Looking at the Homogenization of the Tribal Identity in India: A Marxist Exploration

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Abstract

The present paper offers a comprehensive overview of the current situation of tribal communities in India. Situated within a critical theoretical framework informed by Marxist and Postcolonial theories, the paper seeks to elucidate the intricate dynamics surrounding tribal identity and the current challenges faced by tribal communities. Central to the analysis is the argument that diverse tribal groups in India have been subjected to a process of coerced assimilation by the state, leading to a significant convergence among them within a homogenized system. By situating socio-cultural and legal violence within the larger societal framework, the research aims to shed light on the multifaceted nature of these challenges, emphasizing their sociopolitical and historical underpinnings. Furthermore, the paper also delves into the portrayal and representation of indigenous people in the cultural industry. Through illustrations in media, the paper highlights how representations in the cultural industry can serve as a powerful tool for the state to perpetuate and legitimize violence against Tribals, reinforcing the existing power dynamics. By undertaking this comprehensive exploration, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex and interconnected issues related to tribal identity, state violence, and the agency of indigenous communities in India. It underscores the significance of Marxist and Postcolonial perspectives in analyzing and challenging the dominant narratives and structures that perpetuate the marginalization and homogenization of tribal identities.
Keywords: Marxism, Postcolonialism, Tribals, State Violence, Tribal literature, Tribal Identity.

'We are becoming people from nowhere.'
-The Adivasi Will Not Dance (173)

Introduction

The consolidation of a nation-state resulted in the documentation of an all-pervasive voice for posterity. History, which was merely literature once, defined and concretized a reality for different communities living in India. The heterogeneity of India was ignored, and a westernised perspective on development was prioritized. This paper discusses tribals' position in India today. The paper does not wish to put forward a single, universal truth, nor does it wish to contend that different tribal communities suffered through the same discourse. However, the contention is that, to an extent, parallels can be drawn between different tribal communities based on how they were (are) forced into a system. This perhaps can be done because the system homogenized them by employing the same blueprint of systematic violence to achieve its end.

A brief overview of the legal historical discourse can help us chart the emergence of this unassailable all-pervasive voice in the legal, political, and social spheres. During colonial times, for the purposes of administration, the British collectors consulted ancient Indian texts. The reliance on these 'textual' traditions inevitably meant that the oral codes and conventions of various sections of the population were either completely ignored or forced to assimilate with the conventions provided by the written texts. The ancient texts also situated India at a point in the past. Critics such as Bernard Cohn in his work "Law and the Colonial State" and Janaki Nair in her essay, "The Foundations of Modern Legal Structures in India" talk about the same. The latter quotes J. D. M. Derrett to conclude that the "sastra tells us little or nothing about the customs of the mlecchas, forest or hill tribes or other untouchables living on the fringe of Hindu society: the jurisprudence did not grow to include them" (Nair 21). Meena Radhakrishna in the 'Introduction' to the book *First Citizen* (2016) discusses the term 'Tribe' and the contentions that surround it. Radhakrishna states that according to the British classification

> "...anyone who did not belong to the hierarchy of the Hindu varna or caste system, or did not practice an identifiable mainstream religion, was classified as a 'tribe'...Moreover, the word tribe used over the centuries by colonial authorities did not usefully suggest communities with distinct cultural practices-distinct both to the colonizers and to the mainstream mainland communities-but almost always insinuated backwardness and savagery" (Radhakrishna 3-4).

The British categorised different communities into 'tribes,' 'primitive tribes,' 'wild tribes,' 'wandering tribes, aboriginal tribes,' and 'criminal tribes.' The terms "backward" and "savagery" came to be associated with the Tribals even when the independent Indian state categorized them as 'Scheduled Tribes,' 'Primitive Tribal Groups,' and 'Denotified Tribe.' The vastness of the Indian tradition was therefore based on exclusiveness, consolidated and interpreted by the Britishers with the help of the privileged male Brahmins. These Brahmins systematically preyed on society and dispossessed the majority of the population. For the tribals, the colonial system ended with the isolation of the tribal population under the rule of the new despot.

The Indian Constitution, to an extent, recognised the underprivileged sections by positively discriminating against them by providing them with reservations. The lawmakers also recognised that there are specific crimes limited to certain sections. In order to deal with crimes of specific nature, the Indian Constitution has acts such as The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, Amendment, (1989). For the tribals, laws such as the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, and The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 were enacted, which recognise the right of tribals. The Panchsheel Principles of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were framed to guide the government's actions in dealing with tribal people. On an international level, India is also a part of The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), adopted in 2007, which among other things, recognises indigenous people. However, in his speech "On the Adoption of the Constitution", Ambedkar said it is "futile to pass any judgment on the Constitution without reference to the part which people and their parties are likely to play". He asserts that the "working of a Constitution does not depend wholly upon the nature of the Constitution. The constitution can provide only the organs of the State such as the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary. The factors on which the working of those organs of the State depend are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics" (1210). Therefore, while there are various laws in place to protect the rights of the tribals, these rights are often infringed upon.

Examining Legal Loopholes and Government Hypocrisy

The violation of tribal rights, besides other sources, has been reported by the Xaxa Committee Report, 2014. Various loopholes contravene tribal rights. The FRA defines minor forest produce as including "all non-timber forest produce of plant origin including bamboo, brushwood, stumps, cane, tussar, cocoons, honey, wax, lac, tendu or kendu leaves, medicinal plants and herbs, roots, tubers and the like." The PESA confers the ownership of minor forest produce on the Gram Sabha. However, a Planning Commission report acknowledges that "in absence of a comprehensive national/central policy/approach, contradictory legal provisions still prevail while differential state regimes create some of the biggest limitations which constrain a healthy growth of the Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) sector. Bamboo, for instance, is defined as a 'minor forest produce' in the Forest Rights Act, 2006, whereas the Indian Forest Act, 1927 treats it at par with timber. PESA, 1996 gives ownership rights to local communities over MFPs whereas the regime created under the Wildlife Protection Act doesn't." (Xaxa report, 2014, 336) Often, forest land is illegally diverted, for example, in the Essel and Mining Company Ltd case in Keonjhar district, Orissa, Mahan Coal block in Singrauli district, Madhya Pradesh, Polavaram Project, etc. In recent years, the government and corporations have been entering into MoUs, which impose a responsibility on the state to facilitate the project. More often than not, contractual obligations towards the private investor are prioritized over tribal rights. The point of the agency is also obscured, so the Tribals do not know whom to approach.

In the stories *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, based on a real life-incident in 2013, the narrator, Mangal Murmu, cannot believe that the government will ask the natives to vacate their land;

... I thought, how can anyone force Santhals to vacate their land in the Santhal Pargana? Didn't we have the Tenancy Act to protect us? Still, when the rumors started floating, I went to Godda. We all marched to the block office in huge groups. The officers there assured us that they were all just rumors. The lands were safe. The villages were safe. Nevertheless, later, police were sent to the villages. They came with written orders from the district administration. The villages would have to be vacated to make room for a thermal power plant. (Shekhar 181)

Interestingly, the narrator's thought process is not limited to compassion and consideration, but he posits his situation within the legal framework, which is also unobliging. The story even brings in the supreme power of the country, the president. The then-president, late Pranab Mukherjee, laid the foundation stone of the Jindal power plant in Godda, Jharkhand, in April 2013. For this project, 10,000 to 20,000 people were affected. During that time, a few Tribal farmers were detained by the police. The incident bared the hypocrisy of the government. One of the reasons why the tribal lands and lifestyles are so frequently trespassed in India is that during the time of Independence, political reform was given precedence to social reform. During crucial years of Independence, political reform was prioritized over social reform, which led to the concretisation of inequalities for the tribal and other marginalised communities. In his text "Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah", Ambedkar argued that social reform must precede the demand for political reform. He contended that this was Ranade's position as a social reformer, which he endorses. In the nineteenth century, in India, the emphasis was put on social reform. However, a new thesis arguing for the precedence of political reform garnered attention. This position was defended by various eminent people, such as Mr. Justice Telang, a Bombay High Court Judge; subsequently, this idea won legitimacy.

Those arguing in favour of the primacy of political reform asserted their thesis on various grounds, among which Ambedkar discussed three. The first argument was that political reform should proceed because political power is required to protect the rights of the people. This idea, Ambedkar argued, was borrowed from a theory of Government as it was propounded by the American statesman Jefferson, according to whom politics was simplified to policing by the

state to protect the rights of the people. However, the situation in India is quite different from that of America or any other Western democracy. In India, during the time of Independence and now, even though the idea of an individual entered the society, the society remained largely non-individualistic. People in India continued to derive their identities from their religion, caste, and community. An unequal system offers privileges to a minority section of society and disadvantages to the majority. Therefore, in this unequal system, where most people were at a disadvantage, this idea was reduced to the state policing the rights of the few. Ambedkar agreed with the same; he asserted that this proposition was absurd unless the state was to protect the few with vested rights and penalize those with no rights. However, since precedence was given to political reform, the tribal communities started at a disadvantaged position in an equal society. Within these societies, equality was equated with assimilation.

The second basis of the argument for giving precedence to political power was that they wanted to confer on each individual fundamental rights by the law. This idea is again borrowed from the American Constitution. Ambedkar contended that law cannot precede ideology. The task of conferring fundamental rights to individuals is laudable, but it is important to ensure they are effective. Conferring fundamental rights does not ensure that each individual will be treated fairly. Rights are protected by society's social and moral conscience and not by law. The prejudices of the people governed their actions. This can be seen in the story "Eating with the Enemy" by Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar. In the story, the character Sulochona Behera is a "Harijan of the Ghaasi caste"; she mistakes her Santhals (Tribal) employers for Bengalis since they speak that language. Moreover, she has a superior demeanour because of her status as a help in 'Bengali' households. However, an incident throws light on her prejudiced attitude towards Tribals.

> Once, we were getting the backyard patio of our bungalow repaired. The workers that the contractor had employed were all Santhals from nearby villages. One day, jhi made tea for those workers, served them in steel cups, and asked Sulochona to collect the cups after the workers had finished drinking and washed the cups themselves. Sulochona shrank back in horror.
>
> 'But, didi.' she told jhi, 'they are Adivasis!' (Shekhar 68-69)

Hierarchies are permeating and so clearly established that mere political reform could not make any changes. Even the 'educated,' with the resources to go abroad to study/work, cannot escape this ideology. Indians working in Silicon Valley have also reported a caste discrimination problem (covered by Vice Media)

The third argument was based on the right to self-government. The aim was to establish a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. However, they did not consider if a democratic form of government was possible for the people. Ambedkar reasoned that a democratic government presupposes a democratic society. In India, there is no social democracy, and therefore the framework of democracy would be a misfit. Since the law only recognises an individual in a non-individualistic society, it would not acknowledge collective oppression. Moreover, there was and is a negligible representation of the tribals in the mainstream administrative system. The 'other' is included in the narrative from time to time, as per the discretion of the ruling section. Looking back from a vantage point of contemporary Indian society, the precedence of political independence over social reform resulted in the concretization of a society of inequalities, as Ambedkar had predicted. While the law, today, confers fundamental rights on each individual, the social conscience of the society decides if the person can exercise her rights or not. The exercising of rights other than law is preserved by maintaining the social and cultural capital.

Pierre Bourdieu, in his work, *Forms of Capital* (1986), goes beyond the examination of capital in the economic context and reintroduces the concept of capital in the social world. While it is generally understood that capital is a "force inscribed in objective or subjective structures", Bourdieu argues

that capital also "underlies the immanent regularities of the social world". Capital, according to Bourdieu, has three forms - Economic Capital, which can be readily converted into money, and can have the institutionalised form of property rights; cultural capital, which can be converted into economic capital on certain conditions and can have the institutionalised forms of educational qualifications; and social capital, made up of social connections and can be institutionalised in the forms of title. Among these, cultural capital is further divided into three forms - the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalised state. The embodied cultural capital is an integral part of the person and declines and dies with her. Bourdieu states that cultural capital can be gained quite unconsciously. It depends on where you are situated, your social class, and the time that you are in. It is subject to hereditary transmission and is marked by the earliest conditions of acquisition, which, later, become clearly visible. In India, for instance, acquiring the English language. In some communities, it can be understanding the environment and its resources. Cultural capital in its objectified state is transmissible in its materiality. For instance, writings, paintings, etc. These cultural goods can be appropriated both materially, that is, you have the economic capital to buy these goods, or they can be appropriated symbolically, that is, you know how to use/appreciate them. The cultural capital that is academically sanctioned with a legally guaranteed value is cultural capital in the institutionalised state. It is different from simple cultural capital because it officially recognises competence. This capital helps establish the conversion rate between cultural capital and economic capital by guaranteeing the monetary value of the academic capital (qualification).

Borrowing from Bourdieu, this paper articulates, in the context of India, there is an acceptable, prevailing culture; parallel to it exist various 'debased' cultures. The cultural capital that Bourdieu seems to talk of objectively is subjective for the minorities. In the popular movie Newton, the character Malko gives a piece of advice to Loknath to rub red ants on himself, which will make him sweat and protect him from malaria. She mentions how they make chutney from red ants as well, which is surprising for Newton. This is Malko's cultural capital. In a turn of events, Malko chastises Newton by remarking how they do not know her (/their) culture, even though they only live a few towns away. Between different communities, there is no dialogue. Their cultural capital is disregarded, exchange of ideas and learning from the tribal communities is considered derisive. With respect to Adivasis, the term (lack of) 'development' is perhaps the most common word used by the state. The lack of development that the state continues to assert is the Adivasis' resistance through protests and dissent against the hegemonic culture. Prioritisation of this hegemonic cultural capital is equivalent to the subjection of the non-normative population. Assimilation into this prevailing culture is considered development. India is participating in a cultural genocide by enforcing a culture that was concretised for them by the occident.

The Question of Development

Achille Mbembe, in his book, *On the Postcolony* (2001), studies necropolitics, which is the use of political and social power to dictate people in life and in death. He argues that every ex-colony is now a 'post-colony' in the way that it uses the administrative and government structures inherited from the colonialists to advance its own violent causes. India continues to use the binary of 'theirs' and 'ours' as it was propagated by the Occident. Due to this, many tribal communities derive their identities negatively. In his speech 'The Solitude of Latin America,' Marquez mentions how the West measures the progress of countries such as Latin America by a yardstick that they use for themselves, 'forgetting that the ravages of life are not the same for all and that the quest of our own identity is just as arduous and bloody for us as it was for them. The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary. Venerable Europe would perhaps be more perceptive if it tried to see us in its own Past.'

As the West does with the rest of the world, the Indian State does with its indigenous population by producing a universal yardstick of development. Inherited from the colonisers, this development approach is not only deleterious to the tribal lifestyle but is also harmful to the environment.

While these development processes undertaken by the Indian government further marginalise the already deprived communities, they are also ecologically unsustainable. In the chapter 'In the Name of Sustainable Development: Genocide Masked as 'Tribal Development'', in the book *First Citizen* (2016) Felix Padel, along with discussing the contradictory laws such as the FRA, talks about investment-induced displacement and the adverse effect it has had on tribals. In the name of development, economists have been trying to place a value on natural resources. Instead of focusing on 'Green Accounting' or 'Environmental Economics,' they are indoctrinated to believe that the economy should be prioritized over society and the environment. As opposed to this, Tribal culture is highly sustainable and radically egalitarian. This difference is captured by Jacinta Kerketta in her poem 'WHY IS THE EARTH ON FIRE?'. In this poem, the 'son of the soil' divides the earth into two halves; one is given for progress

Climbing atop a hill
The Son of the Soil
Kept watch on both sides.
On the other side, he saw
Was engaged in constant war
In the name of progress,
In flames was the earth.
And on this side,
Seeds thrived in the fields
For the whole earth to feed,
To sustain, to nourish.
Here the earth was bursting into flower
There the earth was ablaze, on fire.

In the poem, here, while the son of the soil divides the earth into halves, in real life, the one who propagates the path of progress and development is not satisfied with their share. The state wants to acquire as much mineral-rich land as possible.

In order to protect their lands and lifestyle and resist the hegemonic ideology, various marginalised groups have come together to establish solidarity. In the 'Introduction' to *Beef, Brahmins and Broken Men,* Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd notes that 'Dalit students have often formed alliances with other religious, and sexual minorities, allowing for a spectrum of solidarities to emerge.' (15) To argue against an all-pervasive, seemingly homogeneous ideology that evades the possibility of a choice, it becomes imperative for different voices to align themselves. However, this solidarity, too, is used against the communities. The state, too, derails the demands of different communities by grouping them together and labelling them Naxalites, Maoists, etc.

Various documentaries such as 'The Hunt' and 'The Damaged' and films such as *Newton* cover this aspect of state violence. In the 'Epilogue' to *First Citizen* (2016), Meena Radhakrishna also discusses this. 'Maoists, in mineral-rich states, according to their own proclamations, oppose corporate entry into Tribal areas and land acquisition for industrial projects or special economic zones (SEZs). The Maoists have been demanding and supporting exactly what the Tribals have been demanding as well. These armed groups have often opposed on their own the state's repressive machinery (including the Forest Department) which targets Tribals….' However, since the demands of both parties are the same, there are, among Tribals, some Maoist sympathisers.

In a Number of Other Maoist-Occupied Areas, Tribals Remain Ambivalent

For the state, however, any Tribal who struggles for their rights, and protests against the government decisions is proclaimed as a Maoist and then treated as such. Interestingly, most of these activities are restricted to mineral-rich states. An example of this is the 'Operation Green Hunt,' covered in the documentary 'The Hunt.' This operation was launched by the central government to contain Maoists. Interestingly, this operation is not operative in all 216 districts of the country which are said to be infested by these groups, but only in those five mineral-rich districts. As was covered in the documentary, this operation opens space for state agents to harass innocent Tribals.

Moreover, in a turn of events, laws are made to harass the people speaking up for minorities. For instance, recently, an Andhra human rights activist, V S Krishna, was arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The activist had alleged that the Tribal women belonging to the Kodh tribe were raped by the elite anti-Naxal police force, the greyhounds, at gunpoint. Those charged under UAPA can be incarcerated for up to 180 days without the charge sheet being filed. As Radhakrishnan reiterates that 'The most important point for our purpose here is that while Tribal communities do use every available means to fight back, it is increasingly becoming clear to them that a legislative means by themselves are unlikely to deliver.' (24) Today, no efforts are made to ensure that there is at least a farce of democracy. The priorities of the government are precise and go against the tribals and other marginalised communities. More and more sectors are handed over to the private sector without paying heed to the demands of the larger public. Even the non-governmental agents and activists who try to work for the environment come up with their ideas and try to enforce them onto other communities.

NGOs and activists also have agendas, and sometimes their presence does not help the people. For instance, per capita NGOs are highest in Kalahandi, Odisha, but slight improvement can be recorded. In the text "The Adivasi will not Dance", the narrator, Mangal Murmu, narrates that those who seem like they are helping us only wish us to forget our Sarna religion.

Kristan missionary schools where our children are constantly asked to stop worshipping our Bonga-Buru and start revering Jisu and Mariam. If our children refuse, the sisters and fathers tell our boys that their Santhal names- Hopna, Som, Singrai-are not good enough. They are named David and Mikhail and Kiristofer and whatnot. And as if that were not enough, Muslims barge into our homes, sleep with our women, and we Santhal men can't do a thing...The rich Hindus living in Pakur town live are only interested in our land...If they come to help us, they will say that we Santhals need to stop eating cow-meat and pig-meat, that we need to stop drinking haandi.' (Shekhar 172-173)

This narrative clearly shows that the agenda of different agents is not to offer help but to insert them into their respective ideologies, only to subjugate them further. A slightly different account is covered in Jayan K. Cherian's film *Papilio Buddha*, wherein the pseudo-liberal activists working for various subaltern groups, instead of helping them, hinder their growth. For instance, in one of the scenes in the film, an activist tries to videotape a class, disturbing the student's attention. In another scene, an activist refers to the protagonist by his caste within their close group, implying that he will forever be reduced to his caste. Seemingly harmless jokes set an implicit hierarchy that is translated in terms of capital and opportunities. In an ironic scene, the group celebrates 'their success' with a bonfire and alcohol. These groups operate within the framework of their inherent prejudices, of which activism is a dispensable part. However, for various marginal groups, living life on their own terms is activism in itself; it is a form of protest because the hegemony does not recognise it. In a country where spaces and desires are demarcated, even the simple act of love can be fraught with danger if it is not socially sanctioned.

Ideological State Apparatuses

The State is able to put forward a sanctioned ideology through different state apparatuses. In his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" (1970), Louis Althusser discusses Repressive State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatus. Repressive State Apparatus constitute institutions such as the army, the police, etc. Ideological State Apparatuses include institutions such as schools, religion, etc. Althusser says that state apparatuses function by both repression and ideology. While the repressive state apparatuses are centralized beneath a commanding unity, the ideological state apparatuses are multiple and seem relatively autonomous.

The role of repressive State Apparatus, insofar as it is a repressive apparatus, consists essentially in securing by force (physical or otherwise) the political conditions of the reproduction of relations of production which are in the last resort relations of exploitation. Not only does the State apparatus contribute generously to its own reproduction (the capitalist state contains political dynasties, military dynasties, etc.), but also and above all, the State apparatus secures by repression (from the most brutal physical force, via mere administrative commands and interdictions, to open and tacit censorship) the political conditions for the action of the Ideological State Apparatuses. In fact, it is in the latter which largely secures the reproduction specifically of the relations of production, behind a 'shield' provided by the repressive State apparatus. (Althusser 1970)

Therefore, state-sanctioned discourse is shaped through ideological state apparatuses backed by repressive state apparatuses. At present, the cultural industry has proved to be an effective ideological state apparatus, which is used to standardize the thought process of the ruling bourgeois. In this chapter, The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception, of Dialectic of Enlightenment (2002) Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno talk about how the cultural industry normalises and standardizes the role of people in a society. In the film, to allow an illicit relationship without due punishment of the culprits is even more strictly taboo than it is for the future son-in-law of a millionaire to be active in the worker's movement; (Horkheimer et al.). Similarly, the representation of the sustainable Tribal culture too is strictly tabooed. In mainstream Bollywood movies, the tribal culture is erased. In movies such as *Mary Kom*, *3 Idiots*, etc., the protagonists come from a tribal background that is not given any space. In the culture industry, where art is a commodity, conformation becomes a marketing technique. By standardizing the Other, (the Other here is language), the cultural industry becomes one of the most crucial ideological state apparatuses. It lays down the language used by the Tribals- savage, uneducated, primitive, etc. In cinema, for instance, Tribal culture is often employed for comic relief. Ali Akbar's *Bamboo Boys*, Priyadarshan's *Chithram*, etc., use the prevailing stereotypes to market their films. Since art is to be marketed, the cultural industry looks out for artists who would function within the prescribed designs. Instead of challenging normative assumptions, the culture industry reinforces the existing status quo by naturalising it. The pseudo-realism employed by the cultural industry ensures that the existing discourse is not questioned. For instance, often, the audience is instructed about the time to laugh by employing the infamous 'laughter soundtrack'. Moreover, as Horkheimer and Adorno talk about, "Laughter at something is always laughter at it" (Horkheimer et al.). The hegemonic discourse, as it especially prevails in the metropolitan for the bourgeois, is standardised through this. This has ensured that tribals are seen as the 'other,' as violent and savage. As Crispin Bates and Alpha Shah talk about in the "Introduction -Savage Attack: Adivasis and Insurgency in India" that "A long tradition of labelling and essentializing has meant that the lives and actions of a wide variety of poor, marginal groups have been represented as 'tribal' for a range of differing political purposes at particular points of time...the idea of savage attack was developed at an early stage to characterise the resistance of tribal peoples and place them beyond the field of compromise and the pale of civilisation" (Bates et al. 28-29). Therefore, the popular framework is constructed by eliminating voices. This is done by the media channels as well.

Furthermore, contemporary news channels prioritize entertainment over informative content, catering to the interests of their affluent sponsors and influential politicians. In this context, media outlets serve as a convenient platform for disseminating preferred narratives while suppressing alternative perspectives. Rather than fostering independent thought and critical analysis, these channels exert control over the audience's cognitive processes. Consequently, the media, intended to amplify the voices of the people, becomes a tool for silencing dissent and perpetuating a single, dominant narrative. Paradoxically, individuals can simultaneously assume the roles of oppressor and oppressed through the manipulation of media discourse. Another influential apparatus for ideological indoctrination is the educational system. Schools often present a distorted representation of reality by focusing solely on the locations of valuable resources, such as coal and iron ore mines on the Indian map while neglecting the rich cultural heritage and the communities associated with these lands. The effectiveness of these state-controlled mechanisms is evident in the complete assimilation of second and third-generation migrants residing in metropolitan areas, who adopt the prevailing dominant narratives as their immediate truths.

Conclusion

While Tribals constitute 8.2% of the total population, they account for 40% of the total displaced population. Encroachment of their lands has forced the tribals to migrate to metropolitans for livelihood. Assimilation in the discourse of productivity is supported by a significant section of society who feels that tribals are given an undue advantage. There is a growing antagonism towards the 'privileges' given to the tribals on account of being primitive. Vishvajit Pandya briefly comments on it in his work 'Events, Incidents and Accidents: Re-thinking Indigenous Resistance in the Andaman Islands,' when he says 'Settler hostility toward the Jaware is often legitimated with the argument that the Jawaras' primitivity remains a weak excuse for unfair privileges they enjoy from the state.' There is a common understanding that these 'primitive' people need to be educated, disciplined, and introduced to the discourse of productivity.

This has an adverse impact on the tribals' lifestyle. As Meena Radhakrishnan talks about in the 'Epilogue' to *First Citizen*, 'In terms of kinship and the structure of social relations through kin groups, communities are torn apart when they are resettled, as well as from the variable, derisive treatment they receive from 'the company.' Mining companies have a strong tendency to divide people against each other. They bring a new spirit of competitiveness, and hierarchy into what have been markedly egalitarian societies… a corruption value sets in, which goes hand in hand with mass poverty, prostitution, and the breakup of families…' Migration to unknown cities insinuates a new journey without economic, social or cultural capital. Unaware of the ways of city life, tribals are often manipulated by the capitalists and forced into the bondage system. The helplessness of forced migration is captured by Jacinta Karketta in her poem O, City! when she writes:

Leaving behind their homes,
Their soil, their bales of straw,
Fleeing the roof over their heads, they often ask,
O, city!
Are you ever wrenched by the very roots
In the name of so-called progress?

By employing a critical lens of Marxism and Postcolonialism, this research paper examines the phenomenon of internal colonialism within the confines of a state that presents an illusion of tranquility and safety while concurrently suppressing the grievances faced by tribal communities. Through a thorough investigation of the complex web of power dynamics, the construction of manipulated truths, and the resulting disempowerment of marginalized groups, this study argues

for the necessity of initiating dialogues and empowering tribal communities as a means to challenge and dismantle the prevailing internal colonialism.

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