# Chapter: I

# CONCEPT AND THEORY

This chapter at the outset intends to uncover concept and theory of tribe. Definition and conceptualisation of tribe as well as approach on tribal study are further discussed in this initial chapter.

## Concept of Tribe

Tribe is concomitantly a contentious term vis-à-vis issue. It is rather difficult to develop, define and conceptualise tribe in totality. Social anthropologists and sociologists from beginning striving to study tribes but surprisingly most of them came across with enormous problems to adequately define the term tribe. Definition or conceptualisation of tribe always becomes difficult for sociologists and anthropologists not only for variety of socio- economic milieu but also for their continuous assimilation and acculturation with wider social structure. Debate on concept of tribe still continues un-ended among scholars across disciplines.[1]

Anthropological study covering Africa, Australia-Asia, Melanesia and other parts of world exemplify macroness of tribal study. L.H. Morgan, Mayer Fortes, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Bronislaw Malinowski, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and others conducted intensive study on primitive tribes. They tried to study to understand family, kinship, marriage, religion, magic, economy, political institution, law and social relation of primitive tribes from ethnographic account per se.[2]

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[1] David L. Sills .1976. 'International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (Vol.16)', New York: MacMillan and Free Press, pp. 147-150.
[2] Lucy Mair .1972. 'An Introduction to Social Anthropology'. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 13-115.

Anthropologists and sociologists definition of tribe is rooted in evolutionary framework. Evolutionist L.H. Morgan and functionalist Emile Durkheim study of primitive society exemplify society is not static rather gradually evolves with time-space equation. To them, the term tribe not only connotes a type of society but a stage of evolution and development. While Morgan viewed that every stage of social evolution is characterised by a specific mode of social organisation, Durkheim used the term poly-segmental society instead of using or accepting the term tribe. In his book 'The Division of Labour in Society' (1839) he highlights two types of solidarity in society and social organisation of primitive tribe is characterised by mechanical solidarity.[3]

**L.H. Morgan** in his book 'Ancient Society' (1877) defines tribe as a completely organised society where all forms of social relation are dominated by kinship relation. For Morgan, tribal society is completely organised in such a way that their form of social organisation is capable of reproducing itself. A tribe, according to him, is a collection of number of clans who have distinct nomenclature, separate language, distinct political organisation and a territory under their own possession.[4]

**E.E. Evans-Pritchard** in his 'African Political Systems' (1940) writes on Nuers of Southern Sudan. Nuers have a common name, common language, common culture and they are divided into distinct political units. To him Nuers have their specific political system which makes them different from other tribes. Evans Pritchard finds problem to borrow idea of segmentary system to define tribe and hence he does not

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[3] Emile Durkheim. 1997. 'The Division of Labour in Society'. New York: The Free Press, pp. 1-31.
[4] Lewis H. Morgan. 1877. 'Ancient Society'. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, pp. 1-368.

suggests interchanging the term tribe with segmentary system.[5]

**Marshall Shalins** (1961) defines tribe from evolutionary framework and his definition of tribe incorporates idea of segmentary society developed by Emile Durkheim. He makes distinction between state and non-state society. Non-state societies are divided into band, tribe and chiefdom. According to him, tribe is a segmental organisation which is composed of equivalent and unspecialised multifamily group, clan or band. Collection of band has a kingdom to coordinate its economic, social and religious activity.[6]

**Maurice Godelier** (1977) reiterates tribe is a type of society and at same time a stage of evolution. He argues link between use of term type of society and stage of evolution is clear because each stage of evolution is characterised by a specific mode of social organisation. Godelier rejects Shalins threefold scheme of band, tribe and chiefdom. For him, there is basic difference between tribe and chiefdom because of appearance of class inequality during evolution of tribe towards chiefdom. Godelier emphasises on mode of production to define and conceptualise tribe. Mode of production of tribe determines its social organisation since tribal mode of production in every stage of evolution is different from other modes of production.[7]

Taking above into cognisance, it becomes somewhat candidly apparent that European and American anthropologists tried to provide universal criteria to define and conceptualise tribe. Because of distinctive ecological, economic, historical and socio-cultural characteristics, tribe differs from each other but despite diversity and

[5] E.E. Evans Pritchard and Meyer Fortes. (eds.) 1940. 'African Political System'. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-25.
[6] Marshal D. Sahlin. 1968. 'Tribesman Foundations of Modern Anthropology Series'. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, pp. 1-48.
[7] Maurice Godelier. 1977. 'Perspectives on Marxist Anthropology'. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-250.

difference, degree of commonality exists among tribes. According to anthropologists, tribe is a group of people living in isolated forest and hill. Their language is different from language spoken by mainstream people. They live on hunting, food gathering and fishing. Socio- cultural institutions are highly influenced by their consanguine relation. They do have faith on animism, naturism or totemism and religion and ritual of tribes are influenced by magical practices.[8]

Paradoxically, tribes in India may not be similar compared with tribes of Africa or aborigine of Australia or tribes of other parts of world. Even though a great degree of commonality exist among them in terms of socio-economic life, but world view of them cannot be defined and conceptualised with universal criteria.[9]

From beginning of Indian civilisation tribes constitute a significant proportion of its population. Ancient Indian literature like *Veda*, *Purana*, *Ramayana and Mahabharata* highlight nature and feature of tribal social formation in India. According to such religico-scriptural texts, in ancient India tribes were termed as *Nishada, Kirata, Dasyu or Dasa* and several other terms were also used to designate tribes of different regions of Indian society. *Ramayan* mentions that non-Aryans or aboriginal tribes were mainly inhabitants of Deccan region of India and tribes termed as *Rakshasa, Yaksa, Vanara, Nishada and Grdhraj.*[10]

During ancient Hindu rulers' regime, tribes of India remained isolated from main land. They remained backward due to lack of contact with so-called mainstream non-tribal society. Rulers of that age hardly felt necessity to contact tribes living in forest

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[8] S.L. Doshi and P.C. Jain. 2001. 'Social Anthropology'. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, pp. 359-366.
[9] Doshi and Jain. 2001. 'Social Anthropology', pp. 370-384.
[10] Prakash Chandra Mehta. 2006. 'Development of Indian Tribes'. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, pp. 1-30.

and hill. But there are instances of some tribes to accept Hinduism in ancient India.[11]

Medieval India mainly ruled by Mughal and Pathan also failed to accommodate or understand tribe including having evolved no policy towards them. Contact between tribe and non-tribe was hardly found. But that period witnessed growth of Gond and Rajput in central India who flourished themselves as martial race and occupied position of warrior in caste hierarchy. The Muhammadan and Mughal rulers used to patronise warrior castes and their chieftain with high position in civil and military administration.[12]

In contemporary-present Indian society, tribes constitute 8.14 per cent of total population as per 2001 census. Every tribe upholds its distinct culture, dialect and economic pursuit in own ecological setting. Most of them still remained unknown, isolated and alienated, while some other are treated with having mobility and change. Tribes in various parts of India including bulk of tribes in Northeast until recently remained isolated from mainland.[13]

To elaborate during dominant British period, Indian tribes became object of study of colonial administrator, missionary and anthropologist. Hutton, Risley, Elwin, Lowie and others study of tribes tried to understand social structure and culture of Indian society in general and of tribes in particular. F.G Bailey and W.H.R. Rivers too became interested to study tribes in India.[14]

Academia on the other hand carried out extensive and in-depth study on tribal life in

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[11] K.N. Dash. 2004. 'Invitation to Social and Cultural Anthropology'. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, pp. 242-264.
[12] Dash. 'Invitation to Social and Cultural Anthropology', Pp. 268-269.
[13] Sukant K. Chaudhury and Saumendra Mohan Patnaik. 2008. 'Indian Tribes and Mainstream'. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, pp. 1-6.
[14] Andre Beteille. 2008. 'Concept of Tribe with Special Reference to India', in Sukant K. Chaudhury and Saumendra Mohan Patnaik (ed.): 'Indian Tribes and Mainstream'. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, pp. 21-40.

India. Tribes like Gond, Bhill, Munda, Oraon, Ho, Naga, Khasi, Mizo and Andaman Islanders became well known subject of tribal study. Colourful mosaic of tribal culture with exotic custom and ritual, magic and religion, apparel and adornment, song and dance continuously attract scholars of various disciplines.[15]

After independence Indian scholars of tribal study initially get influenced as well as borrowed concept, method and approach from western-European scholars. S.C. Roy, Nirmal Kumar Bose, D.N. Majumdar, Surajit Singha, T.C. Das, P.K. Chattapadyay, B.K. Roy-Barman, P.N. Mishra, L.K.A. Iyer and subsequently G.S. Ghurye, S.C. Dube, L.P Vidyarthi, Aiyappan, M.N. Srinivas, A.R. Desai, Andre Beteille and others studied Indian tribes with immense interest.[16]

Notwithstanding, controversy remained to describe tribes in India among scholar, reformer and administrator. Risely, Elwin and Grigson describe tribes as aborigines or aboriginals. Hutton calls them primitive tribes. G.S. Ghurye describes them backward Hindus. Some scholars and reformers describe them Adivasis. After 1947 government of India put them in scheduled tribe category.[17]

Sociologists and social anthropologists particularly active in defining Indian tribes look into their distinctive demographic, ecological, economic, political, historical and socio-cultural milieu. Indigenous tribes, though not free from contestation, in India are found in geographically isolated location in forest, plateau or hill and very few of them live in plain. Most of them yet live on hunting, collecting, fishing and shifting cultivation. They speak mostly Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, Sino-Tibetan and

[15] L.P. Vidyarthi and B.K. Rai. 1976. 'The Tribal Culture of India'. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, pp. 1-10.

[16] L.P.Vidyarthi. 1978. 'Rise of Anthropology in India: A Social Science Orientation (Vol. 1)'.Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, pp. 1-30.

[17] A.R. Desai. 1978. 'Tribes in Transition', in A.R. Desai (ed.):'Rural Sociology in India'. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, pp. 223.

Mongoloid languages and marry within their restricted local groups. They are guided by their tribal leaders or chieftains. They have socio-cultural institution and try their best to retain their own belief and custom. Belief in supernatural power, magic, sorcery and witchcraft are integral part of tribal socio-cultural life.[18]

**Andre Beteille** finds problem of definition and conceptualisation of tribes in India. According to him, definition of tribe should base on empirical characteristic of tribes in different parts of world irrespective of condition of time and place. He says conceptually a tribe is defined by anthropologists and sociologists as an ideal state, a self-contained unit and a society in itself, but definition of tribes on basis of self-contained society and common territory becomes incomplete. To him tribal societies having segmental political organisations especially Nuer of southern Sudan is empirical evidence and ecological and political criteria are not sufficient to define tribe. He argues anthropologist's inclusion of linguistic, religious, cultural, economic attribute and kinship organisation as additional feature are not adequate to define a tribe. These are not free from criticism too since some anthropologists try to segregate tribe from non-tribe on basis of mode of production. But all these criteria, according to him, are not sufficient to conceptualise and contextualise Indian tribes.[19]To substantiate his argument Beteille further reiterates Indian tribes have more complicated social organisation. Hardly any tribes exist as a separate society. They have all been absorbed in different ways into wider society. Moreover, no tribe in India has exclusively separate political boundary except NEFA. Tribes like Oraon and Santal in Chhoto-Nagpur are territorially dispersed. Linguistic boundary of Indian tribe is not also clear. Language spoken by many of Indian tribes are now

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[18] Ramesh Thapar. 1996. 'Tribe, Caste and Religion in India'. Delhi: Macmillan, pp. 1-15.
[19] Andre Beteille. 1986. 'The Concept of Tribe with Special Reference to India', European Journal of Sociology, Volume 27, pp. 297-318.

conglomerated and assimilated with mainstream language. Bhil have been using a dialect of Hindi for many years. Language spoken by tribes in central India and south India mixed with language spoken by advanced communities there. Therefore, to him in India, ideal type of tribe is rarely found. And in India, tribes are in transition and we can't have a readymade definition of tribe with which one can go to field to locate a tribe. We have to go for historical perspective because tribes in India are encompassing transformation through historical process.[20]

**Nirmal Kumar Bose** in 'Tribal Life in India' notches up Indian tribes including tribes of Northeast India, Andaman and Nicobar Island. Highlighting on social organisation of tribes in India he says Indian tribes are different from other tribes of world due to their distinctive social organisation and cultural practice. He finds thirteen tribal languages or dialects in India each of which is spoken by more than half a million tribe. He classifies major tribes are Bhili, Santali, Gondi, Kuruk or Oraon, Mundari, Bodo, Ho, Khasi, Tripuri, Garo, Kui, Lusai or Mizo and Halviin India. Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands such as Andamanese, Jarawa, Onge, Sentenelese, Shompen are still primitive tribes. Aboriginal inhabitants of Andaman Islands entirely depend upon hunting, fishing or food gathering for their livelihood. They are isolated from even their neighbouring tribes and because of language, they find difficulty to have trade relation with others. Tribes in mainland of India live in hunting, fishing or gathering but they are not exclusively depending upon these. Indian tribes retain their marriage regulation and maintain endogamy within their restricted local group. Tribal chieftain settle dispute of internal and external affair. He also points out that such distinction is very difficult to find out as economic life between them and their neighbouring peasant are almost similar. Difference emerges

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[20] Beteille. 1986. 'The Concept of Tribe', pp. 297-312.

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only in their isolation and economic backwardness, due to which they come under category of scheduled tribes and their number, is 300 in all over India.[21] Likewise tribes of northeast India and tribes in Odisha and Madhya Pradesh depend upon simple cultivation known as shifting cultivation which needs different condition of rainfall. Tribal communities who practice a simple form of production have been coming in continuous contact with peasant and artisan having specialisation. Juang of Odisha, Gond of Madhya Pradesh, Santal of Bihar and Bengal have largely given up more primitive form of production and they come within orbit of peasant of Hindus and are now cultivators, agricultural labourers and workers. Tribes social contact with non-tribes could change their occupation but in subsequent time particularly during British period they became victim of exploitation of money lenders and trader of main land. Hence to Nirmal Kumar Bose evolution of tribal life under specific historical condition is inevitable.[22]

**D.N. Majumder** defines Indian tribes as social group characterised by territorial affiliation, endogamy, non specialised function, tribal leadership and unity of language or dialect, maintenance of social distance with other tribes or castes and consciousness of homogeneity of ethnic or territorial integration. His definition highlights distinct social, ethnic and territorial identity of Indian tribes. According to him, tribes in India are confined to a particular topographical location and have limited contact with people of mainland.[23]

**Virginius Xaxa** accentuates problem of definition and conceptualisation of Indian tribes. According to him, term tribe was used by British in more than one sense. In

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[21] Nirmal Kumar Bose. 1971. 'Tribal Life in India'. New Delhi: National Book Trust, pp. 1-53.
[22] Bose. 'Tribal Life in India', pp. 23-65.
[23] Chaudhury and Patnaik. 'Indian Tribes and Mainstream', pp. 6-7.

one sense the term tribe denotes a group of people having common ancestor. In another sense the term tribe refers to group of people living in primitive condition. Hence to him different criteria used by anthropologists to define tribe are not clear. To justify his argument he further says earlier tribes were distinguished from non-tribes on basis of their religion but religion could not become satisfactory criteria to define tribe when census official found difficulty to separate animism from religion of lower strata of Hindu society. Consequently identity of tribes changed from animists to backward Hindus.[24]

Again according to Xaxa, post- independence period studies adopted several measures to distinguish tribe from caste. Social organisation of caste and tribe inclusive of religious practice, psychological disposition of members of castes and tribe, cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity etc. are adopted to distinguish tribe from caste. But these attempts to put all Indian tribes into a single category again becomes misleading and controversial because some tribes do not follow all tribal attributes in totality and remain in between tribe and caste. And despite of difference, groups which follow these attributes are regarded as tribes. Social scientists could not make any critical introspection to resolve this problem for ever.[25]

**Niharranjan Roy** chosen his argument from historical perspective and says tribals are not a separate category as conceived by anthropologist and sociologist. Hence to him so-called tribals are to be referred to as *janas* and whole concept of scheduled tribe must be seriously viewed from Indian point of view.[26]

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[24] Virginius Xaxa. 2008. 'State, Society and Tribes: Issues in Post-Colonial India'. Delhi: Dorling Kindersely (India) Pvt. Ltd, pp. 13-28.
[25] Xaxa. 2008. 'State, Society and Tribes', pp. 8-13.
[26] Niharranjan Roy, Introductory Address, in K.S. Singh (ed.): 'Tribal Situation in India'. Shimla, IIAS, pp. 3-24.

**The Constitution of India** and article 366 defines Scheduled Tribes as such tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for purpose of the constitution. Accordingly Constitution order 1950 declared 212 tribes located or living in 14 states as Scheduled Tribes.[27]

Besides above conceptualisation and construction of tribe, usually three crucial or major approaches are available to delve upon tribes in India entirety. These three can be attributed **Isolationist approach** of Verrier Elwin, **Assimilationist approach** of G.S. Ghurye and **Integrationist approach** of Jawaharlal Nehru.

### Isolation Theory

The approach is a legacy of British colonialism and usually described as 'leave tribe untouched'. Major objective of isolation was to separate tribal population from masses. British adopted deliberate effort not to develop communication and transportation in hill and forest area occupied by tribes with a view to plunder their rich resource and property. Tribes were always kept away from rest population. In book 'The Baiga' (1986), Verrier Elwin advocated establishment of a sort of 'National park' in a wild and largely inaccessible part of country under direct control of a commissioner of Tribes. To him inside tribal inhabited area, administration should allow tribesmen to live their lives peacefully with full of freedom. Old tribal councils and headmen of villages would be authorised to exercise power in their community affair. Non-tribal settling in the area required to take out license. No missionary of any religion permitted to break up tribal faith. Tribal form of religion

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[27] Desai. 'Tribes in Transition', pp. 223.

would be continued for betterment of tribe. Tribal way of life be protected and freedom be restored and maintained. Tribe's contact with outside should be minimised to save them from exploitation and domination. Economic development should be given high priority and education be on line of Wardha Scheme, simplified and to need of tribal people. Fishing and hunting be freely permitted and dictatorship of subordinate official within tribal area come to end.[28]

In another book 'The Aboriginals'(1943) Verrier Elwin talked about four classes of Indian tribes as he divided tribes according to their stage of cultural development. First, he keeps the purest of the pure tribal groups comprising about two or three million tribal people. Elwin as well as a large section of missionary reformer and anthropologist grow lyrical over robust, vibrant and healthy life of such tribal group. According to Elwin, first group of highlander do not merely exist like so many villagers, they really live. Their traditional religion is alive, their tribal organisation is un-impaired, their tradition art, music and dance are unbroken, and their mythology still vitalise healthy organisation of tribal life. Geographical condition largely protected them from debasing contact of plain. Secondly a significant proportion of such category of tribe keeps contact with plain and subsequently undergoes change. Though this group retains their tribal mode of living but exhibits some characteristics in contrast to first group. Instead of communal life this group likes to live in village. Their communal life and tradition are only preserved and protected through their village dormitory. They do not exchange thing with one another. They left practice of shifting cultivation. Members of these tribes are more contaminated by life in outside world. They come in contact with people who live a more complex life. Members of

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[28] Verrier Elwin. 1986. 'The Baiga'. Delhi: Gian Publishing House, pp. 511-521.

these tribes were not so simple and honest than members of the tribes belonging to first category.[29]

Tribes in category third constitute largest section of total tribal population nearly about twenty million. Members of this class are in a peculiar stage of transition and social transformation. They are like Hindus who belong to lower strata of Hindu society. But a significant number of tribes from this class got converted to Christianity. This group of tribes is affected by external contact. They are influenced by economic and socio-cultural force of Hindu society. They are also subjected to missionary influence.  These categories of tribe are most adversely affected by economic and political fallout of British, which resulted in their being dragged into orbit of colonial- capitalist system in India. They were uprooted from their mode of production in same way as million of cultivators and artisans living in multitude of autarchic village of pre-British India from their self-sufficient and self-contained village setting. Under impact of new economic and politico-administrative factors during British period these tribesmen lost their mooring from their indigenous economy, society and culture. A large section of this population are made bonded labourers and slaves by money-lender, zamindar and contractor, who entered Indian society as a result of political and economic policies adopted by British. Another section of same class was engaged as slave labourers in tea plantation, in mines, railway or road construction or other enterprise. They are not only uprooted from their habitat but also completely detached from their fellow being, native tribe and even from their kith and kin.[30]

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[29] A.R. Desai. 1977.  'Tribes in Transition', in Romesh Thaper (ed.): 'Tribe, Caste and Religion in India'. Delhi: Macmillan India Limited, pp.18-19.

[30] Desai. 'Tribes in Transition', pp. 19-20.

The fourth and last category in Elwin's classification, consists of old aristocracy of the country, represented today by great Bhil and Naga Chieftain, Gond Raja, a few Binshevar and Bhuyia landlord, korku noblemen, wealthy Santal and Uraon leaders and some highly cultured Munda. They retain their traditional tribal names, their clan, totem rule and observe element of tribal religion despite of adoption of full Hindu faith and live in modern or even European style. This group of tribe has won battle of cultural contact with others. They acquired aristocratic tradition, economic stability, affluence, outside encouragement, a certain arrogance and self-confidence characteristic alike ancient aristocrat family and modern entrepreneur. This group has secured benefit of civilisation, without injury to themselves. Elwin is of the view that whole aboriginal problem is how to enable tribesmen of first and second class directly into fourth advanced class without suffer of the third. He suggests giving some protection to tribal people in transition period during which they must learn to stand on their own feet and become strong enough to resist those who exploit them.[31]

In book 'A Philosophy of NEFA' he also talked about development strategy for tribes residing in remote area of Northeast frontier and suggested for spending a great deal of money to eradicate poverty, degradation and unhappiness of these people.[32]

### Assimilation Theory

**G.S. Ghurye** advocated Assimilationist approach in the book 'The Scheduled Tribes' (1959) to highlight nature and feature of assimilation of Indian tribes into wider Hindu society. He divided Indian tribes into three sections. First section, according to

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[31] Desai. 'Tribes in Transition', p. 21.
[32] Verrier Elwin. 1957. 'A Philosophy of NEFA'. Shillong: Published on Behalf of the Adviser to Governor of Assam, pp. 33-59.

him, is constituted of Rajgonds and other tribes, who successfully fought battle and got organised as members of fairly high status within Hindu society. Second category is constituted by large mass of tribes who partially got Hinduised and came to closer to Hindus and third section is hill section, which is characterised by greater power of resistance to alien culture that passed upon their border.[33]

According to Ghurye, a large number of tribes in India like Santal, Munda, Oraon, Kond, Gond and Korku speak language which either belong to Kherwari or Mundari group of languages or to Dravidian family, and are, more often, different from language of plain people with whom they have large number of social intercourse. Languages of latter in most cases belong to Indo-Aryan family. Many tribes employ Indo-Aryan language of surrounding people in their routine intercourse. Many of them thus are bi-lingual, having their own mother-tongue and having more or less acquired language of neighbouring people. There are other tribes, like Baiga, who have taken up Indo-Aryan tongue of locality in place of their own language, whatever it might have been. Others like Bhil speak language which is dialect of local language also.[34]

Ghurye finds Hinduism and its assimilative process has helped to various tribes to bring them closer into Hindu social world. Such process of tribal absorption rather makes them weak and smart or benumbed under feeling of brokenness. Sections of tribes get assimilated into Hindu fold and they ushered into an altogether strange social world. Hindu castes at least many of them, have had many characteristics of tribal society. Tribal sections joining Hindu society developed an internal organisation of caste pattern, and thus regulated and controlled power within them. Many tribal

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[33] G.S. Ghurye. 1995. 'The Scheduled Tribes'. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, pp. 1-20.
[34] Ghurye. 'The Scheduled Tribes', pp. 8-15.

sections or tribes get smugly settled into Hindu fold. Ghurye is of the view that British broken tribal solidarity in India by adopting different policies like policy of revenue collection, central police system and judicial system broken solidarity of tribal society in India.[35]

Ghurye observed that tribal people in India are backward Hindus, differing only in degree from other segments of Hindu society. Their backwardness is due to their imperfect integration into Hindu society. Tribes of India slowly absorbed certain Hindu values and life style through continuous and regular contact with Hindus. Due to Hindu influence tribes have given up liquor drinking, they received education and have changed certain bad practice and habit and adopted Hinduism as their religion.[36]

## Integration Theory

This approach is brain child of **Jawaharlal Nehru**. His main aim was to incorporate tribal welfare and development activity in national developmental plan process. According to him two types of measures for tribal development are to be adopted (l) Protective measure and (2) Promotional measure. '*Panchsheel*' prefers integration of tribes into national mainstream, where distinctive identity of tribe would not be lost, but would make its own unique contribution to 'unity and diversity' in India.[37]

As Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru lays down a Panchsheel for tribal development. Panchsheel consists of five fundamental principles for tribal development in India. For bringing overall development of tribe, there should be

[35] Ghurye. 'The Scheduled Tribes', pp. 24-49.
[36] Ghurye. 'The Scheduled Tribes', pp. 15-35.
[37] Rath Gobind Chandra. 2006. 'Nehru and Elwin on Tribal Development: Contrasting Perspective', in Rath Gobind Chandra (ed.): 'Tribal Development in India: the Contemporary Debate'. New Delhi: Sage Publication, pp. 65-80.

proper communication, medical facility, education and better agriculture. These avenues of development should be achieved within broad framework of five fundamental principles. These fundamental principles are as follows.[38]

1. People should develop a long line of their own genius and nothing should be imposed on them. Rather we should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.

2. Tribal right in land and forest should be respected and protected.

3. We should try to train and built up a team of their own people to do work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will, no doubt, be needed, especially in beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.

4. We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institution.

5. We should judge result, not by statistics of amount of money spent, but by quality of human character that is evolved.

Nehru put immense importance upon land policy, forest policy and policy to protect tribal culture and tradition. At the same time he also initiated development and welfare programme to make tribal life better than earlier. Accordingly Constitution of India is highly concerned to adopt various tribal welfare programmes by incorporating important provision for tribal welfare and development.[39]

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[38] Jawaharlal Nehru.1958. in his Foreword to Second Edition of Verrier Elwin 'A Philosophy for NEFA'. Government Press.
[39] Dash. 'Invitation to Social and Cultural Anthropology', pp. 274-275.

## Contemporary Theory

This theory is blend of different world-view of scholars across culture space and territorial boundary. It also deals with reconstruction and de-construction of tribe. The theory is complex and perplex admixture of skewed fact and figure about tribal study. Among different scholars of ideological orientation and contemporary testament, **B.S. Guha** is of the view that tribal welfare schemes should be prepared without hampering their social values. Tribal people must have psychological receptivity as well as ability to understand or absorb the schemes initiated by the government for their overall development. For formulating development scheme of tribes mere theoretical knowledge on problems of tribe is not sufficient. Schemes should be prepared by understanding the ground reality of tribal problems. Guha also denies isolation of tribe from mainstream society. Instead of isolating them from mainstream people the government policy should be taken in such a manner that tribal development scheme aims to increase their income through strengthening material aspects of tribal culture through better utilisation of environmental resources like forest, minerals, flora and fauna, horticulture, agriculture, animal husbandry, small scale industry based on forest products. Along with these tribal people should be provided training to improve their ability and skill. Government should narrow gap of development between tribes and non-tribes and to improve quality of life of tribal people without disturbing their cultural and ethnic identity. He also suggests for elimination of all sort of exploitation of tribal people. There should be rapid socio-economic development of tribal people. Organisational capacity of tribal people should be built and inner strength should be increased.[40]

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[40] Prakash Chandra Mehta. 2006. 'Development of Indian Tribes'.New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, pp. 15-17.

**B.K. Roy-Barman** argues that though government of India has adopted various plan and policy for tribal development but tribes in contemporary India are still backward as earlier. Tribal development scheme under tribal sub-plan (TSP) is not properly implemented in India. Integrated tribal development programme (ITDP) is ineffective to improve socio-economic condition and quality of life of tribes. He observes that majority of tribal areas have remained isolated and backward till date. Despite of formulation of various schemes by central and state government for tribal development, Indian tribes are still characterised by low level of skill, training and technology. They are facing problems for marketing goods they produce by adopting indigenous method. Proper marketing facility is not provided by government. Tribal land is illegally captured by non-tribes and till now right of land is not given to them.[41]

He further suggests that concept of planning from below needs to be given concrete shape in tribal area by reformulating integrated tribal development scheme. Non-governmental voluntary organisation can make significant contribution for development of tribes. NGOs should take part to understand problem of tribal area and should take initiative to resolve their problem. Awareness programmes for various policies and programme should be started by NGOs in tribal area so that tribal people become aware of scheme initiated for their development.[42]

B.K. Roy Barman criticises tribal development policy adopted in seventh five year plan. He finds out loopholes of fifth and sixth five year plans towards tribal development. He is of the view that seventh plan was initiated by government without

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[41] B.K. Roy-Barman. 1994. 'Approach to Tribal Development an Overview', in Basu Ashok Ranjan and Nijhawan Satish (eds.): 'Tribal Development Administration in India. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, pp. 143-145.
[42] Roy Barman. 'Approach to Tribal Development an Overview', pp. 146.

rectifying mistake of previous plan period. Moreover government is not evaluating implementation of policy and programme initiated for tribal development in successive plan period.[43]

**Virginius Xaxa** in his book "State, Society and Tribe Issues in Post-Colonial India" criticises tribal policy adopted by Verrier Elwin and G.S. Ghurye. He highlights constitutional provision for tribal development in India and its impact on contemporary tribal society. His main focus is centered on issue pertaining to underdevelopment, backwardness, social exclusion of tribes in contemporary India. He observes despite of constitutional provision, policy and programme adopted by government for tribal welfare, condition of tribal continues to be deplorable. Land as well as life support system of tribes are gradually passing to non-tribes through fraudulent transfer, forcible eviction, mortgage, lease and encroachment. Displacement is another reason for loss of ownership of land. Instead of inclusive policy adopted by government, tribes are gradually becoming landless, impoverished, alienated and illiterate as they suffer from numerous health problems due to poor economic condition.[44]

To justify his argument Xaxa says state adopted several measures for inclusion of tribes in large society. Attempt to build an inclusive society is somehow successful in direction of providing civil and political right to tribes. Tribes now participate in parliament, state legislature, government service and private sector undertaking. Reservation policy in education and employment and other development measures

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[43] Roy Barman. 'Approach to Tribal Development an Overview', pp. 147-149.

[44] Xaxa. 'State, Society and Tribes', pp. 1-15.

helped tribes to some extent closer to state and wider society.[45]

Government takes various suitable and pro-tribal measures for tribal development but economic right of tribe particularly their right on land and forest is not protected till date. Their traditional relationships with land, forest and other kinds of resources have deliberately eroded. This process started during colonial period and continuing till now. Legislative measure taken by central and the state governments failed to prevent land alienation, because tribal land are continued to pass from tribe to non-tribe. To him only legislative and constitutional provisions alone are not adequate to ensure economic and social right of tribes rather these provisions are to be complemented and supplemented with effective administrative, infrastructural and financial support.[46]

Indian tribes, according to Xaxa (2012) have been suffering from numerous problems and face adverse inclusion. Poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment and exploitation form only one sort of problem. Another sort of problem is pertaining to their right of forest and land, ethnicity, culture, identity, political autonomy and social mobility. He suggests government to take initiative towards resolving all sorts of problems in tribal society.[47]

## Conclusion

The term tribe is very difficult to define and conceptualise. Sociologists and social anthropologists are not able to provide a single and all accepted definition of tribe. Tribes differ from each other in different geographical, ecological, political and socio-

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[45] Xaxa. 'State, Society and Tribes', pp. 22
[46] Xaxa. 'State, Society and Tribes', pp. 45-48.
[47] Xaxa. 'State, Society and Tribes', pp. 53-59.

cultural context. Despite difference high degree of commonality is seen among them on basis of which they are defined. A tribe, according to numerous scholars, is a group of people who live in isolated forest or hill, lives on hunting and food gathering and leads very simple life. Tribes in general have their own language, religion, belief, magic, sorcery and witchcraft inclusive of unique custom and tradition as integral part of their life. Theories of tribe also differ in different political and socio-cultural context to denote tribal study or studies are same or similar kind. Each theory tries to overpower another justifying own superiority. Discussion, debate and deliberation on vicissitudes of tribal study hence remain regularly inconclusive bereft of appropriate or adequate knowledge and understanding. To acquire or develop a comprehensive awareness about tribal study and its further complicated situation, micro- community with a particular tribe is taken up in present study. Accordingly, the upcoming chapter is going to deal with related aspects of the present work through framework of study.