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EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract:-According to the National Population policy 2000, the tribal people need special attention in respect of basic health and reproductive and child health services. Equally important are provision of mobile clinics, information and counseling on infertility and regular supply of standardised medication. The Dhebar Commission (1960-61) has mentioned that the tribals and their leaders emphasized that the instruction in primary schools be imparted to them through their mother tongue. Teachers from amongst them, or tribal dialect knowing teachers may be appointed. Formal and non-formal education, forest education and vocational courses need to get due emphasis. More women animators are to be identified by the local specific communities for getting trained in development education. The paper analysis welfare, development and empowerment of tribal women in India.

Keywords: Tribe, Women, Empowerment, Education.

INTRODUCTION:

The tribal people are economically and socially backward. Their plight worsened because of pressure of non-tribal population on tribal lands. There is also state demand on tribal lands and private demand on tribal community land. The Tribal lands have been alienated to their better endowed tribal neighbours or non-tribals. Protective laws prohibit sale or transfer of tribal land to non-tribals. In spite of Constitutional safeguards, majority of tribal people still live in conditions as their predecessor lived a century ago. Their condition worsened because of exploitation by the non-tribals. Because of low literacy level, most tribal people do not take active interest in the activities of self-help groups. They simply accept the views of few leading members who generally belong to better off communities. Those living on the periphery of national parks, have to bribe forest guards in order to gain entry into the jungles for firewood, fodder for cattle, seeds, roots, fruits and berries that they need for their survival. The tribals do not even get potable water. Workers of factories and mines are not prevented from releasing toxic industrial waste into rivers and streams that flow through the tribal areas. Everyday the tribal people have to trudge many kilometers to fetch a pot of water. In most habitats, there is neither safe drinking water nor small irrigation structures such as tanks and dams that can host agricultural and horticultural production. Also to get their quota of subsidised rice and wheat, the tribal people have to walk 15 to 20 kms once or twice a week to the nearest ration shop. But, their quota is not sufficient even for a family of three. Medicare is a much neglected area in tribal belts. The government doctors are reluctant to work in tribal areas. Epidemics such as malaria, gastroenteritis and encephalitis play havoc with the tribal population. There is evidence of exploitation of tribal women by forest and mining contractors. The incidence of sexual assaults on tribal women has increased. State atrocities on tribal women are on the rise. Thus, the tribal women face formidable problems in raising their socio-economic status.

EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN KARNATAKA:

According to the National Population policy 2000, the tribal people need special attention in respect of basic health and reproductive and child health services. Equally important are provision of mobile clinics, information and counseling on infertility and regular supply of standardised medication. The Dhebar Commission (1960-61) has mentioned that the tribals and their leaders emphasized that the instruction in primary schools be imparted to them through their mother tongue. Teachers from amongst them, or tribal dialect knowing teachers may be appointed. Formal and

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non-formal education, forest education and vocational courses need to get due emphasis. More women animators are to be identified by the local specific communities for getting trained in development education.

The Ninth Five Year plan (1997-2002) documents observed that their earlier initiative of the Government to start creche facilities within the school campus or nearer to the school will be revived / intensified to ensure that the girl children are not deprived of education. Crafts and products produced by tribal women need to be popularised particularly in urban areas. Also, these women should be trained in various crafts in vocational training institutes. Due importance should be given to time saving mechanical devices. Empowerment is essential to participatory development. Attempts shall have to be made to reduce economic disparities and increase educational levels and expand access to health services on an equal footing. Keeping in view, the principles of the "Panchsheel", the process of tribal development was also initiated on the basis of respect and understanding of tribal culture and traditions. Besides appreciation of their social, psychological and economic problems.

An enthusiastic and responsive political leadership and bureaucracy at various level is crucial for the success of these programmes in a largely backward and illiterate milieu inhabited by the tribals. Given their low socio-economic status, the tribal women can improve their lot only through self-help-groups. Besides gainful employment, they need awareness and training programme appropriate to their environment.

APPROACH TO TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:

The Constitution of India aimed to give protection to women against exploitation in general and particularly in regard to their interest in land and forest and to save them from exploitation by the money lenders and unscrupulous contractors. It provided for protection for all tribals living scattered and residing in other parts protection for all tribals living scattered and residing in other parts not declared as scheduled areas through general legislation. Protection also implied prohibition of bonded labour and adequate alternative credit through simple procedures.

Development aspects involve four fold development, namely, i) Economic, ii) Educational, iii) Health and iv) Communication through Tribal Development Blocks. Economic development involves agriculture, forest, animal husbanding and cottage industries. Education development involves vocational and technical education, girls' education, stoppage of waste facilities and health care system and communication required breaking of business through roads and flow of ideas in the tribal areas.

TRIBAL SUB-PLAN (TSP) APPROACH

The strategy for the development of the Scheduled Tribes based on the TSP approach which comes into operation since 1974-75 during 5th plan period. The main objective of the TSP are:

1. To raise the socio-economic condition of the tribal population and strengthen infrastructure in the tribal areas and to protect and promote tribal interests through legal and administrative support. (Thakur, 1997). The programmes are now being implemented through (1) 194 Integral Tribal Development projects (ITDP) comprising generally blocks/ tahsils with 50 percent or more scheduled tribes population.
2. 277 pockets of tribal concentration Modified Area Development Approach Projects. (MADAP) having a total population of 10 thousand or more and scheduled tribe population of 50 percent or more, and.
3. 90 primitive tribal projects or Micro Projects. The TSP has a two fold thrust of socio-economic development of the tribal area and socio-economic development of tribal families.

The main objectives of the TSP strategy during the Seventh plan are:

1. Taking of Family beneficiary oriented programmes through raising productivity levels of the beneficiary families in the field of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, small industries etc.;
2. Elimination of exploitation of the tribals in the sphere of alienation of land, money lending debt-ondage, forests etc.
3. Human resource development through education and training programmes;
4. Infrastructures development in the tribal areas.
5. Development of vulnerable tribal areas and group like forest villages, shifting cultivators displaced and migrant tribals including tribal women, and
6. Upgradation of environment of tribal areas.

Financing of the Tribal Sub-Plans

There are four sources of financing tribal sub-plan programmes;

- i) Special Central Assistance (SCA) administered by the Ministry of welfare Government of India.
- ii) State Plan funds;

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- iii) Centrally sponsored Schemes, and
- iv) Institutional finance.

Since fifth plane period, with the launching of the TSP approach, special programmes for extremely backward tribal groups has been taken up. These were micro projects or projects for primitive tribal groups. These primitive tribal groups had three criteria for their identification.

1. Almost stagnant population or extremely low growth rate facing the danger of extinction.
2. Having a pre-agricultural level of technology, and
3. Extremely low level of literacy.

The planning commission also mentioned that particular cares need to be taken of the small primitive tribal groups, some of which were on the verge of extinction. The employment orientation programme was proposed to diversify the occupation of scheduled tribes who were primarily agricultural labourers through different types of income generating schemes. The main thrust was on the development of skill of tribal in their traditional and other trades and crafts.

Shortcoming in the Implementations of the TSP

Some of the shortcomings observed in the implementation of the Tribal Development Programme and TSP and mentioned below:

- i) Too much employees was laid on targets and concerted efforts were not made nor necessary follow up action taken to ensure that the families which were economically assisted were actually able to cross the poverty line. In some cases, on account of the loan component the inability of the beneficiary to repay the loan, the economic condition of the beneficiary is reported to have worsened as compared to the persistence period.
- ii) In the protective sphere legislation have been enacted more effectively by plugging loopholes in several of the problem; particularly in land alienation, money lending and debt bondage in some areas.
- iii) Elimination of exploitation in sales and marketing of tribal produce is yet to be achieved in an appreciable degree on account of the weakness of the LAMPS and tribal area marketing co-operatives.
- iv) There is feeling that the tribals sub-plan is merely an agglomeration of the state plan schemes taken up in the tribal areas. There is little attempt to formulate need based schemes in an integrated manner.
- v) Pooling of funds, as required under the basic guidelines of the TSP is not done except in few states.
- vi) The single line administration was not introduced in the ITDPs and this was a major cause for the shortcoming in the implementation of the programmes.
- vii) Monitoring system in the states was not quite effective.
- viii) The performance of LAMPS lags very much behind the service co-operatives functioning in the non-tribal areas.

GENDER ISSUES IN TRIBAL WELFARE & DEVELOPMENT:

The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels. Active participation of women in the entire development process is essential for the overall socio-economic development of any country. Therefore, raising the status of women in general and that of socially and economically, backward women in particular is not just a moral imperative but also a strategic one.

Low female literacy among STs being particular concern, the gender-specific scheme of "Setting up Educational Complex in Low Literacy pockets for development of Women's Literacy in Tribal Areas" introduced in 1993-94, was revised in 2008-09 and renamed as "strengthening Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts". The revised scheme became effective from 1st April 2008. The revised scheme is being implemented in 54 identified low literacy Districts where the ST population is 25% or more, and ST female literacy rate is below 35% or its fractions, as per 2001 census. Any other tribal block in a district, other than aforesaid 54 identified districts, which has scheduled tribe population 25% or above, and tribal female literacy rate below 35% or its fractions, as per 2001 census, are also covered. The areas inhabited by particularly vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) and Naxalite affected areas are given priority. The scheme aims to bridge the gap in literacy levels between the general female population and tribal women, through facilitating 100% enrolment of tribal girls in the identified Districts or Blocks. More particularly in Naxalite affected areas and in areas inhabited by PTGs, and reducing drop-outs at the elementary level by

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creating the required ambience for education.

The scheme is implemented through Voluntary Organizations (VOs)/Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) and autonomous society / institutions of State Government/Union Territory Administration. Ministry provides 100% assistance for running and maintenance of educational complexes for ST girls which include free education, boarding and lodging, books, uniforms, medical help, coaching, incentives to girls, periodical awards, etc., The revised scheme envisages the convergence with the schemes of Sarva Shikshana Abhiyan and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya of Ministry of Human Resource Development. It meets the requirement of primary level students as well as middle/secondary level students and provides residential facility to ST girls students to ensure their retention in schools. Besides formal education, the revised scheme also takes care of skill upgradation of ST girls in various vocations. The revised scheme also envisages establishment of District Education support Agency (DESA) in each also play the role of monitor, facilitator and support linkages with various institutions.

Under the scheme 'Grants under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution of India' funds are released to State Governments for taking up specific projects for creation and up-gradation of critical infrastructure required to bring the tribal areas at par with the rest of the country. As per the guidelines of the scheme, the concerns/issues affecting women should occupy central position in preparation of the projects/schemes, including the involvement of women, right from the planning to the implementation stage. The projects should be so planned that substantial benefits, at least 30% in proportion, are targeted for women.

Under the scheme for construction of hostels for ST boys and girls, 100% Central funding is provided to State/UTs for construction of hostels for ST girls at school, college, university and vocational education levels. The main objective of the scheme is to promote education among tribal students by providing hostel accommodation to such tribal students who are not in a position to continue their education because of their poor economic condition, and remote location of their villages. The scheme provides for the construction of new hostels and extension of existing hostel buildings for students. Under the scheme of establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub-Plan areas, 100% Central funding is provided for the construction of Ashram Schools for ST girls. These revisions were introduced from 1-4-2008 and are expected to have profound impact on the increase in education among ST girls.

The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation is an apex institution under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, for economic development of Scheduled tribes by extending concessional financial assistance for income generating scheme(s) projects(s). The Corporation is having an exclusive scheme for economic development of scheduled tribes women titled Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana (AMSY). Under the scheme the Corporation provides financial assistance upto 90% of the scheme/project having unit cost upto Rs. 50,000/- At highly concessional rate of interest @4% p.a chargeable from beneficiaries. 17.8.2 Under AMSY, during the year, NSTFDC has sanctioned financial assistance for 80 schemes having NSTFDC share of Rs. 15.73 crore, for economic development of 10041 women beneficiaries.

The Corporation also extends its financial assistance for women beneficiaries under other income generating schemes including marketing support assistance. Further the corporation is making all endeavors to cover more women beneficiaries under NSTFDC financial assistance.

The Scheme of Exchange of Visits by Tribals, was introduced in 2001-02, to enable ST people below the poverty line to visit other parts of the country for a period of 10-12 days. The Ministry bears the entire expenditure. According to the scheme, each team/group, consisting of say 10 tribals, will include minimum three women. This enables them to broaden their perspective and also create awareness about the developments taking place in the country.

In some of its schemes the Ministry of Tribal Affairs takes special care to ensure 50% participation of girls or women. In the Ekalavya Model Residential Schools for instance, 50% of the seats are meant for ST girls. Under the Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship scheme for M. Phil and Ph.D, instructions have been issued to the UGC, which implements the scheme, to make efforts to award 50% of the fellowships to women. every year two tribals from each state / UT send one woman and one man.

“Under the Special Area Programme, SCA to TSP meant for community based income generating activities for BPL families, the guidelines stipulated that 30% of the funds are to be kept apart for 'women Component' and to be spent for income generation activities of women beneficiaries”

BENEFICIARY UNDER SCA TO TSP FOR 2007-08

Sl. No	Name of the State	Physical performance			
		Target	Achievement	No of Beneficiaries	
				Women	Total ST beneficiaries
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Andhra Pradesh	159287	224174	73977	224176
2	Assam	—	—	—	22653-IBS 276-SHG (families)
3	Bihar	—	—	—	—
4	Chattisgarh	—	—	—	—
5	Goa	—	—	—	—
6	Gujarat	—	—	—	—
7	Himachal Pradesh	78587	122891	—	122891
8	Jharkhand	—	—	—	—
9	Jammu & Kashmir	—	—	—	—
10	Karnataka	7679	7679	—	7679
11	Kerala	3000	3143	562	3143
12	Madhya Pradesh	148485	148485	44545	148485
13	Maharashtra	—	—	—	—
14	Manipur	3125	3125	—	3125 (families)
15	Orissa	85525	87512	27383	87512
16	Rajasthan	30713	29624	5122	29624
17	Sikkim	6683	6683	2990	6683
18	Tamil Nadu	—	—	—	—
19	Tripura	—	—	—	—
20	Uttar Pradesh	17761	481	—	481
21	Uttaranchal	—	—	—	—
22	West Bengal	25000	1768	10685	17268

ST beneficiaries : 6,47,940
 Families beneficiaries : 25,778
 Self Help Groups (SHG) : 276
 ST Women Beneficiaries : 1,65,264

CONCLUSION:

It has been argued that absence of a viable comprehensive tribal policy has been one of the main reasons for not providing focused attention to tackle tribal problems and implanting meaningful result oriented programmes. We do not

consider this to be so. In fact, the special provisions in the Constitution for protecting and promoting the interests of the Scheduled Tribes and raising the level of administration in the Scheduled Areas are by themselves a viable comprehensive development policy. In addition, various other national policies e.g. forests, health, women, etc., also spell out the policies in respect of such sectoral issues. Some national policies have bearing also on tribal issues and incorporate additional prescriptions for the scheduled tribe. Further, the well known Panchsheel for tribal development enunciated by the first prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru has all the components of National policy on Tribal welfare and Development. In recent years, the tribal sub-plan approach has also laid down norms and procedures for determining developmental inputs necessary for the sustained development of the tribal people and the tribal areas in an integrated manner. The malady has been that in tribal development there is acute absence of sincere and honest execution of agreed policies and programme. What is now needed is a codification or consolidation of various such measures/prescriptions advocated and /or implemented particularly because no serious shortcomings have come to the fore in such measures except of course, the all important issue of "implementation".

According to the Extension Act, the State legislation shall endeavour to follow the pattern of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution while designing the administrative arrangement for the Panchayat at district level. Adoption of Sixth Schedule Areas arrangement is very important for making panchayats, in real sense, institutions of self – government because under the Sixth Schedule, District councils perform legislative, judicial and administrative machinery dealing with social and non-social sectoral programmes would be put under the control of Panchayats. This will enable Gram Sabha to effectively deal with TSP and other issues for the good of the tribal people. The state governments have not paid enough attention in adopting of the Sixth Schedule Area arrangement for administrative structure and has ignored this provision completely while amending their Panchayats Acts. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs and also the Planning Commission have not shown enough enthusiasm in operationalising tribal sub plan programmes through Panchayats.

It is customary now in Indian planning module, to periodically change the nomenclature, pattern, scope, eligibility criteria and procedure for allocation of funds, etc. to cover up patent lapses in realizing the envisaged physical targets under ongoing schemes. In the present context, these include revised guidelines for (1) identification of BPL families (2) allocation of Special Central Assistance for TSP (3) implementation of programmes for PTGs and (4) continuance of a large component of Centrally Sponsored programmes. The institutional support system include (1) Ministry of Tribal Affairs (2) Separate ST Commission under Article 338 of the constitution (3) NSTFDC (4) SA&ST Commission under Article 339 of the Constitution. Seen in this perspective, there is more centralization in Tribal Development matters while the national objectives is decentralization. It is also worth mentioning that in recent times, at the Union Government level, a vast network of institutions have been created while implementation of tribal development programmes is with the states.

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