

Tribal Development in India: A Study in Human Development

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Abstract:

The greatest challenge that the Government of India has been facing since independence is the proper provision of social justice to the scheduled tribe people, by ameliorating their socio-economic conditions. Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and denotified tribes constitute the weakest section of India's population, from the ecological, economic and educational angles. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. Though the tribals are the sons of the same soil and the citizens of the same country, they born and grow as the children of the nature. From the historical point of view, they have been subjected to the worst type of exploitation social. They are practically deprived of many civic facilities and isolated from modern and civilized way of living since so many centuries. The British rulers really did something in providing certain facilities in villages and towns such as, education, transport, communication, medical etc. though inadequate and mainly with self-interest. But it did nothing for ameliorating the socio-economic conditions of tribal people, except to the people in North-East region of the country, because of certain reasons. Firstly, the British administrators thought it expedient generally to leave the tribals alone, as the task of administration in the hill areas was difficult and costly. Secondly, it was considered desirable to keep away the tribals from possible political influence from the world outside world. Thirdly, some of the British officers genuinely felt that left to themselves, the tribal people would remain a happier lot. The Scheduled District Act of 1956 had therefore kept most of these areas administratively separate, the same situation was allowed to continue under the Govt. of India Acts of 1919 and 1935. However, after independence this policy was abandoned and new policy of tribal development and integration was initiated. The Constitution of India has made definite provisions for the welfare and uplift of the tribal people throughout the country.

Keywords: social justice, tribals, tribal development.

Introduction

There are approximately two hundred million tribal people in the entire globe, which means, about 4% of the global population. They are found in many regions of the world and majority of them are the poorest amongst poor. According to 1981 census, the population of Scheduled Tribes in the country was 5.16 crores, consisting about 7.76% of total Indian population, which means one tribesman for every 13 Indians. Among tribes, there are so many communities. The major identified tribes in the country number about the 428 scheduled tribes in India though the total number of tribal communities are reported to be 642 and several of them have become extinct or merged with other communities as the tendency for fusion and fission among tribal population is a continuous process. Thus, if the sub-tribes and state tribes will be taken into consideration, the number will be many more. These 428 communities speaking 106 different

languages have been so far notified as the scheduled tribes in 19 states and 6 union territories. They have their own socio-cultural and economic milieu. In fact, the largest concentration of tribal people, anywhere in the world and except perhaps Africa is in India. About 50% of the tribal population of the country is concentrated in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar and Orissa. Besides, there is a sizeable tribal population in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and West Bengal.

Nature and the Scope of the Tribal Development:

Tribals in India, geographically and culturally, are at widely different stages of social as well as economic development and their problems differ from area to area within their own groups. The tribesman lives not only for himself alone, but also he is an integral part of the community to which he belongs. The identity of interest between the individuals and the community is real, bearing profoundly on tribal attitudes. It makes for the emergence of essentially human qualities like camaraderie, fellow feeling and social awareness. Because of these reasons, the British adopted the policy of isolation and tried to keep the tribals away from the mainstream of Indian life. The Scheduled District Act of 1874 had kept most of these areas administratively separate. The same situation was allowed to continue under the Government of India Act of 1919 and 1935. However, after independence, this policy was abandoned and a new policy of tribal development and integration was initiated.

The Fundamental Principles of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru:

The fundamental principles laid down by the first Prime Minister late Jawaharlal Nehru in this regard became the guiding force. These principles are-

1. Tribal people's should develop along the lines of their own genus and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way, their own traditional arts and culture.
2. Tribal people rights in land forest should be respected.
3. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will no doubt be needed especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders in to tribal territory and
4. We should not over administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry to their own social and cultural institutions.

The Constitution of India has also made definite provisions for the welfare and uplift of the - tribal people throughout the country. Articles 15 (4) 46, 244 (1) and 339 of the Indian constitution speak of special provisions meant for the administration and control of scheduled areas and tribals therein, for their welfare and protection. The policy of the State Govts. towards the scheduled tribes is governed by the board directives laid down in the Indian constitution. It provides that; "The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the people and in particular of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustices and all forms of exploitation."

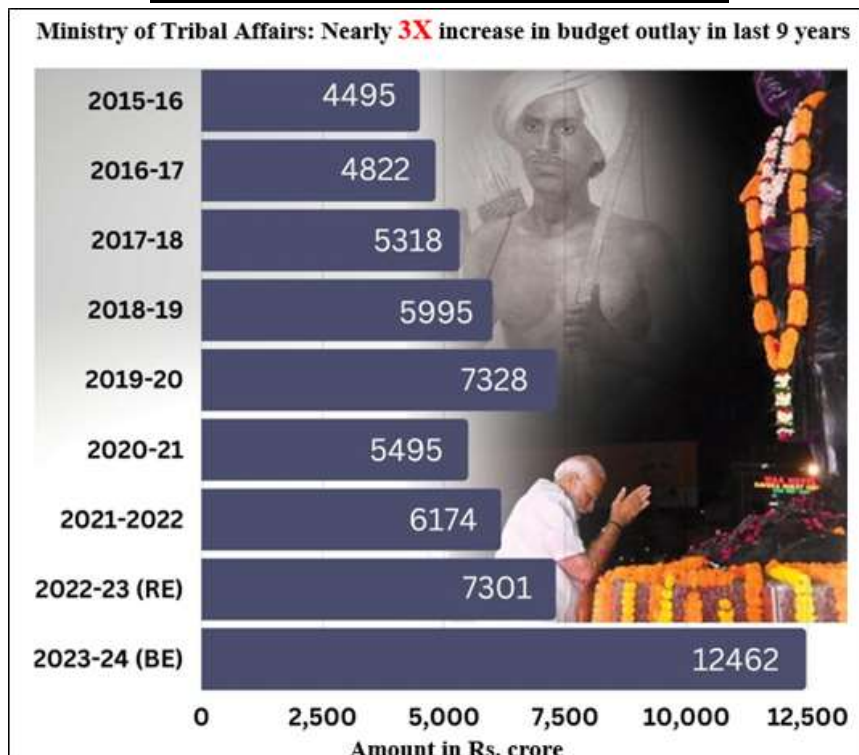
Based on these constitutional provisions, specific policy for tribal development have been incorporated in the strategy of economic development in our Five-Year Plans. In fact the development of the scheduled tribes as a social responsibility of the President of India and the Governors in the state are responsible for reviewing the administration as well as the development of Republic India. It is therefore incumbent of on the administration, both at the Union as well as in the states to promote laws and administrative policies relating to the tribal population, which belongs to the lowest rank of social order.

The Tribal Development Policies and Programmes:

A review of the tribal situation would indicate that the strategy for development would require an intensive approach to the tribal problems in terms of their geographic and demographic concentration, if the faster development of the community is to take place. The community development efforts in the tribal areas were therefore, taken up for supplementation by stating a few special multipurpose tribal development projects covering a few blocks in 1954. A number of commissions and committees were appointed in the recent past to look in to the problems of developments in the tribal areas in the country and they have recommended a number of measures to remove the socio-economic imbalances and also to break down their old psychological barrier, which existed in the tribal areas. The important commission and committees appointed so far are:

1. The Social Welfare Team of the Committee on plan projects 1959.
2. The Verrier Elwin Committee on Tribal Development.
3. The Committee on Tribal Economy in Forest Areas -1967
4. The Schedules Areas and Scheduled Tribal Commission (Dhebar Committee 1961)
5. The Special working Group on Cooperatives for Backward Classes - 1961 (Shri M.D. Bhargava as its Chairman)
6. The Task Force on Development of Tribal Areas -1972.
7. The Dube Committee -1972.
8. The Study Team on Co-operative Structure in Tribal Development Project Areas -1976.
9. The Study Group on Relief of Indebtedness Land, Alienation and Restoration in Development Agency Area -1973 (Shri P.S Appu as its Chairman)
10. The team of Marketing, Credit and Cooperation in Tribal Areas -1978 (Shri K.S. Bawa Committee)
11. The Working Group on Development of Scheduled Tribes during the 7th Five Years Plans (1985- 90)

Budget Allocation for Tribal Development



In 2023, the Prime Minister launched the **Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN)**, with a budget of around Rs 24,000 crore for the overall development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The Mission will be implemented through the convergence of 11 interventions of 9 Ministries.

Conclusion:

The conclusion regarding tribal development in India is multifaceted and nuanced. While progress has been made in certain areas, challenges persist that hinder the overall development of tribal communities.

1. **Progress in Education and Healthcare:** There have been efforts to improve access to education and healthcare for tribal communities. Initiatives such as setting up of schools, healthcare centers, and special scholarships have contributed positively.
2. **Economic Empowerment:** Various schemes and programs aimed at providing livelihood opportunities and skill development have been implemented. These include initiatives in agriculture, handicrafts, and entrepreneurship.
3. **Land Rights and Forest Rights:** Recognition of land and forest rights has been a significant issue. The Forest Rights Act (2006) aimed to secure rights over land and resources, but implementation challenges persist, leading to conflicts and displacement.
4. **Social Integration and Cultural Preservation:** Efforts have been made to integrate tribal communities into the mainstream while respecting their cultural heritage. However, issues like discrimination and marginalization continue to affect social integration.
5. **Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Access to basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and clean water remains inadequate in many tribal areas. Improved connectivity is crucial for accessing markets and essential services.
6. **Government Policies and Implementation:** While there are numerous policies and schemes for tribal development, effective implementation at the grassroots level remains a challenge. Corruption, bureaucratic hurdles, and lack of awareness often hinder the intended benefits from reaching the communities.

In conclusion, while there have been positive steps towards tribal development in India, the journey is far from complete. Addressing the underlying issues of land rights, education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and social integration is essential for sustainable development and improving the quality of life for tribal communities. More focused and coordinated efforts, along with community involvement and empowerment, are necessary to achieve meaningful and lasting changes.

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