The Mapping of the Adivasi Social: Colonial Anthropology and Adivasis

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The construction of textual knowledge about Indian communities in the colonial milieu resulted in an extensive literature on almost all communities that was not only used as a source of legal and general administration but also to establish colonial domination. In this process the adivasis of India were constructed apposite to civilised society, therefore a distinct society. Unfortunately, post-colonial scholarship did not decolonise this colonial construction of adivasi society.

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During the colonial era, a range of disparate groups that lived for the most part in the more inaccessible hill and forest tracts, and survived largely from hunting and gathering or rudimentary swidden agriculture, were categorised by the British as "aboriginals" or "early tribes". They were distinguished by their clan-based systems of kinship and their "animistic" religious beliefs. Sometimes, they were defined in terms of their habitat, as "jungle tribes". In this way, a category was created, and a body of knowledge produced, about the so-called "tribes of India". In the process, scattered communities were granted a unity that they had not hitherto possessed. During the 20th century, as different fractional interest groups within India asserted their right to self-determination, "tribal" groups claimed to be the "original" or "indigenous" people of the subcontinent who had been deposed by later interlopers. They deployed the Hindi term for "indigenous" – that of "adivasi" – to describe themselves.[1] In this paper we shall use the same term adivasi just to avoid colonial derogatories.

As has been mentioned above, the construction of textual knowledge about Indian communities was a major genre in the colonial milieu as part of the project of colonial knowledge creation as a means of the extension of colonial power. This resulted in extensive literature on almost all communities that was not only used as a source for legal and general administration but also to establish colonial domination. This has been greatly brought out by recent studies. As Edward Said says, "Knowledge of subject races or orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge".[2] It is this dialect of knowledge and domination that pushed the colonial state to acquire more knowledge on its subject communities. The colonial state interestingly had widened and reoriented its project of colonial knowledge creation as its control expanded and penetrated farther.[3] This was very much postulated in Curzon's speech in the House of Lords on September 27, 1909. He stated:

> Our familiarity, not merely with the languages of the people of the East but with their customs, their feelings, their traditions, their history and religion, our capacity to understand what may be called the genius of the East, is the sole basis upon which we are likely to be able to maintain in the future the position we have won, and no step that can be taken to strengthen that position can be considered undeserving of the attention of his majesty's government or of a debate in the House of Lords.[4]

Creation of Knowledge by the Colonial State

It is understood from Curzon's statement that the future of colonial power pivoted on the acquisition of knowledge of the colony. Indeed, the colonial state was by the end of the 19th century

deploying huge resources to create detailed knowledge of the colony. In the beginning, European travellers' accounts, such as those of Duarte Barbosa of Portugal, and Jean Baptiste Tavernier of France who visited India in the early 16th and early 17th century, were used as major sources for administrating the colony. Barbosa makes general observation on the castes of India but Tavernier gives a very detailed description of 72 castes.[5] Later, with the establishment of British suzerainty in the late 18th century, there was a rapid acquisition of scientific knowledge of Indian communities with the aid of administrative officials, missionaries and professional orientalist scholars. This whole literature has been analysed to telling effect by post-colonial scholars. Edward Said, the pioneer in this respect, brought out how colonial knowledge was transmitted into power and used in establishing persistent domination and hegemony over the colony.[6] Ronald Inden has revealed how the indological branch of orientalism constructed a notion of a "timeless" Indian society that remained fundamentally unchanged from ancient times.[7] Bernard Cohn has brilliantly illustrated how colonial historiography, documentation, certification, and representation, as state modalities, transformed knowledge into power.[8] Nicholas Dirks' recent work critically illuminates colonial anthropological projects, bringing out how they invented a wholly new notion of caste.[9]

Post-colonial theoretical analysis has nonetheless remained largely indifferent to the adivasi issue, tending to club the colonial anthropology of the "tribe" within the general anthropology of caste. There have been some exceptions in this respect. Studies carried out by David Hardiman, Crispin Bates and Ajay Skariya from the 1980s onwards have shown how the adivasis were placed within the wider system of colonial knowledge.[10] Analogously, my task here shall be to establish how adivasis were reflected and viewed in colonial anthropology, and how post-colonial writings on adivasis did not dislodge colonial derogatories. Adivasi anthropology was distinct from caste anthropology in its methodology, colonial approaches and perceptions of adivasis. The initial construction of knowledge on them took place in the context of their violent resistance to colonial expansion into their forest world, which began with the revolt of the Pahariya Sirdars of Bihar in 1778. With the Assam adivasis' revolt of 1816-24, the British approach to adivasis changed and they began conceiving them as a separate entity. The Santhal revolt of 1855 was another such landmark, which led to the commissioning of a number of studies of their material and cultural conditions.[11] Colonial period adivasi anthropology can be grouped into four categories: darvanic anthropology or official anthropology, missionary anthropology, romantic anthropology, and Hindu nationalist anthropology from the early 20th century. Each school of thought had its own agenda in producing and reproducing adivasi society.

The Darvanic (taxonomies of race) anthropology of colonial India developed within the abstract understanding of the 19th century – European racial theories served legal and administrative purposes, as well as helping to establish a persistent British hegemony over the inferior race.[12] Much of the early work on racial classification was, as in Europe, undertaken by biologists, and based on a hierarchical classification in which adivasis were identified with older races and languages. Biologising of race by anthropologists involved the dividing of human species based on their physical measurements. It grouped the round headed with new races, and the longheaded with old races.[13] Based on this, it was argued that elements of the Negritos, one of the oldest races, could be found in the Kadars of Cochin state in south India, and the Australoid (brown race) in some of the other southern Indian hill and forest adivasis. Similar primitive groups, according to them, were the Mala Pantaram tribe of Travancore, the Paliyar of Madura district, the Malavetan, the Thantapulayan and the Urali, all of whom were said to share strong proto-Australoid traits.[14] Indologists claimed that the adivasi languages were the oldest ones spoken in India. They unearthed 30 different groups of languages in India, and asserted that half a dozen of these belong to the family known as austric, which was the oldest, and that these were spoken by the adivasis. They argued that probably the most ancient types survived in south India, where the climate favoured the growth of the heavy forests that provided a refuge for these primitive groups.[15]

These classifications of race and language in colonial census reports, monographs and ethnographic notes pushed adivasis to the bottom of the civilisational ladder. Adivasi culture was branded as uncivilised, while the Aryan (brahmin and the educated) race and Indo-Aryan languages were considered by orientalist scholars to be relatively civilised.[16] Unfortunately, this stigmatisation of adivasis as "primitive" and "unchanged" continues to inform an understanding of them in India to this day.

Racial Theory

Abstract ideas of racial theory continued to influence scholars throughout the period of colonial rule, though there was a shift during the closing years of the 19th century towards establishing racial classification based on measurable physical traits. The foremost figure in this exercise was H H Risley of the Bengal civil service. He was the pioneer of the anthropometric survey of Bengal, and under his influence the government of India resolved to carry out an ethnographic survey throughout India at the time of the 1901 Census. Risley appointed Edgar Thurston to carry out this work for Madras presidency.[17] He was an anatomy lecturer at the medical college in Madras, and had experience as superintendent of the Madras museum. His long association with the Anthropological Survey of India produced seven volumes on the castes and tribes of south India, a study of the Todas, and his famous *Ethnographic Notes* on south Indian castes and tribes. In all his works, the anthropometry that he had imbibed from Risley provided the dominant methodology.[18] Dirks describes his mode of study:

> According to Thurston, the most important division of anthropography was anthropometry, which he defined as the measurement and estimation of physical data relating to people of different races, castes and tribes; indeed Thurston felt that his best results came from his anthropographic labours, for example in scientifically demonstrating that the nasal index was lowest in Aryans and highest in jungle tribes, and that the index increased as body height diminished.[19]

Body measurement provided the main criteria for his classification of human species; he measured foreheads of 30 to 60 members of a caste or tribe, and mapped them under certain racial categories.

In some cases only six to seven individuals were measured.[20] Certain tribal communities were branded as habitual criminals on the basis of their physical features, and this provided a basis for police surveillance and control. Every police officer and station was equipped with a notebook of criminal tribes of the region, and the books by Gunthorpe and Mullaly on criminal tribes and Thurston's ethnographic notes were very popular in police training centres in south India. Thurston was often requested to speak at such places. The ability to carry out anthropometric measurements enhanced promotion prospects within the police force.[21]

Thurston's *Ethnographic Notes* is a huge volume that deals with marriage customs, idolatrous cults, sacrifices, hookswinging rituals, witchcrafts, mantras (spells), earth eating, and other exotica. With regard to adivasis, he either tries to link their practices with those of the Hindus, or exaggerates their idiosyncrasy as evidence of a supposed primitivism. For example, he elevates the Kurubas of Nilgiri hills to the level of Pandavas, as they had a custom of marrying several brothers to one wife.[22] The marriage ceremony of the Savara tribe of Ganjam was compared with "lord" Krishna's romance with Rukmini, as the Savara boy would traditionally go to a girl's house, plunge an arrow into its thatched roof, take away an empty pot, and then, when the girl went to the stream for water, he would capture her and take her into the forest, after which they would return and get married.[23] Similarly, Thurston linked the marriage ceremony of the Lambadas of south India with the brahmanical saptapadi (seven feet), which is the essential and binding portion of Hindu marriages, as they went around two grain-pounding pestles seven times.[24] This sort of description, which merged the identity of the adivasis into the Hindu fold, was later replicated by Hindu propagandists. Hindu organisations like the Rashtriya Swayam-Sangh and Vishwa Hindu Parishad have, taking their cue from such texts, been converting adivasis to Hinduism by sprinkling Ganga 'jal' (water of the Ganga) over their heads, a sort of purification act.[25] In other respects, Thurston primitivises the adivasis, branding them as homo-Dravida and similar to Australian aboriginals. He exoticises them in a number of ways, for example he claims that the Kois of Godavari district place some pests (animals) in the hand or mouth of dead bodies and bury or burn those.[26] He emphasised their common practice of making fire through friction with two pieces of wood – a supposedly "primitive" custom.[27] This gave a negative connotation to adivasi life and culture; they were portrayed as examples of primitive civilisation and "museumised".

There is also a problem with Thurston's ethnography for coining terms for each community. After his serious study of anthropometry, taking information from his assistants and K Rangachary (a botany lecturer), he compiled seven volumes on the castes and tribes of the south India in alphabetical sequence, covering a brief history of their origin, customs, religious practices, and occupation, and classed them within particular groups based on their occupation and his anthropometric studies. In the case of the Lambadas of south India, after measuring their foreheads and considering their occupation as grain and salt transporters, he described the community as both Lambada and Banjara, and used both terms interchangeably in his 30-page description of the group in the volumes.[28] To our surprise we do not find these terms used by early travellers. Jean Baptiste Tavernier wrote that there were four tribes called Manaris, who were transporting goods such as corn, rice, pulses and salt from one country to another. William Crooke, the editor of Tavernier's *Travel in India*, argued later that manari is a corruption of the term Banjara.[29] Other studies of his time illustrated how they were of mixed castes and from different religions – Hindu, Islam and Sikh.[30] Census and ethnographic notes on the other hand, placed the community within one uniform and seamless community. Similar kind of studies were also carried out in the adjoining princely states of Hyderabad and Mysore by Syed Siraj ul Hassan[31] and L K A Iyer,[32] where the transporting community were called Banjaras. In this way, colonial anthropology created a new form of understanding.

Civilising Mission

The supposed primitivism of the adivasis was also emphasised in the writings of missionaries from the early 19th century onwards. The implication was that such communities could be saved and civilised through conversion to Christianity. Walter Elliot, a prominent missionary in south India, thus noted the "barbarism" of the Marvars and Kallars and the supposed practice of human sacrifices by the Khonds and Meriahs of Ganjam district. Such views were propagated in the Anglican missionary journal called *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, which printed studies by missionaries of races, castes and tribes.[33] In a similar vein, C M Edward, a missionary working in Hubli for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, noted in a report on Lambadas and other criminal tribes that dacoity was like any other trade handed down to them by their forefathers and that they took pride in it. He pronounced that "the Lambadas do not consider a man to be worth his salt unless he has proved himself an expert thief, even women will not marry if the man did not prove to be a successful robber", and he argued that the Lambadas were relegated to that miserable state in the hands of police because of the exclusiveness of the caste system which ordained that a son should follow in his father's footstep; this also meant that they were disregarded in mainstream society which cast them out.[34] In this, the missionary view was largely in common with the anthropometric understanding of official ethnographers. This propaganda encouraged them to take their conversion agenda into tribal society, and they were successful in certain areas, notably in north-east India. Missionary ethnography also largely converged with official ethnography, for it saw the liberation of criminal tribes, and for that matter the entire liberation of Indian, as lying in the modernisation agenda of the colonial state.[35]

The Romanticism Current

There was a strong strand of romanticism in the orientalist understanding of India that grew out of 18th century western romanticism. This outlook was shared by certain colonial officials, Indologists, historians, sociologists and anthropologists.[36] For example, colonel James Todd, who was appointed to the command of the escort of his friend Graeme Mercer, then government agent at the court of Daulat Rao Sindhia between 1805 and 1817

and held the post of political agent of western Rajputana between 1818 and 1822 in the East India Company, was greatly fascinated by Rajput tribal heroism and wrote the genealogical history of 36 clans and tribes, entitled *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, first published in two volumes in 1829, and later in three volumes edited by William Crooke. The first two volumes dealt with the geography of Rajasthan, the origin and polity of Rajput clans and the third one was on the feudal system in Rajasthan.[37] Tod developed a strong romantic affection with the main clans – notably the Sisodiyas of Mewar and the Rathods of Marwar – and he provided support for them while helping to pacify the region.[38] This sort of celebration of martial communities was later extended to adivasi communities.

Hardiman and Skariya have shown in a revealing way how tribal masculinity was celebrated by colonial administrators and forest officers in western India. They equated the egalitarian values (honesty, frankness, communal life) of the tribals with Rousseau's state of nature, seeing them as innocent and childlike. They depicted them as noble, honest, loyal and ruggedly independent. Some officials internalised adivasi values and culture and started drinking and hunting along with them. As Skariya says, "This celebration is ethnocentric and ethnocentrism is anti-ethnocentric". [39] Indeed, the underlying intention was to acquire more knowledge of the adivasi world and to then encourage them to adopt more "civilised" ways of life. Officials, after acquainting themselves with the adivasis, gradually directed them towards settled and commercial agriculture and encouraged outsiders (moneylenders, traders and peasants) to come into the forest so as to incorporate adivasis within wider civilisation, supposing that it would then be easy to control them.[40] Many colonial forest officials were 'shikaris' (hunters) and needed the assistance of forest-dwelling adivasis in their hunting. With this intention, forest officials developed rapport with adivasis by internalising adivasi culture and methods in hunting, but this process went hand-in-hand with the exclusion and subordination of the adivasi, the adivasi free hunter being reduced to a mere labourer serving the interests of British trophy-hunters. As Skariya puts it, "The colonial celebration of the wild and the forest are best understood as a civilised dalliance with wildness – the dalliance that often goes by the name of primitivism".[41] In fact this primitivism was premised on domination and mastery. Their celebration of primitivism itself alluded to their domination over subordinate adivasis, and it all served to extend their control over them. Eventually, it led to the brutal eviction of adivasis from the forests in a phased manner to serve the forest conservation agenda of colonial rule.

With the entry of the professional anthropologist from the early 20th century, romantic understanding entered a new phase. Anthropologists went into adivasi areas with presupposed ideas that adivasis were uncivilised, innocent and honest, but taken advantage of by unscrupulous outsiders. They tried to immerse themselves in the lives of those they studied, even in some case marrying tribal girls to prove their commitment to tribal culture and life.[42] Among them Haimendorf and Verrier Elwin were two stalwarts who worked with the adivasis of central and southern India; adivasis still have great reverence for them, not realising the wider implications of their work. Haimendorf was sent by the British to Hyderabad state in the early 1940s to advise the Nizam in his handling of the rebellious Gond adivasis of Adilabad. His career as an anthropologist was helped considerably by his appointment as adviser to the Nizam for tribal and backward classes and professor of anthropology at Hyderabad's Osmania University. He and his wife travelled often to the tribal areas, where they stayed for long periods developing a rapport with the people. These periods of research produced four reports on the socio-economic conditions of, respectively, the Hill Reddis, Gonds, Koyas and Chenchus.[43] In these, he asserted that adivasi society was exclusive and isolated, so that any intervention was likely to cause devastation of their simple and naturalistic life. He argued that much damage had been done by outsiders, including state bureaucrats, and suggested that enhanced powers be granted to tribal leaders along lines adopted by the British in areas of indirect rule.[44] In practice, this strategy entirely failed to protect the mass of the adivasis, as their leaders merely became the instruments of the state in the recruitment and exploitation of adivasis as forest workers and road construction labourers.

Verrier Elwin was trained originally in English literature and then theology at Oxford. His training in classical English romantic literature was to influence his romantic approach to adivasis. He came to India in the 1920s as a missionary, but later broke with his mission and settled in a Gond village, where he carried out social and educational work. He eventually married a gond tribal woman. He worked extensively with the adivasis of the Central Provinces and Bastar and wrote a series of monographs on the Khonds, Baigas, Marias and Agarias.[45] He also viewed adivasis as creatures of nature whose worldview was entirely at odds with that of civilised people.[46] This was a hopelessly one-sided encounter, in which the aboriginal stood to lose his land and forests, and his culture and self-esteem. In a major work titled *Loss of Nerve,* he grouped adivasis into three classes – the elites, the so-called Hindus, and the primitives – arguing that the second category was corrupted and culturally undermined by contacts with caste Hindus and missionaries.[47] The solution, as he saw it, was to protect the adivasis by creating national parks for them. His celebration of adivasi life was not, however, always in their best interests. In his monographs he made much of certain exotic customs, for example, that the human sacrifices of Khonds were linked with their belief that their turmeric crop would lack the prized deep red colour without the shedding of blood, or that Maria women who refused to offer tobacco[48] to their husband's younger brother were liable to be murdered.[49] All of this helped to stigmatise adivasis as human sacrificers and murderers. His positions were also contradictory. For example, he adopted a positive attitude towards commercialisation and the creation of property rights in land.[50] Despite his condemnation of the inculcation of caste values among adivasis, he demanded a caste status – that of Kshatriya – for them, as they were, in his view, martial races.[51] Later, having fought strongly against state expansion into tribal society, he accepted an appointment as adviser on tribal affairs to the north-east frontier agency between 1954 and 1964, so

that he also became an agent of the state. He was thus a dubious champion of adivasi interests.

Nationalist Agenda

From the 1920s onwards, young Indian anthropologists began to adopt a nationalist agenda. A leading figure in this respect was the Saraswat Brahman G S Ghurye. As was common amongst Brahmans, he first trained in Sanskrit and earned a gold medal in his MA. Later with the help of a Scotch educationist who was chairing in sociology at Bombay University, he took up a fellowship in England and did his PhD in social anthropology at Cambridge University. After his return, he served at Bombay University from 1924 to 1959 and trained many sociologists. His most important works were *Caste and Race in India*, first published in 1932 and *The Aboriginal – So-called – And Their Future* (later retitled as *The Scheduled Tribes of India*) which was first published in 1944.[52] Most of his ideas and methodologies were common with colonial anthropology and he differed from a colonialist such as Risley only in his nationalist politics. His nationalism had a strongly Hindu fascist content. He held that every inhabitant of the Indian subcontinent was Hindu by birth.[53] In *The Aboriginal – So-called – And their Future*, Ghurye argued that the adivasis of India were Hindus for the simple reason that they were born on Indian soil, worshipped Hindu gods, and spoke the same regional languages as caste Hindus. He also strongly opposed the enumeration of tribals in the census under the separate category of "animists".[54] Although he used the term "aboriginal" in this book, he later rejected it, as well as the term adivasi, as both implied that they were the original inhabitants of India who had been usurped by invaders. He argued that such terms helped to create communal blocs. In the second edition of the book, published in 1954, he changed the title to *The Scheduled Tribes of India*, and designated the adivasis as "backward Hindus".[55] He claimed that the primitive tribal people had been gradually civilised by the Hindus, and that contact with Hindu society had benefited them in a multitude of ways.[56] In this, he ignored the many studies that provided strong evidence that this contact had been often devastating for the adivasis. In all this, his outlook was strongly tempered by the politics of Hindu nationalism.

A similar bias can be discerned in the writings of another Brahman, the south Indian M N Srinivas, who trained at Oxford and emerged as a world renowned social anthropologist in the post-colonial period. His theory of Sanskritisation took off from his observation of the brahmanisation of Coorgs in south India. In *Religions and Society among the Coorgs* (1952) he brought out the Brahmanisation process operated among the Coorgs, and generalised it to the entire Indian subcontinent under the banner of Sanskritisation in his Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Lecture at the University of California in May, 1963.[57] He argued that:

> Sanskritisation is the process by which a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste.[58]

Srinivas stated that the claim of the Bhil and Oraon adivasis to Kshatriya status revealed that they were inclined towards Sanskritisation.[59] In this, like Ghurye, he labelled such subordinate communities as "Hindus", and implied that they accepted the rules of the system. The phenomenon can however be understood differently. As Hardiman has argued: "it is a historical and dialectical process that in any given society is a synthesis arising out of pre-existing social systems".[60] The interaction between twice-born castes and lower castes and adivasis produces over the years a fresh synthesis that might not be unambiguously "Hindu". Kosambi illustrates the coexistence of mixed cultures where Guru Nanak and Kabir were worshipped by subordinate groups.[61] They could not be understood as either "Hindu", "Sikh" or "Muslim". Although while it is true that many communities tended towards the Hindu model, their demand emerged within the colonial context and within the demographic politics of colonial rule, and it was as much a socio-political as a religious one. Interestingly the same adivasis who demanded Kshatriya status put forth a serious cultural challenge to the onslaught of Hinduism, in the process, asserting their own cultural practices and values. Srinivas' theory of Sanskritisation was thus dominated by Hindu nationalist ideology and served to neutralise the anti-Brahman sparks lit by the non-Brahman movement in south India.[62] Therefore, although colonial tribal anthropology had varied manifestations, it tended to deny any ideological integrity to the adivasis.

Late Colonial Period

During the late colonial period, anthropologists and ethnographers also became divided into two groups – the isolationists and assimilationists.[63] The first group had environmentalist and romantic learnings. Furthermore romanticisation of adivasis crept into ecological romanticism (Sunderlal Bahuguna) that joined with Hindu right forces and fostered their agenda which is detrimental in the adivasi identity articulation and creates communal tension in the tracts.[64] The second group was more connected with state-patronised research institutions such as the Anthropological Survey of India (ASI). The ASI is primarily the legacy of a colonial anthropology that divided human species by anthropometric and morphologic devices. It was referred to scathingly as the Zoological Survey of British India during the colonial period and the present name was given in 1945 in response to nationalist sentiments. Yet, it has utterly failed to transcend its colonial roots, and it still applies colonial anthropometric and morphologic techniques in its studies on adivasis. Its recent 'People of India Project' that has produced 72 myriad volumes provides an example. Its editor, K S Singh, divides Indian adivasis into four racial stocks Negrito, Proto-Austroloid, Mongoloid and Caucasoid – by measuring their head and nasal sizes, as well as calculating genetic study findings.[65] This

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approach is seen in its other publication and its journal *Man in India*.[66] The post-colonial debate on the position of the adivasi in modern India had strong roots in the period immediately preceding decolonisation and failed to provide any alternative understanding of the adivasi society.

Likewise the Indian Institute of Advance Studies, Simla, has brought out three volumes: *The Tribal Situation in India* (1969) edited by K Suresh Singh, *Continuity and Change in Tribal Society* (1993) edited by Mrinal Miri and *From Tribe to Caste* (1997) edited by Dev Nathan. They focus on the supposed fusion of tribes into castes. Following an evolutionist Marxian paradigm, they apply a teleology of a progress from tribe to caste to class.[67] There are parallels here with Risley's notion of a race-tribe-caste evolution within the civilising process.[68] Most orthodox Marxist scholars have accepted this approach, and celebrate anti-colonial adivasi revolts as a stage towards the creation of a new class-consciousness. Though they designate such struggles as sporadic, spontaneous and unorganised, they welcome these revolts as they provide an opening for the education of adivasis in class consciousness by Marxist party workers, allowing tribal areas to become bases for radical politics and movements. The Telangana peasant armed struggle and Naxalite movement are the best examples where tribal revolts and tribals are considered to have played a very creative role.[69] Marxist scholarship has however failed to provide an adequate understanding of adivasi society, as it fails to delineate it from low caste society, and is rooted in the class-based agenda of Marxism.[70]

Colonial anthropology thus endeavoured to homogenise and totalise Indian adivasi communities ignoring the historically built differences between adivasi communities and the interdependency between adivasis and caste-Hindu society. Although this project failed in many respects it ended up in stigmatising adivasi social as primitive, uncivilised, isolated, barbaric, violent, human sacrificers, criminal, backward, and completely distinct from that of the normal human species in mentality and mode of livelihood. It was also said that each group has distinct physiological and cultural traits and maintains a propound distinction with its sub-group or sub-clan. Post-colonial scholarship has in many crucial respects failed to escape from the framework of knowledge about such people created by colonial ethnography. It is important to decolonise colonial mentality in order to provide an ideological integrity to the adivasis.

NOTES

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44 Ibid, pp 33-35.
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47 Varrier Elwin, *Loss of Nerve* (1942).
48 In Maria tradition a man who wishes to have sex with any other woman goes to her and ask for tobacco, if she offers him tobacco it is considered to be acceptance to have sex with him.
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50 G S Ghurye, *Scheduled Tribes*, 1959, Bombay, p 155.
51 Guha, 'Savaging the Civilised', p 2386.
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54 Ghurye, *Scheduled Tribes*, pp 7-12.
55 Ibid, p 20.
56 Ibid, pp 27-47.
57 M N Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, New Delhi, 1966, see preface.
58 Ibid, p 6.
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60 Hardiman, *Coming of the Devi*, p 160.
61 D D Kosambi*, An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956, p 356.
62 Dirks*, Caste of Mind*, p 254.
63 Guha, 'Savaging the Civilised', p 2380.
64 Archana Prasad, *Against Ecological Romanticism*, New Delhi, 2003, see Preface.
65 K S Singh, *The Scheduled Tribes*, New Delhi, 1994, see note on the series, and also introduction to the series; under the People of India project (1985-92) he studied 4635 communities' ethnographies across India out of which 461 were adivasi communities deploying the colonial anthropological apparatuses.
66 A range of anthropometric studies has been published by ASI: for example see P Gupta (ed), *Anthropometry in India*, 1962, also see S H Ahmad (ed), *Anthropometric Measurements and Ethnic Affinities of the Bhil and Their Allied Groups of Malwa Area*, 1991.
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68 Inden*, Imagining India*, 1992: 62.
69 See P Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons*, Calcutta, 1972; also see K S Singh, *Tribal Movements*, 1982 and 1983; and also see Desai, *Peasant Struggle in India*, Bombay, 1979.
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