

Changing Contours of Adivasi Society and its Culture: Crises and Negotiations *

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Abstract: ‘Coloniality’ and ‘post-coloniality’, when seen as two seemingly opposite mental orientations developed as a result of prolonged exposure, may have a direct impact on the *adivasi* society and its culture. There are indications in the contemporary situation that as states of mind the two sometimes coexist giving rise to conflicting tendencies which get reflected in the fields of tradition and culture, subsistence activities and technological innovations, social structure and greater inter-community interaction. To understand the inner travails and contradictions prevailing in the *adivasi* society, it is necessary to have a reflexive, open and sensitive mind. For getting a comprehensive idea about the process of transformation of *adivasi* society and its culture, anthropologists need to be methodologically well equipped to be able to interpret ethnohistorical changes or historically determined changes over a time frame. The focus should particularly be on the problems of development faced by the *adivasis* and the tensions experienced by them as a result of the introduction of such development programmes over which they have little control. Their entanglement with politically guided activities and state-centric forces in operation is intricately linked with the type of development benefits they could derive. At the same time, there has been an increasing differentiation within the tribal or *adivasi* society striking at the core of their social existence. The knowledge of acculturation coming from outside puts them on the road to “self-acculturating modernity”. It further confirms that the global impact on the local cultures represented by tribes or *adivasis* is an unavoidable development in today’s world, which, in a way, signals the entry of post-coloniality into the post-modern phase of development. Coloniality as a state of mind has provided tribes or *adivasis* with the opportunity to be self-conscious, while post-coloniality has made the situation fluid and flexible enough prompting the *adivasis* to enter into the field of power relations on the basis of priority of settlement and a distinctive culture.

Key words : Coloniality, Postcoloniality, Changing contour, *Adivasi*

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