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Schedule Tribe in India: A Critical Study

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ABSTRACT

India is a multicultural country with rich diversity reflected in different cultures, religions, and languages. Tribal groups in India are considered to be the earliest inhabitants of India that experienced diverse waves of invaders and other settlers over thousands of years, making it difficult to identify the real origin of today's tribal peoples from a purist perspective. So the state and discourse in India reject the term 'indigenous peoples' and prefer instead to use the Constitutional term Scheduled Tribes because the term Adivasi is commonly stated as original inhabitants, and it means 'Adi or earliest time', vasi resident. Social stratification in India is determined by the four types of varna system known as the caste system. So scheduled Tribes do not fall within the caste hierarchy because they have distinct (it means considered non-Hindu) cultural and religious practices and social practices. Over time geographic isolation of Scheduled Tribes has manifested in relative and often absolute deprivation, which has periodically surfaced in the starkest manner and reported widely in the press. In Kalahandi district of Orissa has become a metaphor for starvation, according to reports dating back to the 1980s. Similarly, the Maharashtra Melghat area has surfaced in the press, especially during the monsoon when migrant STs return for transplant rice on their subsistence land, household food stocks are depleted, and cash to purchase food is scarce. The Scheduled Tribes are one of the principal deprived sections of Indian society. Nowadays, They constitute 8.6 percent of the total population as per the 2011 census. Since the beginning of the Independence, the Government of India initiated several schemes & policies for the holistic development of Scheduled Tribes in the Country. Despite the efforts made by the central government for the development of Scheduled Tribes ever since Independence, their socio-economic status is gradually increasing trend, but as compared to the general population, they are suffering several sorts of problems such as malnutrition, hunger, poverty, housing, and pure drinking water facility. So my object of study is to focus on schedule tribe issues like education, health, employment, malnutrition, hunger, poverty, and population in the Indian scenario to analyse the status of STs in India.

Keywords: India, Schedule tribes, Varna System, Government, Tribal group, Population, Geographical Isolation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The term tribes refer to the native people of the land who are known to be the earliest settlers in the Peninsula of India. They are generally called Adivasis, implying original inhabitants. Ancient and medieval literature stated a large number of tribes living in India, like the Kasis, the Koalas, the Assakas, the Magadhas, and the Bhojas, who played an important part in the history of Ancient India.

SCHEDULE TRIBES

- The Constitution of India does not define the criteria for recognition of Scheduled Tribes, but the definition contained in the 1931 Census was used in the initial years after independence.
- According to Census 1931, Schedule tribes are termed "backward tribes" living in the "Excluded" and "Partially Excluded" areas. The Government of India Act of 1935 called for the first time for representatives of "backward tribes" in provincial assemblies.
- Under 366 clause 25 article of the Indian constitution defined scheduled tribes means such tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups within such tribes or tribal communities which are defined under Article 342 to be deemed as Scheduled Tribes under this constitution.
- Article 342 of the Indian constitution provides the procedure to be followed in the area of scheduled tribes. According to this article, **the president** may, with respect to any State or Union territory and where it is a state, after consultation with the Governor thereof by public notification, state the tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this constitution is deemed to be scheduled tribes in relation to that state or Union Territory.
- **Parliament** may by law include or exclude from the list of Scheduled tribes specified in a notification issued under clause one to any tribe or tribal community or part or group within any tribe or tribal community, but a notification issued under the said clause shall not be changed by any subsequent notification.

Classification of Tribes based on Location

In India tribal population lives in the whole country. In some states like Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, Goa, and Puducherry, were to exist a very small proportion tribal population, and the rest of the states and union territories possess a fairly good tribal population.

But recently, the largest number of tribes registered in MP. Based on the location, they are divided into four zones.

- Zone 1: Northern and North-Eastern

In mountain valleys and other areas of the North-East region, most Indian tribes belong to Mongolian social stock. It covers Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram, Eastern Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Tarai areas of Uttar Pradesh, and the mountainous region of West Bengal.

- Zone 2: Central

In the Chhotanagpur Plateau region along the dividing line between peninsular India and Indo Gangetic basin live many tribal communities like the Bhumij, Gond, Oraon, Munda, Santhal, Bhil, etc.

- Zone 3: South-Western

In hills or lines of the Western Ghats where Chenchus, Irulas, Kadars, Ketas, Kurumbas, Judas, etc., Negrito, Caucasoid, and proto-Australoid features are living. This group is mostly concentrated in the southernmost parts of the Western Ghats, stretching from Vindhya to Cape Comorin.

- Zone 4: Scattered Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar

The aborigines of the Andaman Islands may be described as a race by themselves, and can be divided into two groups.

Subgroups. Negrito -Andamanese, the Onges and the Sentinelese. This group is found in the Andaman group of Islands.

Mongoloid: Inhabitants of Nicobar group of islands, i.e., the Shorn Pens and the Nicobarese.

II. DISCUSSION

In India, the Scheduled Tribes are one of the most disadvantaged groups in Indian Society. STs constitute 8.6 percent of the total population of the country, according to the 2011 Census. Development of Schedule tribes in India is a constitutional obligation, But how to develop STs is the main issue for the country's policymakers, planners, administrators, and all those concerned with the welfare and development of the STs. Laws have been enacted with regard to the protection, safeguarding, and development of STs, and these have been put into practice. Right from the large independence number of programs have been undertaken by the Government of India for the development of STs to ensure a better quality of life for them, and

also special provisions are made for the protection of Scheduled Tribes from exploitation for their development. Thousands of millions of rupees have been spent for developing these STs people through various Five-Year Plans, special programs are formulated, and the central government extends adequate resources for the developmental scheme in the tribal inhabitations. Despite the various efforts made by the central government, the results show that the quality and quantum of development achieved are far from satisfactory. STs are still facing the problems of hunger, malnutrition, poverty, illiteracy, ill health, and deprivation of natural resources. Though the Government of India provides special attention to the development of these sections still, a majority of the people in these categories are excluded from the development programs and policies.

III. CHALLENGES FACED BY ST IN INDIA

- **Loss of Control over Natural Resources:**

Before the coming of Britishers to India, the tribals enjoyed unrestricted rights of ownership and management over natural resources like land, forests, wildlife, water, soil, fish, etc. After the upcoming industrialization in India and the discovery of minerals and other resources in tribal inhabited areas, these pockets were mainly open to outsiders, and state control replaced tribal control.

- Forest Acting Director 1865 - This act covered management and preservation of forests and any land covered with trees were declared as forest and controlled by the government.
- Forest Act 1878 – this act were classified forest under
 - i) Reserved forests
 - ii) Protected forests
 - iii) Village forests
- Forests Policy 1894 – this act stated the state forest to be used for public benefit and valuable timbers to be declared as commercial.
- Forest Act 1927 – This act related to the question of duty on timber, therefore commercial approach to the use of forests.
- Forest Act 1935 –under this act the subject of forest was included in the provincial list under this act empowering the province for forest management.

This resulted in the loss of ownership rights over land owing to serious indebtedness, dishonest landlords, money-lenders, contractors, and officials. With the concepts of protected forests and national forests gaining currency, the tribals felt uprooted from their cultural moorings and with no secure means of livelihood.

- **Lack of Education:**

According to the 1991 Census, practically 70 percent of the tribals are uneducated. At the same time, it cannot be denied that education can act as the instrument for the betterment of the tribals to ensure greater participation for them in the development process, but there are some factors that prohibit the tribals from taking to education. These factors include tribal superstitions and prejudices, extreme poverty, the nomadic lifestyle of certain tribes, lack of interest in alien subjects taught through an alien language, and a lack of suitable teachers and other facilities in the tribal areas.

- **Displacement and Rehabilitation:**

After independence, the development process was emphasized in heavy industries and the core sector. As a result, huge steel plants, power projects, and large dams came up, most of them in the inhabited tribal areas, and mining activities were also accelerated in these areas. The acquisition of tribal land by the government for these projects led to the large-scale displacement of these tribal populations. The tribal pockets of the Chhotanagpur region of Orissa, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh suffered the most.

- **Problems of Health and Nutrition:**

Since economic backwardness and apprehensive livelihood, the tribals face health problems such as the prevalence of diseases like malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, diarrhea and jaundice problems associated with malnutrition like iron deficiency and anemia, high infant mortality rates, low levels of life expectancy, etc.

- **Gender Issues:**

The deprivation of the natural environment, mainly through the devastation of forests and a rapid reduction of the resource base, has had an impact on the status of women. The opening of the tribal belts to mining, industries, and commercialization has exposed tribal men and women to the ruthless operations of the market economy, giving rise to consumerism and to the commoditisation of women.

- Erosion of Identity:

Progressively the customary institutions and laws of tribals are coming into conflict with current institutions, which creates apprehensions among the tribals about preserving their identity. Destruction of tribal dialects and languages is another cause of concern as it indicates a wearing down of tribal identity in certain areas.

IV. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AND SAFEGUARD FOR ST INDIA

Educational, Economic and Public Employment-related Safeguards

- Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth under article 15 of the constitution of India.
- Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment under article 16 of the constitution of India.
- Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc under article 19 of the constitution of India.
- The State shall encourage with special care the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of the society and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to protect them from social inequality and all forms of utilization under article 46 of directive principle of state policy.
- Reservation for schedule tribes & schedule castes in educational institution has been provided in Article 15(4) while reservation for schedule tribes & schedule castes in posts and services has been provided in Article 16(4), 16(4A) and 16(4B) of the Constitution of India.
- Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts under article 335 of the constitution of India.

Political Safeguards

- Article 243D of the constitution of India provides reservation of Seats for Scheduled Tribes in Panchayats.
- Article 330 of the constitution of India provides reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People.
- Article 332 of the constitution of India provides reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in Legislative Assemblies of the States.
- Article 334 of the constitution of India provides that reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and the State Vidhan Sabhas (and the

representation of the Anglo-Indian Community in the Lok Sabha and the State Vidhan Sabhas by nomination) would continue up to January, 2020.

Agency for monitoring safeguard

- The Lokur Committee (1965) was setup to seem into criteria for essential Schedule Tribes. The Committee suggested 5 criteria for detection namely, prehistoric traits, different culture, geographical separation, bashfulness of contact with the community at large, and backwardness.
- Bhuria Commission (2002-2004) paying attention on a wide range of issues from the 5th Schedule to tribal land and forests, health and education, the working of Panchayats and the status of tribal women.
- A High-Level Committee (HLC) in 2013, under chairmanship of Prof. Virginius Xaxa was constituted to study the 5 serious issues related to tribal communities: (1) living and service, (2) education, (3) health, (4) involuntary displacement and migration, (5) and legal and constitutional matters.
- Formation of NCST it was set up with result from 19th February 2004 by amending Article 338 and by inserting a new article 338A in the Constitution through the 89th Constitution Amendment Act, 2003. Hence, it is a constitutional body.
- Objective: Article 338A inter-alia gives powers to the NCST to supervise the implementation of various safeguards provided to STs under the Constitution or under any other law for time being in force or under any other order to the Government and to estimate the working of such safeguards.
- Composition: It consists of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and 3 other Members who are appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal. At least one member should be a woman.
- The Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the other Members hold office for a term of 3 years.
- The members are not eligible for appointment for more than two terms.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES AND SCHEMES FOR ST IN INDIA:-

- Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub- Schemes
- Grants under proviso to Article 275(1) of the Constitution
- National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST Student
- Scholarship to the ST Students for Studies Abroad.
- Support to National/ State Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation.

- Institutional Support for Development and Marketing of Tribal Products (TRIFED etc.
- Pre-Matric Scholarship & Post-Matric Scholarship.
- Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups PVTGs:-

This Scheme for Development of Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) came into effect from April 1, 2008. It defines PVTGs as the most vulnerable among the Scheduled Tribes and the Scheme therefore seeks to prioritize their protection and development. It identifies 75 PVTGs.

- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Development Programmes in the Tribal Areas (EAP)
- Minimum Support Price for Minor Forest Produce(MSP for MFP):-

The Scheme for MSP for MFP and development of value chain was started by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) in the FY 2013-14 with an objective of providing a fair price to MFP gatherers, enhancing their income level and ensuring sustainable harvesting of MFPs. The objective of the MSP for MFP scheme is to establish a framework for ensuring fair prices for the tribal gatherers, primary processing, storage, transportation etc. while ensuring the sustainability of the resource base.

- Tribal Festival, Research, information and Mass Education
- Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana:-

In 2007 This programme seeks to enable the Schedule Tribe regions to merge with mainstream development by bridging the gaps between ITDP blocks and other parts of Gujarat. It is aimed at doubling of the income of the tribal area and creating conditions for its sustainability and bridging the gaps in human development indicators between Scheduled Area and rest of the State.

- Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS):

EMRS started in the year 1997-98 to impart quality education to ST children in remote areas in order to enable them to avail of opportunities in high and professional educational courses and get employment in various sectors. The schools focus not only on academic education but on the all-round development of the students. Each school has a capacity of 480 students, catering to students from Class VI to XII. Hitherto, grants were given for construction of schools and recurring expenses to the State Governments under Grants under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution.

In recently in order to give further impetus to EMRS, it has been decided that by the year 2022, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons, will

have an EMRS. Eklavya schools will be on par with Navodaya Vidyalaya and will have special facilities for preserving local art and culture besides providing training in sports and skill development. Across the country, according to census 2011 figures there are 564 such sub-districts out of which there is an EMRS in 102 sub-districts. Thus, 462 new schools have to be opened by the year 2022.

- Eklavya Model Day Boarding Schools (EMDBS):-

Wherever density of ST population is higher in identified Sub-Districts (90% or more) it is proposed to set up Eklavya Model Day Boarding School (EMDBS) on an experimental basis for providing additional scope for ST Students seeking to avail school education without residential facility.

- Support to Tribal Research Institutes & Aid to Voluntary Organisations Working for the Welfare of Scheduled Tribes.

REPORT ON SCHEDULE TRIBES IN INDIA

Using official poverty lines and consumption data from the National Sample Survey, the World Bank's latest Poverty Assessment for India estimates that poverty headcount levels declined from 45.6 percent in 1983 to 27.5 percent in 2004-05 (World Bank 2009).

According to the 2001 Census, India has 84.3 million Scheduled Tribes comprising 8.1 percent of the total population of the country (Table 1). As the table suggests the share of Scheduled Tribes in total population has remained fairly stable, particularly in the ten year period between 1991 and 2001.

Table 1: Share of Scheduled Tribes in Total Population, 1951 – 2001 (population in millions).

Census Year	Total population	Population of ST	ST%
1951	62.4	• 18.2	5.27
1961	• 438.3	• 31.2	6.86
1971	• 546.4	• 38.1	6.94
1981	• 684.4	• 51.4	7.57
1991	• 844.5	• 67.6	8.11

Gross Enrolment Ratio for Scheduled Tribe Students:-

Level / Year	Secondary (9 – 10) 14–15 years			Senior Secondary (11-12) 16-17 years			Higher Education 18-23 years		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2013-14	70.4	70.2	70.3	36.8	34.2	35.5	12.6	10.4	11.5
2014-15	71.9	72.5	72.3	39.9	37.6	38.6	15.3	12.4	13.5
2015-16	73.6	75.5	74.4	43.9	42.5	43.5	15.5	12.8	14.3

Trends in poverty gap India, 1983-2005 (percent) – Slower decline in poverty gap for Tribals

Location	Social Group	1983	1993-94	2004-05	% change b/w 83~05
Rural	Scheduled • • • •	21.4	12.3	10.6	-51
	Tribe	185	11.6	7.3	-62
	Scheduled • • • •	11.2	6.6	4.2	-62
	Caste	13.5	8.5	5.4	-58
	Others • • • •				
	All				

Urban	Scheduled • • • • •	17.5	12.5	10.8	-37
	Tribe	16.7	14.4	10.5	-36
	Scheduled • • • • •	11.2	7.3	5.3	-52
	Caste	11.8	8.4	6.3	-48
	Others • • • • •				
	All				
Total	Scheduled • • • • •	20.8	12.3	10.8	-47
	Tribe	18.5	12.2	8.3	-55
	Scheduled • • • • •	11.1	6.9	4.5	-61
	Caste	13.3	8.5	5.8	-58
	Others • • • • •				
	All				

V. CONCLUSION

We must improve Healthcare Facilities like Mobile medical camps to improve outreach in remote tribal populations would play a major role in emergency transportation for pregnant tribal women to health facilities for obstetric care is one of the major necessities of the tribal women. Health workers from tribal communities may become the link between the healthcare facilities and tribal communities to guide patients, explain doctors' prescriptions, help patients take advantage of welfare schemes, and counsel them on preventive and promotive health behaviors.

We must Improve Food and Nutrition Facilities through Large scale opening of Mini-Anganwadis with much-relaxed norms and expansion of Village Grain Banks to tribal areas are some of the strategies that can be adopted to 'Reach the Unreached' in the tribal areas.

We may improve Employment and income generation opportunities should be ensured for tribal areas, either through wage or self-employment, to raise their economic status, which liberates them from the shackles of poverty and indebtedness. Efforts should also be made to extend micro-credit for self-employment ventures and implementation of mirror schemes of MNREGA when no work opportunities are available, and collection of minor forest produce and their marketing also needs to be encouraged.

There should be a more effective operationalization of the National Water Policy in tribal areas so as to cover the extension of irrigation facilities and provision of drinking water with a special thrust on like Watershed management, rainwater harvesting, and water-saving practices.

There should be taken effective measures to improve lot of tribal women through Promoting leadership roles in Joint Forest Management and Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The tribe should be encouraged to collaborate with the government to identify and collect medicinal plants from the wild and also cultivate suitable species for their self-consumption as well as for sale. Recently the Government of India has decided to take advantage of this trade and has set up a National Medicinal Plant Board, and the government can collaborate with tribal groups for infrastructure development in their local areas.

Social exclusion experienced by the tribal people is largely due to discrimination at the social and institutional level; it has led to their isolation, shame, and humiliation and, in turn to self-exclusion among tribes. So there is a strong need for awareness among the non-tribal population of India to recognize the ability and dignity of tribes so as to ensure the unity and integrity of the country and the spirit of brotherhood.

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