

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Article 46 of the Constitution of India lays down that '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'. In accordance with this policy, large sums of money have been spent and a number of schemes have been prepared, one of which is a programme, jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation, to set up 43 Special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks in the most undeveloped parts of tribal India. There has been considerable criticism of the work of these Blocks, which were slow in getting started and tended to introduce, unmodified, programmes devised for other parts of India with no special reference to tribal needs.

In its resolution No. 20/170/58-SCT-III of the 1st of May 1959, the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India accordingly appointed a Committee to examine the work and programme of these Blocks.

The members of the Committee were—

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| 1. Dr Verrier Elwin, Adviser for Tribal Affairs, NEFA, Manipur and Tripura. | ... | <i>Chairman</i> |
| 2. Shri R. C. V. P. Noronha, I.C.S., Commissioner, Raipur Division, Raipur (Madhya Pradesh). | ... | <i>Member</i> |
| 3. Shri N. M. Wadiwa, M.P., Secretary, Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, New Delhi. | ... | <i>Member</i> |
| 4. Shri R. R. Bahl, I.C.S., Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs (representing the Ministry of Home Affairs). | ... | <i>Member</i> |
| 5. Shri M. C. Nanavatty, Director, Social Education (representing the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation). | ... | <i>Member</i> |

Shri O. K. Moorthy, Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of Home Affairs, was appointed as Secretary.

All the members of the Committee have had extensive experience of the tribal areas. Shri R. C. V. P. Noronha was Deputy Commissioner of Bastar District in Madhya Pradesh, one of the most important tribal areas in India, for six years and later, as Commissioner of the Raipur Division, has had several Districts predominantly inhabited by tribals in his charge.

Shri N. M. Wadiwa, a law graduate and a tribal belonging to the Gond community, has been doing social work for the last twenty-five years in association with non-official agencies. Since 1946 he has been a member of the Tribal Advisory Council for Madhya Pradesh.

Shri R. R. Bahl served in a number of Districts with tribal populations in Madhya Pradesh. He was an Assistant Commissioner in Bilaspur where the Pondi-Uprora Multipurpose Block is now located. He was S.D.O. in Seoni and Deputy Commissioner of the important tribal Districts of Mandla, Amraoti (which includes the Korku Melghat), Hoshangabad, Chhindwara, which now has a Multipurpose Block at Tamia, and Jabalpur with its large population of Gonds. He was Director of Tribal Welfare and Secretary of the Tribal Welfare Department in Madhya Pradesh for fifteen months.

Shri M. C. Nanavatty has been interested in social problems, including those of the tribes, for many years and, as Director of Social Education, has had occasion to visit most of the tribal areas during the last two years.

Dr Verrier Elwin this year completes thirty years of work for and study of the tribal people.

Our Secretary, Shri O. K. Moorthy has been concerned with tribal problems for the last twenty years and since 1953 has been concerned in the Home Ministry with schemes for tribal welfare throughout the country. He has toured in many of the tribal areas, including NEFA.

The terms of reference of the Committee were simple but covered a wide field. They were as follows—

- (i) To study the working of the Special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks, and
- (ii) To advise the Government of India on how to implement the intensive development programme of the Blocks more effectively and give the programme a proper tribal bias.

Immediately on the appointment of the Committee in May 1959, we addressed all the State Governments, asking them to furnish necessary material about the progress of work and the physical and financial targets achieved in each of their Blocks. The Committee, however, was handicapped and its work delayed by the failure of most of the State Governments to supply up-to-date figures of expenditure in spite of repeated requests from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The figures received from the State Governments on different occasions varied considerably: in one case a report on the same Block for the same period showed a discrepancy of over two lakhs.

In view of the difficulty, therefore, of obtaining up-to-date and accurate information, we have had to standardize our statistics as up to the end of September 1959.

The Committee met on the 17th of May 1959 at Ranchi, on the eve of a Seminar (convened by the C. D. Ministry) of workers in the Special Multipurpose Blocks, and we had discussions with the Development Commissioners, Directors of Tribal Welfare, Project Executive Officers in the Blocks and other workers from Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Manipur and Tripura, on the progress of work and the difficulties encountered by them in the implementation of their schemes. We also discussed our programme of visits to the actual Blocks. The Development Commissioners and other officials urged that on account of the rainy season, most of the Blocks would be inaccessible at that time and that we should visit them only after October 1959.

The Chairman and Members of the Committee actively participated in the proceedings of the Seminar, which also gave us a good opportunity to hear the views of the field-workers on their difficulties in the actual

implementation of the scheme Shri Wadiwa, Shri Nanavatty and Shri Moorthy also attended the Seminar, convened at Pachmarhi in Madhya Pradesh in June 1959, of the field workers of the Multipurpose Tribal Blocks of Madhya Pradesh, Bombay and Rajasthan. Here, as in Ranchi, we contacted the Development Commissioners and other officers of the Blocks and discussed the progress of their work and our own programmes. Here again the officers held the view that no useful purpose would be served in visiting the Blocks before October 1959, on account of the rains. This is the main reason for the delayed submission of our Report.

Our Committee met again in Delhi on the 3rd of August 1959, and discussed a tentative programme of visits to the various States. We decided that further reports on the Blocks not visited prior to the submission of our Report to Government might be put up after such visits as desired by the Home Minister. We requested the Government of India to provide for our immediate requirements a Senior and Junior Investigator to assist the Secretary in compiling and tabulating the data received from the States.

During the following months we examined a very large number of reports and documents received from the States and recommendations made by previous Committees and Seminars, but our most important work was to visit the actual Blocks on the spot. Our members visited altogether 26 Blocks and would have visited several more had it not been for the lack of communications, the unusually wet weather and our own pre-occupations, for none of us were appointed on a full-time basis. The Chairman began his touring programme early and visited three of the Assam Blocks—Mairang, Saipung-Darrang and Dambuk-Aga—under conditions of some difficulty in the rainy months of June and July. He met the Development Commissioner and members of his staff for discussion on more than one occasion.

Shri Wadiwa and Shri Nanavatty visited the Tamia Block at the beginning of June. In September the Chairman visited Simdega, Bishunpur, Mahua-dand and Manoharpur in Bihar and Raruan in Orissa. In the same month Shri Wadiwa and Shri Nanavatty visited the Kundahit and Borio Blocks together, and Shri Wadiwa visited Adhaura, though it was almost inaccessible at that time. Later, members of the Committee visited Bombay where they met the Development Commissioner and other officials of the State Development and Tribal Welfare Departments; the Chairman and Shri Wadiwa visited Mokhada-Talasari, and Shri Nanavatty and Shri Wadiwa went to the Sukhsar Block in Santrampur. Shri Wadiwa proceeded to Bastar and inspected the Narayanpur and Dantewara Blocks there.

During November the Chairman visited the Paderu Block in Andhra Pradesh and the Kashipur and Narayanpatna Blocks in Orissa. Shri Nanavatty joined him in Narayanpatna and went on to the Araku Block in Andhra.

During December the Chairman went to Aheri in the Chanda District of Bombay State and to the Narsampet Block in Andhra. He later visited the Rongkhong Block in Assam. At Hyderabad he had discussions with the Additional Development Commissioner and other officials concerned with tribal development and welfare. Shri Wadiwa went to the Bhimpur, Pondi-Uprora and Bharatpur Blocks in Madhya Pradesh and paid a second visit to Tamia during December 1959 and January 1960.

Before the Committee was actually appointed, Shri Noronha inspected the Narayanpur and Dantewara Blocks in Bastar District, and visited Dantewara in February 1960; Shri Nanavatty visited the Araku, Peint, Dharampur and

Tamia Blocks ; and Shri Moorthy visited the Araku, Bishunpur, Mokhada-Talasari, Narsampet, Tamia and Utnur Blocks.

The Chairman spent from January 21st to March 3rd, 1960 in Delhi and a long succession of conferences were held between members of the Committee at the Home Ministry. The Report was finalized after detailed discussions between the members themselves and as a result of interviews with a number of representatives of other Ministries and some distinguished non-officials, to all of whom we express our gratitude for their expert advice.

We wish to put on record our appreciation of the devoted and expert help given us by Shri O. K. Moorthy, Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of Home Affairs, and to the Investigators, Shri C. G. Jadhav and Shri K. B. Murgai for their faithful assistance in collecting material and tabulating results. We are also grateful to the hospitality and co-operation given us by officials and non-officials in all the States we visited, particularly by the Block officials who found time, among their many onerous duties, to look after us very well indeed.

We are grateful to Shri D. M. Sen, Legal Adviser to NEFA and NHTA, for his assistance in preparing Chapter XXII on the Tribal Councils.

We have had the advantage of having before us two important documents relating to the tribal areas, which were produced in 1959. The first is Volume I of the Report of the Study Team on Social Welfare and Welfare of Backward Classes, on which we have drawn heavily and have referred to as the Renuka Ray Report, so named after the distinguished lady who was the leader of the Team. The second is a draft of a Report by the Inaccessible Areas Committee, appointed by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and headed by Raja Surendra Singh. This is mainly a study of agriculture and allied subjects and it has dealt with these vitally important subjects with such care and an expert knowledge, to which we can make no claim, that it has not been necessary for us to repeat its conclusions. The fact that we have not dealt at length with these subjects does not, of course, mean that we are indifferent to them; in fact, we have given them top priority in the programme for the Third Five Year Plan.

In addition to our general discussions and recommendations, this Report contains detailed notes on twenty of the Multipurpose Blocks, which give a fairly good sample picture of the situation.

VERRIER ELWIN, *Chairman*
 N. M. WADIWA, *Member*
 R. C. V. P. NORONHA, *Member*
 R. R. BAHL, *Member*
 M. C. NANAVATTY, *Member*

O. K. MOORTHY,

Secretary

New Delhi, the 30th March 1960.
