



Matrix of Tribal Development in India: Policy and Change

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Abstract: *Tribe is the group of indigenous and distinct people, dependent on their lands for their livelihood, who are largely self-sufficient, and not integrated into the national society. Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Denotified Tribes constitute the weakest sections of India's population, from the ecological, economic and educational angles. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. Traditionally, Tribals of India have been outside the purview of the Hindu Caste System. Tribal communities interacted with the nontribal, caste Hindu Communities but largely remained separate from the social structure. Development of Tribes population is a key issue in our country for up-lift of socioeconomically backward classes in India. Major problems of tribal community are illiteracy, low level of education, poor health conditions, poverty and unemployment, lack of development opportunities and above all, insensitivity towards development. This paper attempts to measure to indicate the development of indigenous tribal peoples in India on various social parameters, such as child mortality, infant mortality and women's health. Tribal population, with a vast majority engaged in agricultural labourer, has a higher incidence of anemia in women when compared to other social groups. The level of infant and child mortality and women's health are high among Scheduled Tribes particularly those living in rural areas. This study examines levels of policy and development factors associated with infant and child mortality and women's health among scheduled tribes in India.*

Key Words: *Tribes, Tribal Development, Child Mortality, Infant Mortality, Women's Health.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Dictionary defines a Tribe as a social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader. The dictionary of Anthropology views a tribe as a social group, usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organization. The term 'tribe' in that sense refers to a type of society and marks a stage of evolution in the human society. As a type of society, 'the term' signifies a set of characteristic features and as a stage of evolution; it connotes a specific mode of social organization. India has the largest concentration of tribal people anywhere in the world except perhaps in Africa. The Tribals 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 Tribals 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, Scheduled Castes and Denotified Tribes constitute the weakest sections of India's population, from the ecological, economic and educational angles. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. Traditionally, tribal people of India have been outside the purview of the Hindu caste system. Tribal communities interacted with the nontribal, caste Hindu communities but largely remained separate from the social structure. Caste groups which were at the lowest end of the caste hierarchy – the Dalits or untouchables (referred as Scheduled Tribes in the constitution) are the ones who were at the receiving end of the system. From the historical point of view, they have been subjected to the worst type of exploitation. They are practically deprived of many civic facilities and isolated from modern and civilized way of living since so many centuries. (Sukai, 2010)

The British rulers 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. However, after independence, the new policy of tribal development and integration is initiated. The Constitution of India has made definite provisions for the welfare and uplift of the tribal people throughout the country. (Prakash, 2003) The Indian constitution has bestowed upon the State responsibility of undertaking Tribal welfare programmes in the country. Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India defined "Scheduled Tribes" as "Such tribes or tribal

communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of this Constitution.” By the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, issued by the President in exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 342 of the Constitution of India, 255 tribes in the 17 states were declared to be Scheduled Tribes.(Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1973) Article 275 of the constitution focuses on the tribal areas and their development, while Article 244 and Fifth Schedule encompass administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas.(Chaube, 2009) Special Central Assistance is given to States/UTs to supplement their efforts in tribal development through Tribal Sub-Plan. This assistance is basically meant for family-oriented income-generating schemes in the sectors of agriculture, horticulture, minor irrigation, soil conservation, animal husbandry, forests, education, cooperatives, fisheries, village and small scale industries and for minimum needs programme. Grants are also given to States/UTs, under the first proviso to article 275(1) of the Constitution to meet the costs of projects for tribal development and for raising the level of administration of Scheduled Area therein on par with the rest of the State/UT.(Fernandes and Paranjpye, 2001) Tribal development in Indian is based on twin approach namely protection of their interests through legislative and administrative support and promotion of developmental efforts through plan schemes.

India being a multiracial country with 573 scheduled tribes living in different parts of India speaking more than 270 languages and maintaining exclusive identities. The 67.7 million people belonging to ‘Schedule Tribes’ in India are generally considered to be ‘Adivasi’ literally meaning Indigenous people or original inhabitants, or ‘primitives’ though the term schedule coterminous with the term Adivasi.(Burman, 2009) It was DR B.R.Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, who preferred the concept of Scheduled Tribe to “Adivasis” for it enumerates the tribes and hence has a specific meaning.(Shanker, 2012) Scheduled tribe is an administrative term used for the purpose of administering certain specific constitutional privileges, protection and benefits for specific section of peoples historically considered disadvantaged and backward. The paper is an attempt at providing a comprehensive and nationally representative picture of the Tribal population in India lags behind other social groups on various social parameters, such as child mortality, infant mortality and women’s health. Tribal population, with a vast majority engaged in agricultural labourer, has a higher incidence of anaemic in women when compared to other social groups. The level of infant and child mortality and women’s health are high among Scheduled Tribes particularly those living in rural areas. This study examines levels of policy and development factors associated with infant and child mortality and women’s health among scheduled tribes in India.

II. TRIBAL POPULATION IN INDIA

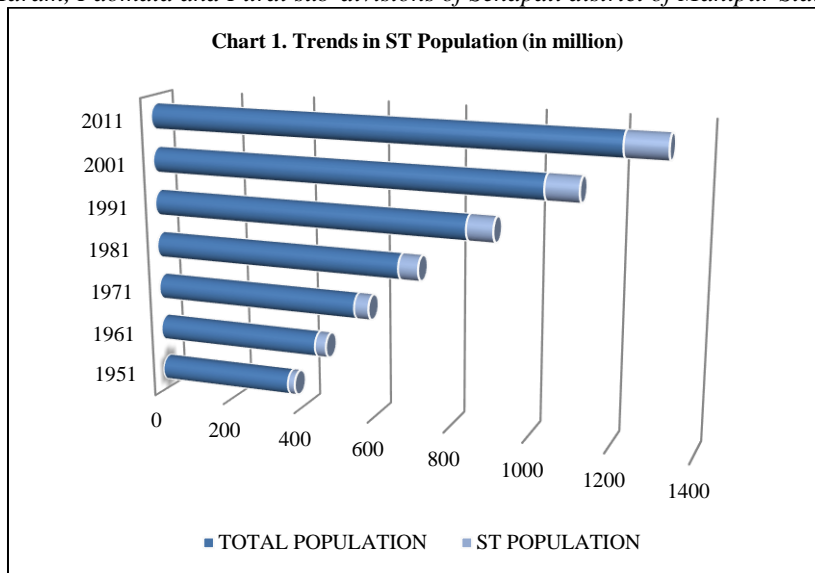
There are over 50 million Scheduled Tribes constituting 7.5% of the Indian population, thus making it the largest tribal population in the world. The Tribes are found throughout India but are primarily based in the mountain and hill areas, away from the fertile plains. The greatest concentration is in the central states of India. The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population. 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas. Broadly the STs inhabit two distinct geographical areas - a large segment inhabiting nine (9) Central Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Gujarat and Rajasthan) and the other distinct area being the North East (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh). The decadal population growth of the tribal’s from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66% against the 17.69% of the entire population. 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. The sex ratio for the overall population is 940 females per 1000 males and that of Scheduled Tribes 990 females per thousand males. The trend in ST population since Census 1951 is illustrated in the following table. From 19.1 million in 1951, the ST population has increased to 104.3 million in 2011.

Year	Total Population (In Millions)	ST Population (In Millions)	Proportion of ST Population
1951	361.1	19.1	5.29
1961	439.2	30.1	6.9
1971	547.9	38.0	6.9
1981*	665.3	51.6	7.8
1991@	838.6	67.8	8.1
2001#	1028.6	84.3	8.2
2011	1210.8	104.3	8.6

*Excludes Assam in 1981

@Exclude Jammu and Kashmir in 1991

#Exclude Mao-Maram, Paomata and Pural sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur State in 2001.



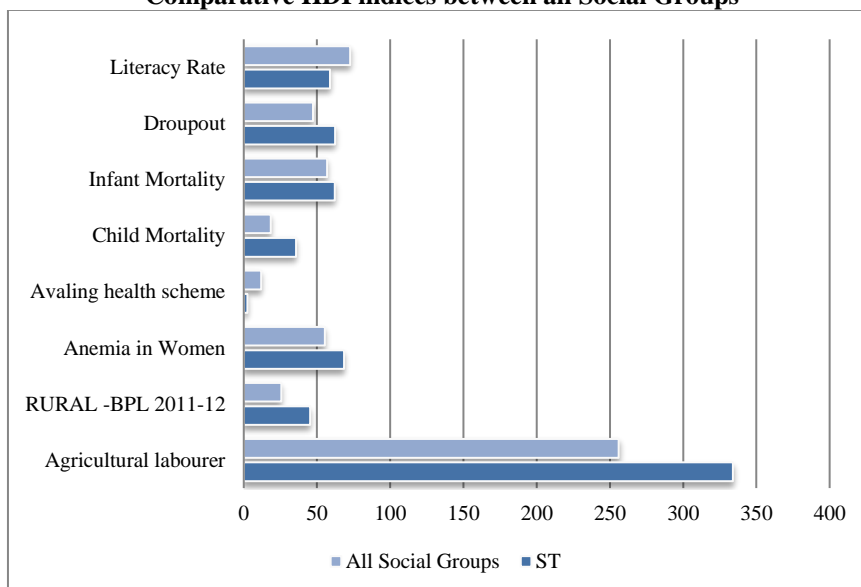
III. HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE IN TRIBAL AREAS

As per the figures pertaining to the Rural Health Infrastructure in Tribal Areas, published by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, there are 27958 Sub Centres (SCs), 3957 Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and 998 Community Health Centres (CHCs) in position as on 31st March 2015. The number of existing Sub Centres has marginally increased by 1.5 percent from March 2013 to March 2015. Number of PHCs and CHCs has decreased by 78 and 18 in numbers, respectively during the period 2013-2015. At all India level, there is a shortfall of 6796 SCs, 1267 PHCs and 309 CHCs in tribal areas as on 31st March 2015 as compared to requirement. At all India level, 7.6 percent of the sanctioned posts of Health Worker [Female]/ Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) at SCs and PHCs in tribal areas are vacant as on 31.3.2015. Details are in Annexure-4H. The number of Doctors at PHCs in tribal areas has decreased from 4787 in 2013 to 4298 in 2015. Also, 20.4 percent of the sanctioned posts of Nursing Staff at PHCs and CHCs and 26 percent of the sanctioned posts of Doctors at PHCs in tribal areas are vacant as on 31.3.2015.

IV. STATUS OF TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT: PRESENT SCENARIO

The community also registered the highest child mortality and infant mortality rates, when compared to other social groups, the data indicates. While educational achievements on the whole has improved, statistics cited elsewhere in the Report shows that the gross enrolment ratio among tribal students in the primary school level has declined from 113.2 in 2013-14 to 109.4 in 2015-16. Besides, the dropout rate among tribal students has been at an alarming level.

**Chart 2. Tribal Backwardness
Comparative HDI indices between all Social Groups**



While the overall poverty rates among the tribal population have fallen compared to previous years, they remain relatively poorer when weighed against other social groups. Health infrastructure has also been found wanting in tribal areas. At an all-India level, there is a shortfall of 6,796 Sub Centres, 1267 Primary Health Centres and 309 Community Health Centres in tribal areas as on March 31, 2015, the Report points out.

V. GAPS IN REHABILITATION

Further, it exposes the gap in rehabilitation of Tribal community members displaced by various development projects. Out of an estimated 85 lakh persons displaced due to development projects and natural calamities, only 21 lakh were shown to have been rehabilitated so far, the Report states. Even the 21 lakh resettlement figure in the Report is questionable as there is no way to verify this data. Based on what he had witnessed in the case of displacement caused by mining plants and captive power projects set up in the past several years, Mr.Pattanaik said that it was tribal land acquisition and not tribal development that was the focus of the government.

VI. CONCLUSION

Tribal development was given impetus in the post-independence era when various measures were taken to ameliorate the measurable socio-economic predicament of the Tribal. Policies and acts were framed to protect the Tribal and to lift them out of abject poverty and despondency through an integrationist approach known as tribal Panchaseel and outlined by Nehru and Elwin. It clearly indicates that we have achieved too less in this regard. Efforts were made to put an end to the isolation of Tribal by mainstreaming them. There is need to further strengthen and consolidate the efforts aimed at bringing the Tribal at par with mainstream of the society. Rehabilitation only happens on paper, and any compensation for displaced Adivasi folks is siphoned off by others in their name. In 2014, the Central government initiated the Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana for the holistic development and welfare of tribal population on a pilot basis. However, the Annual Report points out that the token budgetary provisions being made under the scheme to the tune of Rs.100.00 crore and Rs.200.00 crore for 2014-15 and 2015-16, respectively, is minuscule and barely sufficient to meet the purpose of the Scheme given that it intends to cover 27 States across the country.

Further, with constitutional provision of right to property, the Tribals were dispossessed from their lands which they traditionally cultivated for generations, but had no ownership right over it. They were displaced from their traditional habitats for execution of large projects. Policy measures designed for the development of the Tribal have not been very effective in helping them out. Solution to the problems of the Tribal does not lie in mere pronouncement of high sounding policy measures, but on effective implementation of the same with concessions for Tribal in a participatory and transparent manner.

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