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## BOOK REVIEW

Geography of Tribal Agriculture by **Dr. D.S. Suryawanshi**

Published by: **ABD Publishers, Jaipur, 2010, Pages 207, Price Rs. 650/-.**

The physical insularity supports large number of tribal communities in the world which are racially – culturally diverse and their survival successes are also not identical. The tribal people are believed to be the earliest colonizers of the country particularly, in central, southern, northern and north eastern parts of India. Continuous attempts have been made to answer the two basic questions; who are the tribals? and what is Tribalism? It is very difficult if not impossible to find answer to these questions. The tribals are supposed to live isolated mostly in the hills and forests and even where they live in plains, they often have a separate secluded existence. They are in harmony with the natural resources. Tribals are being considered socially backward people; thing that has been always troubling me since long. I think differently and feel that they may be considered economically backward, without doubt, but it is not correct to label them backward socially, because this is a subjective conception. The tribals have their own distinct social environment, which they have been following, and will continue do so even in future. This is their identity. Instead of socially backward it would be correct and appropriate to call them *socially different societies*. Backward and forward terms create psychological complexes.

The Book entitled '*Geography of Tribal Agriculture*' under review is a comprehensive work in the field of agricultural geography

based on secondary data of 2001. The present volume contains six chapters. Chapter I describes the introduction – nature and scope of agricultural geography, review of literature, study region, objectives, hypothesis and research methodology. It covers a penetrating review of relevant agricultural land use literature at international, national and state levels. The proposed hypotheses relate physical, social and cultural factors having influence on uneven distribution of agricultural land use and spatial analysis.

Chapter two describes the geographical background of the study region with detailed description of the relief and drainage. This chapter also provides details about population, density, distribution, literacy, sex ratio, occupational structure, workforce, land use and live stock.

Chapter three is entitled "General landscape of tribal area", in which the secondary data from census hand book 2001, land use statistics 2001 and annual socio economic review of government of Maharashtra have been abstracted and tehsil-wise statistics have been utilized for analyzing the land use. Author has examined spatial variations in the changes that have occurred during 2001 and suggested ways and means to improve existing land use in the district in relation to physical and socio-economic conditions. In this chapter land use is classified and analysed very practically with positive and

negative impacts. The title of the chapter deserves to be general land use of tribal area instead of general landscape.

Chapter Four deals with the agricultural land use pattern of major crops like jowars, cotton, rice, dadar, bajara, vegetables, maize, oilseeds, sugarcane, wheat and other crops. The area witnessed maximum land under jowar, cotton, rice and dadar respectively. The same chapter reveals the extent and affects of the geographical, social and economic factors on land use pattern and crops of the study region.

Chapter fifth deals with the regionalization of crops. Ranking of crops has been divided in four hierarchical orders in which jowar and cotton came up as 1st order crops. While, sugarcane and wheat found to be in the 4th order- the lowest category. Analysis of crop combination, diversification and cropping intensity is based on traditional statistical methods. Five crops combinations were covering large area with jowar as most dominant crop. Akkalkuwa tehsil is the area of high crop diversification with very high cropping intensity and it is a tehsil having maximum schedule tribe population (84.80 per cent). I think this chapter is most useful for policy maker because regionalization of crops has been analyzed in detail describing the various factors.

In chapter sixth the last one, major concern is, conclusion of the study and outlines strategies for proper and efficient agricultural land use for increasing production. Measures suggested by Dr. Suryawanshi include afforestation for ecological balance, prevention of encroachment, bamboo farming, adaptation of crop rotation system, construction of percolation tanks, congestive and rational utilization of ground water, change in traditional cropping pattern and proper implementation of government schemes like *Gharkul Yojana* and 100 per cent well plan etc.

There appears to be a mismatch between title of the book and analysis given in the text. As per the 2001 census schedule tribe population of Nandurbar district was 65.50 per cent whereas the author has drawn the conclusion by taking into account the entire population of the district. Going by the data and description as provided by the author, it is not proper to draw conclusion on the tribal agriculture. There has not been detailed description about the tribe such as occupational structure, population and land use etc. The author was unable to highlight the productivity and production of various crops which is very essential to know about economic transformation. The author claims that primary data were collected but when, where and how the archival, data were retrieved is not clear. Likewise, there has not been an elaborate explanation about GIS application and its result. The photographs as well as the maps are very poor in quality.

Apart from this submissive observation author deserves warm accolades for this comprehensive study of agriculture geography of Nandurbar District of Maharashtra. This book would be very useful, because of its extensive coverage on empirical knowledge to fulfill the fundamental requirement of researchers, students, planners, decision makers and the beginners who are planning to engage themselves in agricultural research.

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