

① "Nehru favored the policy of integrating the tribal people in Indian society, of making them as integral part of the Indian nation even while maintaining their distinct identity & culture."
Elaborate with special reference to Northeastern India.

After independence, the integration of tribal population into the mainstream posed a serious challenge. They resided mostly in hills & forest areas & their traditions, cultures & ways of life were different from those of their non-tribal neighbours. The preservation of the tribal people's rich social & cultural heritage lay at the heart of the government's policy of tribal integration.

Jawaharlal Nehru did not want that tribals be treated like museum specimens, neither he wanted them to be engulfed by the non-tribal masses. He adopted a middle path, he wanted to make tribals an integral part of the nation & at the same time wanted to protect their distinct culture & identity. Nehru stood for economic & social development of tribals in multifarious ways for which he laid down certain guidelines -

- i) There should be no imposition on tribals or compulsion from outside
- ii) Tribal rights in land & forests should be respected & no outsider should be able to take possession of tribal lands.

iii) Necessary to encourage all the tribal languages.

iv) For administration reliance should be placed on the tribal people themselves. Administrators should be recruited from amongst them & trained.

v) There should be no over-administration of tribal areas.

Various provisions in the Constitution itself supported Nehru's approach, such as Article 46, schedule six, tribal advisory councils, reservation, National Commission for Scheduled tribes etc.

The situation of tribals in the northeast region was different from the other tribals of the country. They constituted majority in most of the areas in which they inhabited, non-tribals had not penetrated into their areas in a significant way & their socio-political culture was not disturbed. Thus, Nehru's tribal policy was even more relevant to the tribals of the northeast. Nehru's policy was implemented in North-East Frontier Agency which was created in 1948. Here officers were asked to implement specially designed developmental policies without disturbing the social & cultural fabric of the tribals.

Thus, Nehru's visionary policy played an important role in the integration of tribal population in the after independence.