

Tribal Development and Welfare: India at 75

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Abstract—India celebrates its 75th year of Independence with ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahostav’. Besides the largest republic, we are now the 5th largest economy in the world, marching forward to become in the near future an advanced country. Still, the economic growth has been rather uneven and not all sections of the population have progressed at the same pace. Several people still suffer from disparities and social inequality and are being left behind in society. The tribes of India (scheduled tribes) are the most marginalized, on the basis of economic and social status, and denitrified tribes, which constitute the weakest section of India's population from the ecological, economic and educational angles. They've been subjected to the worst of exploitation and social injustice. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. There's a pattern of poverty and exploitation on the ethnical group of scheduled tribes has been lumped together for the purposes of diagnosing their problems and improving their socio economic conditions. It has become necessary to suppose over the social policy guidelines for them, Hence this paper made an attempt to understand the provisions were made in the Constitution to protect the tribal interests and strategies adopted by the administrators for solving the problems to promote their welfare.

Index Terms—The tribes of India, Constitutional safeguards development and welfare programmes.

I. INTRODUCTION

History stands witness to the glorious role Adivasi and indigenous farming communities have played in preserving water, forests and land in the past. They fought off ferocious animals, cleared bushy forested regions, set up villages and inhabited those areas. The linguistic and cultural identity of the Adivasi and indigenous communities has evolved in the lap of nature amid these forests, rivers and mountains.

Many Acts were passed with the sole aim to preserve and develop the relationship between tribal and

indigenous communities and their natural and pro-environmental life values. In addition, the Fifth Schedule in the Constitution of India and the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (or PESA), 1996 provides for the tribal community's rights on water and forest under the Khuntkatti System, as well as other traditional rights

It is a well-known fact that special legal provisions have been made in the Indian Constitution to protect and develop forest land inhabited by the tribal communities as well as their socio-cultural and economic base. It has been clearly stated that the natural resources within and without the boundary of the village, such as gravel, soil, sand, shrubs, forest, land, rive and, springs, are community property of the village and all the villagers have community rights over the area.

These rights were attained after a long struggle and martyrdom of thousands of tribal bravehearts including Tilka Manjhi, Sidvu, Kanhu, Phool-Jhano, Telanga Khadia, Sindrai Manki, Vindrai Manki, Bir Budvu Bhagat, Gaya Munda, Kanu Munda, Birsu Munda, Manki Munda and Jatra Tana Bhagat.

II. OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To study tribal characteristics and relate them with their situation in India
 - ❖ To understand the major problems of tribes in India
 - ❖ To know the various tribal development programmes and welfare schemes
 - ❖ To learn the approaches to tribal development
- Important characteristics of the tribes
Different tribes are recognized by different economic levels. For example, the Negritos of the Andaman (Onge, Great Andamanese and Jarawa) are the semi-nomadic tribes which have hunting-gathering type of economy, whereas, the Todas of South India is a

pastoral community, the Nicobarese practice horticulture and most of the Assam tribes practice shifting cultivation for living. The other type of economies includes agriculture which is a much modern type of economy and the cottage industries in which some of the tribes like Mahalis practice basket-making, Birhors practice rope-making, Nagas practice weaving, and Agarias and Asurs practice crude smelting of metals.

The tribes of India show variability in terms of their language, culture, traditions, beliefs and customs. This variability extends to religious absorptions/conversions, identity gain and loss through assimilation into the different social hierarchical dimensions.

“Tribes” can be identified through certain measurable characteristics, some of which are:

- ♣ Group having a territorial affiliation
- ♣ Segmental solidarity (socially and structurally similar)
- ♣ Economic interdependence (Reciprocal exchange through barter and gifts)
- ♣ No surplus generation
- ♣ Importance of family and kinship relations (recognition of identity through clan and lineage)
- ♣ Use of simple technology
- ♣ Resilient to change
- ♣ Endogamous
- ♣ No specialization of function
- ♣ Common language/ dialect
- ♣ Recognize social distance with the other tribes and castes
- ♣ Follow tribal traditions, beliefs and customs

This list is not exhaustive but contains some of the important features of the tribes through which one tribe can be differentiated from another.

The Tribal Problems

The major tribal problems include land-alienation, indebtedness, identity-crises, poor literacy and education, unemployment, displacement and rehabilitation, and lack of health, nutrition and hygiene. These are accompanied by the lacunae in the policy making, implementation and personnel skills and training of the government departments who are deployed in the tribal areas to understand their needs and fulfill their duties as ordered by the government.

The chief factors responsible for the problems of the tribes are rampant urbanization and industrialization in the tribal areas, the socio-cultural factors, forest policy and tribes, and the conservatism and disinclination to change of the tribes. The various problems that are to be addressed by the government includes:

- ♣ Education: Low enrolment, high drop outs, gap in education between STs and other groups, remoteness of schools, poor livelihood, non-availability of teachers, language and cultural barriers, lack of vocational training etc.
- ♣ Health: Inadequate infrastructure, low immunization, malnutrition, loss of traditional food, inadequate coverage of pregnant mothers, remoteness of areas leading to high IMR, MMR among tribes, non-availability of safe drinking water, high incidence of Malaria, Sickle Cell Anemia, GED, URTI, Fluorosis etc.
- ♣ Livelihood: Lack of skills, training opportunities, and backward and forward linkages- agriculture activities, inadequate connectivity, forest degradation, lack of irrigation and market linkages leading to unemployment, low income from traditional occupations and lack of forest diversity.
- ♣ Culture: Lack of awareness and preservation of tribal culture, interface with academic fraternity, infrastructure or mechanism, market linkage to promote tribal craft and absence of tribal museums on tourist maps of the States leading to loss of traditional sports, crafts, medicines, and medicinal practices, sense of alienation, loss of sense of ownership over tribal culture and loss of heritage, cuisine and traditional foods.

So, the tribes remain backward in terms of their socio-economic advancement, seclusion in remote areas and ideological specialty reflected in the primeval level of manifestation of core traditions.

Tribal Welfare Programmes

1. Article 275 (1) of the Constitution of India

According to the Act, infrastructure works such as Foot Over Bridges, Link Roads, Electrical Connection, Check Dams and Screening of Sickle Cell Anaemia are being carried out in the tribal areas.

2. Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

Under this Scheme provides Construction of traditional houses, milch animals, Fishing nets, Two-wheelers, Drinking water facilities and street lights to the Paliyar and Katunayakkan tribes living below the poverty line.

3. Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub Plan

Under this scheme provides Dairy Cows to the tribal groups living below the poverty line. Dairy cows are provided to groups who have pledged to supply milk only to the Tamil Nadu Milk Producers Co-operative Society.

4. Comprehensive Tribal Development Programme (CTDP)

Under this Scheme provides Land development activities, Improvement of Roof houses, Road work, Improvement of infrastructure in GTR schools, Drinking water, Economic development Schemes and training skills to the Tribal people living below poverty line.

5. Schools and Hostels

Government Tribal Residential Schools are given for tribal students.

6. Provision of Drinking water facility

Under this Scheme provides Bore wells, open wells, Drip irrigation, Sprinkler, pipe linings, oil engine, Electrical motors and Solar power Water pump to the tribal people living below the poverty line.

7. Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

Through the scheme, Individual Rights on land up to a maximum of 10 acre to tribal who have been residing in the forests prior to 13.12.2005 and the non tribes who have been residing in the forests for 3 generations i.e. for 75 years as on 13.12.2005. Villages in the forests are also provided with community rights including a various of rights.

8. Industrial Training Institutes

Through the Scheme, Industrial Training Institutes exclusively for the Scheduled tribes are functioning in Karumanthurai – Salem District, Kolli Hills – Namakkal District, Jamunamarathur – Thiruvannamalai District, Anaikatti – Coimbatore District, Gudalur – Nilgiris District and Sankarapuram – Villupuram District to the Tribal peoples.

9. Development of Horticulture

Under this scheme provides Tree saplings, seeds and fertilizer to tribal people who own one acre of land.

10. Sericulture Scheme

Under this scheme, full subsidy is given to the tribal people who own half (1/2) acre of land for raising of Mulberry plantation and Rearing Silk worms.

11. Provision of Minor Irrigation

The Scheme will be construct of Check dams, Sprinklings etc. for Irrigation facilities in areas inhabited by more than 50 per cent of the tribal population.

12. Animal Husbandry

Under this scheme provides full subsidy to the tribal peoples for the purchase and rearing of Goats, Milch animals, Health cover to the animals and artificial insemination etc.

13. Development of Agricultural lands

Through this Scheme, Development of Agricultural lands held by Tribal in hilly and sloppy areas by providing Soil Conservation measures free of cost to the tribal people.

14. Supply of Beehives

Under this scheme 10 Beehives are provided free of cost to the tribal people living in hilly and wild areas to increase their income through beekeeping.

15. Afforestation Programmes

The scheme provides incentives to the tribes in forest areas to increase the forest resources and to maintain the plants.

16. LAMP Societies.

This scheme to tribal peoples provides interest free loans, through Multipurpose Co-operative Societies (LAMPS), sale of produce at good prices, supply of essential commodities such as rice, salt and kerosene at reasonable prices, distribution of inputs for agriculture at reasonable prices and loans for economic projects.

17. Street Lights

Through this Scheme, street lights will be provided to tribal habitations that do not have street lights.

18. Formation of Link Road

Through this Scheme provides tribal village without road facilities are connected to the main village or plain.

19. Free houses

Through this Scheme, Construction of free houses for tribal who are having free house site patta.

20. Vocational Guidance

Under this scheme, a Vocational Guidance Centre is functioning at Udhagamandalam for guidance of tribal youths for employment purposes.

21. Employment Opportunities

Through this Scheme, job placement training are provided to Educated Tribal Youth for unemployed tribal youth through the district employment centres.

22. Providing training for women development

Through this Scheme, tribal women are given training in tailoring, bamboo basket knitting, etc.

23. Special Area Development Programme (SADP)

In order to provide special attention to Hill Areas of Tamil Nadu, the Government in the Budget 2015-16 announced a new programme called “Special Area Development Programme” with an outlay of Rs.75 Crores. The project will improve the livelihood of the tribal people, Establish livelihoods in the villages for the tribal people, provide safe drinking water facilities for the hill tribes and provide additional buildings to the GTR Schools, Community halls, Computers, Driving licences, Footpath etc.

Tribal Empowerment

Tribal communities, pan India, have played a key role in conserving the rich culture and heritage of our country. Their contributions to freedom struggle have been highlighted through various initiatives under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

According to the 2011 consensus, the tribal population in India was 104 million, constituting 8.6% of the country’s population. The significant role of the tribal community in evolving narrative of India is well established, be it their contribution to the freedom struggle, field of sports or business.

Tribal Freedom Fighters:

November 15, the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda has been declared as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to commemorate the special contribution of tribals towards India’s freedom and evolving future.

Tribal Identity:

The unique markers of tribal identity increasingly under threat due to urbanization. Dialects and language impacted by lack of adequate exposure and non-practice at times.

Tribal Education:

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and Eklavya Model Day Boarding Schools (EMDBS) are changing the face of education amongst tribals. In order to give further impetus to EMRS, it has been decided that by the year 2022, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons, will have an EMRS.

Tribal Entrepreneurship:

Often the lack of exposure and/or education inhibits tribal people from extracting higher order value from potential opportunities. The

Tribal Sports:

Dutee Chand (Track and Field), Mary Kom (Boxing), Bhaichung Bhutia (Football), Lalremisiami (hockey), Birendra Lakra (hockey), Dangmei Grace (football), Thonakal Gopi (marathon) are few names that have given us a to the explosive talent of tribal sports persons. Centre of Excellence for Sports (CoE for Sports) are being set up through Eklavya Schools to being out new sporting talent. Also, there are many indigenous games such as Mallakhamb, Kalaripayattu, Gatka, Thang-Ta, Yogasana, and Silambam etc. that are linked to rural and tribal population.

The approaches to tribal development

Many strategies have been adopted for the welfare of tribes till date, but we have still not been able to meet the target of full and uniform socio-economic upliftment of the tribes. The major reasons for this failure are: stereotyping of plans and implementation strategies lacking tribal perspective, non-cognizance of the make-up of tribes underlying in different geographical zones with different set of natural resources, cultural traits, economy and lifestyles, different levels of receptivity of the beneficiaries and myriad capabilities of tribal leadership, lack of funds and trained and skilled personnel.

Some of the approaches which can be considered before framing tribal plans, policies and programmes in India include:

- ♣ Understanding and appreciation of the relationship between a tribal and his land, which assumes rights over land as a method of “communal ownership”. Similarly the requirement of land varies between different tribal economies. For e.g., Hunting-gathering communities requires more land to search resources as compared to the pastoral, shifting cultivator and agricultural communities.
- ♣ Division of the tribal regions based upon the geographical contiguity, common resource potentials, and viable units of development, common needs and history.
- ♣ The policy makers should ponder over the exploitation of tribes by money lenders and

traders, economic loss to tribes, political and moral dimensions.

- ♣ Resettlement and legal help to the tribes with timely follow-ups.
- ♣ Encouraging the participation of tribes in the decision-making process.
- ♣ Creating awareness among the tribes through literacy and technical skills programmes.
- ♣ Sustainable development must be understood in terms of utilization of the forest resources for national economy along with simultaneous social and economic upliftment of the tribes.
- ♣ The methodology should be focused upon than the spread of area in order to diffuse the benefits of the programme to the last individual of the community.

- ♣ Proper channelization of funds

Potential Areas to tribal development

- Tribal Talent Hunt:

Platforms and initiatives for talent discovery and mentorship

- Dialects and Languages:

Period between 2022-2032 proclaimed by UNESCO as International Decade of Indigenous Languages. Programs and initiatives around preservation, practice and popularization of tribal languages, focus on literary and other content asset creation.

- Health and Nutrition:

Innovative program ideas centered around specific issues and concerns related to health and nutrition amongst tribes.

- Art and Culture:

Showcasing efforts of preserving intangible cultural heritage of tribal communities across India.

- Tribal Schools:

Leading the change through intervention in formal and informal education.

- Tribal Freedom Fighters:

Series of seminars, events, programs that highlight unknown, lesser-known tribal freedom fighters.

- Livelihood Programs:

Skill building and livelihood program impacting large section of tribal community.

- Entrepreneurship and Technology For Tribal Youth:

Programs that handhold young member of tribal community towards greater self-reliance and technology integration.

III. CONCLUSION

The strategies adopted by the administrators for solving the problems of the tribes included acquiring tribal land and forests areas. The government had also established a number of schools and hospitals in the tribal areas. Thus, by and large, the tribes remained victims of feudal domination, ethnic prejudices, illiteracy, poverty, and isolation. The governmental programmes implemented in India for the upliftment and rehabilitation of tribes has not been able to achieve their goals and tribal proletarianisation has persisted since independence.

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