A Study on Tribal Education And Development

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INTRODUCTION:

India stands in terms of tribal population after Africa in the world. According to the 2001 Indian Census, the population of the tribal communities in the country stands at 84.3 million and accounts for 8.27% of the total population. There are about 689 scheduled tribes speaking about 105 languages and 225 speaking subsidiary languages. They have traditionally lived in about 15% of the nation’s geographical areas, mainly forests, hills, undulating inaccessible terrain in plateau areas, rich in natural resources. They have lived as isolates entities for centuries, largely untouched by the mainstream society. This isolation was largely responsible for their Politico-Socio-Economic backwardness.

This article examines the tribal education and tribal development policy in India. The promotion of tribal education needs a fresh thinking and renewed efforts in new direction. The new policy and administrative initiatives should focus on the improvement of quantity as well as quality aspects for tribal education. The tribal people in India have their own culture, and are conditioned by the ecosystem. Normal development process has by passed the tribal communities. Hence the government has been implementing special schemes for their upliftment.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the education and development of tribal people.
2. To understand the various problem faced by the tribals to get education.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data. Secondary data were collected from the books and various records, journals, magazines also due care taken to collect all the reference to the particular of study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Bhaskaradass, K in his study Evaluation of Poverty Alleviation Programmes for the Tribals of Kalrayan Hills, South Arcot District works out the problems of the tribal people and programmes for alleviation. 2. Manivannan in his study A Study of Tribal poverty and indebtedness with special reference to Malaiyal Tribal of South Arcot Kalrayan Hills, Tamilnadu, point out the problems and indebtedness of the malayali Tribes. 3. R.V. Rajeev in a Comparative Study of literacy in Kerala and Rajasthan, suggests that Rajasthan which is thinly populated has stretches of land and its has general a low rate of literacy as schools one situated one distant places. 4. Saxena has studied the economics of five tribal groups of western hills in Madhyapradesh. The result indicates that the economic status of tribals was subsistence type and generally their standard of living was below the level of subsistence. 5. Ganguly has studied the tribal poverty and indented the factors responsible for the widespread poverty. The result concludes that the employment opportunities were very poor in the tribal areas. The forestry programmes also paid a very little attention to employment generation.
TRIBAL POLICY IN ANCIENT INDIA:

For centuries together, the aboriginal tribes remained in isolation, residing in the dense and interior forests with little or no interaction with other people. For the early across as a problem. As a result, they had no need for a tribal policy. There were only a few instances where the tribal communities were assimilated into early society. Evidence to this effect can be found in the rock edicts of the Mauryan ruler Asoka.

TRIBAL POLICY IN MEDIEVAL INDIA:

The Medieval period, which saw the emergence of Muslim rulers and states- even empires – was a period of contrasting trends of tribal assimilation and isolation. In fact, no medieval state or empire had a specific policy towards the tribal communities or clans. Relations were either forged or severed based on political convenience. Some tribal people emerged as warrior races that ultimately established kingdoms inhabited by their peoples. The Rajput and the Gond Kingdoms are classic examples of this evolution. The later medieval period saw the Muslim rulers adopting a patronizing attitude towards tribal chieftains. They acknowledged their courage and authority and offered high positions in the State hierarchy. Some tribes fled from persecution and took shelter in inaccessible terrains. Traditionally, tribal communities were never recognized as part of mainstream society. The Mughal rule too witnessed many a revolt by the tribal peoples, mainly over the issues of land, taxation and dwelling rights.

POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD:

The Constituent Assembly acknowledged the tribal problem as an integral part of the development of Indian people as a whole. Thus, a middle path between doing too much was evolved in the post-Independence era. The Indian Government also pursued the policy of isolation, but in a slightly modified form. The partial exclusion of large tribal areas was followed up with special welfare
measures. This led to separatist demands, including independent Naga state and an autonomous Jharkhand. The Advisor on tribal affairs to the Government of Assam, Verrier Elwin, recommended isolation of tribal’s only in extreme cases. The declaration of a “few areas of tribal concentration as scheduled areas and tribal areas” is a reflection of the policy of partial isolation.

POLICY OF ASSIMILATION AND STRATEGY IN POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD:

The assimilation of the tribal people with the rest of the population is a continuous process and the cultural contact with the neighbouring population is a key component of it. The tribal groups have been exposed to various communities in different situations and locations over the years and that led to their assimilation. Some accepted the traditional Hindu way of life while others took to Christianity. Anthropologists like S C Dube (1960), Mazumdar (1962) and G S Ghure (1963) opined that this cultural contact has created a set of different types of tribals on acculturation level. G S Ghure characterized tribals as backward hindus and agreed that any attempt to isolate them from the mainstream life would be meaningless. While sections of the tribals were properly integrated in Hindu society, very large sections, in fact, the bulk of them, are rather loosely integrated. Only very small sections living in recesses of hills and forests have not been influenced by Hinduism.

POLICY OF INTEGRATION:

After Independence, the British policy of isolation and non-interference was replaced by a policy of integration through development. Many social scientists focused their study on the tribal problem. Dr. Varrier Elwin suggested protection of the aboriginal tribals by completely isolating them from the rest of the country. G S Ghure wanted total assimilation of the tribals into mainstream society. The third school of thought believed some sort of integration, but not necessarily assimilation, its objective being the preservation of tribal identity.

In 1947, the Government of India appointed a committee headed by Thakkar Bapato study the status of excluded and partially-excluded areas of the erstwhile British government. The Committee made several recommendations, the most important of which placed the total responsibility of tribal development entirely on the state. It laid emphasis on the protection of tribal lands and prevention of exploitation by outsiders. It also suggested certain statutory safeguards.

The Constituent Assembly that came up immediately after Independence had certain provisions like the Article 46 that embodied the message of hope for millions of backward classes hitherto neglected. All the safeguards for the ST communities flow from this Article. Tribal development or administration of tribal areas was not assigned specifically to any one of the three lists in the Constitution. They were brought under two Schedules (fifth and Sixth) for which special provisions were made. These provisions are incorporated in Part III on fundamental Rights, part IV on Directive Principles of State Policy, part X on the scheduled and Tribal Areas, part XII on Finance, Property, part XVI on special provisions relating to certain classes. The excluded areas were covered under the sixth schedule. The partially excluded areas and some of the tribal areas were included in the fifth schedule.

The provisions for the Sixth schedule areas are more stringent. The statute recognizes the traditional councils and their right to self-governance. No law related to certain specific subjects can be extended to these areas without consulting the District Councils, which are autonomous bodies. The Constitution also stresses that even the fundamental Rights could be compromised for protecting the tribal communities and for achieving faster growth. Under the first provision to Article 275(1), special grants are earmarked for the tribal areas to raise the level of administration. The Constitution is very flexible when it comes to allocation of funds to and administration of the tribal areas.
CHANGING STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES TOWARDS TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PLANNING ERA

The problems of the tribal communities and the development of the tribal areas have been areas of major concern in the planning process. Various policies and programmes were initiated with the objective of tribal development since independence. The objectives of protection and integration of the tribal peoples into mainstream society necessitated implementations of development programmes, through specially created institutions. Over a period, modifications were made in the institutional set-up taking into account the past experience and the recommendations of various committees and experts like Renuka Ray (on development of backward areas), U N Dhebar (on Scheduled Areas) can be termed as classics. However, there was a considerable shift in the approaches adopted by these institutions owing to experiences of the previous planning strategies and their functioning. There were three major trends in this whole process. The multi-purpose project blocks that were the first to be set up as part of organized institutional efforts adhered to a planning strategy which can be termed as “top-down approach”. The Central government, which provided the necessary resources, guidelines and a framework of administration, sponsored these blocks. All the developmental schemes were formulated at the centre and the project authority used to function as per the directives of the Central government.

In course of time, the centralized planning was found not suitable to the local needs and priorities. Therefore, an attempt at democratic decentralization was made. Panchayat Samithis were formed to supervise the administration of tribal blocks. The administrative staff followed a specific approach called the “target group approach”. As part of this, the tribal population covered by the plan was categorized into different groups such as the land-less poor, shifting cultivators, agriculturists, artisans and so on. Specific programmes were devised to suit the needs and problems of each group. Another dimension of the Regional Development Planning is the “Growth Centre Approach” through which uniform spatial development was sought to be achieved by locating socio-economic services at selected centers.

The Community development programme was launched in the year 1952. Similarly, a special programme called Tribal Development Blocks was started to cover all aspects of community life in the tribal areas. Keeping in view the experts’ suggestions, the first systematic effort for the development of tribes was initiated in 1955. In the form of special Multi-Purpose tribal Development (SMTDP) Blocks were established. After the Second Five Year Plan it was realized that the programmes implemented under these blocks were not yielding desired results. In view of this, a committee headed by Verrier Elwin was appointed (1956) to look into the issue. On his recommendation SMTDP blocks were converted into Tribal Development Blocks from the Third Five Year Plan onwards.

Meanwhile, in 1960, under the chairmanship of U N Dhebar, the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission was set-up. This Commission has an exemplary record of investigating the realities of tribal life in India. Further, the planning Commission appointed a study team under the chairmanship of P Shilu A O in 1969. The team observed that the scheme of Tribal Development Block was inadequate and it felt that the blocks unit for planning and implementation.

PRESENT POSITION

The Launching of Tribal Sub Plan in the Fifth Five Year Plan is a watershed in the history of tribal development. Along with several economic sectors, the primary education is accorded highest priority in the sub plan strategy. It is realized that the education is a crucial input for the total development of the tribal societies particularly, for promoting self-confidence among them.

The prospective adopted for the educational development among the tribal societies in different strategies and approaches of tribal development adequately address the distinctive features of the tribal
societies. The development planning and policy initiatives tried to incorporate the complexities of tribal life. Consequently, a worthwhile policy approach in the field of tribal education has been evolved.

However, the various studies conducted on the progress of tribal education in different states revealed several discouraging trends. These studies emphasize that the progress achieved so far in the tribal education is considerable, but it is not sufficient. They admit that the levels of achievement among the tribal students are very low when compared with those of non-tribal students. They have to go a long way to reach the expected levels. The gap between the tribal and non-tribal students in achieving excellence is very wide. As a result the tribals lag far behind the general population in the field of education. The reasons for this dismal situation can be attributed to various external and internal constraints. They are related to defects in the policy and administration system and also to the socio-cultural and economic environment in which the tribals live.

Notwithstanding its crucial role, education continues to receive inadequate priority by the policy makers and planners in India. Inspite of the serious efforts made by the Government during the last five decades by means of introducing a number of specific policy initiatives and huge outlays in the Five Year Plans, the goal of total literacy remains a distant reality. Apart from the low level of literacy rate there are serious discrepancies in the literacy rates across the regions and social groups. Among the social groups, the Scheduled Tribes have to lowest literacy rate.

The role of education in developing the Scheduled Tribes was recognized by the Constitutions, which provided certain special provision. Article 29(1) contains safeguards for the Sts. The Government of India has been implementing special schemes for the social and economic development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. As a result, them has been substantial increase in the level of literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribes. During the period 1961 to 1991, the literacy rate among the STs had risen from 8.5 percent to 29.60 percent. Notwithstanding the increase, the gap in the literacy rate between them and the rest of the society has been widening. The gap between the literacy rates of STs and the rest of the populations was 15.46 percent in 1961 which rose to 22.61 percent in 1991.

The literacy rate among the females of Scheduled Tribes has increased substantially from 4.85 percent in 1971 to 18.19 percent in 1991. However, the gap between the St Females and females of the general population has been widening during the same period. The gap between the females of STs and those of total population increased from 13.84 percent in 1971 to 21.19 percent in 1991 [see table 2]. Also there are intra and inter-state differences in the literacy rates among the STs.

The tenth, Plan Document revealed certain positive trends in tribal education. It said that the pace of progress of environment of both ST boys and girls at the middle and lower levels has been impressive. Particularly, the pace of progress in the case of ST girls is spectacular. He document also highlighted the fact that there has been a steady decline in the dropout rate among the students belonging t the STs category. During the period between 1990-91 and 1998-99 the dropout rate among the tribal students in classes I to V has fallen from 62.52 percent to 57.36percentwhile in the case of middle and high school students the drop out rates have come down from 78.57 percent to72.80 percent and 85.01 percent to 82.96 percent respectively. Even though the dropout rates among the Scheduled Tribe students in respect of al levels showed a declining trend, they are still alarming.

POLICY FRAME FOR TRIBAL EDUCATION

The most innovative scheme introduced by the Government for the promotion of education among the Scheduled Tribes in the establishment of residential schools in the tribal areas known as the
Ashram Schools. The Ashram Schools were started in the Third Plan throughout the Scheduled Areas in the country. This is a centrally sponsored scheme aiming at providing educational facilities through the residential schools to Scheduled Tribe students. In the third Plan, another scheme of providing boarding and lodging facilities to ST students through the construction of Hostels was taken up by the State Government in the Scheduled Areas. This is also a centrally sponsored scheme but in the cost of construction of hostels in the tribal areas is equally shared by the Centre and respective State Governments.

In all the Five Year Plan periods, development of elementary education is accorded highest priority as a crucial input for the development of tribals. The planners rightly considered it as a valuable means to build self-confidence among ST students. The planners evolved a novel framework to make the system of tribal education relevant to the tribal environment. According to this framework the locally relevant contents were incorporated into the curriculum taught in the tribal Schools. Further, emphasis is placed on the localized production of textbooks in a local dialects. Based on these policy prescriptions, several states including Andhra Pradesh, have given a different orientation to the scheme of education imparted in the Schools in the tribal areas. These States have relaxed the norms for the establishment of Ashram Schools in there tribal areas to suit the local conditions. As a result, there is a remarkable increase in the number of Ashram Schools in different States. The Tribal Sub-Plan strategy adopted in the Fifth Five Year Plan accorded equal importance to both quantitative and qualitative aspects of education in the tribal schools.

The National Education Policy adopted in 1986 also gave a special place to the development of tribal education in its policy frame. It emphasized on the:
1. Opening of more number of primary schools in the tribal areas:
2. Development of curriculum and study material languages in the initial states:
3. Establishment of Ashram/Residential Schools on a massive scale:
4. Formulation of suitable incentive schemes to motivate the tribal students for higher education.

The NEP has also underlined the need for instruction through local dialects in the tribal schools up to a certain level.

SOME PROBLEMS

The allow pace of progress in the sphere of tribal education is due to several constraints. The socio-cultural and economic constraints constitute the major problem. These constraints relate to the utter poverty, peculiar traditions and customs, and other cultural lags, lack of awareness among the tribals, and so on. The policy and administrative constraints are related to lack of adequate number of schools and teacher, irrelevant and unsuitable curriculum and content, lack of appropriate medium of instruction in the schools, lack of books and other reading material and so on. On the external side, the major constraints relate to the planning system which fails to take into consideration the peculiar environmental Conditions, cultural milieu and also the needs of the tribal societies while evolving policies and strategies for the development of education in the tribal setting. The same is the case with the preparation of various programmes and schemes initiated for promotion of tribal education.

PERSPECTIVES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The promotion of tribal education needs a fresh thinking and renewed efforts in new direction. The new policy and administrative initiatives should focus on:
1. The improvement of quantity as well as quality aspects of tribal education:
2. Redesigning of the present educational curriculum and contents a suit the local conditions and needs:
3. Production of study and reading materials locally:
4. Revamping tribal education to make it an effective instrument for building and sustains partnership between the tribal community and rest of the society including the Government:
5. Introduction of new type of educational system which can
TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Year Plan</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Five Year Plan (1951-56)</td>
<td>Community development approach tribal development projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Five Year Plan (1956-62)</td>
<td>Special Multipurpose projects for tribal people (creation of TD blocks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Five Year Plan (1961 – 66)</td>
<td>Improvement of the general CD approach 9limprovement of TD blocks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Five Year Plan (1969 – 74)</td>
<td>Administrative frame programme implementation and protective measure (Tribal Development Agencies)</td>
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<td>5th Five Year Plan (1974 – 79)</td>
<td>Total and comprehensive view of the tribal problems and coordination of sectoral programmes (Tribal Sub-plan and creation of LAMPS)</td>
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<td>6th Five Year Plan (1980- 85)</td>
<td>Integrated approach and large financial allocation (expansion plan of TSP).</td>
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<td>7th Five Year Plan (1985- 90)</td>
<td>Mix-up of beneficiary oriented programme an infrastructural development (Intensive tribal development)</td>
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<td>8th Five year Plan (1992-97)</td>
<td>Plan considering the need of the people and participation (District Regional Planning and Participation of voluntary organizations)</td>
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<td>10th Five Year Plan (2002- 07)</td>
<td>National Policy for empowering tribals through their integrated development, which will lay down the responsibilities of the different wings of Government with appropriate accountability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11th Five Year Plan (2007- 12)</td>
<td>The TSP focus on “Securing budgetary allocations for tribal development, at least proportionate to their populations in order to bring them at par with other sections of society and to protect them from exploitation.</td>
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Source: Yojans, February 2012, p.50.

CONCLUSION:
The programmes meant for tribal development need to by area – specific and culture – specific. While funds are important, a coordinated and integrated approach to tribal development alone can deliver the goods.

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