



# IMPACT OF INDIAN PEOPLE ON ADIVASI PEOPLE OF VIDARBHA REGION OF MAHARASHTRA (INDIA)

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## ABSTRACT

*According to 2011 census, the adivasi's (Tribes) of India account for 109 million and represent 8.6 percent of the country's total population. Article 342 of the Indian Constitution includes a schedule (list) of the adivasi communities that are economically and socially disadvantaged. The adivasi's are also known as indigenous people of the land. The deployment of political rationality and market economy has always been threat to adivasi life in India as it functions against the adivasi rationality. Particularly the introduction of new economic policy from 1990s which opened Indian economy to global market forces has effected adivasi self, home and habitat severely. Adivasi's are denied their right over their resources and evicted and displaced from their land and habitat brutally. The economic liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) model of development reduced relatively independent adivasi economy to dependency. Particularly this model of development has completely excluded adivasi's from the development process itself. This paper aims to explore history of adivasi exclusion and problematise elitist nature of Indian political economy which has always cornered interests of elites.*

## INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Vidarbha is the eastern region of the Indian state of Maharashtra, comprising Nagpur Division and Amravati Division. It occupies 31.6% of total area and holds 21.3% of total population of Maharashtra. It borders the state of Madhya Pradesh to the north, Chhattisgarh to the east, Telangana to the south and Marathwada and Khandesh regions of Maharashtra to the west. Situated in Central India, Vidarbha has its own rich cultural and historical background distinct from rest of Maharashtra.[1] The largest city in Vidarbha is Nagpur, the second largest is Amravati while Akola stands third followed by fourth largest city Chandrapur, Yavatmal, is fifth, Gondia is sixth largest and Achalpur is seventh, The Nagpur region is famous globally for growing oranges and cotton. Vidarbha holds two-thirds of Maharashtra's mineral resources and three-quarters of its forest resources, and is a net producer of power. Vidarbha has six national sanctuaries. It is less economically prosperous compared to the rest of Maharashtra. The living conditions of farmers in this region are poor compared to India as a whole. Though rich in minerals, coal, forests and mountains, this region is always kept underdeveloped.

## ❖ [1] Objectives

The development of Vidarbha started as late as 1990 onwards only model of development adopted by the government after 1990's to uplift the Vidarbha region. Methodology: - The data has been collected mostly from the archival sources. The researcher has used empirical method to study. However, the data has been verified by the actual field work in the thrust area by the researcher.

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ancient Vidarbha was very rich in history and culture. However, the first historically recorded Gond kingdoms came up in middle India's hilly region in the 14th and 15th century AD. Jadurai was the first Gond king, who deposed the Kalchuri Rajputs to grab the kingdom of Garha Mandla (1300 to 1789 AD). The second kingdom of Deogarh was created by King Jatba in 1590 AD which lasted till 1796 AD. Around the same time at Deogarh and the Kherla kingdom also came up in 1500 AD and remained for a century. The Chanda kingdom (1200 to 1751 AD),

- ❖ [2]-[4] a contemporary of the Kherla and Deogarh kingdoms, produced several remarkable rulers who developed excellent irrigation

systems and the first well defined revenue system among the Gond kingdoms. However,

today the adivasi's are living in poverty.



#### ❖ ADIVASI'S IN INDIA

The adivasi's in India are known constitutionally as 'Tribes'. The total adivasi population of India is (67.6 million) around 8.6 percent. The total population of adivasi's in India is larger than that of any country in the world. The word tribe is generally used for a 'socially cohesive unit, associated with a territory, the members of which regard them as politically autonomous'. Often a tribe possesses a distinct dialect and distinct cultural traits.

- ❖ [3] They are also known as the aboriginal or indigenous people of the land. The term adivasi was coined as a translation to the colonial category of aboriginal. The adivasi and the aboriginal are not synonymous categories. They are in fact two different categories altogether. The term tribe refers to the political organization of the community while the term aboriginal means one present from the beginning (origin).
- ❖ [4] The adivasi's used to hold their natural resources jointly; those were agricultural lands,

forests, pasture grounds, fisheries, or water resources. No family was deprived of access to these resources; all members have rights to land, or to graze their animals on open ground in the tribe's terrain. On the other side of the coin, no member of a tribe has the right to dispose of his plot to an outsider or to sell it off. The social stratification in the adivasi society results due to a complex process of appropriation of respect, of authority and of a capacity to participate in the cycles of reciprocity. Thus adivasi tenure was a joint venture, and qualitatively different from private property in land. Adivasi cultures do not make commodities of their natural resources. In other words the term tribe can be said to be applied to that specific context where individual rights were embedded in the community rights, where production was for consumption and where there existed authority but not power



#### ❖ [5] ADIVASI'S AND FORESTS

The dependency of the adivasi's on forest is very high as adivasi's are very close to the nature and forest. For their daily routine life they are highly dependent on forest. They were enjoying the life before displacement by utilizing the various natural resources. Before displacement they were getting food and fodder from forest but after displacement they have denied from their natural rights and suffering lot of adjustment problems in the new settlement. India's forest is home to millions of people, including many adivasi's, who live in or near the forest areas of the country. Forests provide sustenance in the form of minor forest produce, water, grazing grounds and habitat for shifting cultivation.

- ❖ [6] Moreover, vast areas of land that may or may not be forests are classified as 'forest' under India's forest laws, and those cultivating these lands are technically cultivating 'forest land'.

India's forests are governed by two main laws, the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and the wild life (Protection) Act, 1927.

- ❖ [7] The former empowers the government to declare any area to be reserved forest, protected forest or village forest. The latter allows any area to be constituted as a 'protected area', normally a national park, wildlife sanctuary, tiger reserve or community conservation area. Under these laws, the rights of people living in are depending on the area to be declared as a forest or protected area is to be 'settled' by a 'forest settlement officer'. This 'legal twilight zone' leads to harassment, evictions, extortion of money and sexual molestation of forest dwellers by forest officials, who wield absolute authority over forest dwellers livelihoods and daily lives. The statement of objects and reasons of the Forest Rights Act describes it as a law intended to correct the 'historical injustice' done to forest dwellers by the failure to recognize their rights.





- ❖ [8] **DEPOSITS OF NATURAL RESOURCES (MINERALS) IN VIDARBHA**  
Vidarbha is endowed with large deposits of coal. The resources of coal in the Vidarbha occurs as much as 5576 million tons of coal. Almost all Manganese ore production of the State comes from Nagpur and Bhandara. The total reserves of manganese ore in the State are estimated at 20.85 million tonnes. Important iron ore occurrences in the State are confined to Vidarbha. Out of the total estimated reserves of 260.824 million tonnes of iron ore, the Gadchiroli district alone accounts for 178 million tonnes, the rest 75.38 million tonnes being from other areas of Maharashtra.
- ❖ [9] Extensive deposits of limestone occur in Yavatmal and Chandrapur districts of the State. Limestone is used for manufacturing cement, as flux in iron and steel industry and in the industries like paper, sugar, textile etc. The estimated reserves of limestone in the State are 1371.425 million tonnes. Extensive deposits of dolomite occur in the districts of Chandrapur, Yavatmal and Nagpur in the State. The estimated reserves of kyanite and sillimanite of all grades in the State are of the order of 2.61 million tonnes. Copper has undoubtedly the widest application of all the non-ferrous metals. According to Geological Survey of India total reserves of Copper ore to be of the order of 7.70 million tonnes with copper content ranging from 0.81 to 2.73%. The tungsten ore occurs in Kuhi,

Khobna, Agragaon, Ranbori, Kolari-Bhaori areas of Nagpur district. The reserves estimated for tungsten in the State is about 19.98 million tonnes. The total reserves of Zinc indicated by GSI in Nagpur district are about 8.27 million tons with 5.4% Zn. About 260 million cubic meters of various decorative stones have been indicated so far by the State Geology and Mining Department. In addition, the State has vast resources of minor minerals in the form of building material like stones, murrum, sand etc.

- ❖ [10] **IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN ADIVASI LIFE**

The interaction of the adivasi communities with the ruling class and caste in India is a saga of deprivation, displacement and discrimination. With the onslaught of liberation, privatization and globalization, the adivasi's have been subjected to massive exploitation and repression. Liberalization, privatization and globalization have given rise to the marginalisation of the adivasi communities. Since these communities were already deprived and marginalised, they could not benefit from the opportunities offered by these processes. Instead, they ended up paying for these opportunities.

[11] According to the adivasi ethos, they are part of the entire jal, jungle and zamin (water, forest and land) and their ancestors are also part of them. These natural resources constitute the very lifeline of the adivasi population. These resources make up the economic, social, cultural,



political and religious universe of the adivasi community. For several centuries in India adivasi's people who practiced hunting, food gathering and shifting cultivation have been steadily pushed further back into highlands and hills.

❖ [12] **NATIONAL SANCTUARIES AND ISSUES A.**

❖ **Tadoba Andheri Tiger reserve:** Often referred to as 'The Jewel of Vidharba', the Tadoba National Park lies in the district of Chandrapur in the north-eastern part of Maharashtra. Located in the heart of a reserved forest, it is an infinite treasure trove of innumerable species of trees and plants - and wildlife that includes tigers, panthers, sloth bears, hyenas, jackals, wild dogs, bison, barking deer, nilgai, sambar, and cheetal. Tadoba Andhari Reserve is the largest national park in Maharashtra. There are 41,644 people living in and around the reserve in 59 villages of which 5 are inside the core zone. These villages in the core zone still do farming activity inside the core area. The process of rehabilitation is going on but the Indian bureaucracy has been at its slowest in the forest department. This has an adverse impact on the economic condition of the local people and results into antagonism towards the management. Total six villages to be shifted but till now only two (Jamni and Navegaon) shifted.

❖ [13] **B. Melghat Tiger Reserve:**

Melghat was declared a Tiger Reserve and was among the first nine Tiger Reserves notified in 1973-74 under the Project Tiger. In 1985 Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary was created. Melghat, located in the Amaravati district of Maharashtra, it is 225 km west of Nagpur. Many different kinds of wildlife, both flora and fauna, are found here. There are 61 villages in the Reserve, all outside the core area. 22 are in the buffer zone and 39 in the Multiple Use Area (MUA). Human population in the buffer zone and MUA is 11024 and 15642, respectively, as per 1994 census. The inhabitants are mainly adivasi's, largely of the Korku tribe (80 per cent) and others like Gond, Nihal, Balai, Gaolan, Gawali, Halbi, Wanjari, etc. All inhabitants depend on the forest for bonafide domestic needs. Their main source of income is from labour and rainy season agriculture. Total 22 villages to be shifted but till now only 8 villages were shifted.

❖ [14] **C. Pench Tiger Reserve:**

The Reserve gets its name from the Pench River that flows, north to south, 74 km through the reserve. The total area of the Reserve is 757.89 km<sup>2</sup> of which the Pench National Park, forming the core zone of the Reserve, covers 292.85 km<sup>2</sup>,

and the Mowgli Pench Wildlife Sanctuary is 118.30 km<sup>2</sup> in area. A Buffer Zone constituted by Reserve Forests, Protected Forests and Revenue land, occupies 346.73 km<sup>2</sup>. The NH 44 (old NH 7), run between Nagpur and Jabalpur along the eastern boundary of the reserve for around 10 km. Currently there are no human settlements within the core zone (National Park) of the Tiger Reserve, with the last two forest villages, Alikatta and Chhendia, relocated out in 1992 and 1994 to Durgapur and Khairanji respectively.

❖ [15] **D. Bor Tiger reserve:**

Bor Wildlife Sanctuary is a wildlife sanctuary located near Hingi in Wardha District in the state of Maharashtra. The sanctuary covers an area of 121.1 km<sup>2</sup> (46.8 sq mi). The sanctuary needs enhanced protection and habitat management, especially in the adjacent forest areas.

❖ [16] **E. Nagzira Tiger Project:**

Nagzira wildlife sanctuary is located between Bhandara district and Gondia district of Maharashtra. Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary is locked in the arms of nature and adorned with a picturesque landscape, luxuriant vegetation and serves as a living outdoor museum to explore and appreciate nature.

❖ [17] **F. Umred Karhanda Tiger Reserve:**

Umred Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary, about 58 km from Nagpur, spread over Pauni, Umred, Kuhl and Bhivapur Taluka. This Sanctuary has also connection with Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve through forest along Wainganga River. The sanctuary is home to resident breeding tigers, herds of Gaur, wild dogs and also rare animals like flying squirrels, pangolins and honey badger. The sanctuary providing connectivity between like Tadoba, Pench, Bor and Nagzira.

❖ [18] **CHALLENGES BEFORE DISPLACED ADIVASI'S FROM TIGER RESERVE FOREST**

The role of development projects in a rapidly developing country like India cannot be overemphasized. For the economic growth of any nation, development projects are considered inevitable. Besides projects aimed at creating improvement of infrastructure like roads, railway tracks, dams, bridges, aerodromes etc., those intended for protection of wildlife like tiger reserves or creation of national parks etc., also come under the category of development projects. It is well known fact that most of these projects unfortunately induce displacement or ousting of people from their traditional habitats. Such displacement causes profound economic, social and cultural disruption to the life of people affected by it. People affected by such problems



are left with no other option but to seek and adjust to new entitlement and access to fresh and many a times non-feasible sources of livelihood. To add to their hardships, the government packages of rehabilitation that they are entitled to are by rule delayed and mostly mismanaged.

- ❖ [19] Besides projects, the process of privatization, conversion of forest land for commercial purposes, the change in government policies and acquisition of natural resources, environmental pollution due to industrialization, the change in the pattern of traditional cultivation and the consequential displacement are all in the name of development adversely affecting the adivasi population who are caught in the web of insensitivity and indifference. Involuntary displacement of people due to deliberate economic policy is not new to India. It existed in the colonial times and has intensified in the decades of planned development. The conservative estimate of the number of people displaced from 1950 to 1991 is about 2,13,00,000, if one restricts the casual factors to dams, mines, wildlife sanctuaries, industries. If one includes urban displacement due to various deliberate or planned activities, then the number would rise to 35-55 million. As per government records at least 75% of those displaced are still not cared for or rehabilitated. This is indeed a sad reflection of the Government's sincerity and a sense of responsibility.
- ❖ [20] The displaced kinds of the people face problems related to nature i.e. weather, water, food habits, dress code, police harassment, culture/ tradition/ taboos, language/ communication had been faced by more people after the displacement. Apart from these there are other issues and challenges before adivasi's. Adivasi youths hide their identity and culture as they feel shame if they speak in their mother tongue. The children are enrolled in the schools, but they have to face the problem of non-attendance and drop outs to lack of facilities in the school premises. The main causes behind unemployment found were, land alienation, lack of sufficient cultivable land, lack of means of irrigation, decrease in forest areas, recent trends in forest laws, lack of forest industries, lack of cottage industries, lack of work as casual labour, lack of scientific agriculture, lack of vocational education, faulty policies of the government towards unemployment. Because of unemployment adivasi's after displacement were facing poverty, labour migration, increase in criminal incidences, prostitution, mental health related problems, psychological frustration, beggary, drinking, family disorganisation, child labour etc.

#### ❖ [21] DISCUSSION

Adivasi's before their displacement used to live in remote villages where there was no access to road in some of the villages. As they were not that much in contact with the outer world they were not aware of the communication pattern and the languages spoken outside. The main causes behind lack of communication were; illiteracy, lack of communicational means, natural barriers, cultural practice etc. Looking at economic activities, before displacement, agricultural work was the main activity for livelihood. After rehabilitation land was the main asset and the fodder and other requirements were to be met with the available land. Thus cultivation of land becomes the main activity for livelihood. With rain-fed agriculture, they are dependent on rain and the other activities take place around monsoon. Before displacement, rain doesn't acquire such importance and hence they used to work as per their wishes and convenience. Now with settled agricultural lifestyle, they have lost their mobility and managing their affairs independently. After displacement displaced adivasi's were deprived all the economy related resources which they were enjoying before displacement. As there is no forest available women in new settlement face acute problem for fuel and fodder; however, an additional burden on the women, especially girl-child to get fuel and fodder from longer distances has been added in this situation; this also resulted in higher illiteracy among girls. The lack of natural resources have not only affected their economy day-to-day work burden has also increased. Physical efforts to get water, fuel and fodder are tremendous. For the resources, which cost nothing in the forest, they now have to spend money or bear social obligation or both, which has made the women more vulnerable to hostility of the outside world.

- ❖ [22] It is the contention that the economic liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) model of development is virtually depriving the adivasi people of their traditional means of sustainable livelihood by promoting the unregulated growth of mineral-based industries in the adivasi regions. In the name of globalization and the country's economic development, the elites are taking over the life sustaining resources of the poor and pushing them into a further marginalized state of living as a result of displacing them from their land and homes. Such development serves the interests of these elites while it impoverishes the adivasi people who are dependent on the life sustaining resources of the ecosystem in which they live. The mining and other industries that are taking



over the resources of the ecosystems of these adivasi people fail to provide them with an improved and sustainable means of living. The very nature of the present development paradigm does not provide for the absorption of these poor people into the organized non-farm sector economy by either developing their skills or providing them with technical education.

#### ❖ [23] CONCLUSION

In the broad setting of reforms in many countries in 1980's, India was at the crossroads. The reforms began in India in 1991. The major areas of the reform includes- Fiscal policy reforms, Monetary policy reforms, Pricing policy reforms, External policy reforms, Industrial policy reforms, Foreign investment policy reforms, Trade policy reforms and Public sector policy reforms etc. Globalization takes society from a national to an International perspective no doubt. But it was a boon for the developed countries. On the other hand it became curse for developing countries. Again it is good for rich people with assets and skills; but it became bad for the poor like Adivasi's. The changing nature of environment due to globalization affects drastically. This is a negative trend among the tribes, who in turn are in the verge of losing its unique identity and problems of identity crises occur. One has to be clear about the fact that no one can deny changes in society. But penetrating by alien economic policies that does not have basic linkages to the core of peoples's life ways is not a welcome change at all. Social scientists have mentioned that social and cultural disintegration through globalization has made adivasi people more vulnerable to severe exploitation throughout the country. The adivasi's are part of the Indian society. yes it is true, but at the same time they are different. Special policies and programmes are required to address and redress these differences especially in the context of globalization. If globalization were superimposed on poorly educated and poorly trained adivasi's, with poor systems of governance and infrastructure, it would not lead to growth nor reduce poverty. Globalization may no longer an option, but a fact. However, it must be implemented logically. A single medicine never cures all the diseases. Likewise globalization is also not going to solve all the human miseries.

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