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Interface of Development and Ecology: A Tribal Contribution

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Some anthropologists view the human person as *homo faber*, as "maker and fabricator, whose job it is do violence to nature in order to build a permanent home for himself."¹ Although "this identification ignores more than it uses,"² it is still useful in explaining the philosophy of human personality in the context of ecological studies. It underlines the characteristic features of *homo faber* in terms of humans' instrumentalization of the world: their confidence in tools; their belief that they have an unlimited capacity to make artificial objects; their trust in the all-comprehensive range of the means-end category; their conviction that every issue can be solved and every human motivation reduced to the principle of utility; their sovereignty which regards everything given as material and their certainty that one can do whatever one wants with nature; their contempt for all ideas which are not towards the fabrication of artificial objects; their matter-of-course identification of fabrication with action.³

This tendency to have mastery over the world has always been there from time immemorial, although in varying degrees at different times. As humans have evolved down the centuries from the emergence of *Homo* (man) in the Lower Palaeolithic Stage, through *Homo Sapiens* (the wise man) in the Middle Palaeolithic Stage, to *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* (the modern man) in the Upper Palaeolithic Stage, the subtlety and complexity of the violation of the law of nature has also become increasingly more sophisticated than ever before. The same tendency is seen in India's testing of the nuclear device in Pokhran and Pakistan's 'fitting' reply to it in the Chagai hills. It is the same tendency at work in the world superpowers pressurising India to sign Non

J. W. BENNETT, *The Ecological Transition: Cultural Anthropology and Human Adaptation*. New York: Pergamon Press Inc, 1976, p. 6.

C. A. ALVARO, *Homo Faber: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West 1500-1972*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1979, p. 24.

BENNETT, p. 7.

2. Ecology
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2

concerned with relationship between the living organisms and their environment. It is the "the scientific study of animals and plants in relation to their environment."⁶ Ecology can be divided into *autecology* and *synecology*. Autecology studies the individual organisms or individual species in relation to environment. Synecology, on the other hand, studies groups of organisms which are associated together as a unit in relation to an environment.⁷ Ecology can be understood with particular reference to animals or to the plants, hence ecology may be divided into *animal ecology* and *plant ecology*. But there is a tremendous inter-connectedness in nature, hence a segmentation of various branches of ecology is out of place.

Ecology: The Awareness of Inter-dependence

Ecological studies cover a vast area. They deal with different kinds of habitat, the inter-dependence of different groups of organisms, the structural and functional analysis of ecosystems, the inter-relationship of biotic and abiotic components, the proper management of natural resources, the gross and net production of different ecosystems, the impact of radioactive substances on the environment, energy conservation and flow within ecosystems, the development of a partially or completely regenerating ecosystem for supporting human life during an extended exploration of extra-terrestrial environments, the functional adjustments of organism for the survival of populations, the dispersal of fauna as a result of multiple interactions between the individual and the environment, etc.⁸

The list is long, but the point here is that ecology is concerned with anything and everything under the sun. Hence, any developmental activity to improve the human condition is sure to affect the internal mechanism of the interrelationship between human and the environment as there is a part-and-whole system in their composition. Development can be defined as a continuous process of transformation of people and society. The process is one of movement or growth towards change in areas of economic, social, political and cultural structures. This change is a process of releasing, restoring and transforming those structures.⁹ If development is a process of structural change, then the

⁶R.L. KORTAL and N.P. BAJI, *Concepts of Ecology*, Jalandhar: Vishal Publications, 1988, p. 1.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 3-5.

⁹Development from Below: Notes for the Workers engaged in Rural Development and Adult Education, Ranchi: Xavier Institute of Social Service, 1980, p. 12.

Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is basically the same policy of one-upmanship that motivates the world to exploit natural resources, resulting in the global warming or green house effect, ozone depletion, extinction of flora and fauna species.⁴ The same greed and violence gives rise to other environmental problems such as acid rain, deforestation, desertification; pollution of different kinds, i.e., air, water, soil, vehicular, industrial, noise, etc.;⁵ major calamities like Bhopal, Chernobyl, Minamata, Sandoz, etc.; nuclear weapons and their effects, etc.

There was a time when the Easterners took pride in shrugging off the predominant *homo faber* tendency of the West. The tribes, too, all over the world who had for years lived in ecological harmony and peace, are now facing ecocide. Gone are the good old days. The tribes are the worst affected by human greed; pride, and their dream of sovereignty over the whole world. As the tribals all over inhabit the environmentally strategic places, they are more exposed to exploitation by the rich, the powerful, and the vested interests.

Against the background of the globalised ecological crisis, the present article spells out a unique tribal response towards a sustainable utilisation of natural resources which takes into account the spiritual and religious dimensions which lie dormant in other approaches. In this age marked by the process of industrialisation, modernisation, nuclearisation, and detribalisation, the tribal model of 'back to the roots' may look too idealised but that is how the tribes have survived so long in the midst of adversities. But for the adaptive socio-cultural mechanisms, they would have been wiped out from the face of the earth long ago. This study attempts to identify and analyse those inner dynamics of the adaptive measures of the tribes. Though the basic principles are the same for various tribes in the world, the specific context of the present study is the tribal belt of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas:

A. Ecology and Development

The term 'ecology' comes from Greek word *oikos* meaning 'household' or 'home' or 'place to live'. Thus, ecology is a field of study

⁴ BREEMANIS, "Culture, Spirituality and Economic Development - Opening a Dialogue," *Trees and People, Newsletter*, No. 34 (September 1997), p. 4.

⁵D. KORUIS, "A Political and Spiritual Awakening... The People Centred Development," *Ibid.*, p. 46.

whole ecosystem with plants, animals and humans in relation to the environment is sure to change. Development is interlinked with ecology because many of our social, cultural, economic, religious and political problems are basically ecological problems, such as the production of material necessary to fulfil our different needs and wants, the control of pest species, the prevention of erosion, the disposal of wastes, etc.¹⁰ The planners of development need to know the dynamics of the interrelation between organisms and their environment. Unfortunately, most of the times, the focus is on the economic development alone and not on its possible side effects on the culture, spirituality and the religiosity of the people. In India various schemes in Five Year Plans have focused on an overall development of social, cultural and economic life of the tribal communities.¹¹ J. Parthasarathy's study of the Paniyan, Kanikaran and Irular tribes of Tamilnadu shows that "the development issues of the tribal groups have a linkage with their socio-cultural base and physical environment."¹²

Development: The Conflicting Paradigms

The conflict in terms of the East versus the West, the traditional versus the modern, is nothing new to either developmental or ecological studies. People shaped by modern culture do not seem to be interested in communication with nature. They have lost the awareness that this is both possible and desirable. The ethos and values of the industrialized moderns are quite different from those of the tribes. On the one hand, the modernized society has become fragmented and relationships are characterised by domination leading to selfishness, self-aggrandisement and contempt for others, and a lack of sensitivity to nature. The indigenous people all over the world, on the other hand, experience a communion with nature. They are part and parcel of nature. The moment they are uprooted from it, they cease to exist. Modern humans tend to forget and even ignore the most fundamental dimensions of human life: spiritual, religious, ethical and cultural. They experience a loss of innocence. The industrialized society defines the world in terms of useful dichotomies and harmful dualism. There is a separation of

¹⁰KORAI and BALU, p. 6.

¹¹As quoted by J. PARTHASARATHY, "Socio-cultural Base, Physical Environment and Tribal Development: Some Reflections from Tamilnadu," *Contemporary Society: Tribal Studies*, Vol. I, G. PRINCE and D.K. BHARUA (eds.), New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1997, p. 248.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 262.

the living from the dead, the body from the soul, teaching from learning, the past from the future, conservation from development, the private good from the common good, and humans from nature. In the tribal culture there is no such dichotomisation.¹³

The tribal outlook on reality is characterised as spontaneous, eco-sensitive and qualitative. The industrial outlook, on the contrary, can be characterised as rationalist, secular, scientific and quantitative, which has been instrumental in bringing about economic, technological and physical well-being. But there is also a danger of encouraging individualism, materialism, consumerism, and social alienation.¹⁴ Comparing the West and the American Indian Karuk society, J. Salter observes that the West has a tendency to separate church and state, mind and body; it believes it is of great importance to debate those issues of separation, but the heart of the question is never debated, i.e., whether they can be separated. The Karuk philosophy, on the other hand, believes in a spiritual link between humans and environment. The spiritual emerges from a contemplation of the nature of Nature.¹⁵

In the highly industrialized countries, the concept of development focuses on the quantification of economic, social and political conditions that need to be changed. P. Beemans rightly points out that the institutions that define 'development' are for the most part large donor agencies that deal in money and the economically quantifiable inputs and activities it buys. Hence, those aspects of human existence that cannot be quantified do not get money, and therefore they are not considered to be 'development'. The reality is that in most cultures and very specially in tribal culture, attitudes, ethos, moral and spiritual assumptions are expressed not in conventional paradigms or in quantifiable terms but in myths, rituals and religion.¹⁶

According to N. Minz, this earth with its different ecosystems and their environment has been misunderstood as a machine which functions by itself and that humans can manoeuvre as they like. In the modern world view the events and the dynamics of history

¹³Editorial "Why an Issue on Spirituality," *Forests, Trees and People, Newsletter*, 34 (September 1997), p. 3.

¹⁴BEEMANS, p. 5.

¹⁵L. JILLMAN and J. SALTER, "Environmental Management: American Indian Knowledge and the Problem of Sustainability," *Forests, Trees and People, Newsletter*, 34 (September 1997), pp. 24-25.

¹⁶BEEMANS, p. 5.

are primary rather than the sustainable spatial dimensions of the earth. The earth, therefore, is the greatest resource to be used by humans. For modern people, time (the temporal dimension) has the primary place and space secondary. On the contrary, for the tribals, space (the land) determines their personhood. Hence, social, economic and political justice must be done horizontally and not vertically.¹⁷

B. The Eco-Religion of the Tribals

The world-view of the tribals, namely their monotheism, belief in the existence of the soul and life after death, and ancestral worship, etc., provides a religious framework for the concrete manifestation of ecological conservation and sustainability. The clan-system or totemism and a holistic vision of humans and their interrelation with environment supply the conceptual clarity needed for a contextual application.

The Spiritual World-View:

B. Sibanda's study of the African tribal religion in the context of Zimbabwe is very relevant to the tribes of India. He points out that "the accumulated knowledge and experience of millions of people have been belittled, dismissed as primitive and pagan and this has contributed to the current poverty in the resource management strategies."¹⁸ The world-view of the Indian tribals can be studied in the light of Sibanda's observations in terms of their spiritual worldview, respect for nature and interdependence between nature and human.

The tribes of India in general and of Chotanagpur in particular are basically monotheists. For them God-is-omnipresent. Tribal spiritualism, i.e., belief in the supernatural, creates respect and reverence for animals, forests, rocks, mountains, rivers and all other beings under the sun. This belief system explains why certain places are revered, certain activities prohibited, certain rivers, mountains and rocks worshipped. Some anthropologists, such as S.C. Roy, would call them animists in a narrow sense who see spirits dwelling in beings living and non-living.¹⁹ Others, like J. Lakra, think that

¹⁷N. Minz, "The Adivasi Perspectives on Ecology," *Ecology A Theological Response*, Madras: The Gurukul Summer Institute, 1993, pp. 71-72.

¹⁸B. SIBANDA, "Governance and the Environment: The Role of African Religions in Sustainable Utilisation of Natural Resources in Zimbabwe," *Trees, Trees and People, Newsletter*, 34 (September 1997), as summarized in "Why an Issue on Spirituality" (see above, note 13).

¹⁹S.C. Roy, *The Ormnis of Chotanagpur*. Ranchi: Man In India Office, 1984, p. 278.

the tribals are not animists since they worship one God only.²⁰ But the tribal spiritual world view is much more than the controversy of whether they are animists or not. Their belief is that the spirit is in everything. And it is the spirit that links nature with people and they understand how everything is inter-linked and interdependent.

According to N. Minz, the personhood of tribals is rooted in their concept of land. The earth is a mother to them. Personhood is absent if there is no land. Therefore ownership of land has a theological implication.²¹ Alienation from land is an alienation from nature, community and the self. Landlessness, therefore, is as good as lifelessness. Land is a gift from God; humans have not earned it. Land can only be inherited from one generation to another. But girls cannot inherit the land from their father as they 'belong' to another home, i.e., the home of their husbands. The plot of land allocated for the *Pahar* (Priest) for his upkeep can never be sold or transferred. God has created the land, as we find in the Uraon Genesis myth where Dharmes creates the land with the help of the creatures. The Kharis believe that Pormesor created land with the help of a crab.²² The Hos, the Santhals and other tribes of Chotanagpur have similar beliefs about the creation of the land. The tribes of the North-East such as Singpho, Apa Tani, Khasis, Nagas, Hill Miri, Khampti, Mishmi, Lepcha, etc., in their Genesis myths emphasise on the three moments of creation, namely isolation, sacrifice and integration. The unity of all experience and the harmony of all existence emerge from the myths.²³

(What is strikingly similar in most of the tribal myths is that the creatures collaborate with the Creator to bring harmony in the cosmos. Not only that, if things go wrong an effort is made to bring back the original harmony even at the cost of sacrificing themselves. Hence, the Adivasis use the land as stewards and not as owners. Minz opines that for the Adivasis, space is priority number one in their vision of this world. Time or temporal awareness is secondary. Theologically, this perspective of reality has far reaching consequences. 'Space' means that all things are integrally related to one another, and therefore people must treat

²⁰J. LAKRA, "Rewriting Tribal Anthropology," *Smarthanam*, 22 (1997), p. 20.

²¹N. Minz, p. 68.

²²P. KULLU, *Kharin Dharina aur Sanskriti ka Vishleshan* (Hindi), Ranchi: Satay Bharti, 1998, pp. 36-37.

²³I. SARASWATI, "Tribal Cosmogony: Primal Vision of Man and Cosmos," *Tribal Thought and Culture*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1991, pp. 63-79.

uals. They understand that life is only possible if these resources continue to be available for human use. Conservation values and practices do not come from law enforcement but from social responsibility and social responsibility has grown from the desire to survive.²⁷ The earth and humans are placed on the same level – an idea which is alien to modern culture.

4. Religio-Ecology and a Sustainable Utilisation of Natural Resources

There is a unique holistic and integrated approach to reality that finds its expression in the tribal way of life and their natural surroundings, in their names and social institutions, in their rites and rituals, feasts and festivals, signs and symbols, etc.

Nature as One Big Family

The tribal habitat in Cholanagpur and Santal Parganas consists of an undulating plateau, hills and mountains with their rivers and streams, forests and valleys, mines and waterfalls. Before facing the brunt of development, the area used to be rich in flora and fauna with hundreds of species of plants, birds, insects and animals. Their way of life is patterned according to the environment. The agricultural activities and life cycle go hand in hand with the seasons of nature. That is why they have seasonal songs and dances.²⁸ They have a symbiotic relationship with nature. According to Minz, in the tribal world view, the earth consists of natural objects, birds, water, air, sunshine, human beings, etc., bound together to one another in an integral manner. A tribal for him is a forest dweller who lives in the midst of plants, trees, rocks, grass, birds, animals, creeping beings, snakes, reptiles, rivers, fresh air and good sunshine, all of which Providence has bestowed upon this earth.²⁹

Natural objects have a rich symbolic meaning for tribals. Among the Oraons, for instance, the sun is a symbol of splendour, glory, power, fecundity and ultimately a symbol of Dharines (the Oraon name for the Supreme Being) Himself; the egg, a sacrificial victim with neither head nor tail, is a symbol of self-contained life; the *Karam* tree suggests life and prosperity. The blood of animals, such as pigs and goats, serve as a substitute for

²⁷SHANDA, pp. 28-29.

²⁸R.M. SARKAR, "Forest Ecology and Cultural Development: Reflections from the life of the Bihors of Cholanagpur," in PUPPHER and BEHRA (eds.), pp. 267-8.

²⁹MINZ, p. 67.

each other with justice. It implies that humans cannot cut a tree without a 'reciprocity' of supplementing its loss. Animals cannot be hunted indiscriminately. They can be killed only during the proper season of the year. Such reciprocities keep the balance between humans and nature. Reciprocity avoids opposition and confrontation, and the notion of conquering one by the other.²⁴

Humility and Respect for Nature

The tribals have a tremendous awareness that ordinary humans do not control, much less create natural resources. These are given by God. There should be no tampering with what one does not understand or control. By relating all this to a superhuman being who is omnipotent and omnipresent and who alone controls its processes, the tribals reinforce their respect for the environment and nature. But these processes are not explained in scientific and sophisticated terms. Their simple reasoning is that since God is in humans and in nature, and since they are a part of this nature, their life is sustained by natural resources as they also sustain them. This is the participatory nature of the world of which they are a part.²⁵

In a study of the culture and biodiversity in the Andes, G. Vasquez states that all things that exist are 'forms of life'. For instance, mountains are perceived as persons deserving respect and consideration for their capacity to generate harmony between the human community and the other forms of life. The mountains receive the name of 'Apus' meaning 'grandparents', persons to be respected. The earth is a living being, a mother to them. The same is true of water, seeds, stones, hail and springs. In other words, for the Andeans, the world is like a person with inter-related forms of life which create a living web. All forms of life, like organs in a body, mutually interact, thus participating in the activity which contributes to the regeneration of the world. Everything that occurs inside this living being, which is the world, emerges from its own inner workings.²⁶

Down the centuries, the tribals have developed cultural mechanism to ensure the continuity of natural resources. The sense of conservation has grown out of the cumulative knowledge of millions of people and not from the observation of a few individ-

²⁴MINZ, pp. 68-69.

²⁵SHANDA, pp. 28-29.

²⁶G.R. VASQUEZ, "Culture and Biodiversity in the Andes," *Trees and People Newsletter*, 34 (September 1997), p. 41.

human life itself in a sacrifice.³⁰ This also explains why persons, localities and villages are named after animals, birds, trees, fruits, flowers, mountains, etc.

The tribals see trees, plants, animals, insects, etc., as their relatives. Totemism is the basis of their social and political organisation in so far as kinship, marriage, and relations are concerned. The fauna and flora of their past and present habitats supply the bulk of the totem names.³¹ Totems are believed to have helped or protected the tribal ancestors, or to have been of some peculiar service to them. This also explains certain taboos. For instance,

As a general rule, an Oraon must abstain from eating or otherwise using, domesticating, killing, destroying, maiming, hurting or injuring the animal or plant or other object that forms his totem; nor must he use anything made of it or obtained from it; and when practicable, he will prevent others from doing so in his presence. In the case of tree totems, the men of the clan will neither go under the shade of the tree nor cut or burn its wood nor use its produce in any shape.³²

According to tribal belief, humans, animals and plants have the same ancestral roots and therefore they have personal and social relationships. Each item of nature has a spirit. Spirits may be benevolent or malevolent. But the presence of the spirits in stones, waters, trees, is real for tribals. They believe that their ancestors form part of a living society. This living consciousness of spirits in nature makes the Adivasi perspective on ecology different from that of others.³³ The tribals have social control mechanisms which help them develop a sustainable utilization of natural resources. In the practical life of the tribal there is no need to impose totem taboos. Everybody knows about them and practices them earnestly.

Tribal Institutions and Environmental Concerns

The tribals have rich adaptive cultural measures and mechanisms to ensure ecological balance. Some of their institutions like taboos, sacred rites, clan-name system, etc., provide the framework for defining acceptable resource use. Taken together, these traditional practices and community agreements create an eco-

³⁰B. TURKEY, *Oraon Symbols: Theologizing in Oraon Context*, unpublished dissertation, Delhi: Vidyanjyoti, 1980, pp. 88-90.

³¹ROY, p. 186.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 190.

³³MINZ, p. 68.

logical balance which ensures a rational use of animals for food and other purposes. They guide the philosophy of resource utilisation, conservation and environmental protection. It is this world-view that has created respect for animals, reverence for forests, rocks, mountains and rivers. A place is declared sacred either because it is believed that some being, superior humans, resides there or because it is deemed suitable for religious worship. Such sacred places can never be abused and as a result the biodiversity of the whole eco-system has been protected.³⁴ These norms exert social pressures that control individual and group behaviour. The traditional practices are enforceable as customary law and this collective social responsibility is expressed in the day-to-day life. Individual interests are subordinated to those of the community. Ecological concerns are communitarian and no individualism should enter into the tribal organisation. Among most tribes the *Sirum* grove is the common place of worship. It is a cluster of *Sal* trees. Since the grove is considered sacred, people are not allowed to desecrate it by felling these trees.

Some of their traditional practices can be listed here. Certain animals are slow breeders, hence they are protected via a complex system of taboos. The married *Kharias*, for instance, do not eat beef. Marriage is the culmination of their maturity and adulthood. Oxen are part and parcel of their life because they toil day and night along with their master. The tribes of Chotanagpur celebrate the feast of *Sohrai* which is primarily dedicated to the deities which take care of their animals. On this day their heads and feet are washed and they even share food from the same plate as their master's. In the words of A.B. Saran,

The worship of a particular class of animals has been and still is very widespread, whether the animals are regarded as divine in themselves, as the temporary dwelling of a divine soul or of a feared or highly honoured deceased man, or as the symbol or totem of a tribe or race.³⁵

In many houses animals share the living rooms of the inmates. Animals are never killed for sport and commercial purposes. They are killed for meat and medicine. *Pluggu sendra* (ritual hunting) and *Jani Shikar* (hunting by women) among the Oraon tribe have socio-religious significance. Similarly, wild beasts destroying human life, animals and crops can be killed with due consultation with the village elders. The ritual or ceremonial hunt-

³⁴SHANIDA, p. 29.

³⁵A.B. SARAN, *Tribal Studies*, Ranchi: Ranchi Offset Printers, 1978, p. 138.

ing of the tribals has never threatened animal species with extinction. Never has there been a concerted effort to eradicate animals.³⁶

Plants too are treated with a similar kind of reverence and respect. Certain plant species are protected and cannot be cut other than for medicinal and religious purposes. Even if they are cut they are quickly replaced or they are cut in such a way that new shoots come out again. Plants and trees have an important role in the daily life of the tribals. Leaves are their plates, cups and spoons. Umbrellas are made out of leaves and bamboos. The materials they use in day-to-day life are eco-friendly, unlike the synthetic materials produced by the multinational companies.

Tribal Institutions and Existential Needs

Humans are both material and spiritual beings. Catering to their temporal needs alone does not solve their problems. Their economic needs are linked with the commitment to the family, clan, community, village and tribe. Mutual love, understanding and acceptance are the basis of the dignity of human persons. The tribal social life too is also guided by a sense of the sacred. Their faith experience finds a common expression in festivities and dances. They are an experience of a tremendous sense of belonging to the tribe. Reverence for life, matter and spirit is the starting point for a dialogue on environment sustainability. The harmonious relationship with nature is continued in their communion with their ancestors which can be seen in their rituals for the dead.³⁷ Settling apart three drops of rice-beer or water before a drink and three grains of cooked rice before a meal, show their communion with the ancestors who are still part of their society and watch over them and protect them from evil spirits and sicknesses.

In the tribal worldview all the existential needs are interconnected, thus providing people with points of departure for making 'the great human choices' that really determine development: choices between transforming nature or inhabiting it, being present-oriented or future-oriented, innovative or passive, right or wrong, and good or evil. The framework that provides answers to these questions consists of 'basic human needs' such as food, shelter, access to health and education, and honest, just governance. Unfortunately, very often development theories and

³⁶Ibid., p. 30

³⁷This needs p. 5.

development agencies undermine and ignore these needs. When these needs are not taken care of, individuals and societies lose their inner bearings and sense of self-identity. Some individuals and societies may rise above the resulting crisis and become stronger and more creative. They may also lapse into behaviour patterns of aggression, stagnation or alienation with disastrous results, both nationally and internationally.

Development processes built on non-sustainable and non-fulfilling values may leave the 'recipients' poorer as persons even though they may be materially better off.³⁸ Hence, every sustainable development is rooted in the deeper needs of human beings.

Returning to Our Tribals Roots

What emerges from the present study is the uniqueness of the tribal response to the contemporary ecological crisis. The tribals can show the way to the modernised and sophisticated generation. The so-called superior western culture can talk about preventing the world from ecological disaster, the tribal culture just does it unassumingly. Development is necessary but not at the cost of human life and values. In all the development activities, the missing dimension is the spirituality that ultimately sustains the tribes in their management and utilisation of natural resources. It is very important to get back the sensitivity to and solidarity with nature, not only individually but also collectively, or else as David Abram (1997) writes in his book *The Spell of the Sensuous*,

if we do not soon remember ourselves to our sensuous surroundings, if we do not reclaim our solidarity with the other sensibilities, then the cost of our human commonality may be our common extinction.³⁹

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹As quoted in "Why an Issue on Spirituality," (see above, note 13).