UNIT 5  TRIBAL PROBLEMS*

Contents

5.0  Introduction

5.1  Land Alienation
   5.1.1  Land for Tribals
   5.1.2  Land Ownership
   5.1.3  Land Alienation
   5.1.4  Forms of Land Alienation
       5.1.4.1  Internal Transfer of Land
       5.1.4.2  Alienation of Land by External Forces
           5.1.4.2.1  Alienation of Land by Non-tribals
           5.1.4.2.1.1  Methods of Land Alienation
       5.1.4.2.2  Alienation of Land by Development Projects

5.2  Debt-Bondage
   5.2.1  History of Debt-bondage
   5.2.2  Problem after Independence
   5.2.3  Methods Followed by Non-tribals for Lending Money to Tribals
   5.2.4  Causes of Debt-bondage
   5.2.5  Constitutional and Legal Provisions
   5.2.6  Problems in Implementation of Legislations
   5.2.7  Alternative and Remedial Measures

5.3  Education
   5.3.1  Constitutional Mandate on Education to STs
   5.3.2  Main Causes of Low Literacy in Tribal Areas
   5.3.3  Suggestions to Improve Tribal Education

5.4  Health
   5.4.1  Health Status
   5.4.2  Cultural Factors in Health and Medicine
       5.4.2.1  Case: Health-seeking Behaviour Among Birhors in Madhya Pradesh
           5.4.2.1.1  Antenatal and Post-natal Care Among Birhors
   5.4.3  Modern Health Care

5.5  Displacement
   5.5.1  What is Displacement?
   5.5.2  Forms of Displacement
   5.5.3  What is Development-induced Displacement?
   5.5.4  Development-induced Displacement Among Tribals

5.6  Rehabilitation
   5.6.1  What is Rehabilitation?
   5.6.2  Rehabilitation and Resettlement: Policy and Problems
   5.6.3  Rehabilitation Among Tribals
       5.6.3.1  Case: Polavaram Project
       5.6.3.2  Case: Narmada (Sardar Sarovar) Project

* Contributed by Dr. K. Koteswara Rao, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Rourkela.
5.0 INTRODUCTION

Tribal people are the most vulnerable section of human society. This is because of their:

- resource-based livelihoods,
- location of their homes in vulnerable environments
- poverty
- marginality.

They face numerous problems, ranging from the decades-old issues of land alienation and debt-bondage to the recently emerging issues of environmental change and degradation.

5.1 LAND ALIENATION

5.1.1 Land for Tribals

Land is a vital natural resource for human life. Land, for most people including tribals, is not merely an economic resource (source of livelihood), but also a symbol of social status and identity (individual identity and identity of community inhabitation, e.g., Naga, Khonds, Savaras, Konda Reddis), security and self-reliance. However, landholding patterns in tribal areas today reflect a form of unequal distribution and/or alienation of land.

5.1.2 Land Ownership

Traditionally, tribals had a three-tier land ownership and control system:

- Community land
- Individual land
- Clan land.
Every community had well-defined boundaries and traditional administration systems based on customary laws. There were definite rules, generally controlled by the village council, on who could cultivate what land and in which season. They performed many social activities and rituals related to land and agriculture in their society.

5.1.3 Land Alienation

Since land is a marketable commodity, its alienation or transfer happens. Land alienation means transfer of title and possession from one person to another. In the context of tribals it means the tribal community losing ownership and control of tribal land.

5.1.4 Forms of land alienation

As alienation of land happens both within and outside the tribal community, we can classify land alienation into two types. These are:

- internal transfer of land (by tribals)
- land alienation by external forces.

Check Your Progress

1) What are the forms of land alienation?

5.1.4.1 Internal Transfer of Land

In such alienation, land is transferred from a tribal landowner to another tribal. This internal transfer of land or mortgage is necessitated by need for money for medical care, education, etc. It results in internal disparity (inequalities in its distribution and control), which is one form of land alienation within the community (High-level Committee 2014). However, this is a minor issue when compared with land alienation by external forces.

5.1.4.2 Land Alienation by External Forces

Land alienation by external forces is of two types:

1) Alienation of land by non-tribals. Migrants and outsiders encroach on tribal lands, resulting in tribal people losing control over their lands.

2) Alienation of land by development projects in the tribal region.

Majority of land alienation happens by external forces and is a major problem for the scheduled tribes of India.
5.1.4.2.1 Alienation of Land by Non-tribals

In spite of constitutional safeguards and legislative measures for protection of tribal land, like the State Scheduled Area Regulations and Tenancy laws, land alienation by non-tribals in connivance with the instruments of the state continues. According to Kamal K. Misra (2002 in “Study of alienation of tribal lands in Schedule V Areas” of Andhra Pradesh, undivided Madhya Pradesh and Odisha), tribal-to-tribal transfer of land accounted for 14.04%, while tribal-to-non-tribal transfer was 85.95%. There were eight methods adopted by land transferees in the study villages:

1) sale
2) mortgage
3) benami transfer
4) forcible occupation
5) oral transfer of possession
6) marital alliance
7) buying land in the name of concubines
8) other fraudulent means.

Tribals fall into indebtedness on account of:
- religious and social obligations
- litigations
- medical treatments
- alcoholism

The study showed that prolonged indebtedness of the tribal households was the main cause of tribal land alienation. The study describes the apathy and insensitive attitude of officials handling land issues of tribals. The study also highlights that tribals were less politically organized and unaware of their constitutional rights. More than 85 percent did not know that there were laws against transfer of tribal land.

5.1.4.2.1.1 Methods of land alienation by non-tribals

The following are important ways land is alienated by non-tribals.

a) Leasing and mortgaging

Land sustains the livelihood of tribals, who have very few other assets. Tribals need to borrow money from moneylenders on occasions such as:
marriages and death rituals,
medical emergencies involving family members
continuous crop failure due to the dependence on seasonal monsoon and poor irrigation

To meet their needs, the poor and helpless tribals are forced to borrow money by mortgaging their land to local moneylenders at high-interest rates. When the tribal people fail to pay back the borrowed money, the land is transferred to non-tribal creditors.

b) **Encroachment**

Outsiders befriend local leaders and bribe them to get ownership of land. The new entrants, who are economically well off, slowly occupy the tribal land and establish themselves by procuring *patta* by networking with government officials. This becomes a significant threat to the tribal people, who are illiterate and unaware of modern land record management systems in the country.

c) **Marital alliance**

Outsiders make use of marital alliances or concubine age with tribal women to buy land in the name of their tribal wives or concubines. They thus escape the law and grab tribal land. This method is more prevalent in areas that are closer to non-tribal areas.

d) **Fictitious adoption of the non-tribal by the tribal family**

Outsiders adopted fictitiously on paper by tribals enjoy the tribal land and escape the provisions of land transfer regulations.

e) **Benami transfer**

Transfer of land through *benami* is another important method of land alienation by outsiders.

5.1.4.2.2 **Alienation of Land by Development Projects**

The High Level Committee report (2014) considers development projects as one of the main causes of tribal land alienation. Because of high demand for land for development projects, the state acquires land in the name of “public purpose” without a compulsory “land for land” provision for rehabilitation. The report further says that land alienation is also due to:

- collusion of revenue officials,
- incorrect interpretation of laws,
- manipulation of records and permissions accorded to alienate land.

It also says that most state tenancy laws recognize only individually owned registered lands. Community lands are recorded as government lands in survey and settlement operations. Such lands have not been fully surveyed, and there is no record of user practices.
5.2 DEBT-BONDAGE

Indebtedness or debt-bondage refers to an obligation to pay money to another party. Debt-bondage among tribals is a significant problem, often leading to situations of bonded labour.

5.2.1 History of Debt-bondage

The origin of the problem of debt-bondage can be traced back to the time when monetary economy in tribal areas was introduced by non-tribal outsiders. The outsiders penetrated tribal areas during the British colonial times. The monetary economy gradually substituted the barter economy of the tribal areas. Originally the tribes had a self-contained economy and were masters of large tracts of lands. During British times, non-tribal people who entered these areas found the tribal people easy prey for their schemes of exploitation. They started lending money to the tribal people against the security of their lands. They charged exorbitant rates of interest (100 to 300 percent).

The tribals were illiterate but honest. They became victims of dishonest and unscrupulous methods of money lenders. Among the tribals, debt became a continual process that would pass on from father to son to grandson. It is generally said that tribals once in debt were always in debt. Debt-bondage made the tribals bonded labourers of moneylenders on their own lands (Verma 2017).

5.2.2 Problems after Independence

Nation-wide, around 85 percent of tribal families have been affected by debt-bondage. According to a survey, average debt liability per household increased from Rs. 419 in 1975 to Rs. 8,500 in 2004.

Tribal people borrow money from two sources:
1) Organized or institutional sources (e.g., banks and co-operative societies)
2) Unorganized sources (e.g., private moneylenders, shopkeepers, friends and relatives).

Among unorganized sources, 72 per cent of tribal people were indebted to private moneylenders; and the remaining people met their credit and consumer requirements from shopkeepers, friends and relatives (Verma 2017).

5.2.3 Methods Followed by Non-tribal People for Lending Money to Tribal People

There are four such methods:
1) Short-term loan: The repayment of a loan, which is at an excessive rate of interest, is made in kind by way of agriculture produce. Such a loan is mainly for clothes and food grains.
2) Medium-term loan: This loan is repayable with compound interest at yearly or half-yearly periods. Such a loan is given against the security of land.
3) Long-term loan: This loan is given for a fixed number of years against the lease of land. This land is to be cultivated by the tribal debtor for delivering products to the moneylender, until the repayment of the entire loan.
4) Usufructuary mortgage: Here loan is given on mortgage of land at compound interest. The moneylender remains in possession of the land and enjoys the produce from the land. The tribal person works as labour on his/her own land for the benefit of the unscrupulous moneylender. In case of default, the moneylender takes possession of the land (Verma 2017).

5.2.4 Causes of Debt-bondage

There are many causes of debt-bondage. According to Verma (2017), debt-bondage is attributed mainly to the following:

1) Extreme poverty,
2) Loopholes in the money lending laws,
3) Lack of awareness among tribals about sources of institutional finances (such as banks and co-operative societies),
4) Indifferent attitudes of officials (government and banks),
5) Absence of any regulatory control against private moneylenders,
6) Weak public delivery system of essential commodities and agricultural inputs, and
7) Lack of employment opportunities for tribals.

5.2.5 Constitutional and Legal Provisions

Special provisions under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution empower the Governor of a State having scheduled areas to make the following regulations:

1) to regulate the business of money lending
2) to provide protection against exploitation of Scheduled Tribes by moneylenders.

Some examples are the Andhra Pradesh (Scheduled Areas) Money Lenders Regulation, 1960; and the Andhra Pradesh (Scheduled Tribes) Debt Relief Regulation, 1960, 1970.

5.2.6 Problems in Implementation of Legislations

Though some legislations or regulations were made, there is no adequate machinery for enforcement of such legislations or regulations. Further, licenses for regulation of the business of money lending have not been issued.

5.2.7 Alternative/Remedial Measures

As remedial measures, alternative credit facilities have been provided for short-term and long-term loans. Procedures are simplified for speedy payment of loans. LAMPS (Large Area Multi-Purpose Co-operative Societies) and PACS (Primary Agriculture Co-operative Societies) have been started to meet loan and other consumer requirements in tribal areas. However, these societies have failed because of financial constraints and lack of administrative will.
5.3 EDUCATION

In this section, you will learn about the existing provisions in the Constitution of India and government policy on education for tribals, and the actual status of education among them.

5.3.1 Constitutional Mandate on Education to STs

The Constitution of India provides specific provisions under the following articles for promotion of education among the backward and weaker sections of the society.

**Article 15(4)** empowers the State to make any special provision for advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

**Article 41** empowers the State to make effective provision for securing the right to work, education and public assistance in [certain] cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement…

**Article 45** empowers the State to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

**Article 46** empowers the state to promote educational and economic interests of SCs, STs and other weaker sections. “The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.”

Thus, the provisions pertaining to education existed but mainly in the Directive Principles of State Policy. However, the Right to Education has now been made a Fundamental Right under Article 21A of the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002.

**Article 21A**: Under article 21A, the Government of India enacted a legislation called the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009”. It is simply known as the Right to Education Act (or RTE). “The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.”

Subsequently Article 45 has been amended and substituted by the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002, as —”45: Provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years.—The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.”

Despite such provisions, there is wide gap in terms of percentage of literacy between tribals and general population. For instance, according to 2011 Census, total percentage of literacy among general population is 73, whereas among scheduled tribes it is 59.
5.3.2 Main Causes of Low Literacy in Tribal Areas

The following are the main causes of low literacy among tribal people, according to Verma (2017):

1) Poverty of the parents,
2) Medium of instruction,
3) Contents of education,
4) Inadequate infrastructure and supporting services,
5) Absenteeism of teachers,
6) Lack of education policy, and
7) Socio-cultural factors.

5.3.2.1 The Poverty of the Parents

For poor parents, children’s education is a luxury, which they cannot afford. Grown-up children assist parents in earning a livelihood; they look after younger children. Absence of childcare centres (creches, balwadis) in tribal areas also deprives children from poor families from education.

5.3.2.2 The Medium of Instruction

Since tribal children are taught in a language which is not their mother tongue and is new to them, there are high drop-outs from schools and the literacy is low. Article 350A of the Constitution empowers the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education, to children belonging to linguistic minority groups. Though the tribals are entitled to instruction in their mother tongue, they have not been provided such facility, not even at the primary school stage.

5.3.2.3 Contents of Education

The general curriculum or contents of education is extended to tribal areas. Most of the curriculum is not relevant to the tribal people as it does not consider their needs and aspirations.

5.3.2.4 Inadequate Infrastructure and Supporting Services

Tribals face the problem of inadequacy of educational institutions, boarding and lodging facilities. Supporting services, such as incentives in terms of scholarships and book banks are insignificant to attract the children.

5.3.2.5 Absenteeism of Teachers

Teachers are absent for days because there is little or no supervision over them and they are not dedicated to the education of tribals. So the children often drop out of school.

5.3.2.6 Lack of Education Policy

Lack of administrative policy regarding the educational institutions in tribal areas affects the education of tribals.
5.3.2.7 Socio-cultural Factors

The general education system does not respect tribal culture and traditions; instead, it presents a negative picture about tribal culture.

5.3.3 Suggestions to Improve Tribal Education

The following are suggested to improve tribal education:

1) Making education value-based,
2) Improving infrastructure and supporting services,
3) Creating non-formal and vocational education centres,
4) Teaching in mother tongue at the primary stage,
5) Setting up sports training centres (Verma 2017), and
6) Providing economic assistance to needy children and families.

5.3.3.1 Making Education Value-based

Provide job-oriented education and make proper arrangements for vocational education. Include traditional local skills and crafts in education. Teach elementary civics to familiarize children with their rights and duties.

5.3.3.2 Improving Infrastructure and Supporting Services

Opening of educational institutions and construction of school buildings must get priority under NREGS. Provide residential (hostel) facilities to all (who walk more than 4 km) to attend school. Establish childcare centres (creches, balwadis) in tribal areas and provide suitable nutritional programmes in such centres.

5.3.3.3 Creating non-formal and Vocational Education Centres

Set up non-formal and vocational training centers to meet local needs (projects in tribal areas).

5.3.3.4 Providing economic Assistance to Needy Children and Families

Provide temporary economic help to low-income families to replace the loss of labour of their children.

5.3.3.5 Teaching in Mother Tongue at the Primary Stage

Teaching in mother tongue makes children follow and understand instructions quickly and encourages them to continue their schooling.

5.3.3.6 Setting up Sports Training Centres

Sports training centres will help tribal children promote their talents.

5.4 HEALTH

This section deals with the status of health, cultural factors in health and medicine, and modern health care among tribals.
5.4.1 Health status

The status of health among tribals is in general very poor. This is predominantly so among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). This is mainly because of their relatively isolated and remote living, unaffected by the process of development. Tribals are highly vulnerable to diseases. Their misery is increased by poverty, illiteracy, ignorance of causes of diseases, difficult geographical terrains and harsh climatic zones, lack of safe drinking water, poor sanitation and certain blind beliefs.

5.4.2 Cultural Factors in Health and Medicine

Culture plays an important role in tribal health and medicine. Attitudes, beliefs and values affect the willingness of tribal people to take voluntary action concerning their health and that of other members of their family. Non-biological human factors (social, cultural and behavioural factors) are essential to determine many diseases. How people live, what they eat, believe, value, and what resources they have at their end, are significant determinants of their individual and collective health. For instance, see the case below.

5.4.2.1 Case: Health-seeking Behaviour Among Birhors in Madhya Pradesh

According to Pandey et al. (1999), the Regional Medical Research Centre for Tribals (now National Institute of Research in Tribal Health (NIRTH)), Jabalpur, did a study among the Birhors in Madhya Pradesh during 1993-94. The Birhor is a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group. Their population was diminishing overtime. It was found that their demographic status was associated with their health status, which in turn, was related to their health-seeking behaviour. Their health-seeking expression was associated with beliefs, customs and practices, since the majority of their population was illiterate, impoverished and lacking access to modern health facilities. According to their belief system, sickness was caused due to the evil spirit or displeasure of God. They relied on gunia, the tribal doctor (Pandey et al.1999).

5.4.2.1.1 Antenatal and Post-natal care Among Birhors

As per Pandey et al. (1999), pregnant women were prohibited from eating fish because it was believed that just as fish swings upwards and downwards in water, the child at the time of delivery may also go upwards and downwards.

Delivery was conducted in an open space outside the house in a nearby hut (tada) made especially for delivery, irrespective of the season. It was believed that their god becomes annoyed if the delivery takes place inside the main house.

The umbilical cord was cut (by mother) with the help of a bamboo strip (40% of cases), new blades (15% of cases), knife (6% of cases), shells (9% of cases), and stone (3% of cases). They preferred to cut the navel cord with a bamboo strip. Because they believed, if a knife or blade cuts it, the affected place is likely to be swollen. They also opined that if the navel cord is cut with the help of an iron-made instrument, it may inject poison into the body of the child.
There was little awareness about immunization of the mother during pregnancy and of the child after delivery (9.6%). For example, a woman aged 31 years narrated the following: “I have four children. I did not take any injections or tablets during pregnancies. As I learnt from my mother-in-law, those are harmful to the foetus and may even lead to abortion or stillbirth” (Pandey et al. 1999).

People were aware of free medicines available at the Primary Health Centre (PHC) but claimed that the doctor did not treat them properly. Under these circumstances, the Birhors preferred to go to local healers. They were superstitious and lacked faith in modern medicine. Some practices prevailing in the tribe related to antenatal care, natal and post-natal care (including immunization) were likely associated with the high mortality (particularly infant mortality) (Pandey et al. 1999).

5.4.3 Modern Health Care

Compared to others, tribals have relatively less access to modern health care facilities. Most of them experience unsatisfactory services of health care providers. Nevertheless, the importance of modern medicine is being realized due to various reasons. These include changing conditions in tribal areas and growing awareness about advanced health care. People are seeking modern health care and medicine for specific health issues, for which they have no other effective remedies.

5.5 DISPLACEMENT

5.5.1 What is Displacement?

Displacement refers to the action of moving something from its place or position. It is a situation in which people are forced to leave their original place of living (homes). It is the enforced departure of people from their native lands - ancestral/original homes, villages, habitats in the affected areas - because of war, persecution, natural disaster, eviction/dispossession etc. Displacement of people in India is largely triggered by factors such as development projects, natural disasters and political conflicts.

5.5.2 Forms of Displacement

Displacements are of three main types:

1) Development-induced displacement
2) Disaster-induced displacement
3) Conflict-induced displacement.

5.5.3 What is Development-induced Displacement?

Development-induced displacement is displacement due to development projects such as dams, industries, and mines. Development projects cause people to lose land and other assets, or access to resources. Displaced people may have to suffer physical dislocation, loss of income, and other adverse impacts.
This displacement forces individuals and communities out of their homes, often also their homelands, for economic development. As coercion or force of any nature by the state is central to the idea of development-induced displacement, it is involuntary or forced displacement. This force is exercised by the public authorities of the state. Forcibly displaced people for development projects are designated as project displaced persons (PDPs), project-affected persons (PAPs), oustees, evictees etc.

### 5.5.4 Development-induced Displacement Among Tribals

Existing studies reveal that most of the people displaced due to development projects are tribals because tribal areas are rich in natural resources. The magnitude of the problem of displacement is known from various projects. We can easily understand from the latest, popular and major projects such as the Narmada (Sardar Sarovar) and Polavaram projects.

- The Polavaram project of Andhra Pradesh, in which a dam is under construction, submerges 94,357 acres of land in the tribal areas and 277 villages. It affects a total of 2,37,000 people in 277 villages of the state. It displaces a total of 1,50,697 people from 42,701 families, out of which about 50% are tribals, from 226 villages.
- In Upper Indravati project of Odisha, out of 18,500 displaced people, 89% were tribals.
- In the Koel Karo project of Bihar, out of the 66,000 displaced people, 88% were tribals.
- In the Sardar Sarovar project, out of 2,00,000 displaced people, 58% were tribals.

### 5.6 REHABILITATION

#### 5.6.1 What is Rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation is the process to restore displaced tribals to their earlier status (restoration to the former state). It is the action of restoring something that has been damaged to its former (prior good) condition. It is a process by which those adversely affected are assisted in their efforts to improve, or at least to restore, their incomes and living standards. Rehabilitation is provided for the people displaced due to development projects. And, resettlement refers to the process of settling people in a new area,
5.6.2 Rehabilitation and Resettlement: Policy and Problems

Rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) problems persist even today. There was no national R&R policy until 2003. The colonial Land Acquisition Act of 1894 remained in force until 2014 when the “Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013” came into force.

All through the years when there was no policy of rehabilitation, the rights of project displaced people had been neglected and they were put to several forms of deprivation. Even after policies of R&R came into force, project oustees continue to face problems due to problems in operation and ineffective implementation of these policies.

Such problems are over and above the unanticipated issues faced by the affected people due to their displacement from original lands to new locations, where they are generally treated as “intruders” by locals (with different culture and language).

5.6.3 Rehabilitation of Tribals

Tribals are displaced from their ancestral and native homes, villages and lands due to various development projects in tribal areas. They are deprived of their tangible and intangible assets, livelihoods and resource base. Such dispossession has inevitable psychological, social and cultural consequences. Multi-dimensional trauma of this kind cannot be easily compensated. The adversely affected oustees are expected to receive proper assistance to reconstruct and improve their living conditions. However, they face various problems of rehabilitation and resettlement. This was and continues to be the situation with most of the projects in tribal areas. Such issues can easily be understood with a few case studies. For instance, see the following.

5.6.3.1 Case: Polavaram Project

In the Polavaram project, the villages located at the dam construction site that were submerged, fall under its first phase of relocation and rehabilitation. There were five such villages. It was reported that a majority of the displaced people were unsatisfied with the compensation and rehabilitation and resettlement.

Majority of the displaced people have reported facing numerous problems at the rehabilitation and relocation centres, which are far away from the original habitations.

The displaced people have faced problems such as:

- lack of proper infrastructure at the rehabilitation and resettlement centres such as drinking water, electricity, roads, schools and healthcare facilities.
- lands provided as compensation are far from their homes at the rehabilitation and resettlement centres.
- coping with the host population at the new settlement centres because of differences in culture and socio-economic lifestyles.
- Oustees have lost access to natural forest resources and forest products.
5.6.3.2 Case: Narmada (Sardar Sarovar) Project

In this inter-state project built in Gujarat, the losses due to submergence and the quantum of displacement were underestimated and undervalued. Though there are diverse views on rehabilitation, the problems of displaced people in the new locations were:

- Inadequate land compensation: Some people were provided with inadequate land as compensation, contrary to that specified in the policy.
- Fuel and fodder: All the displaced families suffered acute problems of fuel and fodder.
- There were also problems pertaining to infrastructure facilities in the new location sites.
- Modern agriculture: Tribals of Nayakada, Bhil, Nayaka and Vasava, who came from interior villages, found it challenging to adapt to modern agriculture.
- Poor quality of land: Poor quality of allocated land forced some affected people to go back to their original, submerging villages.

5.7 ISSUES OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Environmental degradation has been a significant concern for our country for the past few decades. Proper management of the environment and natural resources is essential, as our survival and well-being depends on them. Degradation of the environment or resource base may lead to decreased production. For instance, reduced fertility of soil may result in lower yields, and deteriorated quality of water may affect the quality and quantity of fish in the natural water bodies as well as our health. Such problems are a matter of great concern particularly to the tribals, as they have a direct impact on their livelihood, food security, health and well-being.

5.7.1 Forms and Causes of Environmental Degradation

Environmental degradation takes different forms, such as:

- forest degradation
- desertification
- land degradation
- water pollution.

Environmental degradation is caused mostly by anthropogenic (human-made) activities, rather than natural phenomena. The causes include:

- overpopulation
- deforestation
- unsustainable agricultural practices
- over-consumption
- pollution of air and water
- maldistribution of wealth.
Significant consequences of environmental degradation and destruction of resources include increased poverty, overcrowding, famine, weather extremes and species loss.

### 5.7.2 Forest Degradation

Degradation of the forests is an important form of environmental degradation. Some of the degrading effects are:

- It causes loss of diversity in species and natural resources, and leads to man–animal conflicts in tribal areas.
- It affects the forest eco-system and tribal economy, for instance, loss of forest products and livelihoods to the forest-dependent tribal people.
- Certain diseases of wild fauna, which were once limited to forest areas, are now affecting our health and life, because of forest degradation. Millions of people are now getting affected by many such zoonotic diseases. For example, Ebola and COVID-19 are such zoonotic disease-causing viruses, which have emerged as a grave risk to public health. In other words, loss of forests is considered to lead to zoonotic diseases, which affect human society.

### 5.8 SUMMARY

This unit provides a brief understanding of various problems faced by tribal people.

- **Land alienation**: Alienation of land is a major, old and persistent problem. It is mainly caused by external forces such as non-tribals and development projects in the tribal areas.
- **Debt Bondage**: Debt-bondage is an important problem, which made the tribals bonded labourers of moneylenders in their own lands.
- **Educational and health statuses**: Educational and health statuses are reported to be deficient among tribal communities.
- **Displacement and rehabilitation**: Tribals face problems of displacement and rehabilitation due to development projects in their areas.
- **Environmental degradation**: Degradation of the environment is an emerging problem faced by tribal people.

The reasons for such problems are many and mainly due to factors external to the tribal community, i.e. the outside world.

### 5.9 REFERENCES


5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer 1
Land alienation is in two forms. 1) Land alienation within the tribal community or internal transfer of land, 2) Land alienation outside the tribal community or alienation of land by external forces.

Answer 2
There are two types of external forces that cause land alienation in tribal areas, and thus two types of land alienation by external forces. These are: 1) Alienation of land by non-tribals, and 2) Alienation of land by development projects.

Answer 3
It is a process by which development projects cause people to lose land or other assets, or access to resources. This may result in physical dislocation, loss of income, or other adverse impacts.