

## AN OVERVIEW ON TRIBAL ECONOMY AND ITS ENDEMIC EXPLOITATION IN SUNDARGARH DISTRICT

**Joachim Dung dung\***

**Introduction:** Sundargarh district occupies the northwestern portion of the state and is situated between 21°- 35°N and 22°- 32° N latitudes and 83°- 32° E and 85°- 22° longitudes. In modern times the ex-Gangpur state is flourishing of industries with heavy and light industries springing up all over its northern portion and with the prospect of a very rich mineral economy around the lead-rich Sargipali. The Sundargarh district is constituted by two princely States of Gangpur and Bonai. The people inhabited mainly by scheduled tribes, there is much difference between them ethnologically, physically and economically. The climate of Sundargarh district is humid sub-tropical and is characterized by intense hot and dry summer during the period March to June, when maximum temperature is 45° – 48° c. The rainfall is concentrated in four-monsoon months- June to September.

### **The primitive societies have passed through several stages of economic development**

in all over the world. Thus one finds the stages of tribes' life into food gathering, hunting and fishing, farming, etc. among the Indian tribes. The tribes living in the forests and hills usually earn their livelihood by means of food gathering, hunting and cultivation. Land is the major source of livelihood in the Sundargarh district among tribal population and is assumed great importance in their lives. Land is the only source of their livelihood and their other assets being extremely meager due to land alienation. Due to such factors tribal are deprived of their way of life. From the study it is understood that majority of tribal have small size land holding in the Sundargarh district in Odisha. This is the tribal life in Sundargarh and of neighbor districts in Orissa. Some of the tribes are living in dense forests, full of wild beasts,

---

\* Lanjiberna, Dist-Sundargarh, Odisha,India

live on hunting with poor cultivation. Such tribes are Santhal and Gond, Oraon, Kharia, Binjhia etc.

The male (tribes) hunters of Chhatam and Kunjam area in district leaves females at home to carry out domestic chores and return in the evening after hunting. Some tribes (Sabars) have usual custom of hunting collectively. The tribes living near rivers usually earn their livelihood by catching fish. Among the tribes, few are cultivating tribes such are Oraon, Munda, Kishan, Kharia, Gond, Bhuyan etc. Cottage industries, such as weaving cloths, preparing ropes and skins and utensils of different metals are prevalent in many tribes. The Kharia people are very much specialized to cottage industries for domestic uses.

The Scheduled tribe in Orissa is popularly known as Adivasi. According to *Ghurye*, used the term Adivasi is "*the First Settler of India*". The scheduled tribes of Orissa, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh are recognized as Adivasi. There are about 40 types of tribes or Adivasi lives in different corner in the Sundargarh district. The tribal economy of the district is varied from the community to community; the common tribal economy is base on Land, forest and water. They are (tribes) non-separable from the land, natural forest and water resources in the community. The tribal economy and culture have proximity relation with the natural environment.

The Indian tribes could be classified in to different categories according to their economic organization and some of them belong to Sundargarh district.

#### ***Classification of tribes on Economic Organization basis:***

There are different types of tribes classified on their economic organization base. Those are:

1. Hunting and food gathering tribes.
2. Cattle rearing tribes.
3. Cultivating tribes.
4. Industrial tribes. (Base on village cottage industries)

#### ***Economic structure in the district:***

A tribal society is a kind of primitive society, which existed from the early period of human history depending on the natural produces. From the beginning of the society the economic structure of the tribes is unique. Tribes in Sundargarh district, lives in the village communities with physical proximity of natural environment which supports them to determine their economic activity. The primary economic activities are food gathering along

with the land cultivation started after settled community. The collection of foods from forest produces, hunting wild animals, plant gathering etc. supplements food at the time of needs. The male are normally engaged in outside work(cultivation, hunting daily labour etc.) and the women take care of the home-front, (domestic chores) gather and prepare food also responsible for the children at home. The men do land cultivation work, hunt, fight enemies, take part in community decision making and attend in tribal ceremonies.

### ***The land structure and cropping:***

The cultivated tribal lands structure in the district is classified as Bahal, Berna, Mal and Baribagait. The Bahal land is known a flat land at the bottom of a depression or drainage line. The best Bahal land called Pani Bahal. So as Berna land too. The Berna land denotes land towards the bottom of a depression, which receive the drainage from the slopes either side and also from drainage line between them. The Mal is embanked land and slopes, which are terraced to catch the surface drainage coming down from up land. Mal land also known as Pani male land, get excellent drainage and grow good varieties of rice. Goda land is generally the up land of the area entirely depending on Goda rainwater.

### ***Initial/traditional crops cultivated by tribes in the district:***

The Principal crops of the tribal in the Sundargarh district were paddy, maize, wheat, ground nut, mustard, potato, horse gram (kulthi), green gram (mung), black gram (biri) etc. Paddy is the chief crop of the tribal in the district and occupies 85 per cent of the total cultivated area. The wheat is the next important cereal crop in the district. Among other cereal maize, jower, bazra, ragi maize were another most important among these.

Pulses: Green gram (mung), black gram (biri) horse gram (kulthi) arhar (red gram) and gram are cultivated in the district. Among the oil seeds groundnut, mustard, sesame and caster were cultivated as oil seed crops. Groundnut was an important and is cultivated both in kharif and rabi seasons. The tribal in the district also cultivated commercial crops like sugarcane, cotton, jute and groundnut, potato, chilies and tobacco were all on a limited scale.

The vegetables and fruits were another source which supplemented livelihood and cultivated within their Baribagait land. The produces were as such; country vegetable pumpkin, Brinjal, arum, sweet potato, ridge guard, little guard, plantain, onion were all grown

during the rainy season. Winter vegetables like cauliflowers, cabbage, carrot French beans and potatoes etc. Among the fruits mango, lemon, guava, banana, papaya orange, pineapples were grown in the tribal district. The same land base economy is gradually impacted directly or indirectly by the rampant land alienation for the sake of development (industries, mines, water reservoir etc.)

#### ***Agriculture implement and methods of cultivation among the tribes:***

The tribal in the district prefer the age-old implements like country plough, kodali, khurpi and suckle manufactured by the village smith and carpenter. Generally the tribal follow the age-old method of cultivation. The country plough is still implemented today which is used for all kind of cultivation, finally the tribal farmers in the district raised only few crops.

#### ***Endemic exploitation on tribal economy:***

The history of land alienation in the tribe society began during British colonialism in India when they interfered in the tribal region for the purpose of exploiting the tribal natural resources. Coupled with this, the tribal lands were occupied by moneylenders, Zamindars and traders by advancing those loans etc. Opening of mines in the heart of tribal habitat and even a few factories provided wage labor as well as opportunities for factory employment. Before independence of nation and even after a large numbers of tribal (Adivasis) lost their land. The process of land losing from tribal (Adivasi) to non-tribal has been relentless from pre-independence to till date. The other aspect of taking away tribal right to the forest, which was under colonial rules, classified in stages as an essentially government property and which was often felled systematically to sell as timber while increasing cultivation. Many areas where the way of life revolved around the forest in cycle of self-sufficiency were suddenly deforested and sucked in to an exploited position in the mainstream economy. Currently large scales of tribes' land manipulated by local feudal leaders, which are unable to be checked/controlled from illegal alienation. Therefore, the grass root level tribal uprisings as a part of peasant struggle that fight for their rights are going on. Many grass root level movements/agitations by the local tribal associations have been taken places. The grass root

level tribal associations are Jal Jangle Jamine Surakshya Manch, Adivasi vikash Manch, Khukudubahal Anchalik Surakshya Manch (in Kuarmunda area), Birmitrapur Displacement committee, Raiboga Gethitangar Gram Sabha, Adi hak Jan Sangharsh Sammittee, Athkoshia Ekta Manch(Sikajor area), Jhorabahal Anchalika Surakshya Manch, Tribal Welfare Society (in Ranibandh) which is focusing more on legal aspect and empowering tribal in the district, Adivasi vikash Maha Sangh and Adivasi Mahila Surakshya Manch etc. have initiated action to preserve land properties with aiming at to protect tribal life. In most cases the associations are failed in its action due to non-cooperation support by the elite and government, still then the grass root level associations expecting to bring about dramatic change in the tribal life in the district by their incessant effort.

“Project induce poverty so as Development induced Displacement” This is the western model of development. The Odisha is rich by its natural resources in terms of water and forests as well as minerals laying its open to the classic danger of the resources curse, still people living in the state are poor. One of the causes of poverty among the tribal is a system of endemic exploitation on their economy. The exploitation happens both at the micro and macro-level of companies arriving to take the resources and above all people’s land. The tribal land alienation started in Sundargarh district during the installation of Rourkela Steel Plant, altogether 30 villages inhabited about 2500 households comprising a population of 15,200 were displaced, among the oustees 75 per cent were tribal (most of them from Oram, Munda, and Kharia communities) 5 per cent Scheduled caste and the rest belongs to the general sections of the population.

#### ***An impact on tribal economy:***

The Sundargarh district is so far rich in its natural resources and the establishment of projects like sponge iron industries, mines and rapid expansion of urbanization. Massive of outsiders are coming in to the tribal district in search of suitable jobs which is gradually increasing their numbers. In some parts of the district, development of communication, infrastructures and intermixing of population further is deteriorating the situation. In the same way the migration of non-tribal communities as well as land acquisition by them has led to the decreases of the tribal land holding. The law on protection of tribal land right, water and

forests are somehow flexible in its effective implementation. The Act. Orissa Transfer of Immovable Properties (By Scheduled Tribes) Regulation 1956 seems to be handicapped. The land acquisition marketing is a burgeoning issue in the district. In the district the tribal are highly depended on their cultivable land, water sources available in their localities, because there are no alternatives to get survive in the rural environment. As the Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization of market economy has been inducted, the innocent tribal becomes inefficient to protect their livelihood sources. The process of land alienation has manifested itself mainly in large scale migration of tribal communities from fertile land to neighboring forests. Due to such factors sponge iron industries are standing up its head like mushroom during rainy season. The cultivable land sold in the name of tribal (Benami transfer), and used for different purpose. In the name of development project, the local tribal are supposed to be displaced (partially/fully) and become poverty. An impact of sponge iron industries is adversely affecting in the environment by disposing the chemical fume, liquid and dumping of waste charcoal besides the high way and private land. After the advent of the above development projects, global warming is day-by-day increasing and finally resulting climate change.

In comparison to the past couple of decade, the land crops cultivation is very less as well as the age-old crops cultivated by forefather were vanished from the tribal society. Besides few crops like paddy, few pulses and oil seed no more produces are available in tribal communities. Majority of poor innocent tribal are rushing towards the factories and mines environment and depending on daily labor which converts them as industrial tribes. Daily labor supplements food to survive. All these are happening among the tribes in Sundargarh, because of the relentless impact of the Globalized economy. Besides tribes' economic life, other socio-cultural and political life is also diverted into new directions. Instead of own (tribes) production, depends on other produces that omit the identity of the tribal life in the society.

Therefore, it could be suggested that, (i) policy should be made in a manner which could provide benefit to both the tribal and development projects, that can maintain ambivalence balance in economic factors, (ii) the age old tribal economy will be given honored and steps to be taken to preserve the tribal economy, (iii) the relationship of tribal culture with

economy should be recognized and measures to be drawn to enhance in the global society.(iv) formulate policies, which can look after of two side of the same coin instead of policies resulting social alienation, backwardness, land alienation as well as exploitation and extreme poverty.

#### Reference:

1. Dr. Ramesh Chandra,(ISI, New Delhi)The Pioneer New Delhi 18<sup>th</sup> June 2005
2. Dr. Joseph Marianus Kujur a Hand out- An Assessment of the Decade of Indigenous People in Asia, 1995-2004, November 27<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> Kathmandu, Nepal Author-, ISI New Delhi 110016.
3. Felix Padel Samarendra Das, Out of this Earth (East India Adivasi and the Aluminum cartel). Publisher Orient Blackswan Private limited 1/24 Asaf Ali Road New Delhi-110002. Year-2010.
4. Fourth world, Journal of marginalized people NISWASS Publication, 3, Chandrasekharpur Bhubaneswar. no-14 Oct-2001
5. Indira Vilash Mukharji, District Gazetteer Report on of Sundargarh district, , Sundargarh, Government of Orissa, Department of Revenue 1975.
6. ISI, Social Change(issues and perspectives) vol-24 March-June 1994, Council for social development at Kalpana Printing house L-4 Green Park extn, New Delhi-110016
7. Nadeem Hasain, Tribal in India, Palak Publication, Delhi in the year-1999, first edtion-1991
8. Nilamani Senapati, & Durga Charan Kuanr, Orissa District gazetteers Sundargarh. Gazetteers unit department of Revenue government of Orissa. Printed by the Director, printing, stationary and publication Orissa Cuttack- 10, 26<sup>th</sup> January 1975.
9. Ramdas Rupavath, tribal land alienation and political movements: socio-economic patterns from south India, Cambridge scholars, Publishing,2009
10. The Orissa Scheduled Area Transfer of Immovable properties (by scheduled tribes) Regulation 1956. The Legal Miscellancy High court Road Cuttack-753002, 1996
11. Vedeh Upadhaya, Their land and our Laws Civil Society information exchange Pvt. Ltd legal issue. India together 1677,17<sup>th</sup> main JP Nagar II Phase Bangalor-560078
12. Vidya Bhusan Sachedeva, An Introduction to Sociology, Published by Kitab Mahal 15-Thornhill Road Allahabad in the year1991.