The more things change, the more they stay the same, goes a saying. Reading the foreword of *Tribal Hyderabad*, published way back in 1945, one is not likely to feel as if reading an old book. It delves into the ethos of the aboriginal tribes giving a feeling of *deja vu* nearly three quarters of century later as the circumstances of the Adivasis today are no better.

**Window to the past**

It assumes more significance given the ongoing differences between the Adivasis and the Lambada tribe in the State.

Written by W.V. Grigson, then Revenue and Police member of the Nizam’s government, the foreword for the book is part of the ethnological surveys done by famous Austrian Anthropologist Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf. He stayed at Marlavai village in present day Jainoor mandal of Kumram Bheem Asifabad district between 1941 and 1943. The ethnologist was deputed to make such studies by the government in the wake of the famous Kumram Bheem rebellion of Jodeghat in present day Kerameri mandal in the same district, to better understand the tribal problem and find a solution to it.

In the words of Grigson, the tribal problem then was more of exploitation by ‘cleverer immigrants’, which includes Banjaras, Marathas, Brahmans, Muslims, the sahukar (money lender) and the vakil (advocate).

**Exploited even now**

Talking about the bureaucracy, he said no determined effort had been made by officials to keep their subordinates in check and prevent extortion of aboriginals by them.

Such extortions continue even today in the form of bribery at mandal and revenue division level which makes it very difficult for the ethnic people even to get Caste Certificate or the Local Area Tribe Certificate. This is one of the Adivasis’ many grousess.

Consider this. In Jhari village of Kerameri mandal of Kumram Bheem Asifabad district, the Adivasis have alleged that revenue authorities have regularised land in the name of non-tribals during the recent Land Records Updation and Purification exercise. They allege violation of the Land Transfer Regulation (Amendment) Act 1 of 1970 as land cannot be transferred in the name of non-tribals in Agency villages.

The Local Scheduled Tribe certificate also called Agency area certificate is required by aspirants for Class IV jobs in Agency areas. “We have been bringing it to the notice of authorities that our children are being denied the certificate as we are unable to pay bribes to officials,” alleged Vette Rajeshwar Rao, headman of Pittabongaram village, whose son Jaku had to struggle to get his certificate.

Grigson also castigated the Press and political bodies of that time for hardly playing any role.

“In tribal areas where the local bully has freest scope, are less in public eye and have far less news value and the offender is perhaps a subordinate official than a watandar or sahukar,” he observed.