

ABSTRACT

Tribal Groups and Development

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The nexus of tribal territory, forest resource and development induced social change forms the platform on which this research is based. With 109 tribes identified as practicing shifting cultivation in India and the Forest Policy 1952 and the National Commission on Agriculture 1976 suggesting that it be banned, this research becomes both interesting and essential in exploring the social structure of the Konda Reddis of the Eastern Ghats, a tribe that till date subsists on shifting cultivation. The research attempts to address the issue of shifting cultivation, often branded as detrimental to the forest, at a micro level, looking at the Konda Reddi settlement pattern, population distribution, production and consumption pattern, land use and forest type. The study will also assess the compatibility of the Integrated Tribal Development Project programmes with the hilltop Konda Reddi social and spatial organisation exploring the impact and transition that has resulted, with special reference to the State policy of Andhra Pradesh which has adopted Micro finance as an important development initiative to reach the most isolated and remote regions of the state. In this connection the research will attempt to understand how the Konda Reddis themselves perceive the concept of development and social change. The study will further develop the issue of empowerment by tackling questions as in: What does it mean to be empowered? Should empowerment necessarily follow development? What is the relevance of these concepts within the social fabric of the community?