

Tribal development in India: Some policy perspective

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Abstract

Isolationist, Assimilationist, and Integrationist were three different approaches taken by the authorities in India to the development of tribal communities, and each was founded on a different viewpoint regarding the appropriate position for tribal communities in the larger debate about development. However, the potential outcomes of each of the approaches could/would have been as different as possible and would elude any metric to compare the benefits. All the approaches acknowledged the apparent and resulting differences of tribal communities from the general population and accepted the need for a pragmatic yet non mundane framework for addressing the problems faced by the tribal community. Therefore, the perspective of tribal policy in India is the main topic of this paper.

Key Words: tribal policy, geographical isolation, constitution, tribal communities,

1.1 Introduction

According to Article 342 of the Indian Constitution, "tribal folk" are "People living in a particular place, who enter into marriage relationships among themselves, who have no specific skills in any work, traditionally or ethnically ruled by adivasi leaders, who speak any special language, have own beliefs, customs and tradition [1]," as well as "people who speak any special language and have own beliefs, customs and tradition." The definition of tribes in India often considers relevant the factors of geographic isolation, distinctive culture, primitive features, shyness of contact with others, and economic and social backwardness. The literature makes clear how poor and economically and socially backward they are. The Indian Constitution's Article 46 expressly recognises the need to safeguard the interests of society's weaker groups, particularly those of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes [2]. "Our constitution's founding fathers aimed to provide social, economic, and political justice for all citizens. They came to see that the unequal dynamics ingrained in the socioeconomic system as well as political structures had left the poor and weaker segments of society suffering and at a disadvantage.

They believed it was vital to include special protections for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the constitution since they were the most marginalised, weak, and

vulnerable among the many groups in society due to tradition and a variety of other factors. To enable them to integrate into society's mainstream, different protections and protective measures [3] attempted to secure their holistic development and freedom from exploitation and social injustice. The different strategies used by the authorities to support the growth of tribal communities in India, including isolationist, assimilationist, and integrationist approaches, were all founded on various viewpoints regarding the appropriate position for tribal communities in the larger debate about development [4]. However, the potential outcomes of each of the approaches could/would have been as different as possible and would elude any metric to compare the benefits. All the approaches acknowledged the apparent and resulting differences of tribal communities from the general population and accepted the need for a pragmatic yet non mundane framework for addressing the problems faced by the tribal community.

The assimilationist method opposed this school of thought and advocated that tribes integrate into mainstream culture as soon as possible, whereas the isolationist approach was generally predicated on the notion that tribes function best when left alone [5]. Both approaches had drawbacks and failed to address the development of tribal communities; whereas the latter expected tribal communities to be developed in terms of mainstream society, even discounting important aspects of tribal identity, the former implicitly expected tribal communities to bootstrap their development [6]. Due to the failure of these strategies, an integrationist approach to tribal development was proposed, whereby development was to be accomplished through protecting and promoting measures.

An extensive description of the various central and state level development initiatives for tribal development in India over the years is provided in the statement, "Protection is offered for the upkeep of tribal identity and promotional measures are offered to help them combat the strictures, socioeconomic and otherwise, in their development." Since its start in the last century, the idea of progress and well-being has experienced a number of fundamental transformations. The idea of wellbeing has evolved from only being about money success or physical means of development to include outcomes that are either desirable in and of themselves or desirable because they contribute to improving people's possibilities [7]. According to the World Human Development Report from 1997, income is undoubtedly just one of several options that individuals would like to have, albeit being a significant one. However, it does not encompass their entire existence. Income is a means to human progress, which serves as the objective. The most recent conception of development therefore presupposes that economic progress is merely a means to human development, rather than the other way around. In the early 1990s, UNDP undertook an attempt to map the level of human development in its member nations against this backdrop [8].

When comparing the prevalence of poverty across all sections, we see that it is around three times higher among the ST population. The scheduled tribes, or ethnic minorities, make up about 8% of India's overall population. There are 573 Scheduled Tribes spread across across the nation. In terms of education, since the fifth five-year plan, the government has prioritised primary education in all tribal sub-plans, and it gained momentum with the creation of the national education policy [9]. This was not only due to a constitutional requirement (Article

15(4) AND (5) specifies the creation of equality-promoting conditions, including the reservation of seats in educational institutions), but also due to the perceived need for the total development of tribal communities in the changing socio-economic scenario, which was only possible through the instrument of education [10]. Indicators of social and economic progress, including tribes, among backward people include education. Since tribal tribes typically live in isolated interior regions that are inaccessible and underdeveloped, they also live in modest homes without access to transportation and communication facilities. In many societies, there is a gap between the mainstream population and the marginalised, including tribes, in terms of acquiring human capital. This is because they have their own structural obstacles that prevent them from accessing almost everything that a contemporary mainstream society has [11].

1.2 Tribal Development and Policy

The British colonial interest, which was based on the exclusion and exploitation of the tribes, fully directed and controlled tribal policy during the pre-independence period. These tribal groups were labelled as "primitive," "backward," "barbarian," "sub-humans," "aborigines," etc. [12] The Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly, chaired by Thakarbapa, suggested that the new democratic state be established in principle with a responsibility for the welfare of the tribal people and the development of tribal lands, no matter how far away and inaccessible they may be. Pandit Nehru moved a Resolution on January 22, 1947, in response to the suggestions, which served as a dedication, pledge, and undertaking for the tribal brethren [13]. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was determined to integrate the tribal brothers and sisters since he was personally affected by the tribal policy. He proposed five guiding principles to be followed when carrying out a development programme for the tribe [14]. The finest summary of the objectives of tribal development in India can be found in Nehru's introduction to Varrier Elwin's book on NEFA:

[a] People should develop in accordance with their own genius and we should avoid putting anything on them. We should make an effort to support their traditional arts and culture in every way possible.

[b] It is important to respect tribal rights to lands and forests.

[c] We ought to make an effort to develop and train a group of their own individuals to handle administration and development tasks. Without a sure, some technical personnel from outside the unit will be required, particularly at first, but we should try to limit the number of outsiders we send into tribal area.

[d] We shouldn't administrate these areas excessively or overwhelm them with several programmes. We ought to cooperate rather than engage in conflict over our own social and cultural structures.

[e] Rather of using data or financial metrics to evaluate outcomes, we should focus on the participants' human character [15].

1.2.1 Tribal Development Strategies

Due to their limited technological advancement, overall economic backwardness, and difficult issues with socio-cultural adjustment to distinctive cultural identity, the indigenous peoples are a particular concern for the country. To create them, the following three models or methods were used [16].

Conservationist strategy: The strategy of exclusion or separation from the rest of the population was practised during the colonial era.

Assimilations strategy: Social professionals and nonprofit organisations doing humanitarian work in tribal regions suggested this strategy. But there was concern that it might undermine and split apart these communities.

Integrative Strategy: With this strategy, an effort was made to integrate tribal people into society while preserving their unique identities. It entails keeping a close eye on the trends put in motion by these actions with the goal of eliminating components that undermined their sense of social cohesion and killed their enthusiasm for life [17].

1.2.2 Constitutional protections for listed tribes

The British policy of isolation and non-interference was replaced with a policy of integration through development with the dawn of independence and the passage of the Constitution of free India. Numerous protections for the welfare and development of the tribes are included in the Indian Constitution. Four major headings can be used to group the pertinent articles: (a) Protective Provisions (Articles 15, 16, 19, 46, 146, 342, etc.); (b) Developmental Provisions (Articles 46, 275, etc.); (c) Administrative Provisions (Articles 244 & 275); and (d) Reservation Provisions (Articles 330, 332, 334, 335, 340, etc.) [18]. The Developmental Provisions encourage with special attention to the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections like the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, while the Protective Provisions protect tribal people from social injustices and all types of exploitation [19]. The Reservation Provisions guarantee proper representation of the Scheduled tribes and Scheduled castes in legislative bodies and government jobs, while the Administrative Provisions under the Fifth and Sixth Schedules grant the States special authority for the protection and administration of tribal areas. The key clauses of the several articles are:

Article 244(1) contains provisions governing the management and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes; Article 244(2) contains provisions governing the management of Tribal Areas;

Control of the Union over the management of Scheduled Areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes is provided for in Article 339;

Article 275(1): Provides for the payment of grants-in-aid to enable the States to cover the cost of any development plans they may undertake with the Government of India's approval in order to advance the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in that State or raise the level of administration of the Scheduled Areas there to that of the Scheduled Areas in that State [20].

Declaring some tribes or tribal communities to be Scheduled Tribes, per Article 342.

Articles 330 and 332 reserve seats for Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and State Legislative Assemblies, respectively, whereas Article 334 states that special representation and seat reservations expire after 60 years.

According to Article 164(1), there must be a Minister in responsibility of tribal welfare in the States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa. This minister may also be in charge of the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes or any other work (Now applicable to Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa).

According to Article 338, the Honourable President of India shall appoint a National Commission for the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes (Since bifurcated into two, one for Scheduled Tribes and the other for Scheduled Castes).

Article 46: Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled tribes, Scheduled castes, and other weaker sectors; Article 335: Claims of Scheduled Tribes to Services and Posts;

Article 371A: Special clause for Nagaland;

Fifth Schedule: Administrative and Control Provisions for Scheduled Areas;

Provisions for the administration of tribal areas are found in the sixth schedule.

In addition to the aforementioned constitutional clauses, there are other federal and state regulations that defend and protect the interests of the Scheduled tribes [21]. Several constitutional provisions are the source of these Acts and Regulations. Here are a few of the crucial core Acts: Act of 1955 protecting civil rights [a] The 1980 Forest Conservation Act Act of 1986 prohibiting and regulating bonded labour (c) Act of 1986 prohibiting and regulating child labour Scheduled Tribes and Castes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 [f] The PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996's provisions [g] Act of 2006 recognising the rights of traditional forest dwellers and Schedule Tribes

Similar to the federal government, state governments also protect tribal development through money loans, reservations, stopping the alienation of tribal land, and other measures.

1.2.3 Administration and Protection of Scheduled Areas

The following components make up the management of Scheduled Areas as required by Article 244 of the Constitution, according to the Fifth Schedule: Tribes Advisory Council, Governors' Reports to the President of India, and Special Privilege to Governors (TAC) The areas that have been "Scheduled" by the Hon. President of India are included in the Scheduled Areas, as stated in Section "C" Paragraph X of the Fifth Schedule. After reviewing the issues with the relevant State Governor, the President may change the Scheduled Areas. The Schedule Areas may also be amended by the Parliament, but this won't be interpreted as a change to the Constitution [22]. The Scheduled Areas are infectious regions that have historically formed territorial units. Some of the Scheduled tribes have been placed under the 5th Schedule of the

Indian Constitution in order to preserve their interests and provide them with particular protection [23]. T

he economic backwardness of the region is the criterion for declaring any Scheduled Areas that have a functioning administrative body, such as a District, Block, or Taluk. Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Bihar (now that Jharkhand has been declared after being separated from Bihar State), Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh are the States included in the Fifth Scheduled Areas (earlier Chhattisgarh was a part of undivided Madhya Pradesh State) The North-Eastern States of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura are considered the 6th Scheduled Areas under Articles 244(2) and 275 of the Constitution. These areas have been designated as Tribal Areas, and provisions have been made for the administration of these areas through Autonomous Districts/Regional Councils. [24]. The Indian Constitution guarantees three crucial rights for the Scheduled Tribes' protection, socioeconomic advancement, and political advancement:

[A] Social rights: [a] Equality before the law (Article 14); [b] The State's obligation to take specific measures for the advancement of any socially and educationally disadvantaged segments of citizens, as well as for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Article 15(4)). A National Commission for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes to investigate, monitor, and evaluate all matters relating to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes; [c] Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State (Article 16); [d] The State to make provisions in matters of promotion to any class or classes of posts in the Services in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Article 16 (4A) (Article 338) [f] Establishing a Commission to Report on the Welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the States and the Management of the Scheduled Areas Article 339 [g] The creation of a commission to look into the conditions of socially and educationally disadvantaged groups, the challenges they face, and offer suggestions on how to address these challenges and improve their circumstances (Article-340) & [h] To list the tribes or tribal groups that will be included in the Schedule of Tribes (Article 342).

[B] Economic Rights: [a] The State must take special care to advance the economic and educational interests of the less fortunate groups of the population, particularly the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and must shield them from social injustice and all types of exploitation (Article 46) [b] An annual grant-in-aid from the Consolidated Fund of India to support the administration of Scheduled Areas and the welfare of Scheduled Tribes [Article 275(1)]. [c] As long as maintaining administrative efficiency is a priority, Scheduled Tribe members' requests for appointments to positions involving the affairs of the Union or a State are to be taken into account [Article 335].

[C] Political Rights: [a] Seats reserved for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People [Article 330]; Seats reserved for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the State Legislative Assemblies [Article 332]. [b] Seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are reserved in every Panchayat [Article 243D]. [c] The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996 extended the 73rd and 74th

Amendments of the Constitution to the Scheduled Areas in order to guarantee meaningful tribal participation in planning and decision-making [25].

1.3 summary

The argumentation above leads to the conclusion that ensuring social justice for members of the Scheduled Tribes through improving their socioeconomic circumstances is the Government of India's greatest challenge since independence. From an ecological, economic, and educational standpoint, Scheduled Tribes are the population segment of India that is least developed. Since the very beginning of the Plan Era, tribal development has been given a specific place in the national and state development agenda in recognition of the unique requirements and issues that affect tribal people. One of the goals of the independent country has been the balanced development of all the areas. The government has made a number of attempts for the tribal population in this regard. The welfare and development of the scheduled tribes' rights were given top importance by policymakers and planners from the outset of the nation's developmental planning, which was established in 1951, as a result of constitutional promises.

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