Tribal Development in India - A Study in Human Development

Kulamani Padhi

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 1984 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.

Tribal Population

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
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.

**Socio-Economic Background of Tribal Population**

1. Total tribal population 15 -16 Crores
2. Workers among Tribal population
   a) Main workers 43.10%
   b) Marginal workers 7.61%
   c) Non-workers 49.29%
   Total: 100.00
3. Literacy
   1) General Literacy in the country 36.23%
   2) Literacy among ST people 16.35%
4. Classification of Tribal Population
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Total (lakh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male population</td>
<td>260.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female population</td>
<td>255.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>516.29</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. Land Holdings of Tribal population
   1) Marginal and small holdings 62.42%
   2) Semi-medium 20.59%
   3) Medium 13.58%
   4) Large Holdings 3.41%
   Total: 100.00

**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 comraderie, 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 any thing 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 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:

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)
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)

The Dhobar Commission (1961) recommended an integrated approach based on the minimum essential items like food, drinking water, employment, educational health and village road.

The task force on Development of Tribal Areas constituted in 1972 suggested that the ecological, occupational and social preemtors. of the tribal population should be properly assessed for formulation of a policy and its implementation so that a steady flow of benefits could be assured to the tribal people. The Dupe committee in 1972 tried to define a new strategy for tribal development and suggested that the problem of tribal development should be defined at the national level and national efforts required for tackling it, worked out. It also suggested an integrated area development approach in consonance with the genius and aspirations of the tribal people.

**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 Elevin 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 Punchayat 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%.

In other States, where the tribal population was more dispersed these norms were relaxed with a view to covering a reasonable proportion of tribal population. Tribal sub-plan areas under the relaxed norms were delineated in A.P, Orissa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

For operational purposes, the Tribal sub-plan areas have been organized in 178 Tribal Development Projects during Fifth Plan.
It is the level at which the entire development efforts have been integrated.

The financial investment flows from four important sources in Tribal sub-plans from the sources viz. (1) outlays from the State Governments plan, (2) Sectoral outlays from Central Ministries / Departments, (3) Institutional Finance and (4) Special Central Assistance. Over one thousand crores of rupees had been spent in the tribal sub-plan areas during Fifth plan period. In 16 States and 2 Union Territories, Tribal sub-plans were implemented and over 65 percent total tribal population in the country non-covered during this plan.

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.

Numbering 13.95 lakhs have been taken up for the development through projected approach.

In order to ensure cent coverage of tribal under the ISP approach, it has been decided since 1986-87 to include.

Plan Outlay and Expenditure for Tribal Development Programme in India

(Rs. In Crores)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. Plan Period No.</th>
<th>Total Plan Outlay</th>
<th>Total Development Programme</th>
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</table>
| 1. First Plan*  
  (1951-56) | 1,960 | 19.93 | 1.00 |
| 2. Second Plan*  
  (1956-61) | 4,672 | 42.92 | 0.60 |
| 3. Third Plan*  
  (1961-66) | 8,577 | 50.53 | 0.60 |
| 4. Annual Plan*  
  (1966-69) | 6,756 | 32.32 | 0.50 |
| 5. Fourth Plan**  
  (1974-79) | 15,902 | 75.00 | 0.50 |
| 6. Fifth Plan**  
  (1974-79) | 39,322 | 1,182.00 | 3.01 |
| 7. Sixth Plan**  
  (1980-85) | 97,500 | 5,535.00 | 5.67 |
| 8. Seventh Plan**  
  (1985-90) | 1,80,000 | 12,000.00 | 6.67 |

Note: * Expenditure ** Outlay


During the plan period, 2 lakh hectares of tribal households were under soil conservation, 9000 tribal villagers were electrified and more than 80000 villages were provided with drinking water supply. The state of Sikkim was added during this period. 245 MADA pockets of tribal concentration were identified during this period. By the end of the forty years of Sixth plan, 181 of IFDPS, 245 MADA pockets and 72 primitive tribal projects were in operation in the country. The coverage of tribal population during this plan reached 75 percent as against 65% in Fourth plan.
Seventh Plan

In the Seventh Plan the objective remains to be indicative 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.

To improve the tribal coverage under the tribal sub-plan approach, 285 having a minimum 10,000 population with 50 percent or more tribal population have been identified, covering a population of 50.53 lakhs. In addition about 73 primitive tribes dispersed tribes under the "approach, while identifying their castes wherever possible, 47 clusters, each with a total population of 5000 with 50%, or more tribal concentration there have been identified so far. Among the important contributions of the Tribal Sub-plan strategy over a period of years in our country has been the gradual evaluation of the concept of family oriented programmes for eradication of poverty in the tribal areas.

Programmes & Projects Introduced for Tribal Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Guarantee for the projection of the Tribals.</td>
<td>Article-15 (4) 46,244,339 speak of special provisions meant for the administration and control of scheduled areas and tribals for their welfare and protection for promoting the welfare of the ST and for raising the level of admn. of - ST and tribal areas to the state level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grant-in-aid from consolidated fund of India to States (Article 275)</td>
<td>Article -275 provides grant-in-aid from consolidated fund of India to States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Special Multi-purpose Tribal Projects in selected areas.</td>
<td>For the tribals for their intensive Development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Tribal Development</td>
<td>Development of Cottage and Small Scale Industries to provide employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Training-cum-production Centres &amp; Subsidies.</td>
<td>Tribal Colonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Colonization of tribals</td>
<td>To make farming more economic and profitable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Introduction of Improved methods of shifting cultivation.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
9. Education Facilities Scholarship, Free Shift, etc.

10. Concessions Concessions were offered by Forest, Revenue, Excise Departments, etc.

11. Establishment tribal cultural institutes. To study various cultural problems.

12. Job opportunity Reservation of posts in Govt. Service.

13. Cheaper Credit Enactment of Regulation Acts to counteract exorbitant rates of interest of money lenders.

14. Establishment of offices of the For the enforcement of the safeguards Commissioner for SC/ST industries. provided for the tribals in the constitution for the evaluation of welfare schemes.

15. Establishment of LAMPS For providing integrated services such as credit, marketing, storage, distribution of consumer goods, etc., to the members.

16. Tribal Development Cooperative Established at the state level to help the Corporation / Tribal Development LAMP Cooperative Federation.

17. Tribal Development Cooperative Established at National level to help Marketing Federation (TRIFED) the state level tribal Corporations/Federation.

Kulamani Padhi is presently working as the Asst. Registrar, (Dairy Co-ops) in Directorate of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services, Orissa, Cuttack-1.

Shri Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Orissa inaugurating the MICRO Economics Summit-2005 at Unit-1 High School Ground, Bhubaneswar on 4.2.2005.