

Government Initiatives for Tribal Development: Past to Present

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Abstract

In India tribal development is a project which was started by the colonial administration in the past and proceeded by Indian government after independence. In the world, India is a nation that stand for 2nd rank after the Africa continent in the matter of tribal people. Tribal population of India constitute 8 percent of total population and the most deprived group in the country. They don't only deprived economical, but also faces the threat for cultural identity and socio-political rights also. At present the greatest challenge for Indian government is to provide them proper provision of justice to the schedule tribe people, by removing their persistence problem from past times. The present paper critically examines different approaches of tribal development and government initiatives from past to present. It is based on secondary sources. This paper also endeavors to analyse the evolution of tribes from past to present and reason behind why they lag from the other section of mainstream society.

Keywords: Tribes, Government, Approaches, Development, Policy

Introduction:

In the context of the situation, the first question which comes up for a discussion is what is precisely a tribe. But unfortunately, there is no particular definition which is universally accepted. Some certain characteristics have been preferred as criteria for acknowledging a tribal community. Tribal society is an endogamous organization with basic social infrastructure, self- contained economy and less interaction with outer peoples. In separated areas they lived and resolve their problems by their own method.¹ Commonly, a tribe is a 'social group members of which live in a common territory, have a common dialect, uniform social organization and possess cultural homogeneity, having a common ancestor, and shared systems of political organization and religious pattern'.² The Imperial Gazatteer 1911 described them as a " Collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so." India is a country, where tribal population is found in its different parts.³ Here approximately 200 million tribal population is present on the whole planet, that makes 4 percent of the globe population. Tribals lived in different regions of the world, and most of them are poorest among poor. Different communities are found among them. The total number of tribal communities are 642 and 428 Scheduled Tribes are present in India in which several of them have become extinct. These tribal communities speak different languages and reside in 19 states and 6 Union territories. In the states of

Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, about half of the tribal population live.⁴

Tribal Evolution from Past to Present:

Tribes in India lives in varied isolated places like forest hills and known as the people of forest and hills and many more names.⁵ About the origin of tribes or knowledge is not clear and very few histories are known about them .⁶ The past of India has been influenced by the aboriginal people and their proportion from time of Vedic to Colonial era. During Vedic period, the King of Ayodhya, effectively use the army of Banar tribe for the victory against Ravana, the king of Lanka, Maharana Pratap of Udaipur used Bhil tribe against the Mughal emperor, and gurellia warfare was used for strong resistance against the entry of colonial administration into tribal areas of Chhota Nagpur and Santhal Pargana by the people of Munda, Oroan, Santhal, Ho, etc. Information about the Bhils, Kollas, Kiratas, Kinnars, Kiris, Nisadas and Banars were taken from the Vedic and epic literature in the ancient and medieval time period. In the time of British period, a concerned way was used by them to enter in the areas of tribal people with a view of consolidate their position in India. These trials were not ready for any interference and resisted against the British. However, the Christian missionaries had entered in the places of tribals, become nice to them and gave a massage of humanity and love. All in this process, a new class of exploitation was emerged in the form of contractors, zamindars and police who coincided the missionaries and exploited the tribes, shattered their long –established social and money-making system.⁷ With the departure of British colonialist and rise of independent India, the tribal citizens of the country were promised a fair deal in some case priviledged to become partners in progress. Upliftmet of the tribals was an article of faith for our Constitution makers.⁸ In contemporary time, tribes are 8.6 % of the total Indian population according to the Census of 2011 in India. In spite of that tribes have always been alienated from the core of main society population through the characteristics of physical and cultural, as being a part of this country, they are worthy of recognition, and care at par with the rest of the population. Due to the policy of isolation and social neglect over years, tribes have been disadvantage of fundamental literacy, skills, progress and growth in the world of modernity.⁹

Tribal Policies in India:

To address the issues of tribal people, in spite of the concerns and views were varied, diverse methods of tribal development were enacted. There are two major phases for this:

- i) **Tribal policy in colonial period:** During the period of British rule, the approach to the development of tribals was at best only ambivalent.¹⁰ Britishers used this approach to prevent tribals exploitation by outsiders like traders and money-lenders. In nature it is more beneficial and used isolationalist approach to make the task of administration in the areas of tribals by detaching them from the rest of the society through emotional and sentimental estrange.¹¹ Their approach had marked by the desire to leave the tribal areas alone from their administrative interference. The reasons for such a policy were the difficulties in governing an independent, valiant and self-respecting group of people in a hostile area devoid of any modern communication facilities. Although, tribal areas got

least recognition in the policy of progress and they were left to the notion of the zamindars and petty officials, who invariably let no opportunity of exploiting the tribal gullibility escape. These things resulted in further segregation of the tribal people from core development activities and it increased the chances for their ill treatment. Indian Statuary Commission which also called the Simon Commission who examined the different aspects of administration of the tribal areas for the first time in detail. The Commission broadly recommended the accountability to the centre for tribal tracts should be entrusted by them. Another recommendation was given by Commission that the tribal areas may be classified into two categories viz. 'Excluded' and 'Partially Excluded' Areas in the Indian government by Act of 1935. Extensive powers given to the Governor by the section 91 and 92 of the Government of India Act, 1935. They were as follows:-

- a) Governor was empowered to take necessary changes in acts and laws in these areas.
- b) He could make regulation for law and order and administration in these areas. The assent of the Governor General should require for such regulation could come into effect.¹²

ii) Tribal policies in post-independence:- After independence, India formulate an appropriate policy for tribal development that assumed critical importance.¹³ Makers of the Indian Constitution have envisaged dual preferential treatment for their protection and development in terms of reservation to Scheduled Tribes and their areas notified as Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas in a set of provisions under the backward classes.¹⁴ The Constitutional frame adopted for this purpose broadly followed the two-way classification of the Government of India, Act 1935. The Excluded areas were mostly termed as "Tribal Areas" for whose administration special provisions were made in a separate schedule, namely, the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The 'Partially Excluded' Areas for which special provisions were made under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. The Constitution has devoted more than 20 Articles on the redressed and upliftment of the under-privileged sections of society and affirming the policy of positive discrimination and reservation for Scheduled Tribes. Special attention has also been given to their accelerated development through the planning process since the advent of first five-year plan.

The Governor has also taken measures to extend Panchayati Raj to Scheduled areas through an Act of Parliament. Another major innovation was the introduction of the Tribal Sub Plan concept in all state and Central ministry plans for the appointment of funds to tribal welfare in accordance with their population and genius. For it was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India who called for letting the tribal development in accordance with their genius.¹⁵ On the eve of independence and acceptance of the Constitution of independent India, the President and Governor has taken the responsibility of tribal welfare and development. Special articles have been provided for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the Directive Principles. The provisions of Constitution may be divided into 2 groups which are following:

a) Preservation

b) Growth

Preservation: For the protection of social and economic injustice, some protective provisions are provided which is a summarized narration of the Constitutional Provisions like advancement of public interests in socio-economic and education sector under article 15(4), enclave in posts and services under article 16(4), article 19(5) protect the tribal interest in property. For controlling in human trafficking and forced labour article 23 prohibited it. Article 29 provides freedom in matter of cultural variation and education and the second clause of article 29 is controlled by the clause 4 of article 15. For educational and economical promotion of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes' article 46 is used. The appointment of minister in-charge comes under article 164 in the states of M.P, Bihar and Orissa. Article 330,334,332 provide reservation in Lok-Sabha and Vidhan Sabha.¹⁶

Provision for economic growth: Provisions related to the growth of economic in Scheduled Tribes is provided in the Article of 275 (1) and 339 (2). In shortly, Article 275 (1), provides the provision of financial aid for accompanied the price of policies of growth given by the central government to the government of state for promotion of welfare of Scheduled Tribes. For the further empowerment of STs population in the state Article 339 (2) provides power to the Executive of Union to publish directive to be necessary for their upliftment.¹⁷

Growth: After the independence lots of governmental programmes were launched by different institutions of government and NGOs for the betterment and growth of the tribal population. In 1955 first systematic effort was initiated for tribal development in the form of Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Blocks. In Second Five Year Plan its modified version was taken up on large scale. Tribal Development Blocks was extended in the Third Five Year plan. Tribal Cooperatively Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) and the National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), two national-level institutions were set up under the Seventh Plan (1986-1990). The aim of NSFDC is to provide credit support for employment generation.¹⁸ In pursuance to the recommendations of the task force, a (TSP) strategy of integrated tribal development was emerged in the year of 1974-75. The major focus of this strategy is development of areas with aim on improving the caliber of the life of tribal people. It aimed at elimination of exploitation in all forms, expedite socio-economic development and improve organizational capabilities of the tribals. For improving standard of living priority given to cultivation, reforms in land, generation of employment opportunities and improvement of basic infrastructure was adopted.¹⁹

Evolution of Tribal Policy:

The Constitution of India envisages that “the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation”. Late Jawaharlal Nehru, our first Prime Minister, states the tribes to, “ develop along the lines of their own genius” and additionally guaranteed that in any situation there be no imposition on the tribals in the name of their growth and progress. It is

necessary to know about the different approaches taken by administration for tribal people in the present time. In the past

it was only British period of Indian history that tribal people were proceeded towards in a different manner. The British rulers came in contact with them only with the entry of some missionaries in the beginning of the 19th century. Later the Indian national leaders who were struggling for independence of the nation felt pity for the backward, poor and naturally isolated tribals and wanted to uplift and bring them in the broader framework of the Hindu culture. When the country achieved independence, the government followed the stereotyped policy of the British administration in a modified way.²⁰ In the starting years of freedom, it was a upper policy levels that has a connection to the core for the policy of isolation and assimilation was found. In the found of a proper mid –way between isolation and assimilation, Nehru’s Panchsheel was concretised.²¹

According to tribal Panchsheel guidelines for tribal development, it is allowed to tribals people that they develop their culture, land rights, administration schemes, etc., through tribal social institutions and it will not judge by the result of statistics and expenditure but by standard of human character . In the post-independence period initially tribal development was pursued as a strategy of comprehensive rural development and Tribal Development Block Approaches were multi-sectoral in nature but the projects were deficient in relevance to tribal needs and the non- tribal population of these blocks tended to grab most of the development opportunities.²²

The tribal development policies were reviewed in different time period. First one was review of the Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Projects was undertaken by the Elwin Committee. But it was the Dhebar Commission which was appointed in 1961 under Article 340 of the Constitution that gave a comprehensive review of tribal scene in India. When the Shilu Ao Committee was appointed for reviewing the tribal development programme , the position of tribal welfare programmes and administration of tribal areas are remained unchanged. Land alienation, educational backwardness and inadequacy of communications were some major problems stated by Shilu Ao Committee.²³

Why Tribes Lag Behind the Other section of Mainstream ? :

In India tribes are widely different from geographically and culturally as well social and economic development. Their problems are not same its varies from area to area within their own groups. Their identity is not individual but they are an integral part of the community they belong. Low socio- economic conditions, poverty, unemployment, displacement and insurmountable problems are faced by the tribals in India. Increasing of privatization and globalization of common and natural resources have increasing jeopardized the upcoming life of tribal population. With all these issues the mega projects initiated by governments and private sector leading the loss of economical opportunities and traditional land ownership for tribal people.²⁴

Conclusion:

The concluding part of this paper shows that in present scenario majority of Indian tribals are

lagging behind in all basic indicators of human development. Tribals dominated districts of central India are infamous for their poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and inadequate infrastructure. After decades of planned development today map of Tribal India is identical with the underdeveloped area of India. Gunnar Myrdal, the celebrated Swedish economist has stated the economic development depends on two factors, attitudinal change and institutional change. An awareness about their rights, their duties and responsibilities and their involvement in the betterment of their life has to be created through the tribal elders and the Gram sabhas. Nation's need an immediate step to reclassify the them and their problems according to their geographical areas and cultural patterns that make a viable tribal development programme. In order to new division it will based on parameters of technology and new economic terms and new approaches which has been already achieved in last few decades. Here are some points which needs to be consider :-

- i) There is a need of new techno-environmental condition for the development of skill development and facilitate the opportunity.
- ii) For tribal people education should be changed and make a new syllabus for them in which they have an option to choose either to proceed with their common degree that based on the system or to get a vocational training.

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