



Research Paper

‘Tribal As Anthropologist’: A Reflection from the Fieldwork In Kandhamal District, Odisha.

Mohammad Iqbal

Research Scholar

Department of Sociology

Delhi School of Economics

University of Delhi-110007.

ABSTRACT

The term “tribal” original was constructed by Orientalist anthropologists. The categorization of the group of people living in the forests and the hilly regions as a tribe by the colonial British administration, for the sake of their administration and control. After the independence from British colonial rule, the policy of Panchashila the forest rights act, and the Panchayati Raj extension in Scheduled Areas (PESA) are all efforts by the state to administrate and control the tribal population.

For the last one hundred years colonial administrators, religious missionaries, civil servants, sociologists, and anthropologists have been visiting the tribal areas to know about tribal culture and tradition. But nowadays things have changed, now the tribal people are documenting their world in terms of anthropological narratives. They are now describing and dictating their world to outsiders like me, ‘the researcher in the field’ about their social, cultural, and economic, world view.

KEYWORDS: Tribals, Identity, Knowledge, Religion, Conversion, Hinduism, Christianity, Kandha, Pano, Kandhamal,

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Plan

Before moving forward into the subject, I want to say that I am not the first non-Adivasi, who has tried to venture into Tribal studies. I had no knowledge of tribal life and the worldview as a priori. The best way to change or end that ignorance was to go deep among the tribal people and learn about them directly from them. My plan in the field was to appear as a university student, whose primary objective is to do field work research by using methods like open-ended interviews, snowball sampling, and participant observant method of participatory research. In order to achieve this, I must look like a reliable and genuine person, because one cannot expect to gain every information from anybody in a short period limited to introduction or passing acquaintances. My physical appearance is heavily built. And it worked in my favour as I am not Maoist nor personnel of the police or like-wise agencies. I made it a point to have a shave daily. This helped me in mixing up with the local population. I appeared like “just another person” in the street. My plan was also to mix up with the local population of the Muslim community in G. Udaigiri as it helped me in knowing the point of view of the non-tribal, non-Hindu, and non-Christian aspects of my research questions, i.e., Who is a tribal? Other than G. Udaigiri and Phulbani, the Muslims were in Baliguda town of the Baliguda block, which is 83 kilometers from the district headquarters.

The life of most of the tribal people in India is very hard. The majority of them live in mountainous and forest areas in the country. The geographic location of their place of habitat deprives them of the normal amenities of modern life. According to the 2011 census the population of the Scheduled Tribes in India was 10.42 Crores which was about 8.6 percent of the total population. About 1.04 crores of Scheduled Tribes live in Urban areas About half of this tribal population is concentrated in the three states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha

“Anthropologists have a number of advantages when addressing the general public, one of them being that hardly anyone in their audience has much in the way independent knowledge of supposed facts being retailed. This allowed one to get away with a good deal.” (Geertz, 1993: p36)

The tribals are making their own culture. Now the tribals have taken the reign in their own hand. They are now defining themselves. They are now providing the readymade experiences of being a tribal to the non-tribal outside world. One such instance was establishing a Tribal Culture Museum in K. Nuagaon in Baliguda block. The primary aim of the museum is to provide a glimpse of the Adivasi life to the outside people as well as to fellow Adivasis too. According to the curators, “The world is fast changing. And we too are adopting newer lifestyles. It is not possible to preserve the abstract things of the past. But we can have the material things from our Adivasi past, which are still in use. Some of it is becoming obsolete.

“Adivasis are different. Firstly, they are not an occupational group. They are more like a society with their own language, territory, religion, culture, and governance system. They stand as juxtaposed to the dominant regional linguistic group and not to caste as many people, including scholars, tend to think. The provisions of reservation for them alongside Dalits have, of course, strengthened the caste lens. Historically, they have remained outside of the caste structure.” [Interview, Virginius Xaxa, *The Week* p.43 July 31, 2022.]

There is a gap between the town life and the village life. The town people are mainly in some profession like government officials, teachers, or businessman and the shopkeepers. The availability of the consumer goods is not an issue, as most of the towns are connected with the roadways, furthermore most of the business settlements are on the roadsides. The presence of “outsiders” like the missionaries, church people, or various non-government organisations etc makes the town more diverse and vibrant. On the roads of the G. Udaigiri it is difficult to distinguish a tribal from a non-tribal or a Kondh tribe people from a non-Kondh. There is a uniformity in that aspect of the identity, but religion wise it was somehow easier to point out the people in the crowd, randomly. In the field area I encountered almost all the followers of the major religion in India i.e. Hindus, Christians, Muslims, and Sikhs.

The Hindus were mostly the Odia-speaking population. Odia was some sort of lingua-franca in that area, as my medium of interaction with them was either in Odia or in English, and occasionally in Hindi. It is not the case that people were not aware of the Hindi, as I observed that most of the time a Hindi news or movie channel was tuned in the public spaces, like tea-stalls, bus-station or some eateries, etc. Most of the fast-food eating joints, or street-food etc were available only in the town area or along the state or national highway. The Kandhamal district is not connected with the railways network system of the Indian Rail. During my field work I had interaction with some people who told me that, they have not seen a railway train, railway station nor boarded a train. There are also some people who have boarded the train when they happen to visit a railway linked places like Sambalpur or Bhubaneswar. So, when they got opportunity, they changed this ignorance. They vividly narrated the day when they were sitting at Sambalpur Road Railway station, waiting for any train to arrive, just to see a train. One of the local tribals narrated that when the train arrived and halted at the station, they saw people boarding and de-boarding the train, I too tried to board the train. But suddenly the train made a movement and I hurriedly got down from the train. In another incident, I saw a lady, who had visited Bhubaneswar for the first time was in the state of shock and apprehension because she had seen a multi-storey building for the first time in her life. She was out of her mind and was on some medication prescribed by doctor to ease her anxiety.

One of my respondents Mr. Rajnikant Nayak of Phiringia block says that “Classification of the Kandha¹ as the Schedule Tribe and the Pano as the Schedule Caste is ‘wrong classification’. First of all, there is no word for caste in our language. There are seven groups that claim themselves as Kui. Those are Kuianga, Domanga, Gohinga, Sitaranga, Loharanga, Kumbharanga, Gauranga.

In the Santhali language, the word, ‘Dikus’ is denoted for the outsiders, who are not Santhali. Similarly, in Kui language of the Kandha tribal people, *Sasingia* is used for the outside people. The origin of this word might be traced from the Odia word *Shasan* meaning reign. This is probably a very apt term for the people who have ventured into the forest area with the sole purpose of ruling and controlling the forest dwellers living in the Kandhamal.

“Are there Kondhs in your country too?” When a Kond asked me this question, he made me realize how Kondhs see themselves from that the ethnographic traditions defines them- precisely as it defines other tribes, by locating them in a particular area and giving an exact figure for their population. Kondhs are themselves, quite simply as one of the main races or division of mankind. In their myths, Kondhs are usually the first human beings to emerge out of the earth and have a special relationship with the Earth Goddess.” (Padel, 1995: p.12)

¹ Kandhas are one of the 68 Scheduled Tribes of Odisha. They identify themselves as Kuingia. The Non-Kandha people address them as Kandha. In English, there are variant spellings of the word, Kandha- Kond, Kondh, Kondho, etc. I have used “Kandha”.

Konds call themselves *Kwuinga* or *Kondho*. The name probably related to the Telugu word for the hill, *Konda*.

I was waiting for somebody to provide me lead towards interviewing somebody. I was sitting at a shop in G. Udaigiri. Suddenly the owner of the shop introduced me to Mr. Bhakta Kumar Pradhan, a mason of age around 50 years. He was waiting there for his job assignments. There was no sign of commissioning of job that day. The shop owner introduced me to him and requested him to just talk with me. He then proposed that, why don't I visit his home in Kolagarh Panchayat, which is some fifteen-kilometre up hills from G. Udaigiri. So we mounted the motor cycle and started the ride towards his home. He was on the pillion seat and out of curiosity or scepticism started asking question regarding my family, place, job, marriage, etc.

"Who are in your family?"

"My parents, wife, and a son."

"Where do you live?"

"I live in Brajrajnagar, Jharsuguda."

"How is your home?"

"It is a single-story cottage, with tinned roof."

"Tinned roof?" "Yes"

"What your father do?"

"He is a retired army veteran"

"What you do in Delhi?"

"I am studying in Delhi, and I am on visit in Khandhmal, in connection to my study."

What after study? "I will work somewhere in college in Odisha or Delhi"

What is the benefit of all these study things? What you will get?

"I will get a degree after completion, furthermore my study will be helpful in understanding the people of Kandhamal in a better way. Your contribution will be documented."

After these asking question, he appeared satisfied and said that since you too have tin roof house, then you are like us. His village is at the top of the hill, and there is a name of every hill, curiously I asked the name of a hill, which he replied with a name, *Kunjameda*, similarly the names of other hills too. When we reached his home, his wife was watching television sitting on the floor, reclining her back against a sofa. This was one of my few interaction with the women living in the kandhamal, as most of the meeting happened with the men, that too outside of their home, so this is one of the opportunities when I am meeting a women and trying to know about the views around my subject of study. Her children were working in bank and some offices in Delhi and Bhubaneshwar. They were living there with their families. After some formal introduction, I started with my usual series of questioning. Her response on the rituals things is very interesting, she said, "I am very particular in practicing all the rituals of worships and festivals. I also ask the other ladies of locality to be sincere in these functions." Here she was pointing at the festivals related to the Hinduism. Knowing about my visit, some of the people from the neighbouring household also gathered in the living room. All almost all the spaces on the sofa set chairs and floor were occupied. They were helping the respondent by prompting relevant facts, not to be missed in situation like this. Among them one person was standing outside, I casually asked him to join the rest in the meeting by entering into the room. One the person, sitting in the room, clarified to me that, "He will not enter into the room or to put it in better way he will not enter into the house ever." There reason is he is a Pano. In due course of my field study, I had heard this, that "a Pano never enters into a Kandha household; on that day I witnessed this own my own."

Tribal consciousness in the twentieth century, beginning with the urge to bring about reforms, started to drift towards the increasing assertion and crystallization of their ethnic identity. Thus far this notion of ethnicity had centered around the distinctive traits of their moral and material culture. It had been devoid of any sense of territory or notion of constitutionalism. The resistance offered was primarily aimed at putting end to the exploitation perpetrated by the zamindars, mahajans and others whom they called 'dikus'.² According to Benedict Anderson, "a national is imagined because its member feels a sense of solidarity with one another, even vast of the majority are strangers. Nationals are not natural or pre-existing entities, but are modern social construct. They are forged by the dominant classes in each society who empasise certain cultural, social and political ideas that 'glue' people into a sense of shared identity and belonging. For every nation, the past plays a pivotal role in creating 'imagined community'. Stories about the nation's past, including stories about its origins shape its members collective memory and identity, creating a 'national consciousness'. Certain historical moments, figures and symbols are elevated to a position of great importance within the imagined community. They help fortify the ideas, beliefs and values that are said to underpin a 'national identity'. This is why nations fixate on history curriculums so much.

Every moment spent in the Kandhamal, and G. Udaigiri town in particular added new chapters as experience as researcher. Each moment was a learning experience there. Every person that I interacted with was a potential source of information for me. People in Kandhamal were always ready to provide me information, explanation Many people on their way tried to help me in my field research. There were times, when my motorcycle break-down and I had to leave my motorcycle on the roadside under the care of complete strangers. There were times when, out of all my identities my primary identity as a Muslim, I thought it as a predicament in gathering the information, because I have apprehension that the people there will have their assumption as we have our assumption on the image of a tribal, or Adivasi.

Following are some of the instances of my participant observation in the field area that I witnessed as a bystander:

The television channel that mostly tuned on in public places like tea-stall, eateries, shops, etc.; were the Hindi language news channels, like *Zee News* or *ABP News*. This surprised me as I had the perception that Odia language would be default language. Even I myself sat in bus station where the local panchayat has installed a television set for the passing the time of the waiting passengers and the default channel was movies channel in Hindi language. I again rechecked this some another day and different point of time and found that the channels are in Hindi. I even asked these questions to the respondents and they replied that they prefer to watch channels for news, information, and entertainment. The newspapers readership is concerned they are also avid readers, almost all the houses I visited most of them has newspaper subscription. The game, that most of the children were found playing was soccer.

II. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH-AREA SETTING

Kandhamal district in Odisha is my field work area. The district is not connected with train routes. It is only reachable through the road communication. My first concern was to reach Kandhamal. What to do and where to stay in the Kandhamal was my first thing of anxiety. I was roaming and staying in Bhubaneswar for last one months. Every resource person, I was meeting in the Bhubaneswar, apart form my usual list of questioning my one question was too, on any local connection in Kandhamal. And the monsoon season was on its full scale. So, there were days when there was no activity that means no venturing out. Sometime going out and gaining nothing fruitful. My plan this time was to visit the district own my own, not through any organization. The search for an independent link ended on Mr. Ziauddin Ahmad, a social activist. I had a telephonic interaction with him some four years ago. During that time, I had asked him about my visit and stay in his town area, G. Udaigiri. So, I had clarity on two things, Mr. Ziauddin Ahmad and G. Udaigiri. So, I first tried to contact Mr. Ziauddin Ahmad on his mobile telephone number, that came to be switched off. And from there my anxieties started to show. I reached G. Udaigiri from Bhubaneswar by bus. Responding to the call of the Bus conductor I get down from the bus. I made a quick assessment of the place and behold; I saw a hotel or lodge name and place G. Udaigiri painted on the board. Similarly other shops were also carrying the name. I figured out that this is the chowk or square of a market place. I entered the hotel, luckily the gate was open. The staff was sleeping. I woke him and enquired about the availability of room. A room was available, I checked in and first thing I did was to get some sound sleep after a shower. I slept till eleven o'clock in the morning. When I came out the place that once appeared deserted was now full of life and people. I was hungry but first decided to explore this place and find something to eat on the way. I set a road and started walking and walked until I felt that it is okay to walk that distance. As the place where I was staying was a square and there are three road converging at the point known as Gandhi Chowk, a bust statue of Mahatma Gandhi. In my due course of walking and strolling I heard the sound of Azaan, the Muslim call to prayer. The tried to trace the source of the Azaan. I offered my prayers in a hope that I might encounter Mr. Ziauddin Ahmad. After the Namaz, I further explored the place with intension to meet somebody friendly. I met Mr. Tajammul Hasan, who was the former Imam of the Jama Masjid G. Udaigiri. I introduced myself and asked him about, Mr. Ziauddin Ahmad, fortunately he knew him and asked me to visit a Footwear shop near the chowk. The Shop owner and Mr. Ziauddin Ahmad are childhood friends.

In the early evening, I received a mobile call from Mr. Abdul Bari, who asked me to come and meet Mr. Ziauddin Ahmad. I came downstairs and met Mr. Ahmad. Mr. Ziauddin Ahmad is a thin man in his fifties, wearing kurta-pajama and spectacles. He is not a tribal, that is, neither Kondh or Pano. According to Mr. Ziauddin, his ancestors came to this place from somewhere in Tamil Nadu; as one of his relatives was appointed as an Urdu language teacher when this place was under the administration of the Madras Presidency during the British Raj. Since then, they were appointed as Zamindars, and they were among the few tribals who possesses the land-holding entitlements. Now I have made three acquaintances in the G. Udaigiri town. The three men are from different orientation and knowledge. That eventually helped my fieldwork experience enrich and knowledge enhancing. My job in G. Udaigiri was to get myself ready by nine o'clock in the morning. So that I will be prepared for any task that I am supposed to visit. Many times, we had planned beforehand about the next day. Mr. Ziauddin also helped me in procuring a second-hand motorcycle from a local person. During all these

interactions and encounters I also made a point to discuss my works, doubts, and queries with them. They in return were always available for help. Later I also realized that many wanted to have their version of data availability authentic and authoritative. Sometimes it also became difficult to filter the truth from the exaggeration.

The method for gathering data was participant observation, open-ended interview, and snowball sampling. Most of the time, it used to be casual talking and then slowly asking them about the interview thing. Other times it was a straightforward approach, "I am so and so and I want to discuss these things with you if you are comfortable to discuss." Then they would either give consent for the interview or tell me about the person who would be best for this purpose. Many times, there was no pen or notebook. just plain conversations.

THEY NEED A SCRIBE TO CHRONICLE THEIR WORLD

My presence as a researcher in the Kandhamal brought mixed reactions to the respondents there. Some were delighted, some were curious, but none of them were surprised. The people there are used to people like me, who often visit their place and try to 'study' them. Often people mistake me for some government official doing surveys. But after some preliminary lines of questioning, when they finally came to know about my purpose of visit, they either become ready to have a conversation or they would provide me the best person for that exercise. They often used to sit beside and occasionally participate in the discussion. More of it was a discussion than a question-answer interview. As goes the saying, "people talk, word spread!"

On my visit to the dwelling place of the Kutia Kondhs. They were resettled by the administration but the living place is arranged according to their customs. The houses were built parallelly on both sides of the street facing each other over a rectangular space. There was a piped water facility by the government. Their houses too were having the facility of the toilet as provided by the government. But they practice open defecation. The houses have no door, no locks, but wooden planks used as doors. The main concern at that time was to reach their place as soon as possible. To meet them, have a casual interaction. When I reached at their place it was already afternoon. I went to them; they were sitting outside their house in a group. Seeing me they thought us a someone from the administration. But we alley their doubts by clearing explaining them our purpose of the visit. Kutia Kandha claim themselves as the one of the most primitives of the Kandhas. They used to dwell on the hill-tracts and the mountain tops. But the government intervention brought them to the foothills, more accessible areas for the sake of better administration. There is one dedicated development agency for the welfare of the Kutia Kandha people.

The journey to reach the destination is also full of many uncertainties, one of it was the bike, that I had purchased for the field work area tour. It was working fine, but as I had purchased the bike so I decided to have a simple overhauling of the carburettor as the bike was experiencing hiccups while running. The shop where I had made it done, unknowingly (that I discovered later) missed to assemble a small spring like thing in the piston system, furthermore I only know the skill of riding a motor-cycle; I don't know the art of motorcycle repairing. That turned out to be a chronic fear of bike stopping in the midway. And no mechanic I visit in the nearby places was unable to diagnose it. One day while on the tour to Darinbadi we anticipated that the bike will not able to reach to its destination so we decided to have the bike checked at a local mechanic shop. We don't know what the mechanic did, but unfortunately the bike stopped in the middle of the forest. It was deep dark night. We were unable to make sense of the location, suddenly we heard the sound of cowbells that the bovine was producing by shaking of its head. We followed the sound and realized that there are few houses alongside the road, but there was no electric supply outside the houses so it was deep dark. We knocked at the door and requested the man who opened the door to keep bike with him and we will return in the morning and fetch the bike. Thanks to him that he agreed for the same. He also helped in halting as a bus, as buses seldom stop in the middle of the forest road, but the bus on that night stopped. The bike gave me much more ordeal than anything. Every time I go out in the bike my apprehension was to return without any obstacles or problems.

The rice is the staple food there. The people also eat wheat roti at night and idli and bara for breakfast. The district is well connected with the roadways. There were "line-hotel" in the roadways. The villages had no fast-food eating shops or any other retail shops. The reason behind it was the business of running a shop is done by the Odia people. Here Odia means, the odia-speaking Hindu people, who are from the coastal areas of Odisha. They have purposely come here to run shops and other business establishments. Most of the shops on the roadsides were owned by the Odia speaking people or by the Pano community people. The food items were mainly sold by the Odia people.

"one did become aware of the difference in the celebration of religious festivals but that was not felt as threatening but rather an occasion of wonderment and new source of entertainment." "But religion, for instance, has been well-nigh universal in provoking intense mental occupation throughout human history"

In my part of Odisha, I had only heard of Durga Puja, and the Vijaya Dashmi. But in the field I came to know about the Lakshmi Puja which is akin to the Durga Puja celebration. I visited the Place during the time of Ganesh puja. All their puja events were happening near the main roads as it happens in the other parts of India

or Odisha. To this question one elderly Kandha answered, that we were not aware of such pujas before, otherwise, we might have celebrated. When asked about the festivals in Kui tradition, he said that "Now things are becoming expensive, so is the festivals. Suppose a village wants to observe the *Kedu Jatra*, the amount of money required for it would be approximately fifty thousand; *Kedu Jatra* was not expensive earlier, because the things used for the celebration were locally available, like a rooster, buffalo, clothes, rice, earthen pot, etc. now we have to buy these things from the market. And most important of all, our Kandha festivals were a community celebration. Everybody's participation was required. Now most young people are working and living in towns and cities in far states like Kerala and Karnataka, and many times it is not possible to come during the festive time. "The three-day *Niyam Raja Parab* begin with hundreds of Dongaria Kandha men and women in their traditional attire assembling on the plateau to sing and dance, sip *salap*, eat together, spend the night under a star-studded sky and worship and pray to Niyam Raja to protect them. The festival culminates with a few animal sacrifices before Niyam Raja. The tribal people also sacrifice a buffalo to the deity once in three years. (Das, 2010: p.3 30-32)

So far as festivals are concerned the Hindu festivals are organized in reachable and well-located areas like, marketplace, roadside, and some open spaces in the busy bus stop. But the tribal festivals were organized away from the village or the dwelling places of the Kandhas. The usual culmination of tribal festivities ends in feasts and celebrations near the road heading toward the village. Initially, my observation was that the celebration of Hindu festivals is the way they have celebrated these festivals in order to allure the Adivasi population into Hinduism, but later on, I realized that this loudness of festivals is in competition vis-à-vis Christianity. The Adivasi who visits the puja canopies are only spectators not participants in the rituals. On asking what they do on such occasions? The reply was, "What are we to do, this is not our festival. We go there to see lights and dance; eat *Chowmin* and spend a fun time."

The recent encroachment of corporate companies into the tribal areas has made tribals realize and celebrate the Adivasi heritage. The latest example is when *Vedanta* signed an MOU with Odisha to establish a one million tonne per annum (mtpa) capacity aluminum refinery. (Das, 2010: p.31)

This action has brought strong resistance from the Dongaria Kandha community, and in order to beat the company in its game, they have lobbied up to the British parliament and the London Stock Exchange. "With innocence writ large on his face, Sikaka wondered about the sudden eagerness of the government to ensure the "development of the Dongarias". Where was the government in the past till Vedanta started eyeing our heavenly habitat? How can it take away our hills from us? These hills are ours. The soil is ours and it belongs to us, the people, not the government. Sikaka wonders whether any government by any model of development, can ensure what Niyamgiri has provided the Dongarias. Niyamgiri has remained our lone source of life, livelihood and happiness. No government or company can ever replace it. Dongarias would never allow mining in the hill range." (Das, 2010: p32)

All that they expect from the government is the procurement of the forest produce they grow or collect during different seasons. "We are self-sufficient in food grains, which we grow on the hills in different months of the year. All we need is little cash to meet our other needs and this can happen if government agencies can procure our surplus produce such as pineapple, jackfruit, turmeric, neem, and mangoes." (Lada Sikaka, President of Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti (NSS) an association of tribal who live in hill range). Lada Sikaka further said, "We worship and depend on the Niyamgiri for our existence." The greater ironies are the forest areas that were not part of the reserve forest were denser and more populated with vegetation. The forest that was under the protection appeared to be less dense in comparison. The Adivasi protects the forest, but the government agencies feel that encroachment by the Adivasi population will disturb the flora and fauna of the forest areas. This has created scepticism among the Adivasis, as one of the members of Kutia Kandha who generally practice open area defecation, sees the latrines made under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan as some conspiracy by the government to venture into our forest area.

During the Kandhamal violence of 2008, the road leading towards any settlements was attacked by the right-wing Hindutva people, most of them were Kandha Adivasi and some outsiders who provided them with some logistic support. The roads were dug deep to prevent any vehicle to enter the villages. The people in these villages were Christians Panos, a group that comes under Scheduled Castes prior to their conversion into Christianity fled the village fearing for their lives. Spent nearly three to four days in the forests without food and water. They broke into tears while narrating the ordeals of those unfortunate times. It all started after the murder of Laxmanand Saraswasti, a Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader and Monk, who runs Kanya Ashram for girls. The ashram teaches Hindu religious scriptures and Sanskrit to the Adivasi and other local girls. It is counter to the mission school run by the Christian evangelist groups. While traveling into the various parts of the district, the scars of the Christian genocide that took place in the year 2008 were still visible, there were still the burnt churches and one of the respondents said that it is only for gathering sympathy. But I think the scars which are not visible on the bodies but are still in their hearts and mind. These scars are of deep hurt and resignation. The Christians still fear venturing into their old villages and homes, some are resettled in the main roadways nearby

cities, not in the remote hamlets in the uphill and deep jungles. There is immeasurable sadness on their faces. Most of them are still nostalgic about the past. The villages that they left; the houses were torched down and later on occupied by the perpetrators of violence. They dare not to go there fearing for their life and humiliation. The question of who killed Laxmananand Saraswati still lies unanswered. The police have arrested a Maoist leader and seven members of the Christian Pano Community, the latter released on bail. The Hindutva groups say that the police arrested the Maoist leader only to pacify the anger and violence.

III. CONCLUSION

To show cultural solidarity, without corresponding social, political, and economic changes will not go very far. Tribals still continue to be most deprived in mainland India, in terms of poverty, education, health, and other parameters. Their share of representation in education and employment is still low. On top of that, tribal land is appropriated for various projects like mining hydro projects, and industries. The Adivasis have not been beneficiaries of these projects. Rather, they have been dispossessed and thrown away from their land. They have now been forced to migrate in search of employment. What tribes have gone through during the colonial period is being repeated in more systematic and aggressive ways and manners today. The only exception is that what is happening today it is happening in the name of development. The tribals are articulating their identity. Now they themselves are defining themselves. The election of Smt. Draupadi Murmu as the President of India, the first Adivasi to hold the highest office in India comes with mix responses. Is it just a tokenism or the moment has arrived? only time will tell.

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