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Teacher- Dr. Niru Jain

Topic- Indian Tribal System

Indian Tribal System

Tribal settlements, villages and towns are the three main components of India's social formation. A sharp distinction between tribal settlement and village and between village and town cannot, however, be easily drawn due to some common characteristics shared by them. There are big tribal villages in some parts of the country and they are not significantly different from non-tribal, multi-caste villages.

Distinctions based on kinship, wealth and power among some tribal villages are as sharp as we find among the non-tribal villages. Tribals are not, theoretically, a part of Hindu social organisation, but they have always been in touch with wider society in India. They have been exploited economically and socially by the non-tribals living in tribal areas. A number of tribes have revolted against their exploitation.

Tribal Identity in India:

Article 46 of India's Constitution states: "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." There are, however, tribes which are not Scheduled Tribes (STs) and are generally weaker sections of India's population, like the Scheduled Castes (SCs).

The tribes are backward, particularly in regard to education and economic standing. They were exploited in the past [and even today they are

exploited), by the dominant sections of Indian society, namely, Hindu landlords, moneylenders and industrialists who purchased their lands to establish industries in tribal areas. Forest produces, which tribals bring to the markets for sale, are bought at throwaway prices.

A number of tribes have 'Hinduised' or converted to Christianity or Islam to break away from their tribal identity, to get redemption from exploitation and to elevate their status and honour. Sometimes it becomes difficult to draw a clear line between a tribal and a caste group. There are hunters and food gatherers among the tribals on the one end, and there are tribals settled in villages, practically functioning as 'caste groups' on the other.

Tribals have a strong sense of their distinctiveness and separate themselves from non-tribals, jatis, Christians and Muslims. Language is one of the strong traits by which they identify themselves. Mundas, Santhals and Hos are identified as distinct tribes on the basis of their spoken languages (besides other attributes).

A large number of tribals in India live in hilly and forested areas where population is sparse and communication is difficult. They are spread over the entire sub-continent, but are found mainly in the states of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Defining Tribal Society:

D.G. Mandelbaum (1972) writes:

"In tribal life the principal links for the whole society are based on kinship." Kinship is not simply a principle of social organisation, it is also a principle of inheritance, division of labour and distribution of power and

privileges. Tribal societies are small in size. They possess a morality, religion and worldview of their own, corresponding to their social relations. However, some tribes such as Santhals, Gonds and Bhils are quite large.

Theodore Sahlins writes that the term 'tribal society' should be restricted to 'segmentary systems'. The segmentary systems have relations on a small scale. They enjoy autonomy, and are independent of each other in a given region. We may observe this about the Santhals, Oraons and Mundas of Jharkhand or about the Bhils, Bhil Meenas and Garasias of Rajasthan. Contrary to tribes, castes are 'organic' in nature, as each caste is part of an organic whole in terms of the 'jajmani' system, commensality and connubiality.

The principle of organic relationship explains interdependence of various caste groups upon each other in social life. Caste groups are hierarchically arranged on the basis of certain ascriptive criteria. These criteria do not apply to tribes in India.

Distinctions between 'folk', 'peasant' and 'urban', or between 'tribal', 'folk' and 'elite', are not very useful for the understanding of tribes in India. For example, the tribes of Jharkhand have been interacting and cooperating with each other, despite geographical barriers, problems of communication, relative cultural autonomy and economic self-reliance because they faced a common external threat to their traditional system of land relations, economy and cultural autonomy.

The Hindu zamindars, Bengali moneylenders and the British administration exploited them, pushing them to the point of extinction

and utter dehumanisation. There was never inter-tribal isolation and cultural exclusiveness.

The tribals of Jharkhand mobilised their members against their exploiters. They interacted with the administration, town elite and outsiders. The Jharkhand (earlier part of Bihar state), which contains numerous tribes, is a tribal cultural zone comprising several tribal sub-cultures.

The Mundas, Oraons, Hos and Santhals the major tribes of this region – depend upon forest produce, settled agriculture, employment in industries, coal mines and government jobs. Some have settled in towns, others are in villages, and some of the latter are economically very well off. Thus, tribal culture is in part a peasant culture and in part an urban culture.

Tribal exclusiveness, intact tribal solidarity and tribal consciousness on the one hand, and dependence upon towns and cities, administration and mobilisation against their exploiters on the other, have existed simultaneously among the tribal people.

Even the revival of tribal aboriginality has been expressed in the form of an instrument of protest against the external intrusions and impositions of rules and regulations. The tribals of Jharkhand are peasants to a large extent, and therefore, their 'peasant qualities' should become the basis to understand their economic problems. The characteristics of peasant societies, outlined by Theodore Sahlins, aptly apply to the tribals of Jharkhand.

These are:

(1) The peasant family farm is the basic unit of a multi-dimensional social organisation;

(2) Land husbandry is the main means of livelihood, directly providing the major part of the consumption needs;

(3) Specific traditional culture is related to the way of life of small communities; and

(4) The peasants have the underdog position, domination of peasants by others.

The tribes of Jharkhand have been called peasants by S.C. Roy (1970). They have fought against feudalism for 300 years. Today, they are facing problems emerging out of industrial urbanisation in the Jharkhand region.

Tribal Social Structure:

D.G. Mandelbaum (1972) mentions the following characteristics of Indian tribes:

(1) Kinship as an instrument of social bonds;

(2) Lack of hierarchy (rigid status distinctions) among men and groups (clans and lineages);

(3) Absence of strong, complex, formal organisations;

(4) Communitarian basis of landholding;

(5) Segmentary character;

(6) Little value on surplus accumulation, on the use of capital, and on market-trading;

(7) Lack of distinction between form and substance of religion; and

(8) A distinct psychological make-up for enjoying life.

Tribes have been separated from other social categories on the basis of these features. In India, the British conducted a detailed enumeration of the tribals in the 1930s. Tribes were distinguished from castes on the basis of their religious and ecological conditions.

However, tribals are also peasants, as a good number of them today live in villages and have been engaged in agriculture and allied occupations just like peasants belonging to various castes and communities. According to the 1991 census there are more than 67 million tribals divided into 427 tribes. They form about 8 per cent of the total population. There is vast diversity among the tribes in terms of habitation, ecology, economic pursuits, language, religion and contacts with the outside world. Each tribe is internally stratified. It may be that members of a given tribe do not have a clear perception about their existential conditions or that they have a distorted or false consciousness.

The large tribes of India are the Gonds of Chhattisgarh (formerly part of Madhya Pradesh), Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh; the Bhils of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh; and the Santhals of Jharkhand (formerly part of Bihar), Orissa and West Bengal. The Gonds and the Bhils are more than four million each. The Santhals are more than three million.

B.K. Roy Burman (1972) divides tribal communities into five territorial groupings, taking into account their historical, ethnic and socio-cultural relations.

These are as follows:

(I) North-east India, comprising Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura;

(2) The sub-Himalayan region of north and north-west India, comprising hill districts of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh;

(3) Central and East India, comprising West Bengal, Bihar (now Jharkhand), Orissa, Madhya Pradesh (now Chhattisgarh) and Andhra Pradesh;

(4) South India comprising Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka; and

(5) Western India, comprising Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Tribes in India differ from one another in racial traits, language, social organisation, cultural patterns, etc. The dominant racial type among tribes is the proto-Australoid. In the sub-Himalayan belt, the Mongoloid type is preponderant. The Mediterranean and the Negrito are found in other regions. Tribal languages belong to all the types: the Austric, the Dravidian, and the Tibeto-Chinese. Tribal people are generally bilingual. Some tribes have been assimilated into the Hindu-fold, like the Bhumij and the Bhils. Some have been attracted by Christianity.

The main occupations of the tribes are:

(1) Forestry and food gathering;

(2) Shifting cultivation;

(3) Settled agriculture;

(4) Agricultural labour;

(5) Animal husbandry; and

(6) Household industry.

Social Stratification among Tribes of India:

Andre Beteille (1974), following N.K. Bose's classification, mentions language, religion and the degree of isolation as the main bases of classification of tribes. Beteille, however, considers the manner in which they make their living as the plainest way to arrange them into categories.

Bose (1972) classifies the tribal people into three main categories:

(1) Hunters, fishers and gatherers;

(2) Shifting cultivators; and

(3) Settled agriculturists, using the plough and plough-cattle.

Santhals, Gonds, Bhils, Oraons and Mundas fall into the last category. Their peasantry is not substantially different from the non-tribal peasants. These tribals are also categorised as cultivators, agricultural labourers and workers. They are working in factories in Jharkhand, Bengal, Orissa and Chhattisgarh, and in plantations in Assam, Bengal and some southern states. S.C. Roy (1970) describes the Oraon and Munda villagers as peasants. Furer-Haimendorf (1982) describes the Raj Gonds of Adilabad as peasants. F.G. Bailey (1957) refers to the Konds of Orissa as peasants.

Several anthropologists have observed social stratification among the members of a specific tribe. S.C. Roy (1970) has listed a number of groups in an Oraon village in terms of their different occupations. The Oraons have also been classified on the basis of their tenurial status. Roy mentions the presence of peasant proprietors' or various categories of raiyats. There are various endogamous groups such as Mahalis, Ghasis and Lobars.

The Mundas too have settled agriculture and division of labour within the family. The Mundas had the 'Khuntkatti' system of land tenure. Under this system, there were: (1) the Khuntkattidars, (2) the parjas or raiyats, and (3) the subsidiary castes (service groups). The Khuntkatti system lost its significance due to the introduction of individual ownership of land and the intervention by moneylenders and zamindars into tribal life (during British Raj). G.S. Ghurye (1969) calls tribal people as 'backward Hindus'.

Tribe and Caste:

Mandelbaum (1947) observes a slow shift from tribe to caste. He writes: "There is no absolute cultural or social distinction between all tribal and all caste peoples, but rather a range of variation between tribal and caste traits." Tribes and castes have certain cultural traits in common, in regard to the nature of ritual, purity and pollution, the worship of local spirits, and in kinship practices.

The broad aspects of distinction between the two are:

- (1) Social;
- (2) Political;
- (3) Economic;
- (4) Religious; and
- (5) Psychological.

Despite distinction in these aspects. There is a shift toward jati values. The shift is in the areas of styles of life, customs, dietary patterns, rituals,

hierarchy buttons and feuds, sanskritic religion and worldview. Tribal groups have imitated caste groups in these spheres.

Historian D.D. Kosambi reports that the tribes of the Gangetic plain were conquered by and assimilated into the kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha in the sixth century B.C. From ancient times until the British Raj, tribals were frequently raided by non-tribals. The British deplored the assimilation of tribal groups into the as a caste system. They might have thought of this combination of tribe and caste as a serious threat. It was then political move to stop the integration of tribes and castes Sir Herbert H. Risley observed that the tribes were transformation into since 1873. This process of transformation might termed as sanskritisation.

Tribal Methods of Marriage

The tribes in India have a variety of ways of acquiring mates. Since the tribals consider their marriage, more or less, as a social and civil contract, many tribes do not perform religious ceremonies for the solemnization of marriage. Majumdar has listed the following eight ways through which the tribals acquire their mates.

1. Probationary Marriage:

In this type of marriage, a tribal youth lives in the house of his sweetheart for weeks or months together. Thereafter, if both the boy and the girl like each other, they may enter into the wedlock or in case of dislike they may be separated. If marriage is not solemnized, the boy will have to pay compensation to the girls' parents. It is called as probationary marriage because the boy stays in his would be father-in-laws house as a probationer. The Kuki tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is said to follow this type of marriage.

2. Marriage by capture:

This is a popular type of marriage among several Indian tribes. In the marriage by capture, both the boys and the girl are known to each other since long. But marriage cannot be solemnized either due to unwillingness of the parents of either party or due to the inability on the part of the boy to pay the bride price. Therefore capture appears to be the only way out. Sometimes the captures are pre-arranged and often take place in fairs, festivals markets.

Even at times, the relations and friends of both the families arrange mere fights to retain the tradition when the bride is captured. In the Mock fight, the bride's party pretend to resist. The bride is expected to weep and lament on the occasion. This type of marriage is practiced among the Kondha, Juang, Bhuinya, Kharia, Birhor, etc. The Nagas take recourse to physical capture during raids by one village to another.

3. Marriage by trial:

This is a peculiar type of tribal marriage practiced among the Bhils of Madhya Pradesh. In this type of marriage, the courage and bravery of the young man is appreciated and recognized. Traditionally, on the 'Holi' day a group of Bhil bachelors and spinsters meet at the end of the village in a large field and fix up a wooden pole, at the field. They keep a litter 'gur' and coconut at the top of the pole and make two circles around the pole. The inner circle is made by the spinters around the pole and the boys make the outer ring.

The girls sing and dance in the inner ring and the unmarried boys who make the outer circle try to push through the girls by breaking their inner ring and to climb on the pole to eat the 'gur' and coconut. If a boy comes

out successful in his endeavor, he is free to choose any girl of the group for marriage.

4. Marriage by Purchase:

The man pays price for the bride to her parents before he has her as his wife. The price paid may be in the form of cash or kind. This type of marriage is widely prevalent among a number of tribes all over India. The price is paid by the groom's father to the girl's father according to the traditional custom. This payment, also known as bride prices, emphasizes the sale and purchase of bride, says Loises.

This type of marriage is found among the Kondh, the Juang, the Ho and the Munda. The Renghma Nagas also practise this way of acquiring mates. The amount of bride price paid among many tribes has become a status symbol which has jacked up the bride price too high. This has caused problem for many prospective brides and bridegrooms. They either remain unmarried or prefer to marry by capture.

5. Marriage by Service:

Some tribals have evolved the solution of higher bride price which the economically weaker tribal youths cannot afford to. If the bride groom is unable to pay the bride price, he has to serve in his would be father-in-law's house as a servant and marries the girl after the lapse of specific period. During the period the boy works in the house of the would be father-in-law without any payment and equalizes the bride price through his free service. The Gond and the Baiga practise this marriage. The Gond and the Baiga call the boy a Lamini and Lamena respectively.

A Birhor father-in-law often lends money to the son-in-law to enable him to pay the bride price. The son-in-law repays the loan in suitable instalments and until the loan is repaid in full, he stays with the father-in-

lay. The period of service in father's-in-law's house varies from tribe to tribe. A Bhil bridegroom, unable to pay the bride price, serves for seven long years whereas a Kuki may serve for a maximum period of 2-3 years.

6. Marriage by exchange:

If a son and daughter of marriageable age are available in two families they may exchange the daughters and do not pay any bride price for obtaining the bride. In the tribal India, the Kondh, the Saora, the Juang, Bhuiyan the Santal etc.; practise this type of marriage.

7. Marriage by Elopement:

Among many Indian tribes the unmarried boys and girls lead dormitory life and often involve in sexual relationship by coming in contact with each other. At times the tribal girls and boys may spend nights together while on dance expeditions to neighbouring villages. If the parents do not give consent, to the love of the would be spouses for marriages, they flee away to some other place without any information to the parents.

Such delinquent couple may, later on, be received back by their parents. Sometimes the parents make a search for the eloped couple and arrange their marriage. In this type of marriage, bride price is easily avoided. The Juang, the Santal, the Bhuinya, the Kondha and the Saora practise this type of marriage. This marriage practice is also prevalent among the tribals of Chhotanagpur region as 'Udra-Udri Cholki'.

8. Marriage by Intrusion:

This is the reverse way of the marriage by capture, wherein a girl desirous of marrying a particular tribal male expresses her willingness and goes to his family. She forcibly thrusts herself onto him and stays with him, despite the non-acceptance of the male. In the process she is subjected to humiliating treatment and refusal of food and often physical torture.

But in spite of such humiliation, disrespect or torture if she sticks to the marriage and stays there she is accepted and the marriage is performed.

The Juang, Kondh, the Bhuiyan practise this marriage. But such marriages are widely reported from the Birhor and Ho tribes of Chhotanagpur region. Apart from the above eight ways of acquiring mates, as given by Majumdar, the inheritance of widow may be discussed.

Inheritance of Widow:

Widow Marriage is widely prevalent among the Indian tribes. From the point of view of tradition, custom or personal choice, the youngsters do not usually prefer to marry a widow. In the practice of sororate there is no option. Otherwise the widows are preferred by the widowers. No bride price is paid in the widow marriage. As a customary practice, the sena nagas as a matter of obligation often marries to his father's widow, other than his own mother. This type of marriage is held so as to inherit the family property from the widows, because the widows are the legal heirs of their dead husband's property. The practice of the inheritance of widows is seen among the Santal, the Bhuinyan the Juang and the Kondh.

Divorce:

Divorce or the dissolution of marriage is practiced in the tribal communities. But one cannot divorce the other whimsically or at will. Some rules and regulations persist in this regard. Murdock has mentioned a number of recognized grounds for divorce, such as incompatibility, adultery, diseases, barrenness or sterility, impotency, sexual

unwillingness, laziness, economic incapacity, quarrelsome, mistreatment, etc.

Since the Indian tribes do not consider marriage as a religious sacrament, the process and procedure of divorce is rather simple. In most of the cases of marital disaster the separation occurs with the mutual consent of both the parties. The question of compensation is also involved in divorce, in many a case. As a matter of customary practice, the divorce cases are generally decided by the tribal council and performed in a public place in the presence of elderly villagers.

The tribal communities allow both the husband and wife the right to divorce the other spouse on certain grounds. However, in several tribal communities, such as the Aruntas of Australia the husband can only divorce the wife. The wife does not enjoy the right to divorce her husband, under no circumstances. Also the Bagauda woman has no right to divorce her husband, despite ill- treatment.

Among the tribals, the husband is divorced, generally on the grounds of disease, drunkenness, impotency, extra-marital sexual relationship with other women etc. Generally a wife is divorced on the plea that she has become an insane, a thief or a witch or a runaway. However, there are no common grounds of divorce among all the tribes in India.

Wide variations in the procedure of divorce persist among the tribal communities. As for example in the Korawa tribe a husband can ask his wife to leave his house and that is treated as the dissolution of marriage for them, whereas a dissatisfied Bhil husband will have to call the panchayat and will give a piece of cloth from his turban, in the presence of the elderly people, to his wife and that is treated as divorce.

Then the divorced wife will proceed to her father's village and hang this cloth in the house of her father's wall for a month. This indicates that her marriage has been dissolved and she does not have any relation with her

former husband. Among the Gonds, it is not essential on the part of the wife to obtain the consent of her husband for divorce. The wife may leave the husband and may marry second time, without having the consent of husband.

The only requirement is that the second husband will have to pay some compensation to the first husband with regard to divorce. The murias make the payment of compensation compulsory so as to validate the second marriage. Some Tribes do also have the provision to compensation. But the panchayat decides the giver and taker of compensation, depending on the circumstance and faults of the parties. Among the Leshers the dissolution of marriage is a much simpler affair. If a husband turns out his wife, he must pay the balance of the bride price if any is due.

However, if his wife deserts him or is caught in adultery, she has to arrange for the return of the bride price her husband paid to her. A second marriage between those once divorced is possible.” Mutual consent is essential for divorce and the divorced couples cannot remarry. Wide variations are also marked in the ground of divorce. Whereas the Gond allows divorce freely on grounds of marital infidelity, carelessness in household work, barrenness and quarrelsome disposition, the Khasi permits divorce for reasons of adultery, barrenness and incompatibility of temperament. The Kharia tribe allows divorce for reasons of marital infidelity, sterility of the wife, Laziness, wife’s refusal to live with the husband, and theft. Both the parties are allowed to divorce.

Tribal Economy

Tribal economy forms an important criterion for classifying Scheduled Tribes in India. The dominant economies of the tribes are: (1) Hunting, fishing and food gathering, (2) Shifting cultivation and lumbering, and (3) Sedentary cultivation and animal husbandry. A brief account of tribes practising these economies is given as under:

(1) Hunting, Fishing and Gathering:

A large number of tribes live in isolation in forests and depend upon hunting, fishing and food gathering. Some of the tribes depend exclusively on these occupations. The main tribes which practise these professions are the Raji in Uttar Pradesh; Kharia, Birhor, Korwa, Pariha and Birgias in Jharkhand; Kuki in West Bengal; Hill-Maria in Chhattisgarh, Juang in Orissa, Chenchu and Yanadi in Andhra Pradesh; Koya, Reddi, Kadar and Paliyan in Tamil Nadu, Bhil, Garasia in Maharashtra and Gujarat; Bhil, Garasia and Sahariya in Rajasthan and Kuki, Konyak and Naga in Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

(2) Shifting Cultivation and Lumbering:

Shifting cultivation is said to be as old as history of agriculture itself. In this type of cultivation, a piece of forest land is cleared by slash-and-burn technique and crops are grown. After 2-3, the fertility of the soil is reduced and the farmer shifts to another piece of land.

This is the reason that it is called shifting agriculture. It is known by different names in different parts of the country. It is called Jhum or jum

in north-east India, kumari in Western Ghats, watra in south-east Rajasthan and penda, bewar or dahia and deppa in different parts of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Lumbering involves obtaining wood from the forests.

The main tribes practising shifting cultivation and lumbering are Korias, Saharias, Bhutias and Kharwar in Uttar Pradesh, Korwa and Asur in Jharkhand; Garo, Mal-Paharia in West Bengal; Maria, Gonda, Baiga and Dhora in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh; Saora, Khond, Kurumba and Bagola in Andhra Pradesh; Saora, Keria and Khond in Orissa; Khond, Gond, Kurumba and Muduwan in Tamil Nadu; Bhil and Garasia in Maharashtra and Gujarat; Kathodia in Rajasthan, Naga, Lakher, Chakmas, Garo, Riang, Notia, etc., in the north eastern states.

(3) Sedentary Cultivation and Animal Husbandry:

Sedentary cultivation is a type of agriculture in which the farmer grows crops to meet his own requirements and not much is left for sale in the market. This is not an advanced type of cultivation and is generally practised by the tribal people along with animal husbandry.

The main tribes adopting these professions are the Tharu, Maghi Khasa, Bhoksa, Kol and Bhotias in Uttar Pradesh ; Munda, Ho, Oraon, Tamaria, Korwa and Santhal in Jharkhand; Santhal, Polia, and Bhumji in West Bengal; Parja, Bhatra, Baija and Gond in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, Badaga, Irula, Parga and Malydi in Tamil Nadu, Badaga, Koya, Irula and Kota in Andhra Pradesh; Bhil, Dubla, Raiwari, Barali, Koli, Dhamalia, etc. in Maharashtra and Gujarat, and Bhil, Garasiya and Meena in Rajasthan.

Indian Tribal Religion

Indian Tribal Religion

Indian tribal religion is the most primitive type of religion found in human society. The important characteristics of an Indian tribal religion are discussed as following.

Mana

Mana is a force different from physical force which acts in all kinds of good and bad and control the disturbance. Mana is a supernatural power which is used to control many natural phenomena in man's life. According to Maxmullar, Mana is an attempt to define some natural phenomena in terms of some impersonal power. In tribal religion Mana is the force applied to natural and impersonal things like mountains, rivers, thunders etc. According to Majumdar, Mana is a belief in an understandable, impersonal and material thing having some super natural power and to which people bow for control and peace.

Bonga

Bonga is a type of Mana. Ho and Monda tribes use this word and say that it is a mysterious and impersonal power at the back of some natural calamity. These calamities are flood epidemics, heavy rains, storms etc. everyone tries to be safe from these activities and they perform bonga.

Animism

Animism is the belief that material things have life. In Indian tribal religion animism is the important characteristic of people. The tribal people have beliefs in supernatural power at the back of heavy rains, big trees, mountains and other flood and storms. They want to please these power, and they perform different type of worships. The most important type of animism is the ancestral worship which is found in Santhals and

Oraons. These tribes worship various deities specified for different jobs. One God is responsible for crop, other for animals and a deity presiding raina. That is common in korawa tribe. To please these gods and goddesses they give the sacrifices of various animals. The principles of animism is based on two beliefs.

1. There are some powerful souls besides gods and man is connected to these souls. They feel pleasure and pain through these souls.
2. The soul of a man survives even after the death. The idea of animism was firstly given by Taylor using the term is anthropology. According to Taylor. "Animism is the belief on some natural material objects having souls from very ancient time to that civilized man".

Animatism

Animatism is the most wide spread idea is tribal people as compare to animism. According to animatism there is some impersonal power behind every material thing besides living things. In Indian tribal religion materials like bones, stones and feathers are worshiped to bring peace and prosperity. For example is Bihar tribe stones and feathers are considered to have magical power. The stones are considered as the children of earth mother. So, animatism is the faith is material things have living soul.

Naturalism

Naturalism is the faith on worship of nature. The Gar tribe of Assam worship sun and moon while the Monda people practice worship to sun god. Besides it many other tribes worship rivers, mountains, trees, stars and other natural objects.

Immortality of Soul

Many of the people of India tribal religion believe in the immortality of soul. They have faith that the soul of died person remain in the body and for this purpose there observed the funeral rites twice. The second time rite is considered more important than the first time. The living soul of the dead person requires food etc. for a sufficient period of time. Among

Naga and Nikobar islands the skull of a man is placed in wooden statue believing that the soul of the person would pass from the skull to the wooden statue and skull to the wooden statue and make it able for worship and they made every effort to fulfill all its needs. In south India in kerola the statue of a dead body is worshiped only once in a year. In Naga tribe the soul of the ancestors are worshiped at the time of sowing and need of rain.

Faith in Re-Birth

This is another belief present in Indian tribal religion. According to this faith the soul of a man after death remains alive and enters into the body of some animals, birds or any other living thing. This is practiced in Naga, Anir, Kamar, and Gond tribes.

Faith in Magic

Magic is the most important faith in Indian tribal religion. It is the method which is used to twist the nature in a specific way for the need and desire fulfillment of a person. The events are to control automatically through magic. The tribal people believe in magicians as expert for that practice and they are respected. Other various magical rites are found in Indian tribes for the control of diseases and epidemics. It is the change in nature through magic.

Totem and Taboo

Totem is the faith of Indian tribes in a particular kind of animal or object having close relation with that family. The tribe associates with that animal in different ways and the animal is worshiped. They are considered themselves as the descent of that animal. So, Totem is the belief in a specific animal having close connection with a family in Indian tribes.

Killing and eating of that animal is a taboo for the particular family. The animal is worshiped and respected everywhere. The people of the same Totem do not contract marriages because they think that there exists blood relation among them. Every sacrifice is made for pleasing and worshiping of the animal.

It has been concluded from the above discussion that Indian tribal religion is the most primitive type of religion and is passing through different stages and evolution. It has connected with different is practiced is various tribes of India. Those activities and rituals performed by them is to fulfill their needs and desires in their social life.