



## RISE OF THE ABORIGNGS

Dr. Vilas Ugale

Dr. Praveen Saptarshi

### *Abstract*

*A community, which is unfamiliar with the civilized culture but lives in a particular region, is called a Scheduled Tribe According to Joshi (1976) Except the Aryas and Dravid communities, the community which was living in the forests or near the mountains, away from the civil life is called scheduled Tribe. This definition is well accepted and used in the literature.*

*The general assumption of the people about the scheduled / Aborigines tribes is that the wild people who live in the mountains and the forests. Actually these tribe are original inhabitants of this country. The mighty foreigners attacked them and covered their lands so the tribes had to take shelter in the forests and valleys. They had detached themselves permanently and others also did not pay attention to them. So they remained ignorant and illiterate for hundred's of years. But they kept their values of fundamental culture with themselves. They did not give up their pure soul, honesty, and the love for nature.*

*As stated above, some people call them 'forest banished' instead of 'original livers'. Such people don't like the idea that they are 'original inhabitants'. The people, who are impressed by the greatness of their culture and the old customs, think that it will hurt their ego. As a matter of fact, how can 'original dwellers' be the 'forest dwellers'? Why should they be called 'forest dwellers'? In the clashes between the history and culture during passing time, who forced them to live in the forests? The "Tribal" culture is the original culture of this country. The "Vedic culture" came later. The great tradition and heroic history have been obscured as the time passed on. The scholars, who were studying history and culture, never saw the Tribal communities. That is why the Scheduled Tribes never were understood by the common people. From this fact the, tribes started living their exile in the forests and among the mountains. The exile life has not ended yet. None can tell when it will end.*

The tribes have been mentioned already in the ancient Sanskrit literature. The period of Ramayana and Mahbharata may be of four or five thousand years before. When Aryans came first time in India, they saw the Tribal communities living there primitively. The Aryans called the tribes 'Dasyu'. The groups or gangs of the tribes were called 'Gana' and the leader of the group was called 'Ganapati' or 'Gananyak'. The states or kingdoms of 'Ganas' were at the foot of the Himalaya and in other regions of the country. During the time the emperors tried hard to enslave the states of the Ganas. They attacked the Ganas and killed the leaders. However, the Ganas did not become slaves of the emperors. If one leader was killed another brave man would become the leader. It was hard to enslave the Ganas by fighting them. The minister of the emperor Chandragupta, named Kautilya had advised him how to over power ganas. "By making the Gananayakas quarrel among themselves, by encouraging them to be addicted to wine, and by sending beautiful women to lure them, According him to the powers of Ganas can be weakened by otherwise it was difficult to win them". In spite of the efforts made by many to demolish the tribal people the aborigines have a great and heroic history. As they were the inhabitants of this country, they were the rulers of the enormous empire were spread thousands of miles.

Among the Salryadri ranges also, there were independence states of tribe named 'Mahadeo Koli'. Their region was identified as 'Kolwan'.

The proud we find in the word 'aborigines' is not so much as in the word 'exilers'. Because of the term 'exilers', the self prides the self-respect and self consciousness is not retained. Today no tribe

Dr. Vilas Ugale, Dr. Praveen Saptarshi

prefers to be called as 'exilers'. The word 'tribes' preserved the mental condition of these people. To call them 'forest dwellers' or exilers means to destroy the tradition and history of the tribes and hence it would be a great injustice to them Gare(2002)

Generally we can say that aborigines are the people living aloof and away from the civilized culture. They live in separated regions commonly in the forests, in isolated mountains and valleys and valleys and aloof from the civilized society. There were rises and falls of many civilizations but tribes didn't come in contact with them and so they didn't change even after thousands of year.

“Aborigines” means “Original native”. One view is that they should be called 'Exilers' not 'Aborigines'. They have no different culture, proud and self-respect and they are like other civilized people. The difference is that they live in forests only. This is the other kind of view. Most of the Aborigines live in the areas surrounded by hills so they are called 'Girijan' or “People living in hills”. One typical group of Aborigines is called a “Community”.

There are some other words for “Aborigines” in English such as (i) Primitive which means native people since origin, (ii) 'savage' means backward, 'Savage' shows the backwardness, ignorance and innocence of the Aborigines.

It is being recommended now a days that Aborigines should be declared as an 'illiterate' community. Aboriginal dialects have no script. Therefore they can't read and write. That is why they are called illiterate. In the writings of recent human science. Aborigines have been mentioned as illiterate, Joshi (1976).

“Aborigines are called as 'Girijan' i.e. hill people and as they are inhabitants of this land, so they are called 'land people' or “Bhumijan or Bhumij”. The Scheduled tribe is the word for Aborigines in the constitution of India in article No.: – 342. Gare (1982). It is very extended / occupying and deceptive Aborigines or original native is the correct term for it. Gove. of Maharashtra (1976).

#### **WHO SHOULD BE CALLED “ABORIGINE”?**

Aborigine community means ancient quite undeveloped and negligible community. This is a very wrong assumption about this community. By defining the aboriginal community with scientific methods, the psychologists have removed the misunderstanding about the Aborigines. They have not only corrected the assumption but also given the answer to the question. “Who should be called Aborigines?”. This is the purpose that we have to consider various definitions of Aborigines.

- 1) Gilin & Gilin :- The local group of people living certain region, speaking the same dialect and living the same cultural life but unfamiliar with letters i.e. illiterate is called “Aboriginal community”.
- 2) W.J. Perruyani:- He slated the minimum characteristics of Aboriginal. He says, “The community which speaks the same dialect and lives on the same land is called 'Aborigine community'.
- 3) Dr. Reverse:- “ The members of particular community speak the same dialect and by living together, with the aim or purpose of battle, struggle for achieving the goal, such straight and simple living group of people is called Aboriginal community”.
- 4) Imperial Garrett:- It defined Aborigines as follows. “Same dialect speaking, living on the same land and having the possibility of inter family marriages at first but latter's generally without inter family marriages, having the same family name is called 'Aborigines'.
- 5) In 1962 AD., at a conference of Aboriginal community in shilong defined as follows:- “A unique homogeneous group of people using same language, having origin in ancient times, living on the same land, comparatively backward in technical education, being illiterate, based on the relations by blood and following the social and political customs and regulations sincerely is called an “Aboriginal community”.
- 6) Maan & Majumdar:- “It is always mentioned that having same language and culture and

Dr. Vilas Ugale, Dr. Praveen Saptarshi

economically mutually related rural social group is called “Aboriginal community”.

7) Bogards says:- “Aboriginal group of people is based on necessity of protection, relations by blood and similar religion.”

8) D. N. Mujumdar:- Defines Aborigines broadly by taking into consideration all the characteristics of them. He states, “A combination of families or family groups which is having same name, dwelling on the same land, speaking same language and following same rules and customs about marriage and profession and accepting a systematic method of producing mutual liability is called “Aboriginal tribe”. A community which preserves social and cultural values is Aborigines”. Gare (2000)

“Aboriginal community is the one which has self proud and knowledge of their Geographical region”.  
“A community which is deprived of the modern community and which denies to accept it.”

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY:-**

Aborigines are considered as ancient coloniers of India. The Prato – Astroid, Mangoloid and Negrito were the ancient races living in old era to which we call 'Aborigines' today. It is assumed that they should have risen from any the above said human races. This is the opinion confirmed widely today. The Aborigines were not so much able to protect themselves to they could not stand before the Dravid, Indo-Aryan and Mongolians' respectively. The invaders were not only more in number but also well equipped than the Aborigines. So the Aborigines had to get back or run away and take shelter in forests and hills. We see them living permanently at the same places.

Today many Aboriginal communities live in forests permanently. Among them every caste is considered different. Every caste or sub-caste establishes the marital relationship within itself. Every caste has its own customs and traditions. However, to sum up, the Aborigines have following characteristics.

1. They live far away from the developed world in remote valleys.
2. They are related either of the following races. Negrito, Proto-Astraloid or Mangoloid.
3. They speak only one caste oriented dialect.
4. They worship their ancestors and ghosts.
5. They earn their living by hunting, by collecting farm products and other things. Sometimes do farming on mountains.
6. Almost all of them are camivorous.
7. They remain necked or half naked. They use leaves or bark of trees.
8. They are of wandering nature / mentality.
9. They specially love wine and dance.

#### **CLASSIFICATION OF WILD CASTES TRIBES:-**

Tribal welfare committee organized the Indian a conference at Kolkata the scholars and social workers have classified Indian Tribes as follow.

1. Wild community:- The people living in valleys and its dense forests and following the ancient tractions and customs come under this category.
2. Semi-Wild community:- The people living nearby the villages or outskirts of the villages and living on farming or the profession related to farming come under this category.
3. We cultured wild communities:- The people who have gone to the cities or semi-urban areas and have beome progressed / civilized and they have been influence by the modern life are well cultured wild communities.
4. Resolve Tribes / Assimilated Tribes:- The people who have resolved in Hindu community come under this category. Joshi (1976)

Dr. Vilas Ugale, Dr. Praveen Saptarshi

#### **SALIENT FEATURES / CHARACTERISTICS OF ABORIGINES:-**

Thus for, following may be the characteristic features of the aborigines.

1. An Aboriginal community lives in certain region and the land covered by it is smaller than the area of the developed community. The area is inaccessible due to the lack of roads.
2. The Tribal community is generally having the system of inter-marriage and it is divided into ex-marriage groups. The groups are comparatively smaller than the community living in that region. They depend upon the relationships of the people. The membership of the groups is not possible as voluntarily as the modern society.
3. Every Aboriginal tribe has independent Jury called 'Panchayat'. The whole community is maintained and controlled by only one leader and the chief is called 'Mukhiya'.
4. Every tribal community has its unique and independent language.
5. The religion of Aborigines is limited to their native places and their holy places are also in their regions.
6. There is lack of groups of communities that are differentiated by separate social groups or by labour division in financial system of Aborigines. All people do all kinds of tasks. Besides this, in their economical systems the means of productions are all primary in nature. The slab and the muller, traps, nets, hooks, fishing hooks, ropes, sharp sticks, hammers, knives and many other primary equipment's are used by them. Production, distribution and utilization are the three stages of economy. Among the three stages, distribution means transport and to hand over goods at the public level. But this stage does not exist in Aboriginal economy. The amount of their production is less and so there is no marketable surplus. Every one consumes his own product. Their economy is subsistence types and hence without currency. The inter trade is barter, i.e. the exchange of necessary goods for goods.
7. The tradition is preferred by the Aboriginal community. The treasure of the tradition is transferred from one generation to the other by means of stories, poems, songs and dances etc.
8. Adoration of the Nature and the actions like magic are important in their religion.
9. They lay emphasis on tradition and social control and so there is similarity in the behavior of all people. Their habits and customs are formed by the business they do in their everyday life.
10. Aboriginal communities are self-centered. It is natural that they are self-centered because they remain aloof from the economical, social and religious life for centuries. All societies in the world were in the state of Aborigines. They became rural communities later. After that there arrived the system of the government and the capitals a market places came into existence. This was why there started civilization. Well known human scientists, Robert Red Field opines that "after the Industrial Revolution human societies started taking steps towards to entire civilization. That is why there started the process of desolation of communities and Tribal communities have been changing into rural communities. Joshi (1976).

#### **CLASSIFICATION OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES IN FIVE CLASSES:-**

There have been some important changes in all Aboriginal communities because they came in contact with other cultures / civilizations. From this point of view Tribal communities can be classified into five groups.

- 1) They don't come in contact with other cultures or they are slightly changed.
- 2) They have been affected / influenced by external relations but retaining their own social structure and cultural characteristics.
- 3) Aborigines live together with other castes and religious groups like a caste organization by constructing the society.
- 4) Aboriginal group which is treated as untouched people because of its external relationship.
- 5) The Aborigines who have got high position because of the improvement in their economical

Dr. Vilas Ugale, Dr. Praveen Saptarshi  
status and political influence. Joshi (1976)

**ABORIGINES IN INDIA:-**

The population of the tribes in India is slightly lower than the African continent. According to the constitution of India Aborigines are called as “Scheduled Tribes” (S.T.) From the geographical point of view Indian Aborigines are divided into four categories.

- a) North and North East Part:- This part the tribes like bhutiya, Dharu, Lepcha, Naga, Gora, Khasi, Daphala, Kuki, Abor, Mikir etc. Out of them Butiya and Dharu communities dwell on the border of northern part of Uttar Pradesh Lepacha is Sikkim live on the border or Sikkim. Other communities live on northeast border of Asam and Kamenga, Naga live in the area surrounded by mountains.
- b) Central Part:- The number of Aborigines in the most in this area. In Bihar there are Sandhai, Munda, Aroau, in Orisa Birhor, Bondo, Khond, Savara and Juang, Gond, Baiga, Kol, Koraku, Bhujjiya etc. in Madhya Pradesh, in Rajasthan Bhilla and on the plateau of Deccan living Chenchu, Kolam-koya etc. are very famous Aboriginal tribes.
- c) Western Part:- This part included the tribal communities living in the area of Sahyadri Among them Varali, Katkari, Mahadeo Koli, Thakar, Bhilla are the main “tribes in the area Besides” these the other tribes like Andha, Kolam etc. are other communities. In Gajarat we find the communities like Varali, Bhilla, Dubala, Waghari etc.
- d) Southern Part:- Minority of Aborigines like in this part among them Tada, Badaga, Kora, Irula, Kanmba, Ekkhalan, Adian, Arandan etc. are the mentionable tribes.  
Many Tribal communities live in Tripura, Manipur, Andaman and Nikobar islands. Overall there are more than 300 hundred communities of the Aborigines. Joshi (1976)

**THE ABORIGINES IN MAHARASHTRA:-**

The economy, social organization, religious rites arts etc. of Maharashtra Aborigines are similar to tribes in other parts of India. Besides farming, the main professions of them, they have other professions like collecting food, fishery and hunting are the other professions of the tribes. Many of them work as laborers in the field and as forest workers.

The Aborigines in Maharashtra have been largely influenced by Hindu religion. Rigid proportions and magic are trusted by Madia and Gond tribes Bhilla tribes call to “Arjuna” as “Rana Fanta” and the Lord Krishan as “Gonda Thakur”. They celebrate the festivals like Diwali and Holi but the way of celebration is different from the other communities. There are the folk songs of Bhilla, Mahadeo Koli, Thakar, Katkari, Gond and warli Dance songs, Marriage Songs, songs of hunting, elegies, songs of farmers, lullaby songs etc. are the types of folk songs. Besides these the legends, riddles, proverbs, idioms exist in unwritten forms.

3-Andha	22 – Oreo	31 – Kaware	55 – Kathodi
55 – Kokna	61 – Koya	62 – Korku	67 – Kol
68 – Kolam	79 – Khaikhar	101 – Chodhra	103 – Dhodia
109 – Thakar	112 – Dhorkoli	120 – Dhoti	124 – Dubla
127 – Dhanka	128 – Dhalwar	132 – Nagesia	135 – Naikada
141 – Patelia	146 – Pardhan	153 – parathi	162 – Pamla
166 – Warda	171 – Bawcha	172 – Binzwar	176 – Birdul / Virhor
181 – Bhilla	184 – Bhaya	192 – Bhunjiya	196 – Bhaina
217 – Mahadebo Koli	256- Radhwa	273 – Warli	275 – Vitalia
306 – Halwa			

The above mentioned 37 communities in Maharashtra and other 10 communities that is 47 Aboriginal communities are recognize as “Scheduled Tribes” (S.T.) Joshi (1976)

In Maharashtra there are many types of folk songs and dances of Bhilla, Mahadeo Koli,

Dr. Vilas Ugale, Dr. Praveen Saptarshi

Thakur, Kotkari, Gond and Warli. There are different kinds of folk songs such as dance songs, marriage songs, hunting songs, elegies etc. Besides there is unwritten literature such as legends, riddles, proverbs etc.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has stated five principles for the progress of the Aborigines. They are as follows,

- 1) The aborigines should develop themselves according to intelligence and ability or efficiency. They should not be forced for that. They should be encouraged in retaining their cultures and arts.
- 2) We should approve their rights of land and forests.
- 3) We should try to make them efficient by giving education so that they will administrate and continue to develop themselves. At first we will have the need of external and expert technicians. But we should avoid the entry of the people coming from outside.
- 4) We should not emphasize / insist on extra an complicated administration. They should not be puzzled. With the help of cultural and social institutions we should carry out the work of their development.
- 5) As per the policy we should not conclude their progress according to the amount of money spent on it but we should judge them depending upon the progress of their attitude and mentality. Joshi (1976).

As far as these principles are concerned we should help them to lead happy life by not interfering Aborigines life. From this point of view them government implements different development programmers for them.

#### References

1. Joshi (1976):- “Sanskriti Kosh” Vol-1, Edited by Pandit Mahadevshashtri Joshi, Bhartiya Sanskritikosh Mandal, 410 Shaniwar peth, Pune 411030 Page No. 428.
2. Dr. Govind Gare (2000):- Adivasi Samashya Ani Badalty Sandharbha, Sugawa Publication Pune – 30 Page No. 7 to 8
3. Dr. Govind Gare (1982):- Adivasi Prashna, Adim Publication Pune 2nd edition 1st January 1982 Page No. 1
4. Govt. of India, Constitution of India, Govt of Maharashtra 1979 Page No. 107.
5. Dr. Govind Gare (2000):- “Maharashtratil Adivasi Jamati” an article by Dr. First edition Aniriddhes Anant Kulkarni, Continent Publication. Vijayanagar, colony Pune – 30 Page No. 1 to 2.
6. Pandit Mahadevshastri Joshi (1976):- Bhartiya Sanskritik Kosh, Vol – 1st Publisher, Bahartiya Sankriti Kosh Mandal 410, Shaniwar peth, Pune 411030 Page No. 428.
7. Tarkirtha Laxmanshastri Joshi, (1976):- Marathi Vishwaksoh, Vol – 2nd, Main Publisher Publiscation, Maharashtra state literature, Cultural Board, Mumbai 400 032 Page No. 28 – 49.

**\*Dr. Vilas Ugale**  
Department Georaphy,  
S.P. College, Tilak Road,  
Pune- 411030.

**\*\*Dr. Praveen Saptarshi**  
Emeritus Professor,  
Department of Environment Sciences,  
SPPU Pune-411007.