

The social reformers  
like thakkar bapa on



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The British policy of separating the tribals from the rest of the people created suspicion in the minds of the nationalists. They severely criticised the British policy and charged the British with preventing a large section of our countrymen from joining the mainstream of national life. " In practice what happened was that the tribes were isolated and then left to stagnate, halting the evolving process of cultural fusion.

" [S. C. Dube] This brings us to the questions, whether the tribals should be assimilated into the mainstream or whether they should be protected? And in what way they will benefit from the developments taking place in the country? Let us consider the different approaches or viewpoints which the scholars have developed regarding the tribals and their development. Three views to Solve Tribal Problems: Various solutions have been presented for dealing effectively with the tribal problems. The tribal problems have been approached from three viewpoints. They are as follows: 1. Assimilation: " Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups once dissimilar become similar and identified in their interests and outlook".

Ogburn and Nimkoff. Assimilation is one of the ways of dealing with the tribal problems. According to this solution advocated by the social reformers and voluntary organisations, assisting and encouraging the tribals to assimilate themselves with the mainstream of national life, can alone permanently solve the tribal problems. Thus, according to this approach, we cannot deal with tribal problems on the basis of tribal culture and life but by changing them into the frame of new community. The Christian missionaries on the one hand, and the Hindu social reformers like Thakkar Bapa on the other, have been trying to assimilate them into Christian and Hindu community

respectively. This approach has its own limitations. Complete assimilation is a difficult task.

The tribals are not prepared to give up all of their traditional tribal beliefs, practices and ideas. Any attempt to impose the external cultural practices on them, creates in them guilt feelings, confusions and mental conflicts. This solution may even create economic, religious and moral degradation among them. 2. Isolation: Hutton, who was a commissioner for census of 1931, and Elwin have suggested that the tribals must be kept at a distance from the rest of the society. Keeping them in isolation in some " National Parks" or " reserved areas" would solve two problems: (a) the tribals would be in a position to maintain their independent identity; (b) they would be free from the exploitation of outsiders.

The champions of this approach are of the view that sufficient time must be given to the tribals to assimilate themselves with the rest of the community. The limitation of this approach is that when once the tribals are kept in isolation they are likely to develop vested interests and keep themselves permanently away from others. 3. Integration: The third view, which is actively followed in the recent years, is that of integration. The policy of isolation is neither possible nor desirable, and that of assimilation would mean imposition.

Hence integration alone can make available to the tribes the benefits of modern society and yet retain their separate identity. This view recommends the rehabilitation of the tribals on the plains along with the civilised people, but away from their native places such as hills, mountains, forests, etc. This

suggestion has also been criticised. It is said that this suggestion has been advocated to further the interests of industrialists and capitalists.

This solution is not appreciated on the ground that it may create economic and moral decadence to those who are separated from their beloved land to plains. Still, the policy of integration which aims at developing a creative adjustment between tribes and non-tribes has been supported by thinkers and writers like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Conclusions: The solutions to the tribal problems mentioned above, have their own merits and demerits. Tribal problems are simple but very delicate to handle. No solution can be experimented with before winning the confidence of the tribals.

The modern culture must not be imposed on them. It is essential to establish a harmonious compatibility between the tribal mode of living and the material advancement of culture. The integration of the tribal society into the Indian society takes time, and it has to be promoted while retaining the good points of the tribal culture. Only those elements of new culture which may vitalise them for material advancement must be infused in them. Pandit Nehru observes that, " Tribal people possess a variety of culture and they are in many ways certainly not backward.

There is no point in trying to make them a second rate copy of ourselves". With regards to the tribal development and welfare Pandit Nehru observes that our duty which comes " First is to preserve, strengthen, and develop all that is best in tribal society, culture, art and language. In the second is to protect the tribal economic rights.

The third is to unite and integrate the tribes in a true heart unity with India as a whole so that they may play a full part in their life. And the last is to develop welfare and educational facilities so that every tribesman may have an equal opportunity with the rest of the fellow citizens who work in the fields, factories, and workshops in the open country and the plains". The Tribal ' Panchasheela': Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1957 in his foreword to Verrier Elwin's " The Philosophy for NEFA ", has laid down in five principles, that is, " Panchasheela", the policy of integration. The tribal " Panchasheela" as has been enunciated by him are as follows: (i) Nothing should be imposed on the tribal people. They must be allowed to develop along the lines of their own genius. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.

(ii) Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected. (iii) Attempt must be made to train and build up a team of their own people to the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will be of great help for them in the beginning.

But too many outsiders must not be sent to the tribal territory. (iv) Over-administering the tribal areas or overwhelming them with too many schemes must be avoided. We should not work in rivalry to their own social and cultural institutions. (v) The results of the work must be adjudged by the quality of the human character that is evolved and not by statistics or the amount of money spent. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Community Development (under the Article 46 of the Constitution), set up 43 sub-multipurpose tribal blocks in the various States of India to promote the welfare and the integration of the tribals. Two Committees were set up one

in May 1959 under the Chairmanship of the anthropologist Verrier Elwin and the other in April 1960 under the Presidentship of Dhebar, to examine the programmes and projects of these blocks.

Both the Committees submitted their reports in 1960 and 1961 respectively. The reports have emphasised and amplified the five fundamental principles enunciated by Nehru in 1957.