

Identity Delineation of Indian Tribes*

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Abstract: In contemporary social science literature of India as well as in the administrative diction, 'tribe' as a concept has got wide usage and multiple meanings. This reflects rather a casual approach to identity delineation of the people. In fact, certain notions about the very concept are often taken as if, more or less for granted. Such broad presuppositions naturally justify a close exercise of careful standardization, before the same is accepted as a scientific delineation. Various illustrations establish with evidence that the so-called tribes of India as such represent a very wide spectrum. It is, therefore, important to re-examine the details critically, whether such vibrant populations really deserve a casual approach or the question of their identity should be examined afresh in terms of their participation in various walks of life.

Key words: Identity, Indian tribes, Socio-cultural reality