

Protection and Integration of Tribal Populations of Pakistan

The volume entitled Indigenous Peoples¹ published in 1953 embodied the first results of a programme of research undertaken by the International Labour Office into the conditions of life and work of indigenous and other tribal populations in independent countries. Efforts have been made by the Office since then to study further developments in various countries. This article is devoted to a study of the distribution and nature of the tribal populations of Pakistan and of the constitutional, legislative and administrative measures adopted for their protection and integration. It is based largely on information supplied from time to time by the Government of Pakistan and by Mr. A. Khan of Pakistan, a member of the I.L.O. Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour.

DISTRIBUTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF TRIBES

The two provinces of Pakistan—East and West Pakistan—are separated from one another by about a thousand miles. Both parts of the country have tribal populations. That of East Pakistan is considered to be aboriginal and to be ethnically related to the Mongoloid group of tribes in the neighbouring countries. The tribal groups of West Pakistan, on the other hand, are fundamentally akin to the main community, with which they have historical and ethnic affinities. A second distinction is that the East Pakistan groups profess none of the major religions of the main population, while in West Pakistan all tribal groups, with the exception of the small Kafir population of the extreme north, profess Islam, the religion of the great majority of the main community. Again, West Pakistan tribes, with the exception of the Kafir, speak the languages of the contiguous national community; this is not the case in East Pakistan, although the tribes of that region live in close proximity to the national community and can, by and large, speak the national language in addition to their own.

East Pakistan

The tribal population of East Pakistan is estimated to number some 399,500 individuals and is steadily increasing. It is concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the "partially excluded areas" of the Mymensingh district and parts of Dinajpur and Rajshahi.

Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The largest concentration is found in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where 12 tribal groups consisting of 261,500 individuals represent over

¹ I.L.O.: *Indigenous Peoples. Living and Working Conditions of Aboriginal Populations in Independent Countries*, Studies and Reports, New Series, No. 35 (Geneva, 1953).

90 per cent. of the total population of the area. About 9 per cent. of this tribal population is made up of forest-dwellers. The more numerous tribal groups are the Chakma (124,750), the Magh (65,900), the Tippera (37,250), the Murong (16,100) and the Tanchaung (8,300). Each tribe has its own dialect, but with the exception of Chakma, which is a form of Bengali, all these dialects belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages. Bengali, the official language of East Pakistan is, however, used by the Chittagong tribes in their contacts with the main population. The Chakma, Chak and Tanchaung use Chakma letters, the Magh, Kuki, Khyang and Komi use Burmese letters, the Tippera Bengali letters, and the Lushai English letters. While most of the tribes seem to have retained their own beliefs, they have been strongly influenced by Buddhism. The Chakma, however, are considered to be inclined towards Hinduism, while large numbers of Kuki and Lushai have embraced Christianity.

The main occupation of tribal populations is agriculture. The forest-dwelling tribes commonly practise burn-and-slash cultivation, known as *jum*¹, and also hunt wild animals and rear pigs and poultry. Many members of the tribal population find employment with the forest department and can thus reside within the forest and carry on private cultivation on plots of land rented for a nominal sum in addition to their paid employment. A wage of 2 rupees per day is paid and free medical aid is provided by the department. Tribal women weave cloth for domestic use and for local sale. The establishment of a paper mill at Chandragona has, moreover, opened new avenues of employment for the Chittagong tribes, many of whose members are at present engaged in felling raw material for the mill at a wage averaging 2 rupees per day.

The more important diseases to which the Chittagong tribes are exposed are malaria, ringworm, scabies, intestinal ailments, dyspepsia and yaws. The tribes living at higher altitudes are healthier than those living in the foothills and lowlands.

Among the economic and social problems faced by these tribes Professor C. Lévi-Strauss mentions the harmful effects on agriculture of the invasion of the hillside crops by a tenacious weed and the degeneration of orange groves on hilltops, which is caused either by a specific plant disease or by chemical deficiencies of the soil. In addition, large numbers of non-tribals are entering the area and taking up shopkeeping and money-lending.² According to Mr. Khan, member of the I.L.O. Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour, the Chittagong tribes are having to face competition from non-tribal agriculturists and new problems resulting from the launching of large-scale industrial projects in the area.

Mymensingh District.

The tribal population of the partially excluded areas of the Mymensingh district numbers 83,000 and consists mainly of the Garo (38,000) and the Hajong (35,000), living in a five-mile belt along the national frontier. The former speak Garo, while the Hajong and the other tribes speak Ahamika, which is akin to Bengali, the national

¹ For a description of *jum* and its institutional significance in tribal life see Lucien BERNOT: "In the Chittagong Hill Tracts", in *Pakistan Quarterly* (Karachi, Government of Pakistan, Publications Department), Vol. III, No. 3, 1953.

² C. LÉVI-STRAUSS: "Social Science in Pakistan", in *International Social Science Bulletin* (Paris, U.N.E.S.C.O.), Vol. III, No. 4, Winter 1951.

language. The Mymensingh tribes have attained a relatively high degree of integration, and the younger members of the Garo tribe (which is educationally quite advanced) are favourable to reform of their social system.

These tribes have abandoned *jum* cultivation, and hillocks on which it was practised have been taken over by the Government for reafforestation. This, however, is said to have restricted the grazing facilities needed by the tribes; moreover, the level of agricultural skills among the tribes is low and keen competition is offered by non-tribal cultivators. A portion of the tribal population is engaged either as agricultural labour in the employ of non-tribal farmers or in cutting and selling wood. The women of the Hajong tribe are proficient at weaving and produce considerable quantities of cloth for domestic use and sale. The tribes of Mymensingh have been slow to take up new occupations in spite of the availability of vocational training facilities.

Malaria, eye diseases, dysentery, diarrhoea and kala-azar are common among these tribes.

Dinajpur and Rajshahi.

The districts of Dinajpur and Rajshahi together have a tribal population of some 55,000, the Santal being the predominant element. The entire population is agricultural and fairly industrious. Excessive consumption of alcohol and opium-smoking, habits that are marked among tribes in other areas, are very widespread.¹

West Pakistan

West Pakistan has a large tribal population but, as indicated earlier, none of the groups composing it can be described as aboriginal. They would appear to resemble certain groups in the Middle East inasmuch as, although they are not aboriginal, they are still not fully integrated into the national life. There are many affinities between the tribal groups and the main body of the population of West Pakistan.

Sedentarisation of tribal groups seems to have been going on in West Pakistan on a considerable scale over the last hundred years. During this period the area had the benefit of a long period of settled rule; irrigation and communications were greatly increased and the tendency on the part of the semi-nomadic tribes to settle down and become part of the community was consequently accelerated. In Baluchistan, for instance, the nomadic content of the population dropped from 33.1 per cent. in 1911 to 25.3 per cent in 1931.² However, at the time of the establishment of the new nation of Pakistan in August 1947, the West Pakistan area still had certain groups of population which had not yet settled down. Their problems were pre-eminently of a tribal character. Among these population groups by far the most important were located in the large tribal territory on the north-west frontier. In addition, there were the Kafir tribes of the Chitral state

¹ It may be of interest to note that, apart from the tribal groups mentioned in this section, the labour employed at the tea plantations of Sylhet in East Pakistan is also largely tribal. Most of the persons concerned are said to have been recruited before partition from sources now in Indian territory and appear to have become stabilised owing mainly to the fact that the planters offered them land for residence and cultivation.

² See O. H. K. SPATE : *India and Pakistan : A General and Regional Geography* (London, Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1954), p. 426.

(numbering some 10,000), the 45,000 scattered and migratory Baluch tribesmen in the Dera Ghazi Khan excluded area and the Hur tribe comprising some 6,000 individuals.

The tribal territory on the north-west frontier is situated between the national frontier with Afghanistan and the former North-West Frontier province. It has an area of more than 25,000 square miles and a Pushtu-speaking population of a little less than 2.5 million people comprising tribes such as the Mahsud, Waziri, Shirani, Battani, Dawar, Turi, Bangash, Afridi, Mohmond and Yusufzai. In the past these tribes resisted the extension of normal administration to their territory. However, after 1947 the Government was able to introduce measures for the educational, social and economic development of the area.

The economy of the territory is precarious. Both rainfall and irrigation are meagre, and wheat production alone falls short of needs by 20,000 tons every year. Large sections of the population, particularly the tribes of Waziristan, are pastoral. Cottage industries, for which the tribesmen have great aptitude, are little developed, and communications, except for strategic routes, are scarce. On the other hand the territory has many natural resources.

The Kafir population is distributed over several tribes and a relatively large number of villages in the idyllic and more or less inaccessible valley of Kalash Goom in the state of Chitral. The Kafir are a peaceful people who subsist on hunting, fruit-gathering, stock raising, bee-keeping and agriculture. They are extremely interesting from a cultural point of view and possess a high degree of ethnic consciousness. In view of their resentment to incursions into their country by outsiders government policy is designed to give them protection against such incursions.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES

The Constitution of Pakistan¹, which came into force on 23 March 1956, guarantees rights of citizenship and fundamental freedoms to all inhabitants of the country. Part II of the Constitution deals with fundamental rights and, among other things, provides for equality before the law; safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention; freedom of speech, assembly, association, trade and profession and movement; freedom of the profession, practise and propagation of religion; freedom for any group of citizens to preserve its distinctive language, script or culture; prohibition of slavery, forced labour, untouchability and discrimination in services; and protection of the rights of property.

The preamble to the Constitution affirms that adequate provision must be made for minorities freely to profess and practise their religions and develop their cultures and to safeguard the legitimate interests of minorities and backward and depressed classes. One of the guiding principles of policy is that the State shall make special efforts to promote the educational and economic interests of the people of special areas, the backward classes and the scheduled castes (see below) and shall enable the people of different areas through education, training and industrial development to participate fully in all forms of national activities including employment in the service of the country. The State shall also discourage parochial, racial, tribal and other prejudices among the citizens. The National Economic Council which is to be established

¹ See *Gazette of Pakistan, Extraordinary* (Karachi), 2 Mar. 1956.

under the Constitution will give effect to the principle of uniform development in all parts of the country.

Article 205 of the Constitution requires the federal and provincial governments to protect the scheduled castes and backward classes¹ against social injustice and exploitation and to promote with special care their educational and economic interests. Under article 206 the President may appoint a commission to investigate the conditions of the scheduled castes and backward classes and make recommendations, for implementation by the federal and provincial governments, concerning steps and financial allocations necessary for improvement in those conditions. The President is also required to appoint a special officer to investigate the working of the constitutional safeguards and implementation of the commission's recommendations. This officer will report to the President at specified intervals. The reports of both the commission and the special officer are to be brought to the notice of Parliament, and those of the commission to the notice of provincial legislatures as well.

The Constitution retains the principle of special administrative provisions for areas where the population is largely in an undeveloped state. Under article 103, federal and provincial legislation applies to "excluded areas"² only after the Governor of the province concerned notifies to that effect. In doing so the Governor may modify legislation in its application to the area or any part of the area. The Governor may also make regulations for the peace and good government of the area and by such regulations amend or repeal federal, provincial or any other legislation in force, with the proviso that no regulation repealing or amending federal legislation can come into effect without the President's approval. The President is authorised under the same article to order that an area shall cease to be an excluded area. A similar administrative procedure, but one involving greater control by the President, is provided for in article 104 in respect of the "special areas"³ of the West Pakistan province. Federal and provincial legislation shall apply to special areas only if the Governor of West Pakistan, with the previous approval of the President, gives notice to that effect. In doing so the Governor may modify the application of legislation. With the previous approval of the President the Governor may also make regulations for peace and good government and may modify the application of federal and provincial legislation. The President, moreover, may give the Governor suitable directives from time to time. The President is authorised to order that an area shall cease to be a special area, but before doing so he shall ascertain the views of the people of that area in an appropriate manner.

It will be observed that the administration of the excluded and special areas, though actually carried on by the provincial governors with the advice of their ministers, is the ultimate responsibility of the

¹ The scheduled castes are castes, races or tribes, or their subdivisions, which were designated as such by the Fifth Schedule of the former constitutional instrument, namely the Government of India Act, 1935. In the past, however, the term "scheduled castes" has been understood to apply mainly to certain non-tribal sections of the population which needed special protection. The term "backward classes" might be considered to denote any other undeveloped sections.

² Areas which were designated as such before the Constitution came into force. The districts of Dinajpur and Rajshahi have no excluded area but the tribal population of those districts is treated on the same footing as the population of excluded areas.

³ Areas which were known under the former Constitution as "tribal areas" and which included the tribal territory of the north-west frontier.

President, who is advised by his ministers and assisted by the ministers in charge of the federal ministries of the States and Frontier Regions and of the Interior. This pattern of administrative responsibility was followed even before promulgation of the new Constitution.¹

Administration of the excluded and special areas is of interest because the bulk of the tribal population is located in these areas. To complete the picture it is necessary to describe the administrative organisation at the provincial and local levels.

In East Pakistan the excluded and partially excluded areas are administered through the Home Department, which is responsible for general administration of the entire province. The Chittagong Hill Tract area, headed by an officer known as Deputy Commissioner, is divided into three sub-areas, each in the charge of a sub-divisional officer. In each sub-area the collaboration of the chief of the largest tribe is secured and a system of advisory bodies consisting of tribal chiefs and village elders is maintained. In matters of local administration the tribal chiefs play a considerable part. The Deputy Commissioner is assisted by three special or welfare officers whose duties include assistance in general and judicial administration. Administration is carried on in accordance with the provisions of special legislation, namely the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900, as amended from time to time. This enactment empowers the Deputy Commissioner, among other things, to regulate the ownership and use of tribal land as well as the practice of money-lending. General legislation, including labour legislation², has been increasingly extended to the area in recent years. This extension, however, seems to have been necessitated mainly by the advent of large-scale industrial projects in the area. In Mymensingh, only a small portion of which is excluded, the administrative head, i.e. the district magistrate, is assisted by a welfare officer and his two subordinates whose duties are limited to welfare work. An Aboriginal Welfare Association and its 12 constituent local boards act in an advisory capacity. The membership of the local boards includes tribal people, missionaries and philanthropists. There is no special regulation for the administration of this area. The tribal interests in land are, however, protected by means, in particular, of the Taungya system under which forest land is allotted for cultivation. The Mymensingh Partially Excluded Areas Tenancy Regulation, 1949, and the Mymensingh Partially Excluded Areas Debt Settlement (Tanka Tenants) Regulation, 1951, provide relief to tribal tenants. The district magistrate of Dinajpur is assisted by a welfare officer and two subordinate officials, who are concerned exclusively with tribal populations. In Rajshahi there is a welfare officer who reports to the district magistrate through a sub-district magistrate. In both Dinajpur and Rajshahi the advisory functions are performed by normal local self-government agencies.

In West Pakistan the affairs of the Hur tribe and the administration of the excluded area of Dera Ghazi Khan are the responsibility of the Home Department of the provincial government. None of the Hur

¹ The functions of the President in this regard were formerly performed by the Governor-General.

² As, for example, the laws relating to workmen's compensation, trade unions, industrial disputes, factories, payment of wages, employment of children and maternity benefit; on this subject, however, see *Living and Working Conditions of Indigenous Peoples in Independent Countries*, Report VIII (1), prepared by the I.L.O. for the 39th Session of the International Labour Conference (June 1956), pp. 144 and 145.

areas are excluded or special areas, and responsibility for Hur affairs therefore falls entirely on the provincial government; they have in fact been under special control since a rising which took place there before the inception of Pakistan. For the excluded area of Dera Ghazi Khan the provincial government has appointed a special development board. In general administrative matters the deputy commissioner in charge ascertains the wishes of the tribal people through their *jirgas* (councils of tribal elders and chiefs). The larger portion of the tribal territory of the north-west frontier (which is a special area) is divided for administrative purposes into six agencies, namely Malakand, Mohmand, Khyber, Kurram, North Waziristan and South Waziristan. Malakand agency, incidently, includes the state of Chitral, where the Kafir population is located. Each agency is looked after by an official designated as agent. The tribes enjoy a large measure of autonomy and their wishes are ascertained through the *jirgas*. The remaining portions of the territory, containing no more than a quarter of the total tribal population, are attached to the Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan divisions of the West Pakistan province. The attached tribal areas are administered by the divisional administrations and not by specially appointed agents. At the provincial level the responsibility for tribal territories rests with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and its executive agency, the Tribal Affairs Department. A Tribal Advisory Committee was constituted a few years ago.

WELFARE MEASURES TAKEN ON BEHALF OF THE TRIBES

In both East and West Pakistan the Government has been endeavouring to improve the living conditions of tribal communities. The measures taken relate to health, education, vocational training, agriculture, industry and communications. In East Pakistan governmental activities in the fields of health and education are supplemented by the work of Christian missions and philanthropic individuals and organisations. The participation of missions and philanthropists is negligible in West Pakistan.

East Pakistan

The Chittagong Hill Tract area has 231 primary, 22 post-primary and two high schools. In addition there are 42 primary schools which are not recognised by the administration. Most of the recognised schools are maintained and supervised by the Government. In the majority of schools the medium of instruction is Bengali, while in certain special schools Lushai is used. Over 90 per cent. of the students and 60 per cent. of the teachers belong to the tribal population. A number of scholarships are available to meritorious students. A hostel for 100 boys is attached to the high school at Rangamati, which provides vocational training facilities in agricultural crafts and carpentry for 92 students.

Health measures have been planned on the basis of a survey made in 1937. The area now has 11 dispensaries and 18 health centres in addition to a hospital at Rangamati. An 85-bed leper asylum at Chandragona is maintained by a mission and subsidised by the Government.

Rural extension work is done through 19 demonstration farms, co-ordinated by a central farm at Rangamati, and a network of ten

seed stores. Improved seeds, banana and pineapple suckers, manures and fertilisers and implements are made available to farmers. Irrigation facilities have been improved by the installation of tube-wells. Rice-husking machines have also been provided. Some 218 miles of fair-weather roads are now in existence in the area.

In the partially excluded areas of Mymensingh there are 174 primary, four post-primary and ten high schools. Of these, 23 primary, two post-primary and two high schools are run by missions, which, however, receive subsidies from the Government in respect of the majority of their institutions. As in Chittagong, both tribal and non-tribal people make use of the schools but tribal students predominate, making up as much as 75 per cent. of the pupils of mission schools. The medium of instruction is Bengali, and schools are supervised by officers of the Education Department. The buildings and equipment of the schools are, however, considered inadequate, nor does sufficient emphasis seem to have been placed so far on the training of teachers. There are two special government institutions and one mission school for vocational training in non-agricultural subjects. Classes in agriculture are held at two post-primary schools, one of which has a farm attached to it. Health facilities are provided both by the Government and by missions, which maintain six dispensaries each. All the six government dispensaries and two of the mission dispensaries have in-patient departments; the mission dispensaries also provide antenatal and postnatal care. The Government has built 500 miles of roads which can be used the year round. Tube-wells have been sunk to increase irrigation and measures have been taken to encourage the establishment of rice-husking mills.

West Pakistan

In West Pakistan a programme for the all-round development of the tribal territory of the north-west frontier is in effect. Many minor irrigation schemes have been completed, and a new scheme for the reclamation of 60,000 acres of waste land has recently been approved. A similar scheme for the Kurram agency will bring 96,000 acres of land under cultivation. The new five-year national plan (1955-60) makes provision for expenditure of over 13 million rupees on 34 irrigation projects. The big Warsak multi-purpose project in the Mohmand agency, which is being completed for the benefit of the nation as a whole, will make available to the tribal territory not only hydroelectric power but also water for irrigation. At present tribal labour is being employed on the construction of the project. The agricultural schemes for the tribal territory also aim at pest control and the development of fruit farming and forests. It is, however, realised that the scope for the development of irrigation in the tribal territory is limited. Thus plans are being pursued for the settlement of tribesmen, especially those of South Waziristan, in other parts of the country. Land is being acquired for this purpose in areas such as the Thal, Taunsa and lower Sind where large-scale national schemes of land reclamation and settlement are under way.

There is little opportunity in the territory for the development of large-scale industry; consequently efforts are being made to develop cottage industries within the territory and to find outside markets for the territory's raw materials. The santonin extraction plant at Rawalpindi is taking the entire artemisia crop of the Kurram agency. A woollen textile mill has recently been established at Bannu. The mill

has stabilised the incomes of the sheep-breeders of the tribal territory and is also a source of cheap wool for the local rug and blanket makers.

A projected high-grade paper mill will use as raw material a grass which grows wild in the territory. With a view to promoting cottage industries, vocational training is provided in mazri-work at Alizai, in woollen textiles and rug-making at Batkhela, in metal work at Wana and in sericulture at Parachinar. The woollen textile mill at Bannu and the cotton textile mill at Sarhind also provide facilities for the training of tribal personnel.

Priority has been accorded to educational measures. In 1949 a post of assistant director of public instruction was created in the provincial administration exclusively to supervise education in the tribal territory. In 1951 two assistant inspectors and two physical health supervisors were attached to the assistant director. Larger allocations have been made every year for the establishment of schools and hostels, the free supply of textbooks and the award of scholarships. Normal allocations reached the figure of 1,433,000 rupees during the budget year 1954-55 as against 114,000 during 1947-48. Some 4 million rupees were, however, specially earmarked in 1951-52 for construction of school buildings. Over the same eight-year period the number of schools increased from 65 to over 310 (including 275 primary schools) and the number of students rose from 6,000 to 25,000. Almost all higher schools were provided with hostel facilities. In addition, 70 adult education centres were established and community radio sets and newspapers were made available to the people. Under schemes for higher education 104 tribal students studied at the Khyber University at Peshawar during 1954 and another 39 were undergoing technical courses in medicine, economics, engineering, agriculture, rural extension, animal husbandry, wool and textile technology, etc., at various national institutions.

By the end of 1954 a total of 65 hospitals and dispensaries (six of them mobile) were functioning in the territory. Nine of these institutions were private. Budget allocations for the maintenance of medical aid institutions amounted to 1,180,000 rupees during 1954-55. By that year capital expenditure of 3,240,000 rupees had been incurred and proposals had been submitted for further expenditure totalling 2,200,000 rupees.

In the sphere of communications, village roads costing 700,000 rupees had been constructed at that time and a five-year programme visualising expenditure of over 13 million rupees on road building and maintenance was under implementation. More than 1,450 miles of existing roads were being maintained at an annual cost of 2,300,000 rupees.

In the excluded area of Dera Ghazi Khan important social reforms were introduced in 1951 on the initiative of the tribal population. The reforms were effected by a resolution adopted by lower *jirgas* and approved by the *jirga* of tribal chiefs on 14 July 1951. Among the more important reforms brought about by the resolution was the replacement of the tribal law of inheritance by the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act, 1948. The Act came into force in May 1952. In accordance with Muslim law, marriage was given the status of a civil contract. Other reforms included abolition of the system of land grants (which encouraged landlordism) and the system of realising compensation from the relatives of a defaulting person.

At a meeting of the special development board for the area held on 27 February 1954 it was stated that the number of primary schools in

the area had increased from eight in 1952 to 31 and that it was planned to double their number. Other projects discussed at the board meeting included the opening of three dispensaries, one in-patient hospital and a veterinary clinic and the provision of drinking-water supplies. Emphasis was laid on the importance of developing sheep-breeding and extending the area under grassland and forest. To encourage sheep-breeding, the setting up of a co-operative wool-marketing centre and sheep-breeding farms was proposed.

The provincial government has taken steps to implement the recommendations of a special committee on the rehabilitation of the Hur tribe. The committee had recommended restoration of the tribal headship, the abolition of the settlements to which part of the Hur population was confined, rehabilitation of the tribe in new colonies in its former areas, the provision of free and compulsory primary education, the award of scholarships for post-primary education and the encouragement of the population to take up employment in government and semi-government organisations. Some of these recommendations had already been implemented by 1952. The members of the tribe, most of whom were used to a nomadic way of living, have begun to settle on land allotted by the Government.
