

## **ARE TRIBAL PEOPLE EQUALLY INVOLVED IN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN INDIA? AN EMPIRICAL STUDY FROM MALDA DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL**

**Prabir Das\***

**Dr. Pradip Chouhan\*\***

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### **Abstract**

The inclusion of so-called most vulnerable and most deprived section of the society i.e. ST, SC, and Minorities are very essential on the eve of holistic development of India. Keep it in mind, the Government of India launched Decentralization and Local Government programmes regarding the inclusive growth of the country. In which, various programmes and projects have been implemented from bellow through bottom-up planning. This paper examines the process of tribal responses and participation in the development process, set by the planners in terms of their involvement in various economic, social and political activities. The detailed study concludes that til now after sixty years of independent the tribal have not been beneficiaries of our development process. Development works not properly reach to them, their living condition is very much poor as compared to other social groups. Recently the new generations of tribal started to respond to different educational programs and access to basic health care. They are quietly involved in the political process through participation in different political processes. But these are not sufficient to empower them.

**Key Words:** the tribals; development; access to the economy; access to education; political participation.

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\* **Research Scholar, Department of Geography, University of Gour Banga, Malda, West Bengal**

\*\* **Associate Professor, Department of Geography, University of Gour Banga, Malda, West Bengal**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally tribal is considered a primitive segment of Indian society. The tribal societies are self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency means they need not interact with non-tribal societies for their social, cultural and physical existence. This very nature of tribal people kept themselves away from the rest of the other societies (Mohapatra, 2011). In India tribal form a vital part of the economy directly and indirectly for maintaining the prestige of the country in world level. Recently tribal issues have become an integrated part of the development programme and policies. The tribal populations are historically neglected across the World. India is not exempt from it. Different reflection from tribal society demonstrates that tribal in India continue to be relatively disadvantaged in a matter of survival, health, nutrition, education, job opportunities, assets formation etc. (Thakur, 2012). Broadly the problems of tribal can be grouped into five categories, i.e. economic, education, health, employment and social and political discrimination. A very large percentages tribal is unskilled, therefore, restricting them to low paid occupation. They generally have no control over land and productive assets.

It is not unknown that in the rural area of the country the tribal are the poorest of the poor segments of the society. Their access to different developmental benefits is very low. Their participation in higher education and political system is also very less (Ambagudia, 2006). They live in either forest of hilly areas without having more than a casual contact with the so-called civilized and advance neighbours. There is no population pressure, there was no attempt to penetrate in their areas and impose value and believes on the tribals. The British introduced the system of land ownership and revenue. The annual tax was so high, which was beyond the paying capacity of tribal cultivators. Under the increasing pressure of population, many outsiders also started settling in tribal regions. With their money power, they offered a credit facility at the doorstep. Initially, it provided relief of tribal but gradually the system becomes exploitative, and therefore, they become landless and gradually marginalized.

There are several terms have been emerging at the different time regarding the development of India, like 'incredible India', 'Shining India' etc. Is India really shining? Is it possible for a country to reach targeted sustainable development without eradicating poverty, removing

inequality, equity and social justice and all over capacity building among its citizens particularly, the vulnerable segments in the society like SCs, STs, OBCs, and Minorities?

Keep it in view of mind; the Government of India has taken many steps to improve the situation after Independent. The welfare of *Dalit* and *Tribal* has been given special attention in five-year planes. The size of investment in the special programmes has been increasing from plan to plan. The State Government has a separate department to look after the welfare of SCs, STs, and OBCs. The State Government has also been spending a sizeable amount on the welfare of *Dalit* and *Tribals*. Much has been written on the needs of tribal empowerment, policies have been framed and countless schemes have been implemented.

Despite all effort, the real situation of tribal could not remarkably change. Yet they still marginalized and have not come into contact with the mainstream of society. This paper will examine the real situation of tribal in the view of the participatory approach with respect to non-tribal population. And will exaggerate who is responsible for the above crisis of tribal society.

A large number of research papers, books and project have been published with a description of the tribal scenario. Most of them studied about the tribals are either national level or on the tribal mainland. Quite a few researchers have tried to assess the tribal condition at the micro level. Some researchers have analyzed and come to conclusion regarding tribal development and participation.

Indian tribes have been living between two worlds: their own tribal world which is in transition and the new world which open up vistas for their transformation (Raja & Ahmad, 1999). The Indian tribes today appear to have recognized themselves to the political reality. The programmes of regional development launched in India since the beginning of the planning era have left their impacts on tribal society. Despite they have not received outside influence which could transform their economies. Hence the writers of the tribal problem in the central Indian regions often noted the autonomous status of the tribal society.

In the study of Dipankar Gupta, 1986 about the tribal development of West Bengal, his finding was that the tribal of *Bolpur* in *Birbhum* District are generally unaware of the many facilities in their block. While the tribal in distant *Salbadia* knows about many of these facilities and concludes, there is the mixed impact of development policies on tribals.

Krishna Mohon, 2010 in his article asserts that tribal areas in India are a misnomer. In reality, it does not exist. Amit Kumar Singh in his article on urbanization and development in Ranchi city finds that the pace of urbanization causes enormous uprooting the tribal population from their habitats and they lost their agriculture and forest-based occupations.

The political inclusion through assured their representation of tribal members did not result in making them empowered in local government (Pramanik, 2013). In this study, an attempt has been made in assessing how far the tribal population is involved in our development process in the country.

### **1.1 The Tribes in India: Nature and Growth**

A tribe is viewed historically and developmentally as a social group existing before the development of or outside of, states. Many anthropologists use the term tribal society to refer to societies organized largely on the basis of kinship, especially corporate descent group. In India, the tribal are also called '*Adivasi*'. Adivasi is a comprehensive term for a heterogeneous set of ethnic and tribal groups, claimed to be the aboriginal population of India. They comprise a substantial indigenous minority of the population of India.

The concept of 'original inhabitant' is directly related to the initial peopling of India. Regarding this statement different debate had been arrived. Some anthropologists hypothesize that the region was settled by multiple human migrations over time, which makes it even harder to select certain groups as being truly aboriginal. One narrative research describes '*Negritos*' similar to Andamanese adivasies of today as first humans to colonize India likely 30-65 thousand years before present. None of these hypotheses is faced from debate and disagreement.

The constitution of India, Article 366(25) defines Scheduled Tribe as “*such tribes or tribal communities or part of or group within such tribe or tribal communities as are demand under Article-342 to the Scheduled Tribes (STs) for the purpose of the constitution.*”

In Article 342 the procedure to be followed for specification of a Scheduled Tribe is prescribed. However, it does not contain the criterion for the specification of any community as Scheduled Tribe. An often used criterion is based on attributes such as-

- a) *Geographical Isolation:* They live in cloistered, exclusive, remote and inhospitable areas such as hills and forest.
- b) *Backwardness:* Their livelihood is based on primitive agriculture, a low value closed economy.
- c) *Distinctive Culture, Language, and Religion:* Communities have developed their own distinctive culture, language, and religions.
- d) *Shyness of Contact:* They have a marginal degree of contact with other cultures and people.

There has been a continuous effort towards the holistic development of tribal population ever since the beginning of planned development in India in 1951. The tribal population in India, an estimated based on 1931 Census where cast wise data exists, indicated their total population as 17.9 million sharing 7.8 percent of the total population.

In 1950 all 245 communities of tribal were identified for expanding special privileges. These communities are called Scheduled Tribe. The nation-wide Census in 1951 for the 245 communities, their total population was recorded as 19.1 million. It was only 5.36 percent of the total population in India. Contrary to it the Scheduled was revised in 1956 to include more communities. However, the basic problem on the inclusion of any community in the list will revolve around working out their population size, geographical location and nature of the distribution. The Census of 1961 was awaited with a hope that the actual figures may be more than estimated.

**Table 1: India Scheduled Tribe Population, 1950-2011**

Year	Total Population (Million)	Total Population (Percent)	Growth Rate
1950 *	17.9	7.8	
1951!	19.1	5.36	-

1956 *	22.5	6.25	-
1961	30	6.87	51.3
1971	38	6.9	26.3
1976 **	41	7.5	-
1981	51.6	7.6	35.8
1991	67.8	8.08	31.9
2001	84.3	8.2	24.3
2011	104	8.6	23.37

Note: Years with an asterisk are no Census Years. ! The government of India (1952): First Five-Year Plan, p. 626. \*The list of Scheduled Tribe was revised. \*\* Scheduled Cast and Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act 1976- area restriction for Scheduled Tribe was removed.

However, the Census count of 1961 all the listed communities of tribe placed a total population of 30 million. It was 6.87 percent of the total population of India. The Census of 1971 reported a total of 38 million Scheduled Tribes sharing 6.9 percent of the total population of India. There were once again deliberate attempts to reach the magic figure of 7.5 percent. The Government removes the area restriction in 1976 and the Scheduled Tribe population was exactly 7.5 percent of the total population. Ever since 1976, there has been the continuous inclusion of communities in the Scheduled list. The Scheduled Tribe population in 2001 Census was reported 8.3 millions of the nation's total population. It is 8.02 percent of the total population of India. According to recent 2011 Census, the total Scheduled Tribe population in India is over 104 million. It contributes 8.6 percent of the country's total population.

Within India, there is exists a huge variation in the distribution of the tribal population. One concentration lives in a belt along the Himalayan stretching in northern and north-eastern states. In the north-eastern states Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland, more than 90 percent of the population is tribal. However, in the remaining north-eastern states, Assam, Manipur, Sikkim and Tripura tribal people form between 20 percent and 30 percent of total population.

Another concentration lives in hilly areas of central India. Other tribal including ‘*Santal*’ lives in Jharkhand and West Bengal. The Central Indian States have the country’s largest tribes and taken as a whole roughly 75 percent of the total tribal population live there, although the tribal population their accounts for only 10 percent of the region’s total population.

### **1.2 Development Issues- An Overview**

The principle goal development policy is to create sustainable improvement in the quality of life for all people. Last six decades have been marked by a mix of pessimism and optimism about the prospect for development. In so far as rising per capita income improves people’s living standard, it is one among many development alternatives. The overall aim of lifting the standard encompasses a number of more specific goals: bettering people’s health, and educational opportunities, addressing livelihood issues and employment generation, promoting gender equality, ensuring a clean environment, promoting a participatory approach to development and much more.

It is recognized that development planning in India has to concentrate on effective mechanisms and instrument to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality in the process creating pursuing power parity and enabling their choice of freedom and with it generate economic and social equality. Challenging the prosperity of India is the unfortunate truth that a large percentage of the population still lives in high risk and unpredictable environment. The basic objective of development is to ensure a balanced economy and ecologically sound –micro-regional economy and policy. The productivity and the service delivery mechanism needed to be improved and targeted programmed should be implemented in full sincerity. Providing better access to service, technology, education, healthcare and drinking water will reduce inequality, eradicate poverty for hundreds of millions of citizens and add an additional engine of growth to India’s empowerment and capacity building to achieve a sustainable and inclusive development.

In spite of the implementation of several programmes and schemes, the state of rural India has not improved substantially. Therefore we needed to reorient our development priorities and policies as well and find urgent solutions to the problems to empower the people more so, those

living in the rural areas. Therefore, to ensure that India gets out of the vicious cycle of poverty and unemployment a paradigm shift in development strategies should be an advocate.

### **1.5 Objectives**

Keeping the theoretical background in view, a detail empirical investigation has been undertaken in this paper with a view to analyzing the following objectives:

- I. To examine the disparity in economic parameters of development, i.e. access to land, out-migration, the structure of the workforce, and per capita income between tribal and nontribal population.
- II. To analyze the social parameters of development mainly, education and health condition among the tribal and nontribal population.
- III. To discuss the political participation as well as reservation issues in terms of their empowerment.
- IV. To study the degree of variation in the distribution pattern of infrastructure and institution i.e. Roads, Primary Health Centre(PHC), School, College, Hospital, Bank, Market etc. and their availability among tribal and non-tribal villages.

### **1.6 DATA AND METHODS**

This study is basically the empirical investigation about the tribal population to see whether they are actually facilities from developmental benefits of not and whether they are actually involved in various development processes or not, and will also see if any external forces influences on their involvement in development.

The study incorporates Habibpur Block of Malda District in West Bengal. For the purpose of the study total, 120 households (60 tribal households and 60 non-tribal households) have been chosen for a personal interview. In an attempt to select a representative sample of village society, three steps multistage stratified random sample techniques, i.e. selection of a block, selection of Gram Panchayats (GPs) and selection of village have been followed. From the total surveyed six villages, 20 households from each and every village have been selected for a personal interview through simple random sample technique Therefore, total 120 households (60 tribal and 60 non-tribal) have been selected finally for the survey.



For supporting the study the data from secondary sources have also been used. These data have been collected from various sources. Such as- Office of the Block Development Officer', Jabalpur Block, Malda, Village Directory 2011, Census of India, The West Bengal Human Development Report, Human Development Report, Malda, And different official websites of Government of India

The data about district and block level has been collected from secondary sources and the information regarding the standard of living, health, education etc. at household level has been gathered through a primary survey. The field survey has been carried out subsequently between September and October 2013. For a selection of sample household, different sample techniques have been selected that mentioned earlier.

In an attempt to gather information on village society, parameters such as household structure, economic condition, social condition and political participation were taken into consideration. The economic background has been evaluated on the basis of monthly average per capita income, access to land, the structure of workforce and out-migration for work of the household interviewee. The social condition has been examined in terms of their education and health condition. The condition of education and its access is measured by literacy rate, gross enrolment ratio, no of schools per 1000 population, student-teacher ratio, infrastructure etc. The health condition is measured by their access to health services, health awareness, availability of health infrastructure etc.

For political participation and status of implementation of different Government facilities, the interview was designed to gather information about the villager's opinion about the local Panchayat and its way of dealing with the development of the local area, giving emphasis on the issue of democracy in the decision-making process, inclusiveness and participation at grass root level. The interview also aimed to understand the functioning mechanism of Gram Sabhas and Gram Samsad promoted by local member and to evaluate their contribution in terms of local livelihood and participation in the development process, in the area under study. Further, this study has been based on different selected variables for analysis, which require a systematic approach. Therefore, certain standard statistical techniques have been used in this paper.

## 2. THE STUDY AREA: MALDA DISTRICT

As mentioned earlier, the majority of the available literature and development issue of tribal discuss the tribal mainland of India and thus isolated tribal region within the nontribal area is often left unattended or studied on this region are limited. Actually keeping a few exceptions, all studies are ethnographical and anthropological in orientation. The geographical and peripheral local location and smaller population size probably have been the reason for such neglect. In order to integrate this part with the mainstream, a scholar needs to undertake studies focusing development experience in these regions.

As per the selection of study area, Malda District of West Bengal is a concern. Malda District is one of the extreme lower levels of development in terms of economy, education, health and nutrition, sanitation and so on (Table 2) in one hand,

**Table 2: The condition of Malda District in West Bengal State in 2011**

Indicator/Parameter	Value of Malda	Highest among district	Lowest among district	Rank among all district (19)
Infant Mortality Rate	61.0	74(Purulia)	24(Hugli)	14
Life Expectancy	54.0	74(Kolkata)	53(Koch Behar)	16
Literacy Rate	50.7	81.3(Kolkata)	48.6(Uttar Dinajpur)	17
HDI Index	0.4	0.78(Kolkata)	0.44(Malda)	17
GDI Index	0.3	0.59(Kalkata)	0.39(Malda)	17

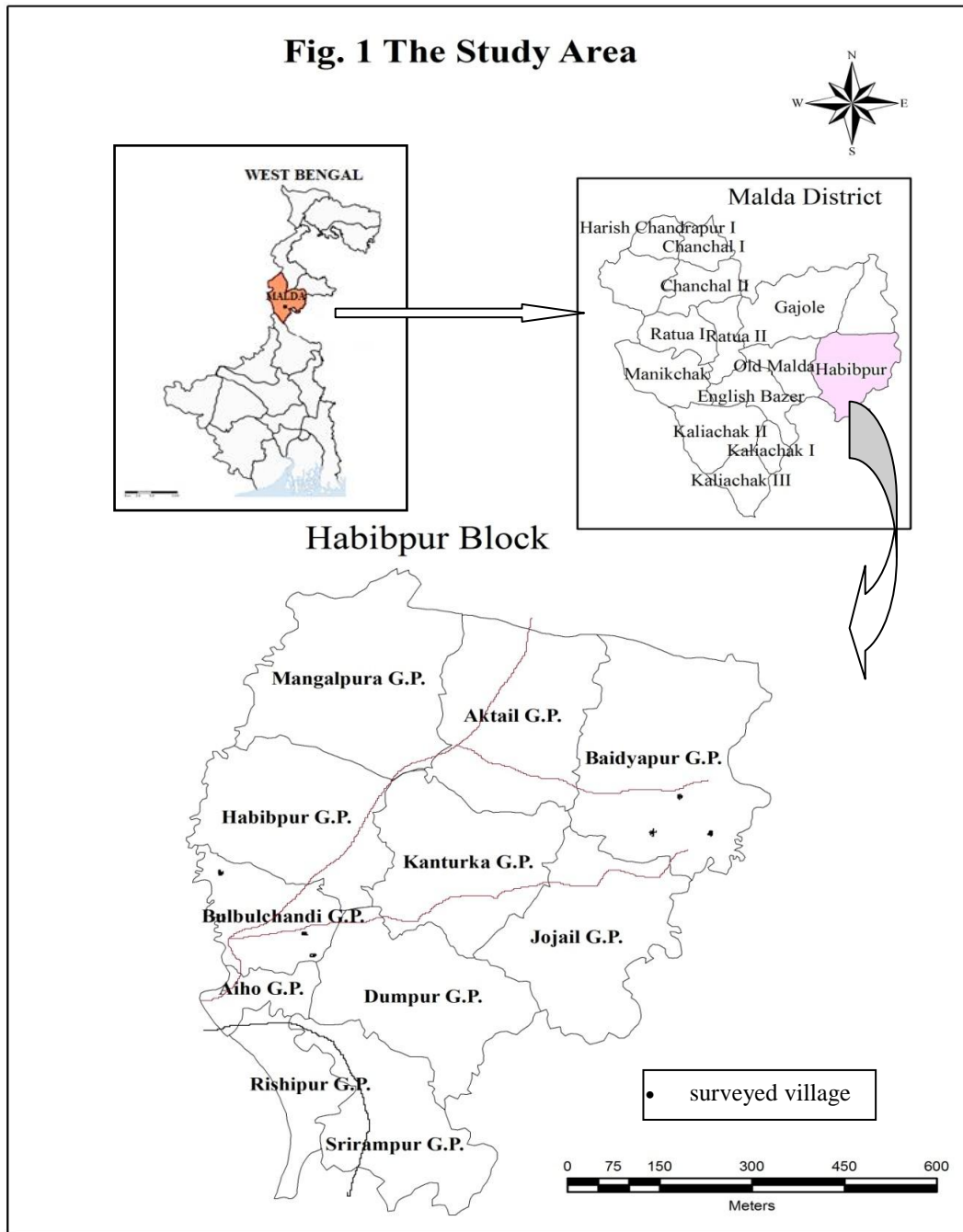
Source: The West Bengal Human Development Report.

and Scheduled Tribe and Schedule Caste population comprise a significant portion of the District in another hand. Habibpur Block in Malda is the more tribal dominated Block. That is why the West Bengal Assembly decides to elect a representative from Scheduled Tribe communities and permanently named the area as ‘43 Habibpur (ST) Constituency’. These are the reason behind the selection.

## 2.2 General Background

The study incorporates Habibpur Block in Malda District. The Block is situated in the eastern part of the district and geographically located at 25°01'06"N 88°21'32"E. The total geographical area of the block is 397.10 sq. km. It consists of 11 Gram Panchayat (GP) areas, 291 Mouzas, and 656 villages.

The average elevation of the block is about 26 meter from mean sea level. The middle part of the block is highly elevated and elevation decreases towards eastern and western part of the block. The overall topography of the block is undulating plain or it can say wave like topography. Two minor rivers from north to south direction are flowing in the block. One is River Punarbhaba in the eastern portion of the block, flowing along international boundary with Bangladesh and another is River Tangan in western portion is flowing along with the western boundary of the block. Except for the floodplain areas of two rivers, the upper portion of soil is relatively less fertile of the block due to the presence of lateritic soil in subsurface areas.



**Figure 1: The Location of the Study Area**

According to the 2001 Census, the total population of Habibpur block was 187568 persons. Out of which 50.57 percent are male and 49.43 percent is female. Out of the total population, more than 75 percent was SC and ST population combined. About 81349 population

was SC which accounts 43.36 percent and 55777 persons belong to ST categories which comprises 30 percent of the total population.

Agriculture on small land holding both on a flood plain and dry upland is the principal source of livelihood of the block. Rice, specially *Bodo* paddy in the winter season in flood plain area *Aman* paddy in autumn season in remaining areas and animal husbandry is the main source of income. The agriculture system of the entire block except eastern and western flood plain region is less productive because of the presence of less fertile soil and lack of proper irrigation facility.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF THE TRIBAL POPULATION: REFLECTION FROM THE STUDY AREA

#### 3.1 Economic Development: Situation of Tribals

##### 3.1.1 Access to Land

Land in its broader sense is the most vital resource of rural India. Its importance further increases in the context of rapid population growth, particularly in rural area. The first task of any rural development policy is to ensure is access to land for all those who were denied the same. Theoretically, the subsistence agriculture is the main economy of the block. Hence, the land issue is the vital thing so far as their livelihood is a concern. About 90% of the Tribals are engaged in agricultural and allied sectors. Most of them either landless or possess small and uneconomical landholding. Because of which their crop yield is less and hence, they remain debated. In the present study, category wise land holding of the Tribal and non-tribal household of the block is a concern for understanding access to the land of the Tribal population (Table 3).

**Table 3:** *Category wise Land Holding of the tribal and non-tribal population of Habibpur Block in 2005-06.*

Sl.No.	Size of Holding(in hectares)	Total Holdings of Tribal population`		Total Holding of Non-Tribal population	
		Number	Area(Ha)	Number	Area(Ha)
1	Marginal (less than 1 ha)	9462 (76.91)	6033 (53.03)	8890 (83.28)	5046 (61.22)
2	Small (1.0-2.0)	2504(20.35)	4391 (38.6)	1673	2877

				(15.67)	(34.91)
3	Semi-medium(2.0-4.0)	313(2.54)	841 (7.39)	84 (0.79)	202 (2.45)
4	Medium (4.0-10.0)	23 (0.19)	111 (0.98)	28 (0.26)	117 (1.42)
5	Large (above 10.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
6	All classes	12302 (100)	11376 (100)	10675 (100)	8242 (100)

*Source:* Agricultural Census of India, 2005-2006. NB: Figure in parentheses indicates percentage.

The above table no 3 about landholding clearly shows that the majority of the tribal population operates marginal land holdings(Less than 1 ha.) i.e. more than 70 percent in comparison to non-tribal population (65 percent). The area of land that operated by tribal population is low then the non-tribals. A very few proportions of tribals operates semi medium and medium land holdings i.e. 2.54 and 0.19 percent respectively. Similarly, the non-tribal operates also semi medium and medium landholding in a small proportion (0.79 and 0.26 percent respectively). There is no any single tribal and non-tribal household who operates large land holdings in the block. From the above table, it may generalize that there is a number of marginal land holding belonging to non-tribal population than the tribal population and a large number of tribals operates small and semi-medium land holdings than the non-tribals in the block. It should be noted that the tribals are living mainly in remote areas and the majority of non-tribals are living in the city/town of near city/town area. Notably, the land value in city/town area is very high. That is why the proportion of tribal-operated marginal and small land holding than the non-tribal population.

From the empirical observation of the study area, it has been known that tribals land holding operates only in Kharif season, which has no irrigation facility and it only depends on rainfall. The erratic nature of rainfall often causes crop failure or damage of crop or most areas remain uncultivated in many years. Consequently, it effects badly on their economy, while the majority of non-tribal people operate landholding in both, *Kharif* and *Ravi* season. Hence damage to one crop not heavily affects their economy, unlike the Tribals.

The Tribal itself and the Government are also responsible for the problems of access to the land resource. Firstly over dependency i.e. the tribals are over dependant on land and secondly, improper planning of Government agency. The tribal people of the block can be classified on the basis of their economic pursuits in the following way: 1) Foragers, 2) Pastoral, 3) Handicraft makers, 4) Agriculturist, 5) Labors etc. All these occupations involved directly and indirectly dependency on land. Land right and changes in rules continuously go unnoticed. Tribal are unaware or are made about the rule which governs India's land right. The Tribal do not have access to the land record, not even the record of right. This leads to them a higher probability of getting exploited by the non-tribal and in some case by local officials. Wherever land is given yet the parties are not given, or pattas handed over yet the land are not shown.

The Tribal people's mode of land ownership is quite different from the rest. On an average three kind of land ownership is noted in tribal society. 1) Community-based ownership, 2) Clan based ownership and 3) family-based ownership. As commons are difficult to manage tribal people have frequently denied their right to land.

### 3.1.2 Structure of Workforce

Tribal responses to development process may be examined by the crucial area: Structural change in the agricultural workforce. The tribal assimilation into the present mode of production is a tortuous process. It is well known that the Indian tribes pick up the art of agriculture quite early in history. Although, the tribal agriculture have remained subsistence in character, the British revenue administration in nineteenth-century found in the communitarian model of land ownership still intact in many tribal areas.

However, this practice did not continue for a long time. Functionaries of land record department put to pressure from the vested interest and gradually land were transformed to non-tribals. This process of land allocation affects the tribals of all India. As a consequence, the proportion of cultivator in the agriculture workforce has declined and this declined leads to increased tribals to agricultural labor from cultivator. Here the workforce structure (Participation in occupational activities in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors) of the tribal and non-tribal population are

given below which may help to understand the tribal participation in developmental process (Table 4).

**Table 4:** *Structure of workforce of the tribal and non-tribal population*

Occupational activities	Share of Workforce population (%)	
	Tribal	Non-Tribal
Primary Sector (Agriculture and allied	72	60
Cultivators	42	40
Agricultural Labour	25	12
Others (Hunting, Fishing etc.)	5	8
Secondary Sector (Manufacturing and Construction)	23	28
Tertiary Sector (Service Sectors)	5	12

*Source:* Household survey.

Table 4 indicates that a large proportion of the tribal population (72 percent) are engaged in primary activities and their participation in secondary and tertiary activities is very less, nearly 23 percent and only 5 percent. It indicates even now in the modern age of development the tribal remains stagnant in the traditional primitive economy. The situation is quietly better in case of the non-tribal population. Their working populations engaged in primary, secondary and tertiary activities are 60 percent, 28 percent, and 12 percent respectively. The proportion of cultivator in tribals and non-tribals are all an average equal. The proportion of wage labor in agriculture is high among tribals (25 percent) than the non-tribals (only 12 percent).

### 3.1.3 Income

Income at the household level, state level; and national level is one of the most important parameters so far the development is a concern. It always plays a vital role in determining the state or level of well-being and quality of life. A family without or with very less income obviously has a lack of education, health condition, social security and overall poor quality of life. Here the best measure of income, per capita annual income. Major sources of income of tribal and non-tribal households of the study area are given below (Table no 5, 6, and 7).



The table 5 shows that about 40 percent of tribal households have an annual income of less than Rs. 25000 as compared to only 28 percent of the non-tribal households. In the moderate income group of 25000-50000 per anum, the proportion of tribal households (46 percent) and non-tribal population (41.6 percent) is however equal. As income level rise, the proportion of tribal households is reduced sharply than the proportion of non-tribal households. However at the high-level income group of Rs. 100000-500000, only 10 percent of non-tribal household fall into this category and there is no tribal household earn this amount of income.

**Table 5:** Annual income (in Rs.) pattern among tribal and non-tribal household

Types of Household	Annual Income in Rs					
	<15000	15000-25000	25000-50000	50000-100000	100000-500000	>500000
Tribal Household	5(8.3)	20(33.3)	28(46.6)	7(11.6)	0	0
No of non-tribal Household	2(3.3)	15(25.0)	20(41.66)	17(20.0)	6(10.0)	0

Source: Household survey, October 2017. NB: Figure in parentheses indicates percentage.

**Table 6:** Major Source of Income of tribal and non-tribal household

Types of Households	Percentage of household with income from						
	Cultivation	Agriculture Wage Labour	Non-agriculture Wage Labour	Self-employed	Small Business	Salaried employed	Income from Rent/pension
Tribal	37	28	25	3	5	2	0
Non-Tribal	32	20	30	3	10	5	0
Total	69	48	55	6	15	7	0

Source: Household survey.

Agriculture remains the most important source of income of the majority of households in the area, either from the cultivation of their own land or as wages from agricultural labors (Table 6). Of the tribal households, 60 percent reports agriculture as the main source of income. While in the case of non-tribal households it is as low as about 60 percent. A significant proportion of

households of both tribal and non-tribal, earn income from cultivation in their own land (37 percent and 32 percent respectively). The source of income from agricultural wage labor and non-agricultural wages labor is considerably higher among tribal households than among the non-tribal households.

**Table 7: Diversity in Income of ST and Non-ST households**

Types of Household	No of Household with income from			
	One source	Two Source	Three Source	Four or more Source
Tribal Household	48	39	13	0
No of non-tribal Household	33	50	14	3

*Source:* Household survey.

However, of tribal households in the sample villages, 48 percent derived income from one source, while only 39 percent have two sources of income (Table 7). On the other hand, half of the non-tribal households derived income from two sources, indicating better stability in income. Overall, only 52 percent of tribal households have multiple sources of income as against 67 percent of non-tribal households.

### 3.1.4 Out-Migration for Searching Work

For poor households in rural eastern India, wage work is very often the key means of livelihood. Yet jobs are almost always arranged informally, without a written contract, and reflect the temporary peaks of demand for labor in agriculture, brick-making, road-building, and construction. Moreover, and especially for rural people located beyond the fringes of cities and towns, there is a limit to the number of days of employment within daily commuting distance.

Thus tens of millions of poor people move away from their usual places of residence to find work for periods of weeks or months at a time (Deshingkar and Grimm 2005). This is not forced migration; indeed studies carried out with migrant workers have revealed diverse and shifting motivation. Yet nor is it entirely voluntary as people are often compelled by economic circumstances, including structures of inequality in their home localities<sup>2</sup>, to take risky journeys

and undertake arduous, unhealthy work that they would not take part in if they had alternative means of livelihood. The migration itself is a source of vulnerability because of a lack of effective regulation of employment conditions, because of having to set out without any guarantee of a job, and because of migrants' lack of powerful allies, or indeed networks of any kind, in the temporary destination area.

**Table 8:** *Pattern of Out-Migration for Work*

<b>Types of household</b>	<b>No of Migrant Household</b>	<b>Destination nearby village/Town/City</b>	<b>to Destination to other States</b>	<b>Average Wage per Day (Rs.)</b>
Tribal Household	31(51%)	13(40%)	18(60%)	175
Non-Tribal Household	25(41%)	8(30%)	17(70%)	300
Total	56(46%)	21(37%)	35(63%)	-

*Source:* Household survey. NB: Figure in parentheses indicates percentage.

In table 8 about the pattern of out-migration for work in the study area shows that more than half of household have a member who migrant outside of work in compared to 40 percent of the non-tribal household. Within migrant workers, 40 percent tribal go to neighboring cities/towns in compare to 30 percent of the non-tribal migrant. About 60 percent of tribal migrant goes to other states while 70 percent workers of non-tribal go to other states. If we consider the daily wages of tribal and non-tribal workers, it reveals a serious image that the tribal worker still continued to work in very low paying, hard and unskilled work, (average daily wages from 170 rupees to 200 rupees). In the case of a non-tribal worker, the situation is relatively better. There average daily wages are 300 rupees to 350 rupees. It indicates that the tribals are continuously depriving of the equal structure.

### 3.2 Educational Development: Situation of the Tribals in the Study area

Now a day, there is a large network system of education in India. Yet considerably a large section of our society remains illiterate. Tribal response to the programmers of literacy and education is significantly low and it varies from region to region. While a few sections of tribal society has enthusiast responded to education/literacy programs. Other have just remained outside the ambit of education. The level of education of tribal with respect to-tribal population has been shown in table 9.

**Table 9: Level of Education among ST and a Non-ST population of Habibpur, 2010-11**

Social group	Level of general education (%)							Total Literate
	Illiterate	literate & up to primary	Middle secondary	secondary	Higher Secondary	Diploma/ Certificate	Graduate & above	
ST	47	24.2	14.3	8.4	4.2	0.4	1.6	53
Non-ST	37.8	23.7	17	11.5	6.2	0.7	3.2	62.2

*Source:* Statistics of School Education (WB), 2010-2011

The table shows that about a half of the tribal population of the block is illiterate (47 percent). While only 37.37 percent of the non-tribal population is illiterate. More segment of both, tribal and non-tribal population literate only up to primary level (24.2 and 23.7 percent respectively). As the education level rise, the proportion of tribal population reduced sharply than the non-tribal population. All over the tribal literacy of the block is only 53 percent against 62.2 percent of the non-tribal population.

If we consider the School Enrolment Ratio among tribal and non-tribal students, the average school enrolment of tribal boys and girl student are relatively higher than the non-tribal students (Table 10 ). Up to class five, the average enrolment of tribal and non-tribal students are 137.5 and 115.5 respectively. Up to class eight, the enrolments is 119 and 103.5 respectively and the enrolment up to class ten is 106 and 95 in tribal and non-tribal population The enrolment from class I to class XII is relatively high among tribal student (about 95) than the non-tribal student. There is a little variation in boys and girls student in enrolment among the tribal and non-tribal population in the block.

In recent decades a number of incentives are provided Sarba Siksha Mission in 2003; providing elementary education for all children in the age group of 6-14 by the year 2010, Midday Meal Scheme- 2001, which gives a mid-day meal to the school going children that dramatically increased the enrolment rate of the tribal population.

**Table 10:** *Gross Enrolment Ratio (Boys and Girls) of Habibpur Block 2010-2011*

Classes	Tribal		Non-Tribal	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Classes I - V (6 - 10 Years)	137.2	136.7	115.4	116.7
Classes VI - VIII (11 - 13 Years)	90.7	87	87.7	83.1
Classes I - VIII (6 - 13 Years)	120.5	118.7	104.9	103.7
Classes IX - X (14 - 15 Years)	57.1	49.1	69	60.8
Classes I - X (6 - 15 Years)	108.2	105.3	97.6	94.8
Classes XI - XII (16 - 17 Years)	32.7	24.8	42.2	36.1
Classes IX - XII (14 - 17 Years)	45.4	37.3	55.5	48.4
Classes I - XII (6 - 17 Years)	96.8	92.8	88	84.8

Source: Statistics of School Education (WB), 2010-2011

The Dropout rate of the tribal student is very high than non-tribal students. Merely 37.2 percent boys and 33.9 percent girl student of tribals drop out after learning of class V against 28.7 percent boys and 25.1 percent girls student of non-tribal society. More than half of tribal student drop out after learning of class VIII and more than 70 percent of tribal

**Table 11:** *Drop Out Rates (Boys and Girls) among Tribals and Non-Tribals*

Classes	ST		Non-ST	
	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
Classes I-V	37.2	33.9	28.7	25.1
Classes I-VII	54.7	55.4	40.3	41
Classes I-X	70.6	71.3	50.4	47.9

Source: Statistics of School Education (WB), 2010-2011

Students drop out after learning of class X. The situation of the non-tribal population is relatively better than tribal society. About 40 percent student of their drop out learning after class VII and about 50 percent student drop out after learning class X.

### 3.3 Health Condition: Situation of Tribals

Health is another crucial measure of development. So it is said that 'Health is Wealth'. Poor health of a man is a burden to achieve the sustainability of life although, it is directly related to economic condition and education i.e. awareness of a society. Here some selected important health indicators of the tribal population with respect to another social group of the block have been analyzed.

Table 12 shows the Infant Mortality Rate, Child Mortality, and the Under-Five Mortality rate is very high among the tribal community than other communities i.e. 62.1, 57 and 35 respectively. The Neonatal Mortality among the tribal and other population to some extent same (49.1 and 49) but Postnatal Mortality is relatively high among tribals than the total population.

**Table 12:** *Health Indicators: Situation of Tribal with respect to total population of Habibpur, 2005-06*

Indicators	ST (%)	Total (%)
Infant Mortality	62.1	57
Neo-natal Mortality	39.9	39
Post- natal Mortality	22.3	18
Child Mortality	35.8	18.4
Under five Mortality	95.7	74.3
ANC Checkup	70.5	77.1
Percentage Institutional Deliveries	17.7	38.7
Childhood vaccination (full immunization)	31.3	43.5
% households covered by a health scheme/ insurance	2.6	31.9
Prevalence of any anaemia (<12.0 g/dl) in women	68.5	55.3

*Source:* National Family Health Survey (NFHS-WB) 2005-06.

The institution delivery is very low among tribals (17.7 percent) than others group of populations (31.0 percent). Their childhood immunization and access to health scheme are also very low with respect to total population.

From the empirical observation and interview with the villagers of the study area, it is known that most of the tribal populations are unaware about modern healthcare i.e. ASHA, Health Scheme under NRHM etc, taken by the Government. Even many of them did not hear about these systems,

### 3.4 Political Participation of the Tribal Population

An attempt has been made in order to access the political participation of tribal population. In during the nineteenth century's massive decentralizing governance have announced after four decades long periods of centralized control over management since independent. As a result, a three-tier Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) system was launched in the decentralizing. The lowest level of PRI is the Panchayat in which the citizen can directly participate in the policies and decision making processes, i.e. development processes through their representation. This leads to empowering them.

This section focuses on the issue of tribal empowerment through inclusion and participation in PRIs and the way in which they participate in the functioning of the panchayats. Here the awareness about policies, programme, and functioning of PRIs as well as participating in PRIs activities of the tribal population with respect to non-tribal population are given in table 11 and 12.

**Table 13:** *Level of Awareness of Tribal population (Percentage)*

Measures of Awareness	ST	Non-ST
Awareness about purposes/objectives of PRIs	81.9	95.1
Awareness about developmental schemes implemented by PRIs	69.2	86.1

*Source:* Household survey

Table 13 shows that the level of awareness of the tribal population is quite high about the objects of PRI and various development schemes implemented by PRI. Even though there is little difference among tribal and non-tribal population it indicates significant awareness about the PRIs. When asked about different schemes about overall development programmes the tribal representative was able to discuss them in details.

Participation of the people was examined by way of involvement in local political activities. The data represents in table 12 reveals a higher rate of casting votes but a lower rate of involvement in political activities of tribal population than non-tribal population (table 14).

**Table 14:** *Participation in Local Political Activities outside PRIs*

Activities	ST	Non-ST
Casting their votes in different election	69.0	81.5
Participation in election activities of the locality	32.2	52.2
Participation in campaigning for political leaders in the general elections	33.3	57.9
Participation in political meetings in the locality	35.6	55.2
Participation in non-political (cultural/social/conflict resolution, etc.) meetings of the locality	83.3	76.7

*Source:* Household Survey.

Participation in local socio-cultural activities, tribal population scored higher than non-tribals. This indicates that tribal in general maintain their own and independent socio-cultural organizations. It is known from the interview that the villagers of this area are worried about the working performance of panchayat.

#### **4. VILLAGE-WISE LEVEL OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY AREA**

##### **4.1 Availability and Accessibility of Neighbourhood Facilities**

The development of any region primarily depends on services that are available to their residents of all sections of areas Further not only the number of services is important but its accessibility is also essential. So if we assess the facilities in terms of both availability and accessibility. Then it will give a real status and character of development. For this ten services had been taken. They



are Post Office, Primary Health Centre, Primary School, College, Market, Ration (PDS), Bank, Bus Service, Railway Station and Hospital. Table 15 summarizes the availability and accessibility of neighborhood facilities among the selected villages.

**Table 15:** Average Distance to Neighborhood Facility

Study Villages	Facilities with distance in Km.											Total Facility
	Post Office	P. H. C.	Primary School	Secondary School	College	Market	P. S. (Ratio n)	D. Bank	Bus Service	Rly. Station	Hospital	
Jagajjibanpur (STp)	0.1(*)	25	0.1(*)	0.3(*)	25	25	0.2(*)	12	12	45	25	4
Simuldanga (STr)	2	26	0.5(*)	2	27	27	2	13	13	40	24	1
Kuchimor (Non-ST)	1.0(*)	27	1.0(*)	2	28	28	1(*)	14	14	41	25	3
Hapania (Non-STp)	2.5	2.5	0.5(*)	3	24	2.5	1(*)	3	0.1(*)	4	3	3
Khatia Kana (Non-STr)	2	2	0.2(*)	2	20	2	1(*)	1(*)	2	3	3	3
LotaBhangra (ST)	6	3	0.1(*)	4	25	4	4	4	4	1.5	4	1
Average Distance	2.10	14.25	0.40	2.05	24.83	14.75	1.24	7.83	7.92	22.42	14.00	

*Source:* Computed from Primary Data through Household survey. \* = service presently available

The analysis reveals that out of six surveyed villages, not a single village had all the ten services together. It is evident from the table no 11 that Jagajjibanpur had the highest number of the facility. Yet again, very less number of facilities was available in rural areas. The lowest number of facilities was available in two villages' viz. *Lota Bhangra* and *Simuldanga* i.e. only one. It is noticed that out of all ten services Primary School was easily accessible to all these villages. So this is the only one basic service which is available in the entire study area and it is

also remarkable that on average each village was in the range of 400 meters from the Primary school. However, of these only *Jagajjibanpur* and *Kuchma* had only Secondary School in their neighborhood. On the other hand not a single degree college had located in the entire block. So the student of these areas has to go Pakuahat College in Bamangola Block, 25 km distance or in Malda Town, 30 km distance from these areas.

So, every day the student has to face difficulties in traveling to the Secondary School and Colleges. Post Office is another basic service, but it is found only in *Jagajjibanpur* and *Khatia Kana*. Only three of the surveyed villages had a Public Distribution System (Ration) for their residence viz. *Jagajjibanpur*, *Kuchimor*, and *Khatia Kana*. Residence of these villages also reported the irregular supply and lack of ration from their P.D.S. shop. Markets were also distantly located from these villages, about 10 km away.

The transport facilities have not properly developed in this region. Only one village, *Hapania* has Bus service but the number of buses on this route is very low. And the only village, *Lota Bhangra* has a nearby railway station, about 1.5 km away from the village. Otherwise, all the surveyed villages were located distantly from bus and railway service (Average distance, Bus: 8-10 km and Railway: 25-30 km).

#### **4.2 Village-wise Levels of Tribal Development**

On the basis of effective use of seven indicators levels of tribal's socio-economic development of the study area have been analyzed. After that, a Composite Index work out for each and every village have been ranked in order to determine the level of development. These seven indicators are the percent of the literate population, above matriculation, population treated by Doctors, children delivered in Hospital, a household using electricity, toilet facility, safe drinking water facility. The table 16 clearly indicates that levels of socio-economic development of tribals of the block vary widely according to their geographical location. Population living in remote areas has less availability and accessibility of different amenities and facilities than those living in near city areas or in proximity areas.

**Table 16:** *Level of Socio-economic Development of the Study Village*

Study Villages	Parameters (Figure in Percentage)							Composite	
	Literate Pop.	Above Metric Pop.	Doctor's Treatment	Delivery in Hospital	Electricity for Lighting	Using Toilet	Safe Drinking Water	Index Value	Rank
Jagajjibanpur (STp)	66	22	40	70	75	70	65	5.204	1
Simuldanga (STr)	48	11	35	40	30	15	35	0.632	6
Kuchimor (Non-ST)	80	18	32	55	62	50	60	3.563	4
Hapania (Non-STp)	72	15	50	65	90	70	80	4.901	3
Khatia Kana (Non-STr)	85	37	65	25	85	80	80	5.011	2
LotaBhanga (ST)	41	12	41	70	20	10	15	0.926	5

*Source:* Computed from Primary Data through Household survey.

It is a matter of fact that access to electricity, toilet facilities, modern medical facilities and educational facilities are very much related to the household's economic condition. If the Government fails to provide all these facilities in this region, it will surely lead to overall backwardness. On the other hand, tribal proximity areas have certain advantages, despite their economic backwardness. They can use all the above facilities because of their nearby location. Thus the level of socio-economic development is significantly higher in proximity areas than remote areas.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is well known that tribal's are the most disadvantaged section of the Indian society. For the long period of time, they had spent their lives in complete isolation, even the earlier development works that were started in their homeland, was only for the exploitation of their resources. Till

now after sixty years of independence, they have not been the beneficiaries of our development processes. Development works have not properly reached to them; their living condition is very much poor as compare to other social groups of the Indian society. Habibpur block in Malda one of the heartland regions of tribal concentrations is no different from this. Here most of the tribal population is living in the rural areas, and are denies access to minimum basic amenities and social service. School, College, and Hospital kike essential services are distantly located to them. Most of them do not have permanent electricity connection. There is a serious problem in safe drinking water of tribal villages in the block. Most of the tribal drink either open Pond's water or uncovered well's water throughout the year, which are highly polluted and highly desirable. Even in the rainy season, they have to go outside their houses for sanitation. Till now their access to education and healthcare is very low as compared to others. It should note that the new generations of tribal significant responses to education and health care under the influence of various crucial programmes implemented by the government. Their political inclusion through the participation in different activities is also very low and it did not empower them sufficiently. Where the participation and involvement of tribal population are higher, yet they could not hold the actual power of decision making in the PRIs.

It becomes clear from the above discussion that the use of amenities and basic services very much depends on their availability and accessibility. That is why in many tribal villages of the block those living inaccessible areas i.e. proximity to road or near town/city areas has better availability of housing and household amenities than the tribal population living in remote areas.

In this respect, in the last decades, a comprehensive rural development programme was announced by the Government on the eve of the overall development of the country. These programmes are PURA (Provision of Urban amenities in Rural Areas), MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme- 2005), PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sarak Yojana), NRHM (National Rural Health Mission and so on. Under these programmes, several developmental schemes have been implementing. Furthermore, while implementing these programmes Government has to ensure that the benefits of our socio-economic processes will definitely reach to the deprived section of our society and should judge their satisfaction on utilization.

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