

Forest Management in Pre British, British and Post British Period of Kheri District,U.P.

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to formulate and systematically evaluate the existence of forest in different regime. The forest is a home, livelihood, the very existence to a vast number of tribal people. Management is the process and agency through which the execution of policy is planned and supervised. The changes encountered for the existence of forest management during the Pre British, British and post British period of Kheri district. The methods adopted in this study are based on secondary sources.

In the present study, efforts have been made to correlate the affinities of forest and tribals. Forest is a natural resource and useful for all but they have a special significance for those who dwell in and around forest since years. How this aspect was deliberately neglected by the policy formulators, is concluded in the present investigation.

1. Introduction

In India, the word 'Tribe' and 'Tribal' convey meaning today of a bewildering and enchanting groups of people who have been known by various names from time immemorial-'Vanvasi', 'Adivasi', 'Vanyajati' and 'Adimjati'. This unique group of people has acquired a substantial degree of importance in recent part and this group the national attention is focused in a manner as never before.

Today, the tribes and tribals are no longer the exclusive domain of anthropologists forming their subject study alone. They are the concern of the Govt. of India and all its allied departments and agencies. They are the concern of the various welfare societies, the forest department, Labour cooperative societies, social workers, voluntary agencies & non government organizations etc.

The objective of this paper would be to make a comprehensive study of the tribals and also to elaborate on various provisions which have been

made by the government of India and the state govt. from time to time for the improvement of this group of India.

According to Jawaharlal Nehru, "The tribal people possess a variety of culture and are in many ways certainly not backward. Thus there was no point of trying to make them a second rate copy ourselves. Every flower has a right to grow according to its laws of growth."

The tribal people may be hunter or fisherman, shepherd or cultivators, food gatherers or craftsman; they are integral components of forest and environment and must be recognized. A more precise definition of tribals has been given thus;

"A tribe is a collection of familiar bearing common names, members of which occupy the same territory speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations."

Viewed in this prospective, India's first Prime Minister Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru called for five point formulae

- 1- Tribal people developing a long line of their own genius.
- 2- Tribal's right in land and forest must be respected.
- 3- Tribal's forming most of the man power in tribal development administrative structure.
- 4- Avoiding the problem of over administrative of tribal development agencies at the top level.
- 5- Judging the result of tribal welfare projects by utility and human characters.

The Problem

To a vast number of tribals, the forest is a home, a livelihood, the very existence. It gives them timber without which they cannot live. Besides fruit, honey, medicinal plants and fish it provides them with timber to build their houses and things for practicing their art. From times immemorial the tribal people have enjoyed freedom to use the forest and hunt its animals and this has given them a conviction that remains even today deep in their heart, that the forest belongs to them. However, in late seventies-the tribal villages were converted to be revenue villages.

A war era began with the declaration of the forest area in which they ruled since ages, as a National Park on February,1,1997.Thus most of the villages come into the ambit of the buffer zone of Dudhawa National Park while two Tharu villages 'Surma' and 'Mura' remained located inside the core zone-'Sanctum-Sanctorum' of the park. Mura has been located into the buffer zone of the park. With the conversion of status to revenue village the authority of the government in these areas and the natural desire of the forest officials to exercise closer control over them disturbed the tribal tradition and sowed the seed of conflict.

The inter-relationship between the tribals and forest may be studied through various angles such as, income and employment generation through agro forestry, evolution of tribal welfare schemes, impact of forest labour co-operative societies, rehabilitation of project affect person, working of tribals sub plans, marketing of forest

produce etc. In the present study, however, a wider prospective has been taken in establishing the economic and social impact of forest policy on the tribals in Dudhwa National Park, as well as, the impact of tribals of Dudhwa Forest.

The main motive of the forest shall be to envisage long term harmonious relationship between the forest policy and tribals economic and social interest.

Review of Literature

- 1- According to government order no. 313/1431 dated April, 8, 1916. Those forest area of Kheri forest department, which were situated towards north of the river Sharda were declared under north Kheri forest department from April 1,1916
- 2- Tharu village source; notification Director Dudhwa National Park, Kheri, Reference No. - 4897/6-1dated June9, 1981.
- 3- Tarai Nature Conservation Society, Rajgarh, Lakhimpur-Kheri.

Materials and Methods

Materials

The following parameters are studied as tools –

- 1- Study of Geography of Dudhwa
- 2- Study of History of Dudhwa
- 3- Forest and forest wealth
- 4- Tharu villages
- 5- Land utilization
- 6- Area under reserved forest
- 7- Analysis of various forest acts in different era.

From the above mentioned tools only the Geography and History of Dudhwa National Park is described in detail.

Methods

The work is based on secondary data. We collect information through available research reports, journals, books, govt. reports, NGOs report, etc.

Geographical study of Dudhwa forest

These forests are situated in the district Kheri of U.P. It is a northern district of Lucknow division and is situated in sub Himalan belt bordering Nepal. The geographical area of the district is 7691 square km. It comprises three sub divisions viz Lakhimpur Kheri, Nighasan and Mohmmadi, which are also Tahsil head quarters.

The study area lies in Nighasan Tahsil of this district in Tarai belt of Himalyan range adjoining the border of Nepal. The major of area of the study is situated in the forest area of North Kheri. On february 1, 1997 a very large area of North Kheri forest department was converted into 'Dudhwa National Park', abiding to the government order no.-6991 inclosing 14-3-1/94 dated January,21,1997 percentage reserved forest area, Tharu village situated between National Park and Indo- Nepal borders were declared as buffer zone. Buffer zone was declared keeping in view the pressure of Tharu village on the reserve forest.

Historical background

The history of state forest dates back to 1861, when 1784.77 square km. (727 square km. of Kherigarh paragna and 64.77square km. of bhur paragna) forest was declared reserved. In1869, forest situated south of the Suheli river in the Nighasan pargna, were transferred under forest department. From 1905 govt. order No.742/14-391-A, dated December15, 1904 dictated the control over entire Tharu villages upon the divisional forest officer. But govt. order no. 227/14-2-1975 dated June, 20, 1975 declared these Tharu villages as revenue village.

The park also harbours some intriguing relics of history. On one hinter land towers the kherigarh fort which, say some historians, was built by Mohmmad Tuglaq, other say that the builder was Firoz Shah. Five km. to its west is the fort of Ghori

Shah where legend has it; Prithvi Raj Chauhan was once imprisoned. The sat memorial, in the Sathiana block symbolizes a tragedy; the Raja of Kherigarh, out tiger-hunting, one day, was himself devoured by a big cat. His grief-torn widow hunted for the animals for days but in vain, ultimately she committed sati at the spot where the memorial stands.

Observation and results

It includes analysis of various forests acts in different era.

Section I- Pre British Period

Though very little is known about the management of forest at the advent of the British, tell me have a picture of a well-wooded country whose pasture and forest resources were controlled and fairly managed by the local village communities. The forest was a communal property with no individual staking any claim to them though the entire individual had resource to forest for their needs. For the tribal in particular, the forests remained a life-blood. The symbiotic relationship was observed between the forests and tribals.

In the initial periods of the history of Indian forestry, state control over forests was virtually nonexistent. In this period when the Military technology of large empires relied heavily on forest for tumblers and elephants, the state made explicit provision for forests to be set aside for the use of the subject population. As result, India's vast forests were largely under the control of village and tribal communities.

We also have many evidences regarding the prosperity of tribal in forest in our epics. In Ramayan, we learn that many tribal communities help lord Ram during his 'Vanvas'. The example of Nishadraj is very prominent in this regard.

In brief those who lived in the forests also looked after the natural resources well. The travelogues of pre-British days give a sufficient proof of the forests being a communal property; whole community feed itself a communal responsibility

towards the preserver. It is only when the British came that the things changed drastically.

Section-II-The British Period 1855-1947

With the British, came the scientific management of forest which served their own purpose well. Tribals became a hindrance in the exploitation of forests on which the British defense relied heavily. British government resulted as an increase in restrictions on tribal. A review of the British policy has been undertaken in this section.

Conservation Neglected-

The early days of the British rule, up to the middle of 19th century, were characterized by a total indifference to the need of forests conservation. Forests were considered obstructions to the prosperity of the country and their removal meant increases in the revenue. The whole policy of the time was to extend the agriculture, and the watchword was to destroy the forest with this end in view.

Establishment of Forest Department

In 1862 the Government-General called for the establishment of a department that could ensure the sustained availability of the enormous requirement of the different railways for sleepers. As an officer later reminisced, the forest department was started because the Government became aware that the magnificent forests in India and Myanmar were being worked by private enterprise "...in a reckless and wasteful manner and were likely to become exhausted if supervision was not exercised."

It was in this situation that the Imperial forest Department was formed in 1864, with the help of German Foresters.

Tribals became Intruders

In response to the above mended situation, the guardians of forests (the imperial Crown) declared the people of the forest as intruders, aliens over the 'state poverty'. However, tribals were allowed to live in forest because they provided the cheap labourer by which the forests could be cut, the timber transported and prepared for the timber trading. The tribal thus "...formed an appendage to the colonial interests."

The Government forest act 1865

The Act empowered the government to declare any land covered with trees, jungle as government forests by notification, provided that, "...such notification should not affect any existing right of individual or communities." On the contrary, the Govt. could also prescribe punishment for the breach of the provision of the Act. It can be seen from the provision of the act that the major objective was to establish government control over forests because by the defense of 'offence' tribals could do nothing in forest-to even recollect fallen leaves.

It is instructive to note that they were the Britishers who recklessly destroyed the Indian forests. But when it came to imposing of restrictions, the tribal people were the victims. Restrictions being imposed on all the basic activities, the forest-dwellers, once the owners of the forests, became the puppet in the hands of British rulers.

Indian Forest Act 1878

At this stage, the British Government felt the necessity of setting the claims of tribals on land which was declared as forest land. The Indian Forest Act, 1878 was, therefore more comprehensive than the earlier one.

Classification of forest

For the first time in this Act forest were classified as-

1. Reserved Forests
2. Protected forests, and
3. Village Forests.

Government had powers to reserve any forest according to the provision of the act. Reserved Forests can briefly describe as- forests, where everything is restricted unless permitted. Protected forests as- forests, where everything is permitted unless restricted. Regarding village forests as well, the Government retained the authority to cancel or assign the rights to village community though these forests were to provide timber, other forest produce and pasture to people.

Indian Forest Act 1927

The Indian Forest Act 1878 was modified in parts by different acts of the local government. It was later on replaced by the comprehensive Indian Forest Act, 1927. This piece of legislature contains all the major provisions of the earlier policy. While all the restrictions proposed by earlier remained, the penalty for defaulter increased, except such minor exceptions, the Indian Forest Act, 1927 was word to word the same as the Indian Forest Act, 1878.

Essence of the British Policy

Britishers formulated and reformulated this forest policy with the only motive of revenue collection. Forest department was established to improve authority over the tribals who were converted from owners of forests to cheap labourers. Many photographs in different books reveal British officer shooting a Tiger (with the help of hundred of tribals) and then posing with it boastfully. It shows that the British policy of considered tribal as intruders was in order to fulfill their own means and their lain of forests was a lame excuse , increasing powers of

government mean increasing restrictions on the tribal. This is the period when, for the first time a formal forest policy came into existence in the form of forest acts.

Section III-Post Independence Period 1947-88 A.D.

After Independence, all tribals, social workers working amongst tribals, academic scholars-hoped for some fundamental change in the early forest policy. The Government was expected to recognize the relationship of tribals which was earlier practiced in the name of forest management. The Government of free India disappointed by adopting all the principles lay down by the British. Tribal remained intruders and labourers, and did not get back their erstwhile right over forest and forest produce.

The National Forest Policy, 1952

The continuity between the colonial and the post colonial forest of 1952, the policy statement of 1952 affirms that the 1894 policy constitute the basis for the forest policy of India up to this date became its "...fundamental concepts feel hold good."

The classification of Forests was suggested as-

A-Protection forest

B-National Forest

C-Village Forest

D-Tree Lands

A-Protection forests; i.e. those forests which must be preserved or created for protection of physical and climatic conditions

B- National Forest; i.e. Those which have to be maintained and managed to meet the needs of defiance, communications industry, and other general purpose of public importance

C-Village Forests; i.e., those which have to be maintained to provide fire wood in order to release cow-dung for manure, and to yield small timber for agricultural implements and other forest produce for local requirements, and to provide grazing for cattle.

D- Tree Lands-i.e., those areas which though outside the scope of the ordinary forest management, are essential for the betterment of the physical conditions of the country.

“It is obvious that the needs of tribals or forest dwellers have been given low weightage or even that they are conspicuous by the absence of their mention.”

Protection forests are kept out of reach of tribals for ecological purposes, and so are the National forests as “...they constitute valuable timber bearing regions, the producer of which is indispensable for defense, communications and vital industries.” Their management on scientific and business lines was felt to be essential for maintaining a sustained supply of wood for industry and of large timbers for defense, communications and other national purposes.

The National commission on agriculture 1976

The commission advocated commercialization of agriculture at all costs with almost a total disregard for the sustenance of tribals derived from the forests. Removal of poverty attainment of self-reliance and maximum employment were declared to be the objectives of planned development,

Bias against Tribal

The commercial and anti-poor bias of the commission is evident everywhere in the report. The commission does not make it clear as to who has over-exploited the forests and simply presumes that the tribals have done it. Neglecting the fact that the supply of forest raw materials to the industries has been heavily subsidized and in a relative sense is ‘dirt-cheap’ or ‘almost-free’ the commission comes heavily on the concession given to the forest-dwellers, holding them responsible for the destruction of forests. It opines that “having over-exploited the resources, tribals cannot in all fairness

expect that somebody else will take the trouble of providing them with forests produce free of charge.”

Forest Development Corporation- The necessity

The sector analysis of the nation’s forest and forest based-industries was carried out in 1971 by the Ford foundation and the planning commission. The conclusion of the analysis was that India’s industrial forestry programme must be geared up to increase production from the then level of 8.92 million cu. m. to 25.55 million cu. m. by 1980 and to 41.00 million cu. m. in 1990. The problems had also been studied by the National Commission on agriculture which reported that forestry will not be contributing its due share to the national income unless per hectare yield was increased.

The commission was convened that a new commercial approach to forestry development had to be built up, therefore, a change-over from conservation forestry to a more dynamic programme of production forestry was found necessary.

Objective of the Forest Development Corporation

The concept of Forest Development Corporation was evolved with the specific objectives of-

- 1- Making use of industrial finance
- 2- Ploughing back substantial portion of profits for development
- 3- Giving flexibility & freedom to managers to introduce innovations and to take quick and timeless decision.
- 4- To diversity production and to induct specialists in organizations.

“It is a peculiar that there is no mention of simultaneous and integrated development of tribals.”

The Indian forest Bill, 1980

It was expected that the forest bill drafted for the first time in free India would be different than the earlier efforts by giving due weightage to the dependence of tribal communities on forests. However, social activists working among the forest dwelling communities saw in the Draft bill "... increased threat to the life support system of these communities." The bill tried to formulate certain definitions vary widely. Thus, 'forest' including any land containing trees or shrubs, pasture lands and 'any land what so ever', which the State Government may be notification declare to be forest for the purpose of this Act. Similarly, 'forest produce' was defined as to include trees, leaves, flowers. Fruits, all other parts or produce of trees not specifically mentioned, as well as, all types of grass, creepers, orchid, moss and all parts or produce of such plants. The bill classified forests into three categories; reserved forests, protected forests, and village forests. Reserved forests imply 'protected areas' where the local forest dwellers and tribals are banned entry and the normal age-old practices of looking to the forest for the satisfaction of their basic needs were to attract a stiff penalty.

The prohibited actions such as grazing of cattle, utilizing bark for medicine and exchange of seeds, grain, honey, fishing and hunting small games-were labeled as 'offences' liable to a penalty as fine, imprisonment, as well as payment of compensator for damage.

Under section 36, the bill gave to the state government the authority to regulate, pasturing, hunting fishing, etc, in protected forests as well. On village forests there was no concrete provision that spelt and how lands marked out for village forestry could be useful to the local population. It is only said that the state bureaucracy will be responsible for the manner which the local population should live in harmony with the forests. Chapter 12, section 118 and 119 of the bill gave judicial powers to the forest officers to arrest and seize the property. It also gave forest officer discretion (emphasis added) - in the

collection of fines and calculate of compensation for damage. The provision in the bill recognized personal claims over lands and forest produce, and ignored the fact that many of these rights especially those connected with forest produce have been enjoyed by the tribes as groups. Thus the bill emphasized protector of forests from the people (emphasis added). It denied the real worth of forests in being a source of livelihood for millions of the tribal poor.

The bill, without any change in basic attitude, become the forest Conservation act, 1980. Facing the nationwide uproar in 1982 against the Act, the government decided to prepare a forest policy document. The new forest policy document was prepared by the end of 1985.

It was criticized by the ecologists, eminent scholars and activists, as both the drafts in corporate nothing more than cosmetic changes to the 1952 policy.

National Forest Policy, 1988

The National Forest Policy resolution, 1988, is strictly different from the previous draft statements. It reflects the pro-tribal attitude with clarity. Though it relates the right and concessions of the tribals to the carrying capacity of forests also mentions the "need for optimizing this capacity by increased investment, silviculture research and development of the area." It assures that 'customary and concessions are fully protected', adding that the domestic requirements of fuel wood, fodder, minor forest produce, and construction timber should be the first charge on forest produce.

Other salient features of the policy resolution pertaining to the tribals' are-

- Section 4.6 deals with 'Tribal People and Forests', it accepts the symbiotic relationship between tribals and forests and need to associate tribals in the protection, regeneration and development of forests.
- It is suggested that forest based industries should grow their own raw

material under the technical guidance of forest department. Also these industries should not only provide employment to local people on priority but involve them fully in raising trees and raw- materials as well.

Although lot more could have been done to make it a right forest policy in all sense it still stands as a good beginning.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above observation and discussion that the forest dwelling tribal communities had free access to forests and depended completely on forests before the advent of the British. The British Government converted the natural resource into a supplier of raw-material for the forest based industries and a source of revenue for the government. Their forest- policy in the form the forest legislation resulted in increasing restrictions on the tribals and their use of the forest-produce. The policy adopted by the Indian Government is in constitution of the Britishers' revenue - oriented approach. Forests continue to be 'raw-material for industries' and 'income for the government.' The people living in forests still continue to be as cheap labourers-living on the mercy of the forest-department officials. Every new programme and project in forest, adopted by the government provides an evidence of this. Even after severe criticism from scholars, social workers etc the government seem to be bound by some other consideration rather than the welfare.

Suggestion

It should include-

1. Restoration of rights of scheduled Tribes.
2. Restoration rights of tribal villages.
3. Restoration of rights of forest villages.

4. Illegal cutting of forest is strictly implemented.
5. Employment in the forest management.
6. Contribute social zones within the forest (both protected and other forest).

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