

DIGITALISATION AND ITS IMPACT ON SANTALS' ECOLOGY : A PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK

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Abstract: *The Santals are one of the Adivasi communities of India. Their way of living and cultural identity is uniqueness. Their livelihood and survival is intimately linked with Nature. Their life co-exists with Nature, not in the way to dominate Nature but to have mastery over Nature so that the life, both human and non-human, can be preserved without depletion. In this way, interconnectedness with the natural environment makes their life as eco-friendly. However, slowly, due to the nationalisation of non-timber forest products, some forest goods have gained market value, and are now included in trade to earn cash money.*

In this paper, an attempt is made to understand the Santals' ecology philosophically, and how their way of life is threatened due to digitalisation. For example, many Adivasis/Tribals in Odisha, especially Santals whose subsistence depends on collection of sarjom sakam (leaf of Shorea robusta) and making plates and bowls out of them, are directly affected by GST. Further, Adivasi/Tribal communities in central India depend on tendu leaf (Diospyros melanoxylon) collection for subsistence but owing to the implementation of GST on it, their rights to these have been abrogated. In contemporary India, due to the notions of the modern development, globalisation and industrialisation through the corporate houses, the trade and infrastructure is designed to feed its personal profit interests. The consequence is that Adivasis/Tribals gets deprived. The strategy of Indian development, globalisation, and industrialisation ultimately means Adivasis/Tribals being alienated, marginalised, and oppressed. The anthropocentric conceptions of modern development and globalisation depleted the ecological balance and destroyed the traditional Adivasi/Tribal environment of holistic, integrated and elementary harmony between Nature and Culture. And such evasive actions erase/suppress the very life of indigenous group identities and knowledge networks.

Due to lack of cash during demonitisation Adivasi/Tribal daily labourers did not receive their wages on regular basis, notes of smaller amounts, in particular. They felt that banking transaction are just for the wealthy as if the amount hacked or deposited money will not get back in time. They have to spend the entire day for withdrawing money. Again, majority of their survival depend upon daily works. So, they used the new technology only for entertainment purpose. Further, modern technology changed their agriculture model as instead of using available traditional fertiliser from their locality they are using modern fertiliser these days. They are taking modern medicine in place of locally available traditional ones. Imitating the modern music and musical instruments they are avoiding their traditional style. Furthermore, advent of social media the majority of Santal youths are addicted in Face book and WhatsApp and increasing the lack of interest in work. Moreover, as modern wine has come in the market they are gradually not consuming homemade rice beer.

Key Words: *Santals, Ecology, Digitalisation, Mastery and Dominance, Modern Development.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Santals are one of the Adivasi communities of India with unique cultural identity. Their entire livelihood along with survival efficiency is intimately linked with Nature. The existential establishments as economical life, foods and drinks, dwellings, festivals, ceremonies, culture, religious beliefs and rituals are immensely related with Nature. Their life co-exists with Nature, not in the sense of domination but to have mastery over Nature so that the life, both human and non-human, can be preserved without depletion. The behaviour of conjunction endeavoured their relation with the natural environment makes their life eco-friendly. But, gradually, a few forest produce acquired market interest as a result of nationalisation of non-wood forest goods. Because of this change, the Santal inhabitants involved themselves in the trade system avoiding their traditional way of earning. Furthermore, in contemporary India, the need of land for development is forcing Adivasis/Tribals especially Santals for displacement. And landless Santals have been rising rapidly. As a result, in the name of development they are getting deprived.

2. SANTALS' MODE OF SUBSISTENCE:

The close adaptive relationship between the Santals and the environment has enabled them to survive while leading a relatively isolated life in a difficult environment. In the ancient time, the Santal people confided on forest based activities like hunting, food gathering and farming. But those pristine manners are vanishing fast with the changing circumstances. Due to these changes, they proceed with agriculture, in order to maintain their economic activities, influenced by primitive technology generating fairly sufficient quantity of grains.

According to their environmental conditions their major occupations are agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, gathering, pastoralism, fishing etc. They construct *sukri ura* (pig chamber) near their house with mud, straw, bamboo etc, for taming pigs. Pigs (*sukri*) are used for eating purpose as well as sacrificial purpose. *gede gudri* (duck chamber) and *sim gudri* (chicken chamber) is also created by them for the same purposes. *merom* (goat) and *vidi* (sheep) *gura* (chamber) is built for same motive too.

Interesting thing is that, during these livelihoods based works male as well as female actively work together. Along with these, they indulge in subsidiary occupations such as, mat-weaving out of date palm leaves, trays and bowls making with *sarjom sakam* (leaf of *Shorea robusta*), broom weaving out of *siroms* (*Chrysopogon zizanioides*), toddy-tapping etc. Further, although some Santals are employed as school teachers, professors, doctors, nurses, engineers and government employees nowadays, but they are very few. Therefore, it can be understood that ecology accomplishes a very important life-sustaining role in shaping the Santal economy.

3. SANTALS' HOME:

The Santals depend upon their surrounding environment for their survival and livelihood. For example, Santals' home is made of mud, several wooden logs, bamboo, straw, palm leaves, etc which they collect from their own immediate surroundings. Their houses are very neat and tidy; they swab the courtyard and the terrace with cow dung daily. The way the houses are built, the roof is thatched, the floor decorated, the doors carved and the walls painted signify Santals' artistic skills and creative abilities. In their lives, the adaption of artistic creativity has emerged from Nature and requires in their day-to-day life and where some are from one generation to another. For example, *aloni* a kind of decoration of wall (frescos) is portrayed with the symbols derived from the objects and beings of their natural surroundings.

Their rope cots, baskets, bows, arrows, fishing materials, mouse trap, birds trap, and almost everything are prepared by the materials which are available in their neighbouring forest area. The rope cots being necessary furniture spontaneously appear in their house for hospitality. The earthen vessel is used for preparing foods and earthen pitcher is to preserve drinking water also visible in their home. Santals villages are typically established in a high place near to the forest or river. There is a wide *kulhi* (street) from one end to the other end of the village so that bullock carts can be easily moved through. There are rows of houses on the both sides of the *kulhi* (street). The houses in villages are built in a way that they coordinate linearly with every house, also in mid of the village a wide space is left and *akhra* (an open place for dancing and singing) is created. It is a place where all people gather together, they sing, dance and enjoy all festival together. *Jaher Than* (sacred grove) is situated on the entrance of every Santal villages for worshipping their deities. *Manjhi Than* is also located near the house of the *Manjhi* (village headman) for worshipping the predecessors of the village headman and their deities and they also use it as a centre for important meetings.

4. JOM-NU (FOODS AND DRINKS):

Due to their intimate exposure with the immediate forest ecosystem, Santals have adequate traditional knowledge of the qualities and varieties of exhaustive forest products and also become acquainted with which of them are esculent and which are not. The food chart is very much balanced with their local environment such as, leaves, roots, tubers, flowers, mushrooms, etc which they gather from nearby jungle or neighbouring area. Furthermore, as they are settled cultivators too, they cultivate paddy, wheat, maize, potato, mustard, several types of millet and pulses. As they plant rice, rice is used as their staple diet. Settled agriculture does not provide them sufficient food due to indifferent geographical location and as most of them have deficient cultivable land, they depend upon natural food resources. The vegetables that they eat are often of leafy type, which grows like wild weed. It has become their habit, and these edible plants have been important part of their diet until now.

The Santals have traditional ethnic knowledge and technique of use of parts of different plants as well as wild edible forest mushrooms and understanding of ecology. They collect various kinds of edible weeds from their agricultural and non-agricultural fields to supplement their staple food. For example, *kantha arak* (*Trainthema monogyna*), *garundi arak* (*Alternanthera sessilis*), *seta kata arak* (*Gynandropsis gynandra*), etc. Again in winter time they dry these under the sun and make curry with *da mandi* (rice soup).

They take different kinds of mushrooms to make curry such as, *sim sandi ud* (*Russula sanguine*), *tarmal ud* (*Amanita vaginata*), *putko* (*Astraeus hygrometricus*) etc. Besides, they use some mushrooms for medicinal purposes

such as, *tumbo ud* (*Pisolithus arhizus*) and *lutur ud* (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) is used as medicine for the treatment of wounds and so on.

They also eat local vegetables such as, *kundha* (pumpkin), *hotod* (gourd), *saru-boho* (colocasia), *pinde da* (*Amorphophallus campanulatus*), soup of dry *janum* (*Ziziphus zizyphus*) etc. They make curry with fig too. They also consume some cereals such as, *ghangra kolai* (*Asparagus bean*), *horej del* (*Macrotyloma uniflorum*), *raher kulai* (*Cajanus cajan*), etc.

They consume various kinds of locally available fruits such as, *tali* (*Borassus flabellifer*), *hisa* (*Ficus religiosa*), *baare* (*Ficus benghalensis*), *kadam* (*Anthocephalus*), *lawa bili* (*Ficus glomerata*), *Sa* (*Ribes nigrum*), etc.

They also consume different types of non-vegetarian items too such as, pork, meat of rat, beef, meat of iguana, meat of squirrel, meat of weasel, meat of rabbit, meat of tortoise, small snail, large snail, oyster, crabs, dry fish, meat of frog etc and meat of some local birds such as, *kisni chere* (*Acridotheres tristis*), egret, owl, stork, etc. Another interesting thing is that their knowledge of preparation for consuming different kinds of meat by *lat* process (meat is roasted by warping in leaves) is really wonderful.

Santal's food habit also varies and run by time and space in their daily life as well as in religious practices, and festivals/ceremonies according to season. For example, during hot season they eat *riyar daka* (boiled rice mixing with cold water) by adding little *bulun* (salt) in it with onion/green chilli. In winter and rainy season they eat *lolo daka* (warm boiled rice) with *katkom sipi* (the crabs are burnt and crushed with salt and chili) and consume warm *da mandi* (rice soup) adding little salt. For example, Santals do not consume first fruits of *matkom* and *sarjom* without offering these by *Nayke* (the village priest) to their *Bongas* (spirits) at *Jaher Than* (sacred grove) at *Baha porob* (the flower festival). Besides, they do not consume first rice without offering it by *Nayke* to their *Bongas* at *Jaher Than* during *Janthar* (the harvest festival).

“Cooking of *pitha* (sweet or salted cake), a food of religious and social importance is also regulated by time. *Arsa pitha*, for example, is prepared to welcome the guest at any social ceremony; *buka pitha* is made only on the occasion of name-giving ceremony of a new-born baby; *dombok pitha* is prepared during festivals in the months of November-December; *jel pitha* must be prepared at *Sohrae* (the harvest festival) and so on. Not only *pitha*, but cooking of some other foods such as *nim-dak-mandi*, *nimsure*, etc., is also regulated by time. *Nim-dak-mandi* (rice-gruel with margosa leaves) must be cooked and eaten at the time of name-giving ceremony of a new-born baby to remove pollution of the spirits and the whole village. *Nim sure* (rice and *Margosa* leaves mixed) must be cooked and eaten by all the members of a household when the farmer comes home after having sown the first paddy to ensure that the flies will not eat the ears of the corn” (Nita Mathur, 2001: 39).

Consuming food is also regulated by space. For example, in any festival or religious practices especially during the sacrifice to *Abge Bonga* (Clan Deity), flesh of any animal sacrificed to their *Bongas* at the *Jaher Than* must be cooked and consumed there itself. They believe that the *Bongas* will enter into the village along with such foods and bring harm. “Remains of sacrifices to the Bahre bonga (village outskirts spirit) must be cooked and eaten outside the village lest the spirit will be angry and cause harm to the whole village... It is strictly forbidden for any Santhal to cook or eat anything at the kherei (the threshing ground). It is believed that if the prohibition is not followed, the Kharachatani bonga (the spirit of the threshing ground) will become very angry” (Nita Mathur, 2001: 39-40). In that way Santal's knowledge of consuming foods is run according to season.

5. HANDI-POURO (RICE BEER-LIQUOR):

Handi (homemade rice beer) and *matkam pouro* or the wines made out of *matkom* (*Madhuca indica*) are also favorite and sacred to them. Sometimes they drink rice beer in the *furu/khala* (bowl/big bowl like item) made of *tali sakam* (palm leaf) and offer every times to their *Bongas* in the *furu* (bowl like item) made of leaves of *Sarjom*. It is also used for purification as well. For example, the religious and communal pollutions at the time of birth, initiation, marriage and death, are removed by the libation of *handi* to the *Bongas* (spirits). *Handi* symbolizes greeting too. For example, at any occasion and ceremonie Santals are greeted with a drink of *handi*. *Tari* (toddy) from *tali dari* (*Borassus flabellifer*) and *khijur* (date palm tree) is also consumed by them. “*Handi*, i.e. ricebeer, is the most sacred and indispensable drink of the Santhals. According to a myth, the Supreme deity, *Maran Buru*, taught the first human pair of Pilcu Haram and Pilcu Budhi to prepare *handi*. It is, therefore, a very sacred food to them. The festivals of the Santhals would appear lifeless without ricebeer. It may be noted that the Santhals drink not only to enjoy its taste, but to become nearly intoxicated, so as to forget the troubles of this world” (Nita Mathur, 2001: 41).

Each and every time before taking these foods and drinks, especially at the time of drinking *Handi* (rice beer) and other liquors they *Barha* or *Chodor* (offer) to their ancestors and deities with the belief that, they will save them from ruin, destruction or harm. In that way their food habits are also closely associated with Nature through festivals, ceremonies, religious practices and ancestors' worshipping.

6. IMPACT OF MODERN NOTION OF DEVELOPMENT ON ADIVASIS/TRIBALS:

The Adivasi/Tribal way of life and their traditional systems of governance are perceived to be eco-centric and democratic as prudent use of natural resources still exists among the maximum Adivasi/Tribal people, especially in Santals of India. These communities are the best suited to conserve their biodiversity and resources through their traditional practices as their entire survival depended on the sustainable use of these resources.

Historically saying, due to the economic interests of the different dominant ruling classes, they have been forced to corners. The requirement of their land for development continues to drive them into displacement. In addition, the trade and services are also built to serve the capitalist interests, which increasingly growing landless class. Development programs have destroyed their physical, cultural and cognitive survival. It has thus turned into a symbol of plunder and violence. As a result, the bourgeois-shaped development drives forward the neoliberal capitalist agenda that has caused victimisation of Adivasis/Tribals in general and Santals in particular in the name of development.

7. LAND AND ADIVASIS/TRIBALS:

Hasa (land) is the *jiui* (life) of Adivasis/Tribals. So, it is imperative to claim land rights for them. Emergence of land alienation due to modern development and commercialisation of agriculture have adversely affected their economy. And the right over the bio-resources of the area of these people has become minimal. The modern development is driving out them from their traditional occupations and from their residence. For example, because of development projects like construction of reservoir, nuclear and thermal power plant, industry and mining, roads, railways, hydroelectric dams, missile testing bases, tourist lodge, park etc have ruined the cultural life-world of Adivasis/Tribals. Thus, in the name of development they are being evicted.

As a result, several significant resistance movements of various Adivasi/Tribal groups had emerged, especially against land grabbing and economic exploitation. For instance, in recent times, on April, 2018, in Jharkhand several Adivasi/Tribal groups, especially Santals protest against changes in Jharkhand Land Laws as they understand that the amendments is for grab their land to sell to corporate. Again, on September, 2018, in West Bengal Adivasi/Tribal communities protest against power project in Ayodhya Hills because the project harms the forests, elephants and Adivasis/Tribals. Further, on June, 2018, in Odisha these peoples of Niyamgiri ranges collectively oppose the bauxite mining by Vedanta Company. Because the Niyamgiri hills are home of many of them as well as they consider the hills as sacred and worship the hill. Recently on October, 2018, a 182 meter high tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is built in Gujrat and in response of it several Adivasi/Tribal organisation protested, saying it takes away their land and livelihood. Many farmers and Adivasis/Tribals protest by saying the statue takes away their land and livelihood, and they have not been adequately compensated for it. Besides, on April 2018, over 40, 000 Adivasis/Tribals in North Bengal protest against displacement by Railways project for construction of Sikkim-Bengal Railway corridor.

8. FOREST AND ADIVASIS/TRIBALS:

Forest environment plays a chief role in shaping the socio-economic and religious life of the Adivasi/Tribal people; hence forest to them may be conceived as heart of their livelihood. The forest resources not only give livelihood to them but they also provide them with a social bond, a culture reminiscent of their ancestors. In fact, this sort of knowledge can only be acquired due to intimate association with the immediate environment. They are ecologically adapted to a forest environment. So, they have symbiotic relationship with the forest and they are the best suited to conserve their biodiversity and resources as their entire survival depends on the sustainable use of these resources. They collect various kinds of non-timber forest products from the forest, such as, grasses, leaves, fruits, fibres, gums, medicinal plants, seeds etc, it primarily meet their personal requirements.

But, gradually, some forest products acquired commercial value due to nationalisation of non-timber forest products. However, in most cases, the collection is done through government agents or the men of the private contractors. In this process, they have been deprived of some of their natural rights over forests. “The Forest Department reported that nearly 7 lakh hectares of forests were under encroachment in early 1980, which has gone to 12.5 lakh hectare today. However, more significant is the fact that of the 43 lakh hectares forestland diverted between 1950 and 1980, only half was for agricultural practices. By 2001, 2.5 lakh acres of encroachments had been regularized and 50 per cent of these were in tribal areas. These figures reveal that the government refused to make a distinction between encroachment for commercial purposes and encroachment for livelihood. Further, it is also necessary to emphasize that most of the encroachment that occurred for industries and big projects had an adverse impact on tribals and weaker sections of the society” (Archana Prasad, 2004: 34). From the report of Forest department it is obtained that, immense encroachment happens for the purpose of establishment of industries and mega projects, whereas a minimal encroachment occurred for agricultural purpose. Furthermore, minimal encroachments by marginalised communities occurred only for subsistence or livelihood. So, commercial encroachment devastatingly affected livelihood of Adivasi/Tribal people as a whole.

They have lived in harmony with their forest surroundings from time immemorial and therefore have the first right to their forest lands. The livelihood of these people is inherently dependent on their immediate forest environment

too. So it is not possible to class them as ‘encroachers’ as their very existence is dependent on forests, and it is just a frustrating practice to view them as encroachers. From the colonial time, in the name of reserve forest, they have been evicted from their own forest areas. Therefore, the development programme would not provide an alternative form of subsistence rather they were deprived of their productive assets and converted into daily wage labourers while the forest was actively utilised for commercial and industrial purposes.

As a consequence, many resistance movements of various Adivasi/Tribal communities had occurred against forest exploitation in India. The movements were the outcome of a long course of oppression by the dominant officials. “There were also several movements during the colonial times that demanded the restoration of their traditional rights on the natural resources of their own regions. The most prominent amongst these were the Munda and the Santhal rebellions of the nineteenth century, The Bastar rebellion of 1910, the Gundem Rampa movement of Bengal, the Forest Satyagraha of the Central Provinces, etc” (Archana Prasad, 2004: 19). Again, Chipko movement (1973) in Garhwal (U.P.), Narmada Bachao Andolan in Manibeli (Maharashtra) etc, questioning the worst impact of modern development pursued by the officials and for conservation of ecology.

Furthermore, recently there were also several struggles raised for forest, water and land rights. For example, on January, 2018, in Maharashtra 467.5 hectares of reserved forest land is transferred to the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group for cement plant. Again, thousands of farmers, Adivasi/Tribal groups and agricultural workers from around the country came out in the protest in Delhi on September 5, 2018, seeking farm loan waivers, better minimum wages and recognition rights of these communities over the forests.

9. PRESENT SITUATION OF ADIVASIS/TRIBALS:

The modern notion of development is affecting the livelihood and traditional occupations of Adivasi/Tribal people, especially Santals. As a result, they have to change their traditional occupations and become unskilled labourers that lead them to misery. For example, many Adivasi/Tribals in Odisha especially Santals whose subsistence depends on collection of *sarjom* leaf and making plates and bowls out of them, are directly affected by GST. Again, Adivasi/Tribal communities in central India depend of *tendu* leaf collection for subsistence but due to imposition of GST on it resulted in the abrogation of their rights over these subsistences. Besides, due to availability of tharmokol/plastic plates and bowls the demand of plates and bowls made of *sarjom* leaf is reduced. Furthermore, planting other trees in the *sarjom* forest, such as, *sona jhuri*, eucalyptus etc for business purpose the *sarjom* tree is reducing. Because the leaves of *sona jhuri* and eucalyptus are creating infertility for *sarjom* trees in the land they situated.

The survival and livelihood of Adivasis/Tribals depend upon collecting forest produce but due to forest plantation and transfer of forest to the contractor, resulted deprivation. So, they are depending upon government schemes but these too stop working due to digitalisation. For instance, in the name of social security they face problems due to Aadhaar in the form of data entry errors, network glitches, biometric authentication failures, cut on fingers and so on. And some government schemes for Adivasi/Tribal welfare such as rations distribution is delivering less or no quantity of grain to them because they did not have Aadhaar or had failed to link their social security details with Aadhaar. Again, the monthly pensions are not received because of failure of biometric authentication. In spite of Supreme Court’s order that no child could be denied school admission for not having Aadhaar, some poor children of them may be refused because their family could not locate their Aadhaar numbers.

Further, due to lack of cash during demonitisation Adivasi/Tribal daily labourers did not receive their wages in regular basis especially notes of smaller amount. They felt that bank transactions are for rich people only as if their deposited money will not be got back in time. For withdrawing money they had to spend whole day.

Again, modern technology changed their agriculture model as instead of using available *guri j hasa* (traditional fertiliser) from their locality they are using modern fertiliser these days; those are costly as well as harmful. Again, as they are mostly daily labourers, their livelihood depends on daily wages. But due to modern technology they are losing their worker job too. For example, because of paddy cutting machine and rice transplanted machine the daily labourers are getting fewer jobs nowadays. They are compelled to work with low wages. As a consequence of it, many Santal men and women go to neighbouring areas for some days or daily basis to work as *namal* on cash payment.

One interesting incident is that, earlier some old persons and children would collect the remaining paddy (*hulo*) after harvesting from the field as one of the subsidiary occupation. But after coming of the paddy cutting machine this occupation is also getting vanished. Besides, the straws are not in use after using paddy cutting machine and the left straws are burnt in the field. As a result, burnt soil loses its fertility and disturbs ecology. Furthermore, as the paddy straws are out of availability the cattle rearing is getting reduced and nowadays they are roofing their houses with modern tools, such as, adbester, tin etc. In this manner their traditional technique of roofing their mud house getting missed through these modern tools are not comfortable. Again, with the advent of modern technology, such as, tractor, harvesting machine, the cattle rearing is getting reduced. For example, the *Sahrai* festival of Santal is for thank offering to the cattle, has got affected.

They are taking modern medicine in place of locally available traditional ones (*rehed ran*) those are available in their locality. Imitating the modern music and musical instruments they are avoiding their *ari-chali* (traditional style). As a result, they are on the way to identity crisis. Because it is believed that they are fond of *reske* (enjoyment) with their traditional music, song and dance. It is said that after entering to their *akhra* (music spot) they forget all of their hunger, thirsty, tiredness and so on. Furthermore, majority of their survival depends upon daily works. So, they use the new technology only for entertainment purpose rather than to know the present situations. But with the advent of social media the majority of Santal youths are addicted to in Face book and WhatsApp and increasing the lack of interest in work. Instead of their poor condition, anyhow they want to buy a multimedia mobile phone and they are not doing their work. Moreover, as modern wine has come in the market they are gradually not consuming homemade rice beer and *matkom pouro* (wine made of *Madhuca longifolia*). But the modern wine is costly and harmful too. Besides, as rice beer is the main item in their every life cycle rituals they are forgetting their culture.

Furthermore, by producing huge nuclear power, India dreams of very early being efficient. So, the government has been started large scale of uranium mining. Consequently, large number of health hazards, such as, muscular dystrophy, illness and so forth occurred in many Adivasi/Tribal areas. Besides, the land acquisition process has recently begun by the government of Maharashtra for Bullet Train project. In addition to this, Suresh Oraon, an anti-coal mining activist had recently shot dead in Purnadih Chatra as he protested land grabbing of Central Coal fields Limited. Again, in the recent past in Uttar Pradesh, the police brutality that assaulted many women, children, as they were in claim to forest land under Forest Rights Act 2006.

10. CONCLUSION:

It is evident that Santals are hermetically knit relating to their local natural environment using Nature in their everyday life in harmony with Nature. But, in contemporary India, due to digitalisation through the modern development, globalisation and industrialisation by the private enterprise within capitalism, inherently implies alienation of the living down to Nature of Adivasis/Tribals in general and Santal in particular. Again, the anthropocentric conceptions of modern development depleted the ecological balance and destroyed their traditional mould of coherence and basic balance between Nature and Culture.

It is true that modern science and technology is necessary to develop a nation as whole. But, the capitalist model of development induced inequalities as these have used corporate control over natural resources for the benefits of the elite whereas Adivasi/Tribal people are deprived. The modern capitalism thus entails unsustainable and unhealthy commercial use of natural resources resulting environmental degradation and marginalisation of traditional Santal ecology.

Therefore, protection and restoration of traditional socio-cultural ecology and community rights of them on their own natural resources must be implemented. The steps must be taken to envisage and build a feasible model of development that is non-capitalist in nature and on behalf of Adivasi/Tribal society as well. Besides, the local control over natural resources as well as local body governance and democratic control of people over natural resources is essential.

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