Even at the beginning of the 21st century, about 44 per cent tribal people were living below poverty line as against about 25 per cent for the country's total population.

As mentioned above, the tribal population is mainly concentrated in northeastern and central India. Even a cursory glance at their distribution pattern reveals that areas of concentration of tribal population have been, till recently, marked by relative isolation from the rest of the country. It occurred because all through history, these people have always been receding further and further into remoter and relatively inaccessible areas under the pressure from economically and technologically more advanced non-tribal people. Their hearth areas were largely covered with forests which, over the centuries, had come to be a part and parcel of their cultures and economies. Similarly, each major tribe had

developed its own culture, language, and a distinct world-view. On the other hand, their geographical isolation was also responsible for their considerable lag in socio-economic development vis-a-vis non-tribal population of the country. Thus, at the time of the Independence of the country in 1947, the tribal population stood clearly disadvantaged in both economic and political terms.

With the attainment of Independence from the British rule in 1947, there came a distinct change in the tribal policy of the country. Unlike the essentially 'isolationist' tribal policy of the British rulers, that of the post-1947 India has been largely assimilationist which also necessitated active socio-economic interaction with these people (Upadhaya, 1991, pp. 165–167). Keeping in view the rampant poverty among the tribal people. Some important provisions were made in the Constitution of India for safeguarding the socio-economic interests of these people.

Consequent upon these Constitutional provisions, a perceptible improvement in socio-economic position of tribals have taken place during the past few decades. It includes: (a) notable increase in literacy rate from 8.53 per cent in 1961 to 29.60 per cent in 1991; much higher literacy rate among tribals (47.08 percent) in 2001 needs to be viewed keeping in mind that the 0-7 year population was excluded for working out literacy rate for that census, unlike that in the previous census; (b) appreciable decline in the incidence of poverty among them as revealed by decline in the share of population below poverty line from 72.4 per cent in 1977–78 to 52.6 per cent in 1987–88 and then to less than 45 per cent in the 1999–2000 (Table 4); (c) perceptible expansion of tribal elite section; and (d) significant improvement in their representation in Central Government Services (Table 1).

LITERACY AND EDUCATION

Educational development of tribal people has been considered as one of the main pillars of tribal policy in India. It is heartening to note that significant progress has been achieved in tribal literacy rate, i.e., from 8.53 to 29.60 per cent during 1961–1991, and than to 47.08 per cent in 2001. Significantly, all the areas with higher incidence of conversion of tribal people to Christianity also reported higher literacy rates which were as high as those among the total population of the respective states/union territories. However, a lot remains to be done in case of non-Christian tribes of central India. Trapped as they are in the vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, low paid jobs and increasing landlessness, it would require a mammoth effort to make these people literate and educated. If literacy rate happens to be low among the dominant community of a country, it would not deter its socio-economic and cultural flourishing since it controls the sinews of political power. However, for marginalized people, like the tribal population in India, a continued lag in

literacy and education may ultimately lead to their socio-cultural demise and anonymity both in history and geography.

The main factors responsible for low tribal literacy rate in the central belt of India include rampant poverty, and the lack of instructional materials in tribal languages. Further, the situation cannot be fully salvaged unless school drop-out rate is arrested. Table 5 shows that about 57 per cent tribal children dropped out of school at the primary school level itself in 1995–99. This figure for I–X Classes was as high as 83 per cent in that year.

However, when the improvement in tribal socio-economic situation is compared with that of the non-tribals, it is found that their relative situation has not changed much over the years. For instance, change in percentage points in literacy rate of general population (24.35 per cent) and of scheduled castes (27.14 per cent) has been higher than that of scheduled tribes (21.04 percentage points) during 1961–1991. The combined share of cultivators and agricultural labourers among tribal workers was still as high as 79.38 per cent in even 2001 (Table 6) while it was much lower in case of the general population (54.85 per cent). Similarly, the level of urbanization, which is a very sensitive index of socio-economic development, has virtually refused to move up in a meaningful manner among the tribal people. It was 8.29 per cent only in 2001 (as compared to 7.39 and 6.20 per cent in 1991 and 1989 respectively) which also included a large incidence of spurious or pseudo-urbanization. On the other hand, the level of urbanization in case of general population and scheduled castes was 27.82 per cent and 20.18 per cent respectively in 2001.

Table 6. India: Per cent Distribution of Workers by Industrial Category, 2001

Population	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Household Industry	Other Services
Total Population	33.85	21.00	3.97	41.17
Tribal Population	51.03	28.35	1.77	18.85

Source: Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India (2005): Scheduled Tribe Atlas of India, New Delhi, The Controller of Publications.

Thus, tribal population of the country stands considerably marginalised in the emerging socio-economic and political scenario of the country. If gradual and systematic erosion of their language and culture is also taken into consideration, the obtaining situation of the tribals in India becomes a matter of real concern. Similarly, large scale deforestation in their areas, widespread and growing incidence of land alienation among them, huge influx of relatively well-off and better organized non-tribal people in recent decades have further worsened the situation for them. They have "clearly failed to reap the benefits of regional development," and most of them remain outside the "growing urban-

industrial sector, disproportionately outside the system of education” (Weiner, 1978, p. 149). The very ethos of their life is at risk. While the ruling class of the country explains away this situation as the necessary outcome of development and modernization, the ground situation is not as simple as that.

Since all this has happened in spite of various tribal development programmes involving an expenditure of hundreds of millions of rupees, there is a need to have a closer look at the basics of tribal policy in India. Every policy is formulated with certain objectives in mind. Nehru, the first Prime Minister of free India, had rightly emphasized that tribal people should be allowed to develop as per their own genius. He was aware that in order to avoid exploitation of tribal people by unscrupulous people from outside areas, tribal people must be given ”a measure of protection in their areas” (Nehru, 1955, p. 7). But these views were not reflected in the Constitutional safeguards which were mainly directed toward their economic and educational development only, as these were necessary to integrate them into the mainstream of the country. Similarly, other top political leaders as well as different Five Year Plans documents also keep mentioning about the development of tribal cultures and improvement of their economic situation. However, only indifferent attention seems to have been given so far to translate these promises into practice.

CULTURAL POLICY

The answer to this wide gap between promises and practice, as well as to the growing socio-economic marginalization of tribal people lies in the basic thrust of tribal policy of the country. The main objective of India's tribal policy is to assimilate these people into numerically preponderant segment of population which is commonly designated as the 'mainstream' of the country. Had the main thrust of India's tribal policy been tribal development *per se*, the present unhappy situation of the tribal people could have been easily avoided.

In other words, the development of various tribes as distinct socio-cultural communities is not compatible with the political discourse of the country's ruling class which, somehow, has come to hold an erroneous view that assimilation of different people and cultures into the mainstream is a must for integration of the country. Accordingly, it stands opposed to the flourishing of distinct ethnic groups and regional identities and cultures which, it believes, would cut across the unity of the Country.

No wonder, the obtaining model of development in the country is strongly homogenizing. It is particularly aimed at undermining the regional as well as tribal cultures and languages in order to facilitate the process of assimilation of these people into the still not precisely defined 'mainstream'.

A first rule in the cultural policy of a country has to be decentralization (Girard, 1983, p. 172). which did not happen in a meaningful way in India. This

is, especially true of the tribals of central India. Their cultures have been made out to be contested cultures, and every effort is made to present these as mere variants of the 'mainstream' culture. Even their history is getting distorted and marginalized in a systematic manner. Besides, the ever-growing influx of non-tribal migrants to these areas has proved specially destructive to the tribal way of life (Ahmad, 1985, p. 67). Thus, they are being imposed upon a different culture, a different history, and a different world-view which would act as a serious hindrance in their evolving dialogue with their contemporary and also the future world.

This point deserves further elaboration. White (1991, p. 128) rightly emphasized that there could be three ways of negotiating difference or otherness: (a) eroding or dismantling difference through direct or indirect means; (b) grudging tolerance of difference for the sake of something else; and (c) welcoming and promoting difference for its own sake. The main thrust of the obtaining cultural policy of India has been to dismantle and absorb all meaningful difference, and, as far as possible to design the edifice of the country in terms of a single world-view. But wherever it is found difficult to destroy difference altogether, it is per force tolerated grudgingly. In the case of the tribal people, particularly those of central India, the policy aims to absorb them into the mainstream by applying one method or the other.

ECONOMIC POLICY

The tribal areas of central India have witnessed major developmental activities in the post-Independence period. These include: (a) large scale development of mining activity; (b) setting up of major industrial plants; (c) considerable development of means of transport and communications; and (d) big spurt in forest related activities. The simultaneous and rapid development in all these fields has also resulted in a brisk pace of urbanization in most of these tribal areas. Consequently, these regions experienced a great demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers, businessmen, contractors, and administrative and other office workers. Due to the lack of proper education and requisite skills, the tribal people were not in a position to answer the demand for these various employment avenues. As a result, there occurred a large inflow of non-tribal from outside areas. In this way, the tribal people came to be swamped by a large inflow of non-tribal people who were considerably ahead in education, skills, political resources, entrepreneurship, and money power, etc. The tribal people were suddenly pitted against a situation which they were least prepared to negotiate on favourable terms to them.

In the wake of implementation of major development projects during the post-1947 period, the tribal areas have also witnessed considerable uprooting of tribal people. Though itself a matter of serious concern, which

causes misery and loss of various sorts, uprooting leads to even more adverse consequences for the tribal people: (a) it works to break up tribal communities and also thins out their concentration in the affected areas; (b) even if most of them are settled at one place, they do not often come to acquire the same pulse of life in view of different ecological settings in which they are relocated; (c) they seldom get adequate compensation for the lands and the property left in their original areas of residence; and (d) uprooting itself works to accelerate social change which often goes beyond their capacity to absorb. The net effect of uprooting of tribal people is the dilution of tribal identity, culture, and ultimately the very flavour of tribal life.

The non-tribal in-migrants with their higher economic and educational levels and stronger socio-political linkages do not stay limited to new jobs acquired in the tribal areas. Quite a large number of them indulge in purchasing and grabbing of tribal lands. Various legislations and other restrictive measures could not stop growing incidence of alienation of tribal lands due mainly to following factors: (a) loopholes in the tenancy legislation; (b) slackness in the implementation of restrictive measures; and (c) chronic poverty, and also a profound sense of honesty among the tribal people at large (Dubey and Murdia, 1977, p. 199). The problem of land alienation has become so serious that even the lands restored to tribal people have again been alienated to the non-tribal (Dubey and Murdia, 1977, p. 208).

In this way, the lack of tribal cultural policy has inflicted injustice on these people in two other ways also: (a) a development model was imposed on them which was not only without tribal people's concurrence but also diverged widely from their prevalent world-view; and (b) no precautionary steps seem to have been deemed necessary to halt, much less reverse, the process of their socio-economic and political marginalization in a meaningful manner. Any socio-economic development of tribal people would not be of much use to them if the obtaining model of development did not cater to the essential parameters of the tribal way of life.

FOREST POLICY AND TRIBALS

Forests have been a part and parcel of tribal life in India. However, there are "no legislative safeguards available to scheduled tribes at present in relation to forests" (Upadhyay, 1991, p. 342). *The Forest Act and Wild Life Protection Act* give no recognition to tribals' age-old link with forests. Similarly, the *Forest Conservation Act* recognizes only the registered or recorded rights "without realising that the use and exploitation of forests by tribals was a traditional activity not documented as in the case of revenue land" (Upadhyay, 1991, p. 342). It is important to point out that next to the alienation of land, "reservation of forests was the greatest single threat to the

prosperity and well-being” of the tribals (Haimendorf, 1979, p. 546). Similarly, creation of bio-sphere reserves and National Parks, etc. in tribal areas have further added to their difficulties (Prabhu, 1993, p. 481). Lately, the Government and the planners seem to have become more sensitized to these issues as revealed by Five Year Plan documents in this regard.

SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS

Various policies and plans lead to production of specific space that “in addition to being a means of production is also a means of control, and hence, domination of power” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 26). The tribal policy of India is also amply reflected in specific production of space in the tribal tracts. One typical example would be enough to vindicate this point. The linguistic reorganization of the states in India in 1956 and also thereafter have totally ignored tribal languages, despite the fact that the tribals were in majority in the following three large areas in central India. One of these areas is located in the west which was divided into four states, i.e., Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. The second one is located in south which stands subdivided again into four states, namely Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. The third large tract having a majority share of tribal population was bifurcated into the states of Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Even a cursory look at the Map 1 showing state boundaries and the areas of concentration of tribal people in central India reveals that these boundaries have been gerrymandered and were not strictly done on linguistic basis. It is worth noting that a very heavy proportion of the tribals did not speak the language of the states which they were allocated to. It would have been better for the purpose of tribal welfare and development if each of these three major tribal areas would have been included in one state or the other without resorting to their sub-division. But all this gerrymandering was done with a clear purpose, i.e., to reduce the demographic, cultural, and, hence, political visibility of the tribals in these areas. Such a visibility and its subsequent assertion right in the heartland of the country would have been highly inconvenient for the ruling class's project of cultural homogenization. It was as late as 1998 that two new states, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh were carved out in response to long standing demands of predominantly tribal people in two of the above three respective areas.

SUMMING UP

Tribal people, like any other marginalized group, in India have always been invisible in Indian history. They have all through been receding back into

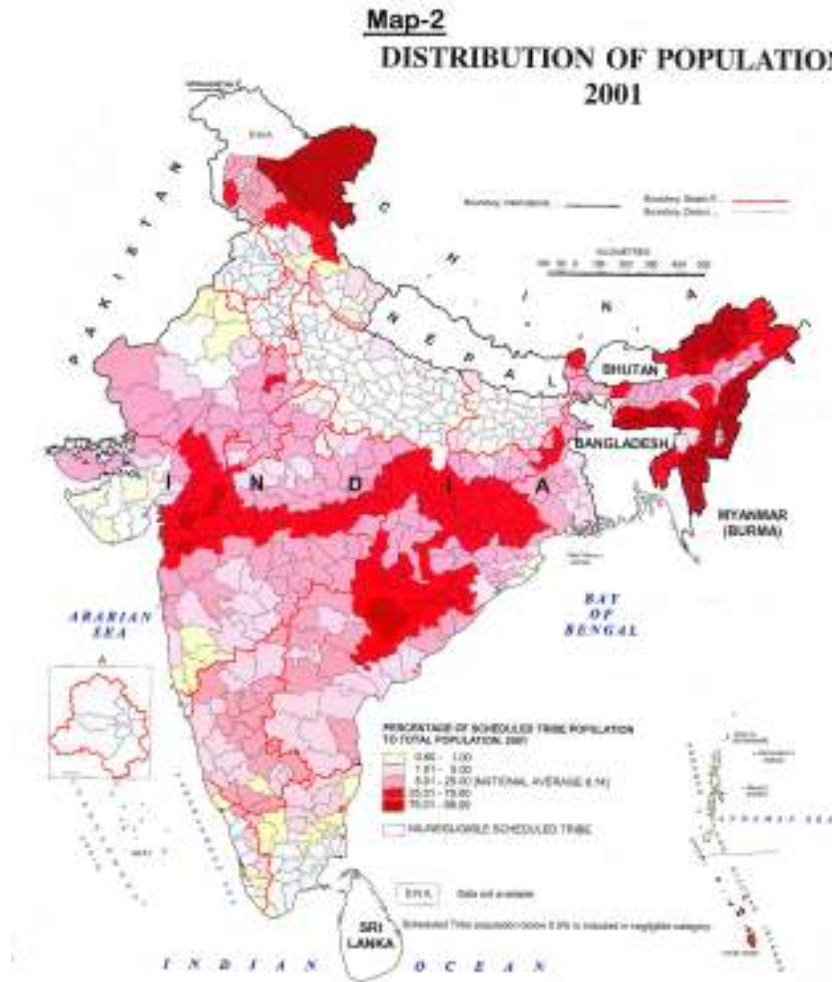
mountainous, forested, and other inaccessible and remoter areas under the pressure of the stronger non-tribal communities. However, their present day



invisibility stems from their virtual inconsequentiality in the power structure of the country.

Notwithstanding the fact that there has been a perceptible improvement in economic conditions in the post-1947 period, the present situation of the tribal people, particularly in central India, seems like that of internal

colonialism. Accordingly, they are getting continually impoverished economically, culturally and politically. If the situation continues as at present,



the day would not be far off when their strength as distinct and sustainable communities would become a matter of the forgotten past.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, A., Noin, D. and Sharma, H. N. (1997): "Introduction" in A. Ahmad, Daniel Noin, and H.N. Sharma, eds., *Demographic Transition: The Third World Scenario*, Jaipur, Rawat Publications, pp. 1-12.

- Ahmad, A. (1991): "Regional Development Process and Redistribution of Tribal Population in Mid-India," in L.A. Kosinski and K.M. Elahi, eds. *Redistribution of Population in South Asia*, Jaipur, Rawat Publications, pp. 65–78.
- Dubey, S.N. and Murdia, Ratna (1977): *Land Alienation and Restoration in Tribal Communities in India*, Bombay, Himalaya Publishing Company.
- Furer-Hamendorf, C. Von (1979): *The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh*, London, George Allen and Unwin.
- Girard, Augustin (1983): *Cultural Development: Experiences and Practices*, Paris, UNESCO.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1991): *The Production of Space*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1973): "The Tribal Folk," *The Tribal People of India*, New Delhi, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, revised edition, pp. 1–7.
- Prabhu, Pradip (1993): "Sustainable Tribal Development," *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Special Issue, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. 479–487.
- Upadhyay, H.C. (1991): *Reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes*, New Delhi, Anmol Publications.
- Weiner, Myron (1978): *Sons of the Soils*, Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- White, Stephen K. (1991): *Political Theory and Postmodernism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Mehar S. Gill

СИТУАЦИЈА У ПЛЕМЕНСКОМ СТАНОВНИШТВУ ИНДИЈЕ

Резиме

Племенско становништво, као и свака друга маргинализована група, одувек је било невидљиво у историји Индије. Оно се повлачило у планинске, шумске и остале неприступачне и удаљене пределе под притиском јачих неплеменских заједница. Ипак, данашња невидљивост племенског становништва проистиче из његове виртуелне неважности у структурама моћи земље. Као резултат, племена слабе економски, културно и политички. Уколико се садашња ситуација настави, неће далеко бити дан када ће њихова снага као засебних и одрживих заједница бити ствар заборављене прошлости.