

Towards Tribal Development

Dr.Satish Shirsath

(Professor, Department of Adult, Continuing Education
and Extension, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune-411007)

Dissussion regarding Tribal Development ;

The present paper intends to discuss regarding tribal people from India. Tribal is an umbrella term used for a heterogeneous set of ethnic and tribal groups claimed to be the aboriginal population of India (Adivasi, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki-Adivasi>). Different academicians and authorities have described or defined Indian tribal people differently.

Key words- *Tribal development ,Tribes,Scheduled Tribe,Panchayat, Approaches for Tribal development.*

Some of the denotations (Roy:2005) are as follows;

- 1.Risley,Lacey ,Elwin and A.V.Thakkar-Aboriginals.
- 2 .Baines- Hill Tribes & Forest Tribes.
- 3.Hutten- Primitive Tribes.
- 4.Ghurey- So called aboriginals or Backward Hindus .

In spite of different meanings/ denotations, the term 'Adivasi '(original inhabitants)is used more often to indicate-tribal people (in India).Some scholarly statements can support this statement(1) ...it has now become an established fact that the aboriginal tribes in India are in the most cases, survivals from the later prehistoric groups (Kumar A.:2002) .(2) The tribal population are the aboriginals of our country....(Dephaonkar S.G.:1994).

In a long peregrination of this term; one comes to Constitution of India which has designated them as 'Scheduled Tribe'.

Here are some characteristics of tribal communities (Roy I.B.;2005):

- A) (In terms of territory),every tribe has a traditional identity.
- B) They possess a common & distinct name.
- C) All the members use a specific dialect .
- D) Kinship operates as a strong associative, regulative and binding principle.
- E) Differential position in the production system do not create any difference in social position.
- F)Tribal economy is basically a non-monetised economy where producers themselves are the consumers.
- G) The technology is simple and specialized .
- H)Each tribe maintains its specific rituals along with social, economic & cultural traditions .
- I) Politically they are under the control of respective State Governments, however in many cases each of them exhibits its own tribal council (Panchayat) for local settlements.
- J) One of the outstanding features of Indian tribe is dormitory institution, where different customs and moral codes are imparted to adolescents. Few things should be made clear-(a)all these have mentioned characteristics are not found equally in all tribal people. Some may be absent in some tribal people, some may possess some more specifications. It differs place to place. (b)Though tribal people in India are part of its wider civilization (which includes some characteristics such as independence and sharing of certain common symbols), exhibits some differences (which are mentioned above).

Rich Past but Dark Present;

The references of Shabri (who fed sweet fruits to Rama in Ramayana) ,Eklavya (who learnt archery despite of refusal from Dronacharya in Mahabharata),Chitranganda (wife of Arjuna who was Naga princess in Mahabharta)etc. can or cannot be believed as such characters can be called mythical. However, some historical facts which have evidences or documented proofs show rich traditions developed by tribal people in India. Tribal states and governments, rules

and rulings made by them along with their following aspects are imitative- way of living , art,songs, knowledge about herbal medicines, some values(which are considered as advanced and egalitarian), sense of belongingness,unity, honesty,we feelings etc. Nevertheless, such abundant virtues have not stopped the tribal people from dragging behind. Today one of the characteristics of tribal people is backwardness. In every aspects (i.e.Social, economic, Educational etc.) they are far behind. Their discontent was considered as revolt at the time of British rule. Their lagging in education & awareness as well as remoteness and dispersion could not convey their sorrows to others. (so called mainstream).In spite of efforts from various sectors not much changes are seen in the miseries of tribals. It is proper to see different approaches deployed for development of tribal population. Approaches to Tribal Development ;

Some major Approaches for tribal development are as follows;

- 1.Religious Approach (Roy I.B.:2005).
- 2.social service Approach (Roy I.B.:2005).
- 3.Radical Approach(Roy I. :2005) .
4. Administrative Approach(Roy I.B.:2005) .

.Religious Approach:

It is the oldest approach which was deployed by Christian missionaries. Hence it is recognized as missionary approach too.With the motive of preaching the tribal people regarding how religious ideas and conversion, they entered into tribal areas. They conducted several welfare activities, promoted health education programmes such as schools, hospitals, libraries etc. They tried to pursue the tribal people who were living miserable life through development activities. They rendered humanitarian service to the needy & downtrodden tribal people. Some Hindu minded organisations also started working in tribal areas through that zeal .Such Organisations shifted their emphasis from mere social welfare activities to economic development activities since 60s.(Kumar A.:2002).

Social Service Approach:

Some voluntary agencies started social service activities based on humanitarian ground for tribal people. Such work is seen during last few decades of British rule. Many times such Organisations could not understand the values and aspirations of tribal people. Hence they did not get substantial success in their work. Radical approach: Some leftist activists worked with the tribal people for conscientisation regarding their state of deprivation and tried to organise them to rise in revolt against their exploitation by the feudal lords, capitalists and state agents. It resulted in many tribal movements in various parts of India. Their nature differs place to place. Administrative Approach;

This is an important Approach because of two factors;

A) much can be achieved through administrative measures as pointed by Dr.G.S.Deogaonkar. He says," In developing countries like India, though the democratic model is adopted, it is inevitable that the ' Administration ' which plans and administers development. has the political power concentrated in it(Deogaonkar S.G.:1995).

B) The role of government machinery is crucial and important in tribal development. Pre independence measures and post- independence activities can be included in this approach. In pre- independence period, the British government demarcated the tribal territories as 'excluded 'and ' party excluded '.This strategy was bitterly criticized by the nationalists leaders of independent India. They felt it as a ' negative ' approach of seclusion ' .Hence the exclusion policy was found to be modified after independence. Constitutional safeguards aimed at a ' positive political approach ' for uplifting backward tribal communities so that they can be placed equal to other advanced people.

After independence, the government paid more attention towards the problems of tribal people. Three types of measures were adopted .(a) provision of constitutional concessions to S.T.s- its main focus has been on reservations for tribal people in education institutions,in government jobs and in parliament and state assemblies. Such reservations are meant for upbringing the tribal people at par with non-tribal people.

(b) Programmes of tribal development such as 'Community Development Programs (CDP)',

Tribal Sub Plan(TSP) etc. - Such programmes are designed with the objective of modernizing tribal economy ,promote tribal agriculture & forestry. Besides the measures for development of tribal economy, many tribal development plans have been focused on physical, social and educational aspects of tribal life. Some provisions like health care centres, community Centres, schools etc.are designed to improve the life chances of the tribal people and integrate them with the larger society.

(c) Protectionist policy- it relates to the protection of the right of tribal in land and forest and the right to be safeguard from exploitatitive elements. While discussing different approaches to tribal development (accepted by government level),Dr.S.G.Deogaonkar writes as follows(Deogaonkar S.G.:1994),

During the modern era,the Government arms reached the hilly and forest tribal areas for the first time during the British regime. Till then some of the tribal areas had their own chiefs with a traditional pattern of political organization and others were stray scattered groups either ruled by other kings, Maharajas or left to themselves as if in a " State of Nature ". After Independence, planned development started and broadly three different approaches were advanced.

Policy of Isolation:

This approach was adopted by British rulers. It also indicated as ' leave them untouched '. Some academicians opine that along with the policy of non- intervention or limited intervention , the British rulers encouraged the missionary activities. The isolation policy was justified on the grounds that (tribals)'culture ought to be preserved and hence there should be no interference by planners. Thakkarbappa criticized this policy saying that the anthropologists wanted them (the tribals)as "specimen in a zoo". So that their academic field-laboratories would always be available. Policy of Assimilation; This policy is exactly opposite to the previous one which emphasizes on bringing the tribal population in the mainstream of national life as early as possible. In this process, traditional aspects of tribals may get diapilated. *Policy of Slow and steady assimilation; This is middle policy which expects for development of tribals and bringing them in the national mainstream without disturbing the healthy features of tribal life.

This policy also emphasizes on bringing out such changes (regarding development) on their (tribal people's) own initiative and their willing consent. Respecting the tribal life and culture and to bring the best thing in modern life to them but in such a way that these will not destroy other traditional way of life but will activate and even attract them to a better and fuller life was the crux of the policy. First Prime- Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is supposed to be a strong supporter of the policy. His words advocate the very principle. He said, "The Government of India is determined to help tribal people to grow according to their own generous and tradition". The draft of the first five year plan (which supposed to be a planned beginning of Independent India towards a welfare State) states. "The conditions are now generally such that there has to be positive policy of assisting the tribal people to develop their natural resources and to evolve a productive economic life wherein they will enjoy the fruits of their labour and will not be exploited by more organized economic forces from outside. So far their religious and social life is concerned, it is not desirable to bring about changes except at the initiative of the tribal people themselves and with their willing consent. It is accepted that, there are many healthy features of tribal life, which should not be only retained but developed. The qualities of their dialects and the rich content of their art and craft also need to be appreciated and preserved". In this way, this policy is reflected in India's welfare measures especially after first five year plan.

The results are not so satisfactory; As an integral part of Indian society, everyone would expect the need of equal status to tribal people along with others. Several approaches have been suggested and practiced. After specific interval, such approaches got evaluated; modified and executed again. The philosophical foundations, strategies, machineries were changed. Several studies and reports utter the fact that we could achieve lot of infrastructural development on micro level, however we could not convey it unto the last deprived tribal man. So far psychological changes are concerned, not much we could gain. Enlightenment, people's Education can do it: 'Atta Deep Bhava' (you become a torchlight of your own destiny) is the popular saying uttered by Lord Buddha. The very right path of development is 'Empowerment' of distressed individuals. In the case of tribals, it is not right to wait for some 'outsider angels' who will accelerate the development. The present scenario calls for movement of the problematic individuals & marching towards 'self development' problems and hence the need of individuals regarding development can differ. From that point also, the

problematic individuals need to acquire what he/ she wants. Though we have achieved literacy level satisfactory, it is very low among the tribal people. Besides literacy, awareness in other issues is also low. Most of the tribal people can't cope up with the fast growing changes. Constant sensitizing the tribal population through non-formal method in different life-related subject is required. The Adult, Continuing Education and Extension wing, in which youth from higher education are involved, carry out this task ably. They can identify the needs of people; and based on them they can plan activities. As formal education has some limitations of ' rigidity in formalities ' and 'pace in modifications ' the Non-formal Education through Adult, Continuing Education and Extension wing, it is quite possible.

References;

- 1.Adivasi, [https:// en.wikipedia. org./wiki/ Adivasi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adivasi), visited on March 09,2012.
- 2.Roy I.B.(2005),'Tribe ' in ' Anthropology: the study of Man',New Delhi, : S.chand & Co.Ltd.p.585.
- 3.Kumar ,A.(2002),'Tribes : Origin and Historical perspective ' in ' Tribal Development in India: Sarup & Sons, p. 1.
- 4.Deogaonkar S.G.(1994),Genesis and Growth of Tribal Administration ' in ' Tribal Administration and Development 'New Delhi: Concept Publishing Co.p.9.
- 5.Roy ,op, cit.
- 6.ibid. 605.
- 7.ibid.
- 8.Kumar, op.cit. p.291.
- 9.Roy ,op.cit.,p.p.605-606.
- 10.Kumar, op.cit.,p.290.
- 11.deogaonkar, ,op.cit.,p.24.
- 12ibid.,p.26-29.