

## **Globalisation and Global Warming: Issue of "Deprivation" and "Exploitation" of Adivasis in India**

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### **Abstract**

Neo- liberalism stands as a cause of exploitation of indigenous people like tribes of India. This process has taken away tribal land and forest, which were used by the tribes not only for natural resources but they also had a spritual connection with it. Due to the processes of liberalization, privatization and globalisation, their source of livelihood has changed from agricultural to industrial workers. The increasing level of global warming is responsible for obliteration of their traditional agricultural system, which has pushed them to migrate into city areas in search of new jobs. Under this new era of globalisation, the national objective for a government is to construct a worthy infrastructure for foreign investors. The government is obliged to work for the elite section of society which has been improvising the condition of indigenous people, as they are losing their land at the hands of elite sections. As a consequence, some sections of young educated tribals have come out to fight for their rights and it is seen frequently, that they are being mobilised by the left wing intellectual ideology. This article is devoted to understand how the globalisation induced global warming is increasingly causing deprivation among tribal people. The second part of this paper examines the nature of tribal movement in response to their exploitation.

**Keywords:** Globalisation, global warming, indigenous people, deprivation

### **Introduction**

Within a given territory, the tribal people are considered as indigenous people. Numerous countries have accepted their rights over their natural resources, as they have been using those resources from generation to generation. They consider natural resource as a material and spiritual way for their survival of life. But many times this is affected by globalization where it is seen that these natural resources are exploited in many ways by none other than the respective governments. It is a violation of human rights under the sponsorship of law makers. For fast-tracking development, governments are continuously using that natural resource as raw material. As a result those particular indigenous people have been affected by this development agenda where governments are giving more importance for setting up big industries and mega dams inside forest areas which belong to tribal communities. Main agenda of this structural development is trying to attract more and more foreign investors in India. But this development agenda stands up as a cause of displacement of thousands of

tribal people. This destruction of natural resources is also responsible for global warming and this changing weather brings fear for tribal communities, as agricultural production is also declining. This trend also extends to loss of their natural resources including traditional agricultural methods, culture and most prominently their means of livelihood.

All socio- economic aspects of tribal communities are related to forests. So many times it is said that using forest is their birth right. But despite having such rich natural resources, they are the most vulnerable groups. The forest rights are mentioned in the constitution but these provisions have also proved to be insufficient to protect their rights. At the same time it is also a violation of constitution by cutting off their relationship with forest through setting up big industries and devastating the forests. The violation of law is very frequent; it is for the benefit of elite sections of society where government officials and state itself benefit from it. Corruption and inefficiency of government officials and inefficient implementation of laws are prominent causes among others.

The global society has been changing under globalization. These new social structures and processes change the nature of relationship between nation-state and society. It has pushed for an anti-globalisation and left ideology stands against this new dominant structure which are criticising the regimes of authoritarian and bureaucratic nature. The growing discontent, protest and resistance try to resist the negative side of globalisation. Social scientist like Giddens (2000) has given an optimistic view of globalization and argued that it as an extension of modernity rather than a split from it. Later he talked about aggression of European colonialism where he focused on the issue of nation-state. He talked about the indigene and plundered cultural resources, exploitation of their indigenous labour and land.

During 1980s, some international organisation like World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Centre etc. have emerged. Main agenda of these organisations is implementation of privatization, deregulation, liberalisation and export-oriented market policies with regard to free trade. In mid-nineties the darkest side of the globalisation was at peak level, where the world income growth rate was only 2.5 percent; it was the lowest per capita income ever, where flows of income was asymmetrical in nature and had increased the gap between indigenous people and the rich people. Due to this negative effect on common people, strong anti- global movements have grown up against this flow of exploitation. This movement has led some educated indigenous people, who lost their land, livelihood, to place hope on globalisation. This grassroots and alternative mode of political participation is flexible, decentralized in nature where it has focused on several issues including the value of dignity, liberty and justice. This movement has given a platform of a global democracy which link with local self-management at grass root level against the problems of poverty, discrimination, social displacement, starvation, poor health condition and environmental devastation (Juris, Jeffrey, 2004).

### Review of literature-

Raikhana, Moldakhmetb, Ryskeldyc & Aluad (2014) stated that globalization has affected cultural ties among people from different nations where human migration has been continuing and has resulted in dangerous loss of cultural identity. Again, in a study Moahi (2007) extended his view on the same line as cultural globalization can contribute to the erosion of people's indigenous languages and culture. He further stated that unfolding the process of globalisation could be the cause of dismissal of undocumented, unscientific knowledge of indigenous people, whereas indigenous knowledge is regarded as inferior and not worth trying to validate by scientific method. So it could be the cause of de-glory of indigenous knowledge. Here the media has been playing a pivotal role for globalising the indigenous culture. Thomas & Nyamnjo (2007) have further stated that indigenous knowledge such as music, weaves, symbols, knowledge of natural resources, dance steps, motifs – are now increasingly coming into the grasp of privatization. It is the cause of loss of indigenous knowledge from the hand of indigenous communities. Kibet (2003) stated that globalization has commoditized and privatized indigenous knowledge. Coates (2004) stated that due to globalisation, indigenous communities have been facing the problem of territory where they preferred to stay in a collective possession of their land. But in this post- independence era the liberal policies of state have been promoting the private ownership which abolishes the collective ownership. As a consequence indigenous communities have been losing their land ownership. Hlúšek (2010) has pointed towards the exploitation of natural resources by multinational companies. In present times deforestation is one of the biggest ecological problems, multinational companies are destroying the forests. Again, pressure of overpopulation is also equally responsible for environmental degradation. In order to access land; peasants cut trees and also expose the slopes of the mountains. This leads to water erosion and devaluation of the soil. Another factor natural disaster is construction of hydro-electric and irrigation dams inside the forest areas which has reshaped landscapes. Thousands of tribal people have been displaced. The resettlement schemes have failed to compensate their short term and long-term effects. Cesarotti (2009) raised the issue that indigenous people have hardly been able to take the advantage of globalizing economy, as this process marginalizes them. It has enhanced their ability to raise their voice against all disruption, a process of "globalization from below" is building for their political networks and communications.

In a study on the Contractors-Management Nexus, Sharma and Das (2009) have stated that in this age of globalisation a class of labour contractors has emerged among the trade union leaders who emphasise on cutting down production cost. The tea plantation owners/management often strike deals with the contractors for the reduction of production cost and the workers are made to bear the burden of any compromise thus made. Sharma (2009) also observed that government has shown more loyalty to the industry than the labourers under the course of liberalisation. The government gives more emphasis on attracting more industrial investment from outdoor. It has stifled the voices of the labourers to

demand more labours rights, such as bonus, gratuity, family pension, provident fund, among others. The labourers are exploited in varied ways.

### **Methodology**

This study tries to understand the impact of global warming on indigenous people. The study is qualitative in nature and it is based on both secondary and primary data. Secondary data has been collected from government reports, academic publications and newspaper reports. Primary data was collected mainly from tea garden workers of Assam during 2014. In November, 2014 a study among tea garden workers was done by the present researcher at Baksa district in Doomny Tea Garden. All the data are collected by using purposive sampling method where an interview was taken with some of the Tea tribal leaders and some of them engaged as labourers in tea plantations.

### **Narrative Analysis: A study on Tribal Communities**

This case study will help us to know how globalisation has brought changes in labour- management relations from informal to formal among the tea garden workers. Again, it will trace how the rising level of temperature is one of the causes of reduction in tea production and how the globalisation process has brought changes in relationship between trade union and labourers, as trade unions have been working for the benefit of labourers for over decade. It will also cover several issues including how the construction of mega dams and industries have been affecting their livelihood, and has forced them to migrate to other places.

The structural development agenda of the government is the cause of displacement of thousands of tribal people and many social scientists did studies on this dark side of globalisation. In India more than 1500 major irrigation projects have been made since independence and it has displaced more than 16 million people and among them more than 40 per cent population is from tribal communities. Mega dams are the cause of erosion of natural resources and culture identities of tribal people. Through the use of force the tribes have been evicted from their land. They are now constrained within their narrow new rehabilitated areas, and most of them have started working as industrial workers. At present, India holds the second position in the world in terms of number of dams. It was estimated that more than 300 billion rupees have been spent for the construction of dams and hydropower projects by 2000. Out of them 87 mega dams were funded by the international organisations like World Bank, 60 per cent have been constructed in central and western India where around 80 per cent inhabitants belong to tribal communities. It is estimated that around 5 to 7 million tribal population has been displaced till date because of mines, industries and others development projects (Pathy, Jaganath 1998). Moreover, these dams have led to environmental degradation, as in India forest cover areas have declined from 40% in 1950's to 10% in 1980's.

Thousands of people were displaced from district Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh as they compromised their land in favour of mining. Most of their land has been acquired for industrial set up including infrastructural development. Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) is a subsidiary of Coal India Limited which has acquired the entire town and ten adjoining villages and is turning the area into a coal mine. It has covered eight villages in Morwa and all surrounding areas have now converted into a bustling township with 11 municipal wards with 50,000 newcomers.

Tanmoy Bhaduri, (2017) took interview with a respondent “Urmila Baiga” for a magazine “Wire” and during her interview she said that:

*“NCL gave me a land near the national highway but the highway authority did not allow me to build a home there. Again, I started living in NCL land though I don’t have any patta (documents). Nagar nigam asked for bribes – I gave them three thousand. Where will we go?”*

Elizabeth Puranam, (2016) had an interaction with the villagers of “Lath” where a big coal mine project was constructed under South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) which was built for mines in 2003. The indigenous people used this land for the purpose of rice production and cows roamed before the construction of mining project. More than 400 Adivasi families lived in Lath village and most of them belong to adivasi “Kawar” communities. Their adivasi culture was clearly visible from their dressing patterns. The villagers worship the tree.

#### **One respondent told during the interview that**

*“That’s because they live in India’s forests, which we now know to be rich in minerals. Only 56 families remain in Lath after losing their land, livelihood - they were farmers - and access to clean water, which the coal mine has cut off. Our half of live is dependent on the river and we use to catch fish, washing dress and cleaning of our day to day activities- so we can say that river is our lifeline in one word. Many people already left our village and search of their livelihood and in this way they just lost their river and now we are still fighting for our livelihood and our river”* Rathia said.

Sutapa Chattopadhyay (2010) stated that approximately 3135 medium and minor dams are constructed, apart from the 30 large dams on the Narmada river and among them the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) is the largest multipurpose project which is still being constructed on the Narmada. As a consequence around 245 village people are dislocated and most of them belong to tribal communities. The displaced village people have been shifted to other place where they have been struggling with reconstruction of their socio- economic lives, with their grazing lands, fishing grounds, and forests and have to constrain within a limited area. They are just innocent in knowledge as well as in nature, blaming that government official has misguided them by saying that they will get everything in relocated areas.

Another respondent told the interviewer during her interaction with a village group of “Kusumbdi” village:

*“Due to the displacement from our earlier village we need to supplement our diets – as earlier we use to have a variety of vegetables collected from the river side ; fish from the river; a variety of fruits, nuts, leaves and tubers from the forests; and milk from cattle. Here we are facing with the problems of cattle deaths due to lack of grazing lands. But we cannot take the pressure of cultivating cash crops as it is high in cost, along with bearing high household expenditure. So, altogether it has been binding on us to search for secondary employment or curtail our consumption requirements.”* (Madan Bhai, male respondent, age 38, Lunadra Village; interview with author on 4 July 2004)

In tea garden of Assam, due to influence of globalisation, the poor socio-economic condition of tribals is being exacerbated in certain aspects. They are employed in the unorganised sector and are facing the problems related to denial of benefits of government-regulated welfare schemes like minimum wages, public provident funds, and pension, among others. The over influence of globalisation has also brought an erosion of the bargaining power of labour within national contexts (Mishra, Upadhyay, and Sarma 2012:9).

During my interview with a local tribal leader “Kujur” in 2014- 15 November , he remarked that:

*Due to the influence of globalisation, the tea plantation industry has shifted from the formal to the informal. It has led to what is known as the informalisation of the tea industry. The self-help Groups or other cooperative groups have emerged to invest their money in the small tea gardens with little financial support. The tea plantation owners also enjoy more powers vis-à-vis the tea labourers and any trade unionism or mobilisation among the tea labourers is restrained and suppressed. Under such a circumstance, the tea labourers have little or no say in the affairs of the tea plantation and securing even their basic rights becomes a problem. Another process of globalisation which is found to influence the life and working conditions of the women tea labourers is that women workers appeared to have some form of empowerment. This has influenced matters of recruitment and the domestic life of the women. It has helped the women to limit their children, increase family income, increase contacts outside their home. They are also more emboldened to join Self-Help Groups and other avenues of associational life to improve their conditions.*

The response of another labourer called “Nagen” to one of my questions about the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, 100 days of work which are to be extended to the labourers through tea plantation Gram Panchayats is as follows:

*“In reality, these jobs are provided to other people instead of the genuine tea labourers. This would often lead to violent strikes, depression, deviation, suicides and inactiveness and adversely affecting the productivity and profitability of the tea industry in the long run.”*

Climate has been changing drastically due to deforestation and forest fragmentation and consequently, more carbon is being released into the atmosphere exacerbating and creating further changes like drought and declining

rainfall. The tribal people are more dependent on natural water because till now they have not got the benefits of irrigation- although most of the big dams are constructed in the tribal areas. The livelihood of the tribal people has also suffered from the negative consequences of changing their socio-economic condition as most of the tribal people are dependent on natural foods like fishing and gathering. This rising temperatures, dune expansion, increased wind speeds, and loss of vegetation are negatively impacting traditional cattle and goat farming practices of indigenous peoples. In search of their livelihood, they have chosen to move out from their villages and forests to town – as a consequence they have been facing with double problems including forced migration away from their traditional lands along with facing problem of trafficking and smuggling. Praharaj (2015) stated that in Odisha only, thousands of people have been effected due to Climate change. During 1998 heat wave had killed around 1500 people in the state. Again, daily temperature levels are increasing steadily. Rohatgi & Kapoor (2013) stated that lack of employment opportunities is the main cause of migration of tribal people to city areas, where 41 percent people migrate in search of jobs which is followed by marriage (21%), and 20% due to displacement from their agricultural land for construction of big companies. In city areas they have faced several problems such as exploitation by the person/agency, landlord's , economic and physical abuse, sexual exploitations etc.

During my interview on 28<sup>th</sup> November in 2014 – the labourers and tribal leaders told me that:

*“Now the new generation does not want to works at the tea garden because there they have very less of opportunities. One to two family members from every family of this garden are staying outside state- basically in Pune, Bangalore, Delhi and there they are working as a manual labour. But in reality, no one wants to stay outside of their home – but they are bound to leave from their home in search of their livelihood. We have no agricultural land and we get a very small amount of wage as a labour, so, with this small amount no one can survive their life. Again, now a day's tea production has also declined due to hot weather. So very less number of fresh recruitment is seen – so frequently changing weather also causes migration- as in the tea garden there is very little chance to get job due to less number of fresh recruitment for these youth”.*

### **Tribal Movement**

The indigenous people have demonstrated the history of resistance and cooperation over the decades, as it is an opinion and determination to live within their distinct territorial identities (UN, 2009). In May 2016, the Fifteenth session of the united Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) has declared that indigenous people' as distinctive groups. It has emphasized to protect tribal specific rights based on their linguistic, territory, and development of a given region by the international or national legislation. Over the decades the relationship between the indigenous people and the non-indigenous people has become more and more complex, as a result the degree of conflict and



subjugation has increased. As a result, they have been facing the problem of identity crises from the pressure of assimilating into their surrounding society.

Different Indian scholars have classified these Indigenous movements in different ways. Desai (1979), Gough (1974) and Guha (1983), have classified tribal movements as peasant movements. K.S. Singh (1985), has criticised this view on tribal movement and stated that movements are social and political in nature which have lead to social isolation. Again, Mohapatra (1972), described tribal movement as re-actionary, conservative and revolutionary. But, Surajit Sinha (1968), has classified movements into five groups such as ethnic rebellion, reform movements, political autonomy movements, secessionist movements, and agrarian unrest. S.M. Dubey (1982), has classified tribal movements as religious, social reform movements and movements for separate statehood, Insurgent movements and cultural rights movements.

A numerous tribal movements have been seen over the century against the destruction of forest and land. The first tribal movement was begun from Bihar in 1772 and it was considered as the first beginning of Tribal movement in India. After that hundreds of revolts were witnessed in state like Andhra Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram and Nagaland. Jungle Bachao Andolan of 1980s was the first tribal result in Jharkhand and Orissa. Navdanya Movement was started in 1982 and it was the movement for empowering women for anti-globalisation campaigns. This movement was led by environmental activist Vandana Shiva who tried to promote biodiversity conservation and organic farming. Again, different tribal movements were seen in North-Eastern state around the issues of identity, irregular developments etc. For example, Bodo movement, Adivasi movement, Naga movement, Kamatapur movement etc. are the prominent ones.

Most of the adivasi people of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra lived in the mountains and the plains areas of Narmada river valley and their livelihood is based on the natural resources. Since 1985, a struggle is going on against the displacement and devastation of natural resource from the Narmada Valley project, as it is constituted by 30 large dams, 133 medium size dams, and 3,000 small dams and with 75,000 km of canal. Narmada Bachao Andolan is related with rights over economy, environment, and livelihood, personhood, for humanity. Most of the movements slogans are 'Amra gaon ma amra raj' (our rule in our village), Ham sab ek hain' (We are one), vikas chahiye, vinas nahin' nahin' ('we want development and not destruction). The Jharkhand movement was started for the issue of deforestation, deprivation from job and influx of outsiders. They had demanded for the creation of separate state covering Palaman in Bihar to Keonjhar in Orissa and from Surguja in Madhya Pradesh to Manipur in West Bengal of the Indian Union for their identity preservation. Their chief slogan was the "our lands,' our minerals and our rights". But the government had taken the entire illegal path to fulfil their dream and the local people are even more harassed are by police in false cases. All the tribal movements in India such as Naxalite movement in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh etc., were related with the issue of alienation, deprivation, cultural



assimilation, uneven development etc. and against the insensitivity of government over this issue. The tribal movements failed because their leaders become prisoners to that great bane of Indian democracy- identity politics and they tried to mobilise their communities for electoral gains. In an interview with Magazine "Down to earth" on Thursday 31 July 2003 - Jharkhand based minister and tribal leader remarked-

Babulal Marandi former chief minister of Jharkhand and himself a tribal said that-

"Tribals say no to developmental activities because they haven't seen the fruits of development. Maximum displacement happened only when tribals spurned jobs and employment. That's why non-tribals got all the jobs.

Again, Arvind Netam, a prominent tribal leader of the Congress party said that:

*"Tribal leaders have very little significance in mainstream political parties. Tribal leaders within political parties depend entirely on non-tribal leaders. There are no tribal heavyweights at the higher levels of the parties to influence, say, the distribution of tickets to promote a promising young tribal politician.*

One Tea garden based leader "Kalpajit" told me during my interaction that:

*"It is impossible to represent tribal interests within the fold of political parties. Political parties 'work for the interest of some sections of people, who can help by providing money. Big corporations provide money for election. So all these parties, when it comes to power-they obviously work for that corporate".*

## Conclusion

Globalisation induced global warming stands as one of the major causes of marginalisation of adivasi people from their own land and resources. Globalisation has brought geographically isolated tribal people into homogenization. As a consequence their traditional self-governance systems have come into contradiction with globalisation. Increasing threats for livelihood, traditional culture are seen among them which frustrate the young generation. Despite having several constitutional provisions, they are vulnerable in several ways. The political parties work for the elite sections of society. The uprising of indigenous movements are the evidence of this resistance. It has denounced the destructive flow of exploitation of the indigenous land. This resistance is seen as an alternative social conflict and argumentative political behaviours, grassroots at and as an comprises alternative mode of political participation. In character, it is flexible and decentralized networks.

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