



TRIBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Dr. HARISHANKAR BANOTHU

Department of Economics, Kakatiya University, Warangal-506 009, Telangana State

ABSTRACT

India has the largest concentration of tribal people anywhere in the world except perhaps in Africa. The tribal's are children of nature and their lifestyle is conditioned by the eco-system. India with a variety of ecosystems presents a varied tribal population throughout its length and breadth. The areas inhabited by the tribal constitute a significant part of the under developed areas of the country. The tribal's live mostly in isolated villages or hamlets. A smaller portion of their population has now settled in permanent villages as well as in towns and cities. On the whole, as per rough estimates, the prominent tribal areas constitute about 15 percent of the total geographical area of the country. Scheduled Tribes, Schedules Castes and de-notified tribes constitute the weakest section of India's poverty. Traditionally, tribal people of India have been outside the purview of the Hindu caste system. Tribal communities interacted with the non- tribal, caste Hindu communities but largely remained separate from the social structure.

INTRODUCTION

Since independence, particularly with the inception of five years plans, concern for tribal development has always been high on the government's agenda. The credit for this goes to both the farmers of the constitution and to our first prime minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who not only took a great deal of interest in tribal development, but also gave long term guidelines in this regard. He strongly believed that no development activity in the tribal areas should take place at the cost of tribal heritage. This is abundantly evident from his views on tribal development.

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.

TRIBAL POPULATION

There are approximately two hundred million tribal people in the entire globe, which constitute, about 14% of the global population. They are found in many regions of the world and majority of them are the poorest amongst poor. There are 533 tribes as per notified schedule under Article 342 of the constitution of India in different States and Union Territories of the country with the largest number of 62 being in the State of Orissa. Thus, if the sub-tribes and state tribes are taken into consideration, the number will be many more. 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, Himachal Pradesh and West Bengal. According to 2001 census, the population of Scheduled Tribes in the country was 84.3 million, consisting about 8.19 % of total Indian population. The population of Schedules Tribes has been found increasing after 1951. the decadal population growth between Census year 1981 to 1991 in respect of tribal population has been much more (31.64%) than the same for entire population (23.51%). As compared to the sex ratio for overall

Table-1
Population in Millions

Census Year	Total Population	Population of ST	ST Percentage (%)
1951	361.1	19.1	5.29
1961	439.2	30.1	6.85
1971	548.2	38.0	6.93
1981	685.2	51.6	7.53
1991	846.3	67.8	8.10
2001	1028.6	84.3	8.19

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 comradeship, 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.

**These principles are:**

- Tribal people's should develop along the lines of their own genus and we should avoid imposing any thing on them. We should try to encourage in every way, their own traditional arts and culture.
- Tribal people rights in land forest should be respected.
- 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,
- 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 multi-purpose 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:

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

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE PLANNED ERA

The special programmes for Tribal development have been implemented in our country to benefit the tribal population under backward classes sector from First Five Year Plan.

First Five Year Plan: First Five Year Plan did not play any specific and special attention towards the development of tribal areas, because only certain piecemeal attempts such as educational schemes, welfare schemes etc. were introduced. These schemes left the concrete impact on tribal community in the country.

Second Five Year Plan: During the second Five Years Plan, recognizing the Socio-economic conditions, prevailing in the tribal areas, concrete developmental schemes were planned. A novel administration system was introduced, with creation of "Multi-purpose Tribal Projects in certain selected Tribal Areas".

Third Five Year Plan: On the recommendation of the Verrier Elewin Committee, Tribal Development Block System had been implemented under Third Five Year Plan. This system was evolved not only to improve the conditions in the tribal areas, but also to involve the tribal "people in the process of development with the aid of Panchayat Institutions. These schemes and sector plans, which were adopted as the institutions of planned development, resulting in tanning up of tribal economy and improvement of social-service to a certain extent, but it was found that certain regions



and groups in tribal areas still remained very backward while others recorded a slow rate of progress.

Fourth Five Year Plan: On the eve of the commencement of Fourth Five Year Plan 489 Tribal Development Blocks had come in to existence for the economic betterment of the scheduled tribes and intensive development areas with large concentration of tribal populations. In this connection the fourth plan envisaged extension of these blocks from 10 to 15 Years and introduction of stage III with an allotment of Rs.10 lakhs per Blocks for Five Year period. About Rs.75 crores were spent by the Union Govt. for the implementation of Tribal Development programmes during the fourth Five Year Plan period. A number of new programmes were also introduced, besides intensifying programmes, which were already popular. Land colonization schemes were started and several Tribal colonies were established. Cooperative. Farming Societies had been introduced and a number of concessions were offered to the tribal people by Forest excises. Revenue Departments and other departments in their respective field though District Level Planning were envisaged during this plan, but they could not take concrete shape, as actual planning was not done at the grass root level. Sectoral planning with schematic budget was also introduced during this planned period.

Fifth Five Year Plan: In view of the weaknesses of the earlier area based programme viz. Tribal development Blocks and Tribal Development Agencies a new strategy was evolved in the fifth five year plan for the foundation of sub plan for the areas of tribal concentration. This is intended to achieve an intensity of attention to the tribal areas and devise measures to suite their local ethos. About 2/3 of tribal population in the country is estimated to be covered by the sub-plans as were in operation in the Fifth plan.

In our country, the problem of Tribal was broadly classified into two categories (1) Areas of Tribal concentration and (2) Dispersed Tribes. In respect of the farmer, it was decided to accept an area development approach with focus on tribals, for dispersed tribals, family oriented programmes were taken up. The tribal sub-plan includes all scheduled areas and Tehsils/Blocks, with more than 50% Tribal population. Substantial tribal population was covered under sub-plan according to these formulations. Bihar 72%, Orissa 68%, Himachal Pradesh 9%, Gujarat 59%, Madhya Pradesh 75%, Manipur 94%, Goa, Diu, Daman 100%, Nagaland and Nagar Haveli 99% and Rajasthan 44%.

Sixth Plan: In the Sixth Five Year Plan, it was noticed that certain pockets of tribal concentration outside the tribal sub-plan area were still left out of the tribal sub-plan strategy .It was therefore decided during the Sixth Plan that pockets of centre groups villages / pockets having a minimum of 10,000 tribal population of which at least 50 percent are scheduled tribes, should be carved for intensive integrated development and Modified Area Development Approach, (MADA) under the Tribal sub-plan. A definite target of 50% of the scheduled tribal families to cross the poverty line was adopted during the Sixth Plan for the first time. By and large, the target set for the



Sixth Plan have been achieved. Against the target of 4.70 million scheduled tribal families to be brought above the poverty line, it was estimated by the end of 1984-85, 3.45 million scheduled tribal families have been assisted.

Seventh Plan: In the Seventh Plan the objective remains to be indicious mix of area-cum-family development. Simultaneously paying attention to the vulnerable section amongst the scheduled tribes it can easily be ascertained that their resources base mainly on environmental devastation. For the Seventh Plan period (1985-90), about 40 lakhs scheduled tribe families below the poverty line are targeted to be provided economic assistance. In this plan, 3 new ITDPs have been added in Sikkim, by scheduled tribe population concentration norms as a special case and by the end of 1987 -88, total of 184 ITDPs are functioning. ITDPs areas covered 313.21 lakh tribal population.

Inclusive development is a concept which advances equitable opportunities for economic participants during the process of economic growth with benefits incurred by every section of society. Inclusive growth should result in lower incidence of poverty, significant improvement in health outcomes, universal access of children to school, increased access to higher education and improved standards of education including skill development. It should be reflected in the form of better opportunities for employment and livelihood and also in improvements in basic amenities like water, sanitation, housing, electricity etc and special attention for backward sections of populations like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, for women and children, minorities and other excluded groups. "Towards faster and more inclusive growth" reflects the need to make growth "more inclusive" in terms of benefits flowing through more employment and income to those sections of society which have been bypassed by higher rates of economic growth witnessed in recent years. The recognition of the need for more inclusive growth by our planners is a welcome shift in emphasis from mere increase in growth rates to improvement in standards of living of those weaker sections of the society through increase in employment opportunities as well as better delivery systems to ensure access to intended benefits by intended benefits.

CONCLUSION

The socio-economic conditions of the tribal people of India are not appreciable. Their standards of living are still low. Moreover the tribal development schemes have not brought any changes in the life of majority of the tribal people. Inclusive growth is not making the fruits of development available and accessible to the tribal population of India. In conclusion, it can be summed up that "Inclusion" should be seen as a process of including these excluded sections of the population as agents whose participation is essential in the very design of the development process and not simply welfare targets of development programmes. It is necessary that steps should be taken to make these people informed about the development schemes. At the same time procedures of sanctioning of the schemes should be made easy so that the number of total benefitted families increase.



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