

A Geographical Analysis of Core and Peripheries of Tribal Population in Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT The present paper based on the 1991-2001 Census data insights into the distribution of tribal population and intends to identify the core and peripheries of five major tribes, in the state of Maharashtra. For the comprehension and identification of core of a particular tribe along with its periphery, the composite index has been computed for the year 1991 only. The five major tribes viz. Bhils, Gonds, Mahadeo Kolis, Varlis and Kokanas are considered for the identification of their core and periphery in the state. Apart from this, the percentage distribution of tribal population has also been worked out and depicted on the map to highlight their concentration in different districts of the state, both for 1991 and 2001. It is found that the proportion of tribal population in the state as a whole, barring two districts of Dhule and Aurangabad, has declined from 9.27% in 1991 to 8.85% in 2001, due to the under enumeration and derecognition of some tribes. The core of Gond tribe is confined to Chandrapur and Gadchiroli district and its periphery in adjoining districts of Nagpur and Bhandara. The core of Bhils is identified in Dhule, Varlis in Thane, Kokanas and Mahadeo Kolis' core is commonly identified in Nashik district, and the peripheries of these tribes are also found in the immediate adjoining districts. This sort of study of distribution and regarding their core and peripheries is useful for the tribal planning.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'tribe' is very complex to define. However, it is attempted to define by considering different point of views. The constitution of Indian Union (Article 366) has defined the Scheduled Tribe as such tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as or deemed under article 342 to be Scheduled Tribe for the purpose of Constitution.

Constitution order of 1950 declared 212 tribes located in the then states as 'Scheduled Tribes.' It is pertinent to point out that no single criterion has been adopted to distinguish tribal from the non-tribal population. Ghurye (1969) in his work regarding the scheduled tribe pointed out that the religion or occupation or racial features are not sufficient criteria to distinguish tribals from non-tribals. Following are some of common features of tribal people:

- 1) Scheduled tribes live away from the civilized world in the most inaccessible parts of both forests and hills having very under-developed means of transportation routes (for example, tribals in Borvan and many other villages in Dindori tahsil of Nashik district).
- 2) They are associated with any one of the Nigrito, Australoids or Mongoloid racial group.
- 3) They speak tribal dialect but in Maharashtra they also speak Marathi language.

- 4) They profess primitive religion known as animism in which the worship of ghosts and spirits is the most important element. So they follow primitive occupation such as gleaning (use full remnants of crops after harvesting), hunting or gathering of forest produce.
- 5) They are mostly carnivorous (flesh or meat eaters). They have nomadic habits and love to drink and dance.

On the basis of above characteristics, the term tribal is defined as a group of people who are the inhabitants of inaccessible forest in hilly and remote areas, belong to the oldest racial groups, speak a common dialect, profess a primitive religion, follow primitive occupation, have nomadic habits, love for drink and dance and are endogamous. They are also called as 'Adivasi', 'Adi' means original and 'vasi' means inhabitant, that means original inhabitant.

The Oxford Dictionary defined the term 'tribe' as the racial group especially united by language and customs, living as a community under one or more chiefs.

Study Area

For the present study, the entire state of Maharashtra was selected to look into their spatial distribution and concentration of tribes in Maharashtra with their core and peripheries.

Geographically, the state of Maharashtra is

located in the western part of India. It forms the part of Deccan plateau. It is the second largest both in terms of population and area in the country, which came into existence on 1st May 1960.

From location point of view, it extends from 15°46' North and 22°6' North latitude and 72°36' East to 80°54' East longitude. Maharashtra has an area of 3,07,713 sq. km. and population of 9,67,52,247 (2001). The density of population was 314 persons per sq. km. as per the 2001 Census. There are six administrative divisions of state with 35 districts, 353 tehsils and 378 towns and cities.

The Maharashtra State is bounded by Arabian Sea in the west, the state of Gujarat in the north-west, Madhya Pradesh in the north-east, Andhra Pradesh in the south-east, Karnataka in the south and Goa in the south-west.

Objectives

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To look into the spatial distribution, concentration and growth of tribal population in Maharashtra.
2. To examine the core and peripheries of the five largest tribal groups in the state.

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on the secondary sources of data. To study the distribution and concentration of tribals and their decennial growth rate, the data were obtained from the 1991 and 2001 Censuses. For calculating the tribal core and peripheries, the five major tribal groups are selected from 1991 Census.

In order to measure the present spatial distribution of tribal population in Maharashtra, a simple percentage has been calculated at district and state level. The index of concentration of tribal population is also calculated by using the location quotient method (Mahmood 1977) as given below:

$$L.Q. = \frac{\% \text{ of tribal population to total population in a district}}{\% \text{ of tribal population to total population in the state}}$$

where the value of location quotient is above 1, the concentration of tribal population would be high and dispersed in the area where the value is less than 1 and where the value is exactly 1, then it is balanced one.

To know the absolute concentration, the tribal population as percentage of total tribal population is also analysed. For the decennial growth rate at district level, the simple growth rate formula has been employed:

$$\text{Growth Rate} = \frac{P2-P1}{P1} \times 100$$

Where, P1 is Population of previous decade and P2 is Population of current decade.

To understand the cores and peripheries of the five largest tribal groups in the state, the composite index was computed (Raza and Ahmed 1990) as follows (see Table 1):

Table 1: Tribal core and peripheries: Computation procedure-(I)

	Total population of the district	Total tribal population of the district	Total population of X tribe in the district	Total population of X tribe in the state
	1	2	3	4
Statistical technique	A	B	C	
Percentage	3 as % of 4	3 as % of 1	3 as % of 2	
Normalization value of the ith spatial unit	A' = $\frac{A}{A}$	B' = $\frac{B}{B}$	C' = $\frac{C}{C}$	
Weightage	1	1	1.5	
Composite index (Ci)	Ai=A1'+B1'+C1			
Core =	Ci+2S.D. and above			
Periphery	Ci to Ci + 2 S.D.			

Note: Where S. D. is the standard deviation of composite index

Core = C1 + 2SD and above
Periphery = from C1 to C1 + 2SD

The composite index (Ci) may be symbolically expressed as below:

$$C1 = \sum_{i=1}^3 W_j X$$

where,
j = 1
i = number of variables (i1, i2, i3)
j = number of districts (j1, j2, j3)

X1j = ratio of the percentage of 1 specific tribe in the Jth unit

to the total population of that tribe to its mean
X2j = ratio of the percentage of 1 specific tribe in the Jth unit

to the total population of Jth unit to its mean
 $X3j$ = ratio of the percentage of 1 specific tribe
 in the Jth unit to the total

tribal Population Jth unit to its mean
 W1 = weightages given to the variables are
 as follows:

$$W1 = 1, W2 = 1, W3 = 1.5$$

DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBAL POPULATION

India is considered to be an anthropological laboratory of its regional, religious, racial, and linguistic diversities. As a geographical point of view, India covers an area of 32, 87,236 sq. km. extending from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. As far as a tribal population is concerned, the total tribal population was 6.78 crores, amounting 8.01 percent to the total population of the country according to 1991 Census.

As per the 2001 Census, the proportional of tribal population in Maharashtra was 8.85 percent. Their proportion has declined from 9.19 percent in 1981 and 9.27 percent in 1991 to 8.85 percent in 2001. In 2001, the tribal population ranged from a minimum of 0.47 percent in Kolhapur district to a maximum of 43.16 percent in Dhule district (including Nandurbar). Less than 5 percent tribals are distributed in the 12 districts in the state in 2001 and also in 1981 and 1991 Census with 11 and 13 districts respectively. These districts are located in southern, western, and central parts of the state. In the second category, that is, 5 to 10 percent, 3 districts fall in this category. The proportion of tribal population in 2001 in Buldhana 5.16 percent (in 1981 5.06 percent and 1991-4.40 percent), Ahmadnagar 7.15 percent (1981-6.93 percent, 1991-7.12 percent) and in Nanded 8.82 percent (1981-10.19 percent, 1991-11.84 percent) was between 5 and 10 per cent.

There were seven districts in the third category of 10-15 percent in 2001. In 1981, five districts and in 1991 four districts were under this category. The high tribal concentration above 15 percent was found in the districts of Wardha, Yavatmal, Thane, Nashik, Chandrapur, and Dhule in 1981 and 1991, and in 2001, only four districts viz. Yavatmal (19.26 percent), Nashik (23.92), Chandrapur (24.56 percent including Gadchiroli), and Dhule 43.16 percent (including Nandurbar) were categorized in this high concentration of tribal population (Table 2 and Fig. 1).

These districts are known as Sahyadri and

Table 2: Maharashtra: District wise distribution of tribal population 1991 - 2001

S.No.	Districts and state	% of S. T.	
		1991	2001
1.	Dhule	40.85	43.16
2.	Gadchiroli	38.75	38.25
3.	Nashik	24.18	23.92
4.	Yavatmal	21.47	19.24
5.	Chandrapur	19.70	18.10
6.	Thane	18.12	14.75
7.	Wardha	15.56	13.66
8.	Bhandara	14.71	12.58
9.	Amravati	14.36	12.46
10.	Nagpur	13.93	12.19
11.	Raigarh	12.82	11.81
12.	Nanded	11.85	10.91
13.	Jalgaon	12.82	8.80
14.	Ahmednagar	11.85	7.51
15.	Akola	9.85	6.45
16.	Parbhani	7.12	5.15
17.	Buldhana	7.05	4.85
18.	Pune	5.24	3.61
19.	Latur	5.03	3.45
20.	Aurangabad	2.09	2.25
21.	Jalna	2.27	1.98
22.	Osmanabad	2.05	1.82
23.	Solapur	2.05	1.79
24.	Bid	1.72	1.17
25.	Br. Mumbai	1.49	1.12
26.	Ratnagiri	1.15	0.76
27.	Satara	1.05	0.76
28.	Sangli	0.97	0.66
29.	Kolhapur	0.73	0.47
30.	Sindhudurg	0.50	0.46
	State	9.27	8.85

Source: Census of India- Maharashtra 1991 and 2001

Satpudas regions forming western and north Western Ghats and Gondwana region of eastern Maharashtra. These districts comprising 47 tehsils (31 in Sahyadri and 16 in Gondwana region), are in hilly mountainous and backward forest region of the state. The Bhils, Katkaris, Mahadevkolis, Thakurs, Gamits, Warlis, etc. live in Sahyadri region, while in Gondwana region of eastern Maharashtra, especially in the districts of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli, where the forest is very thick and on the plains, the roads are uncommunicable, tribals like Gond, Kolams, Madias, Halba, etc. can be found (Jain 1998).

These regions are lacking various facilities although the state and central government declared many tribal development plans, but unfortunately they could not reach the grassroot level of the tribal population. It needs thoughtful planning to develop the tribal regions as well as the tribal population to raise their socio-economic status.

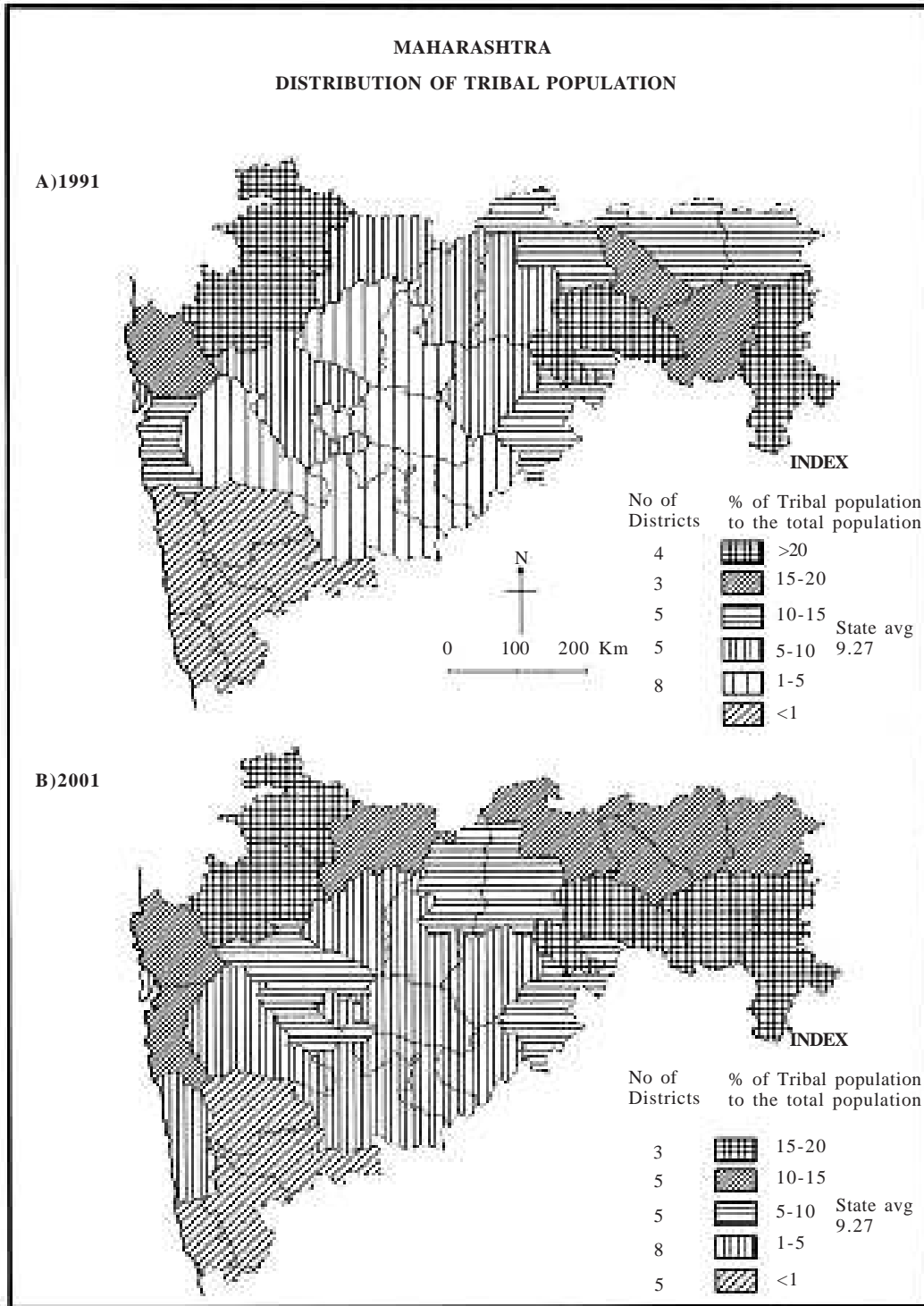


Fig. 1. Distribution of tribal population in Maharashtra

CONCENTRATION OF TRIBAL POPULATION

As far as concentration of tribal population is concerned, the index of concentration of tribal population is calculated by using the location quotient method (Mahamood 1977:106). As per the location quotient index, the concentration of tribal population in the districts of Dhule and Nandurbar was very high in 2001 as the value was as high as 4.36. In the district of Yavatmal (1.94), Thane (1.46), Amravati (1.26), Wardha (1.33), Raigarh (1.20) and Nanded (1.84), the concentration was high as the index values were above 1. Similarly, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts also fall in the high concentration category (2.78).

In 1991, the concentration in the districts like Dhule and Nandurbar (3.89), Chandrapur and Gadchiroli (2.75), Yavatmal (2.14), Thane (1.72), Wardha (1.68), Amravati (1.43), Raigarh (1.22), Nanded (1.27), etc. was also high. These districts have high concentration of tribal population in the State. There are as many as 13 districts with index value less than 1, having the tribal concentration below the state average in 2001. Not a

Table 3: Maharashtra: Concentration of tribal population

S. No.	Districts and state	1991	2001
1	Sangli	0.05	0.05
2	Kolhapur	0.04	0.07
3	Satara	0.07	0.08
4	Ratnagiri and Sindhurg	0.00	0.01
5	Mumbai and Sub Mumbai	0.11	0.11
6	Beed	0.15	0.11
7	Solapur	0.02	0.18
8	Osmanabad and Latur	0.33	0.02
9	Aurangabad and Jalna	0.37	0.33
10	Pune	0.48	0.36
11	Nagpur	0.05	0.45
12	Buldhana	0.56	0.05
13	Parbhani and Hingoli	0.67	0.58
14	Akola and Washim	0.71	0.74
15	Ahemadnagar	0.10	0.89
16	Jalgaon	1.27	0.11
17	Nanded	1.22	1.34
18	Raigarh	1.43	1.20
19	Amravati	0.15	1.26
20	Bhandara and Gondia	1.68	0.13
21	Wardha	1.72	1.55
22	Thane	2.14	1.46
23	Yavatmal	0.25	1.94
24	Nashik	2.75	0.24
25	Chandrapur and Gadchiroli	3.89	2.78
26	Dhule and Nandurbar	3.89	4.26
	Maharashtra State	0.09	0.09

Source: Census of India- Maharashtra 1991 and 2001

single district was at par with the state average (Table 3).

GROWTH OF TRIBAL POPULATION

The growth of tribal population in Maharashtra during 1981-91 was 26.79 percent, which has drastically declined to 17.20 percent in 1991-01. It shows that the growth of the tribal population slashed down due to the shift of some communities to other backward castes, that is, SBC (Special Backward Caste) and some are debarred, because of fake possession of caste certificates during 1981-1991. The districts where more than 40 percent tribal population declined were Ratnagiri including Sindhurg (-40.97), Kolhapur (-45.85 percent) and Nagpur (-55.36) and on the contrary, in the next decade (1991-2001) the same districts have shown high growth rate of tribal population that increased to 33.69 percent, 10.79 percent, and 181.80 percent in 1991-01 respectively. In the district where the

Table 4: Maharashtra: Growth rate of tribal population

S. No.	Districts and state	Year 1981-1991	Year 1991-2001
		Growth rate	Growth rate
1.	Bhandara and Gondia	957.09	-5.05
2.	Nanded	54.83	-8.11
3.	Beed	53.04	17.93
4.	Aurangabad and Jalna	47.76	18.53
5.	Jalgaon	45.16	39.04
6.	Buldhana	43.53	20.72
7.	Parbhani and Hingoli	41.86	09.54
8.	Satara	40.44	19.38
9.	Pune	36.31	20.98
10.	Akola and Washim	35.67	-24.80
11.	Nashik	32.70	28.27
12.	Amravati	30.92	12.67
13.	Thane	30.40	26.08
14.	Ahmednagar	27.97	26.28
15.	Dhule and Nandurbar	24.72	25.73
16.	Mumbai and Mumbai Sub.	23.43	-12.19
17.	Raigarh	23.00	15.03
18.	Yavatmal	20.46	06.17
19.	Chandrapur and Gadchiroli	18.96	14.26
20.	Wardha	15.34	-7.16
21.	Osmanabad and Latur	-6.21	26.18
22.	Solapur	-30.58	42.62
23.	Sangli	-40.97	65.57
24.	Ratnagiri and Sindhurg	-45.85	33.69
25.	Kolhapur	-55.36	10.79
26.	Nagpur	26.79	181.8
	Maharashtra State	26.79	17.20

Source: Census of India- Maharashtra 1991 and 2001

tribal concentration was high, the growth remained normal except in Bhandara (957.09 percent), an adjoining district to the Chhattisgarh state of India, a tribal state of the country.

In 1991-01, in Bhandara the growth rate was -5.05 percent and in the neighboring Nagpur district the growth rate increased to 181.80 percent in 1991-01 from 26.79 percent in 1981-91. In the Sangli district the growth of tribal population in the decade 1981-91 was 30.58 percent and it enhanced to 65.57 percent in 1991-2001. In Nanded, the neighbouring district of Chandrapur, the growth rate declined to -8.11 percent in 1991-01 whereas in 1981-91 the growth rate was 54.83 percent. On the contrary, in Kolhapur district the tribal population declined to -55.36 percent in 1981-91 and increased to 10.79 percent in 1991-2001 (Table 4 and Fig. 2).

CORES AND PERIPHERIES OF FIVE MAJOR TRIBAL GROUPS

As far as the tribal distribution and concentration is concerned, it is better to understand the identification of cores and peripheries of tribal individual groups in Maharashtra. For this, the present study intends to find out the cores and peripheries of major five tribal groups viz. the Bhils, the Gonds, the Mahadeo Kolis, the Varlis and the Kokanas, which constitute 63.40 percent of the total tribal population of the state.

The size of population of these tribal groups was small and they had separate habitats. These habitats started with being monolithic in their composition. In time there was an increase in the tribal population and increasing pressure was exerted by transformation of the tribals into pe-

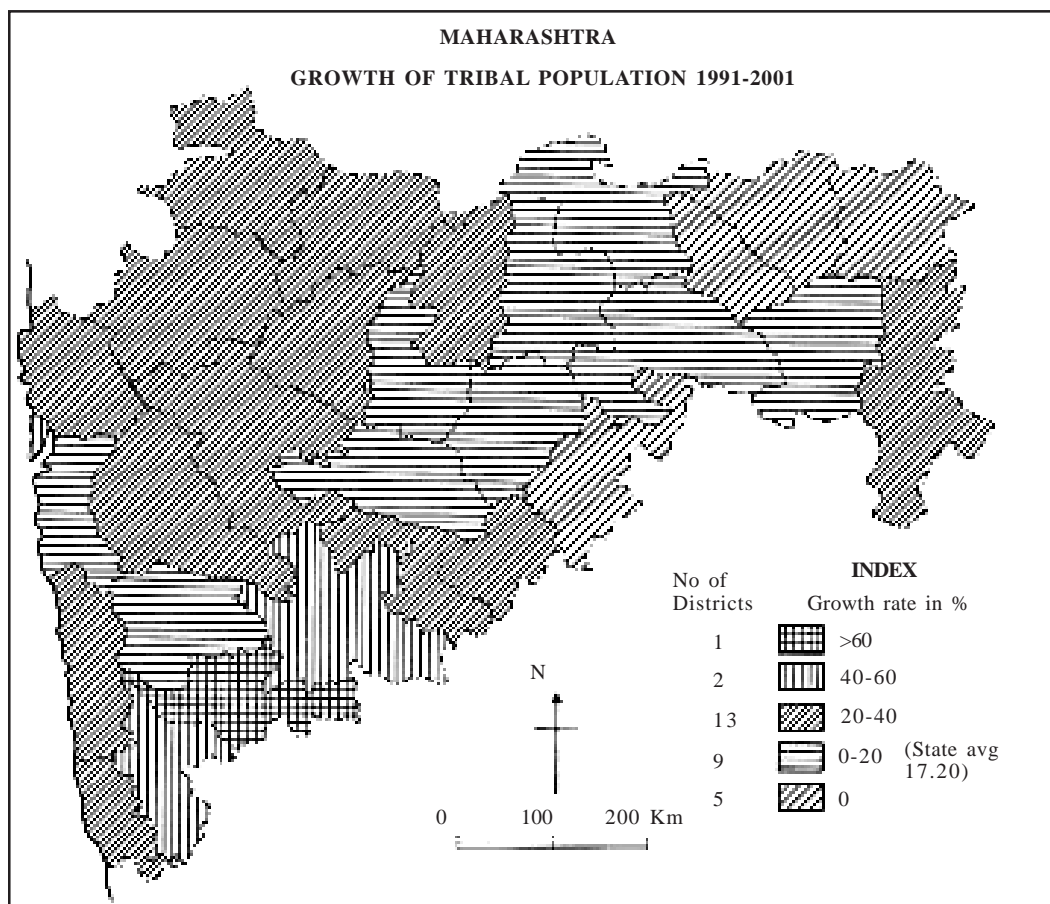


Fig.2. Growth of tribal population 1991-2001 (Maharashtra)

asant communities but the hilly, arid, forested tracts remained unsuitable, and they moved towards *Jhum* (shifting) cultivation.

With the increase in population and the increasing pressure exerted by non-tribal peasant communities on arable land, tribal communities inhabiting areas suitable for sedentary cultivation were either assimilated by non-tribal communities or were squeezed into those areas of their primeval homelands which were negative from the point of view of settled agriculture. Therefore, the proportion of the non-tribal groups in the tribal areas remained low (Raza and Ahmed 1990).

The spatial distribution of cores and peripheries of Gonds, Bhils, Mahadeo Koli, Kokna, and Varli, are the largest numbers identified in the state of Maharashtra and are as follows (Raza and Ahmed 1990),

Both the cores and peripheries of the tribal groups are compact.

- i) The periphery is compact but the core is fragmented.
- ii) The core and peripheries are fragmented.
- iii) The tribal group has a compact core but there is no periphery.

In Maharashtra both core and periphery of Bhils are in compact. The core of the Bhil tribe is confined to the district of Dhule (index values 39.43) and the periphery is extended over to the districts of Nashik, Jalgaon, Ahmednagar, and Thane. The Bhils' compactness is due to shyness, afraid and lack of confidence character and hardly move towards densely populated regions. They are discouraged by the non-tribal peasants. The environmental condition in this tribal territory is very harsh and retains its original area of inhabitation.

Table 5: Core and peripheries of five largest tribal groups-1991 in Maharashtra

S.No.	Districts	Bhils (Ci)	Gonds (Ci)	Koli Mahadeo (Ci)	Kokana (Ci)	Varlis (Ci)
1	Osmanabad	0.01	0.01	2.89	0.01	0.01
2	Gadchiroli	0.01	21.99	0.05	0.01	-
3	Sindhudurg	0.01	0.17	0.21	0.47	0.10
4	Chandrapur	0.03	15.20	0.21	0.01	0.02
5	Bhandara	0.03	11.72	0.01	0.01	0.00
6	Parbhani	0.03	0.71	1.21	0.10	0.01
7	Latur	0.06	0.27	5.10	0.04	0.01
8	Raigarh	0.07	0.03	6.91	0.04	0.42
9	Ratnagiri	0.11	0.65	2.92	0.11	0.35
10	Gr.Bombay	0.11	0.38	3.44	1.44	1.42
11	Satara	0.11	0.09	2.93	1.04	0.03
12	Solapur	0.18	9.77	4.74	0.03	0.00
13	Kolhapur	0.22	0.16	3.27	0.07	-
14	Yavatmal	0.24	8.17	1.14	0.05	0.01
15	Akola	0.36	5.48	2.29	0.01	0.01
16	Nagpur	0.36	10.16	0.15	0.01	0.03
17	Pune	0.49	0.08	8.56	2.21	0.10
18	Nanded	0.52	1.67	4.08	0.05	0.02
19	Wardha	0.69	9.69	0.46	0.04	0.04
20	Amravati	0.75	5.14	1.85	0.02	0.09
21	Thane	0.97	0.09	3.52	8.84	74.03
22	Sangli	1.47	0.07	2.17	0.14	0.06
23	Bid	2.26	0.57	1.37	0.09	0.08
24	Buldana	2.32	0.18	3.34	0.02	0.02
25	Jalna	2.74	0.29	1.61	0.05	0.01
26	Aurangabad	5.67	0.24	1.04	0.18	0.10
27	Ahmednagar	7.23	0.12	6.95	0.11	0.03
28	Nashik	10.35	0.05	18.35	54.19	8.77
29	Jalgaon	12.52	0.16	0.71	0.14	0.02
30	Dhule	39.43	0.02	0.02	22.59	0.21
	Average	2.98	3.46	3.05	3.07	3.07
	STD	7.44	5.55	3.54	10.41	13.75
	Core-Above	17.86	14.56	10.23	23.89	30.57
	Periphery-Below	17.86	14.56	10.23	23.89	30.57

Source: Based on Census of India 1991

Formula for Calculating Core and Peripheries

Core = $C1 + 2SD$ and above

Periphery = from $C1$ to $C1 + 2SD$

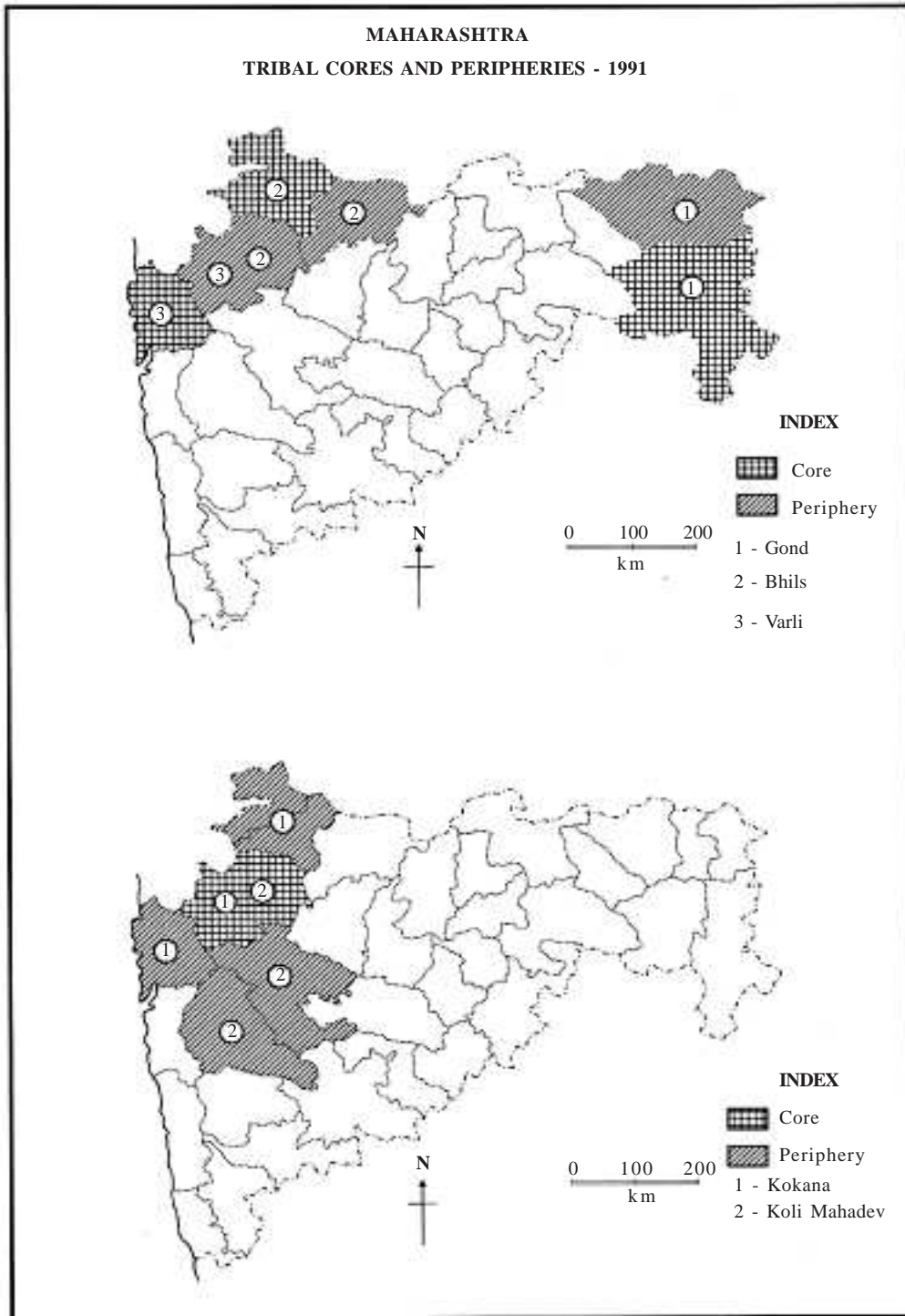


Fig. 3. Tribal cores and peripheries -1991 in Maharashtra

The compact core of the Gond tribal group remains in the districts of Chandrapur including Gadchiroli (37.19) due to thick forest and rich mineral resources and also they might be caught in the twist of Naxlite activities. So far they have remained mostly illiterate and backward, and are concentrated in one region. The fragment periphery of this group is found in the districts of Nagpur (10.63), Bhandara (11.72), and Wardha (9.69). The other tribal group is Koli Mahadeo which has fragment core in Nashik (18.35) district and also the fragment periphery extended towards the district of Pune (8.56), Ahmednagar (6.95), Raigarh (6.91) and many other districts of Maharashtra, as they have been taking the benefits of reservations in the sectors of education, industries, government services, etc.

The compact core of Kokana tribe is formed in the district of Nashik as the index value is more than 50 (54.19). They are residing in the backward region of the district working as cultivators and agricultural laborers. The periphery is found in the adjoining districts of Dhule (22.59) in the north and Thane (8.84) in the south.

The Varli tribe has a very strong compact core in Thane district as its index value is very high (74.03) (Table 5 and Fig. 3). They have been working as wage labourers in Thane, Nashik and Greater Bombay. Being unskilled they could not develop much. Varli tribe's periphery is small and very scattered, lying in Nashik and Greater Mumbai (Pathan and Mangnale 2005).

CONCLUSION

It is inferred that tribal population is mainly confined to north-eastern and north-western parts of the Maharashtra. Barring these two regions, the tribal proportion in the state is insignificant.

1. The tribal concentration has declined from 1991 to 2001. For example, there were 6 districts with proportion more than 15 percent in 1991 and in 2001, it reduced to 4 districts only. But the number of districts in the category of 10 to 15 percent was 4 districts in 1991 and increased to 7 districts in 2001. The overall proportion of tribal population has declined from 9.27 percent in 1991 to 8.85 percent in 2001, because of some de-recognition and exclusion of some tribal communities, for example the Kolis who were tribals during 1981-91, have been shifted to SBC categories in some districts.

2. It evidenced from the fact that the growth rate of tribal population in the state has also slashed from 26.79 percent in 1981-91 to 17.20 percent in 1991-01. The growth of tribal population was in minus, ranging from -24.80 percent in Akola (including Washim) to -5.05 percent in Bhandara (including Gondia) during the same period. The growth of this segment of population during the 1981-91 was mainly confined to the central part of Maharashtra that includes Nanded, Beed, Aurangabad (including Jalna), Jalgaon, Buldana and Parbhani (including Hingoli). Apart from these, the two districts viz. Satara and Bhandara have also registered substantial growth rate. During 1991-2001, the growth rate was more than 40 percent, which was observed in three districts of Sangli, Solapur and Nagpur.

3. The core of the Gond tribe is identified in Chandrapur district and its periphery in Bhandara and Nagpur districts. The core of Bhils and Varlis are in Dhule and Thane districts respectively and their peripheries in adjoining districts. The core of Kokana and Mahadeo Koli is found in the Nashik district and peripheries in their adjoining districts.

It is concluded that the cores of the 5 major tribal groups are identified in the north-eastern and north-western parts of the state. The identification of core and peripheries of different tribal groups is helpful for their planning to raise the standard of tribal living.

The process of globalization as witnessed from the maps is diminishing their territorial expansion day-by-day and they are being squeezed into smaller territories. The high rate of modernization and industrialization of the world affects their life, economy and also their territory.

The study of concentration and core and peripheries is useful for development plan and its proper implementation for whom it has been designed. The plans designed the areas where the tribals are highly concentrated and are in a very bad condition, can be implemented so as to extend the benefits to the maximum number of people. Identification of core and peripheries of a particular tribe brings out their origin and diffusion and accordingly the welfare programmes can be prepared for their upliftment and overall development.

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