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## **TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF DARINGBADI BLOCK, ODISHA**



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*Abs tract:-Ever since the formulation of Indian Constitution, special emphasis has been laid on the development of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in India. An exhaustive review of nearly sixty years of planned effort to develop the scheduled tribes from their subsistence economy to a self-sufficient standard of living through a variety of development programs under tribal sub plan approach brings out a very dismal picture about the successfulness of the governmental programs at the macro level. The increased investment and change induced by numerous tribal development programs have helped the tribals but marginally, which is neither in commensurate with the needs of the tribals on the one hand and the money spent on the other. While the unsatisfactory performance of tribal development programs in the past have been mainly due to inadequate appreciation of general apathy towards problems of tribal people and their areas but the unresponsive institutional arrangements, indifferent and inefficient administrative system and the manner in which it implements or administers the development programs, the personnel and the role they play in tribal development, misuse of given funds, lack of proper understanding of tribal culture, their social structure, customs, traditions and values together have contributed to such failure. With this perspective in mind the present study was carried out in Daringbadi block of kandhamal district of Odisha by taking it as a case study during the conduction of the research study on "Tribal Development Through Institutional Arrangement in Daringbadi block, Kandhamal District, Odisha. The main objective of the study was to explore the dynamics of tribal development institutions and programs so as to find out the forces and factors that affect the functioning of the institutions and programs either helping or hindering the process of development. The study was carried out to examine various important segments of the programmes being implemented by the Government to provide an insight whether the programmes are being executed on the desired lines. While the analysis of the issues presented above was made on the basis of primary data collected from the field from a variety of respondents, a critical analysis of the approaches and policies and plains and programs was made on the basis of the secondary data collected from a variety of sources. The structure and processes of tribal development administration were analysed in the specific context of block, district as well as state of Odisha. Some of the findings of the study has been presented in this article.*

**Keyw ords:**Tribal Development , special emphasis , structure and processes .

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Constitution of India enjoins upon the state the responsibility to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the scheduled tribes and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. The fulfillment of the aspirations of tribal communities within the broader framework of a democratic political system engaged the attention of our leaders during the freedom struggle. When India attained independence, the framers of the Constitution supported the notion of tribal self-rule for the tribal communities for tackling the problems unique to the region and also to preserve the democratic traditions and cultural diversity of its people. Keeping in view the constitutional obligation as well as Government's policy on tribal development initiated by late Prime Minister, Pundit Nehru to develop the tribal people without shaking their traditional and cultural structures, a number of development programs have been undertaken for the overall socio-

economic and educational development of the tribal people. And to achieve these objectives, a number of development programs have been undertaken for the tribals which can be categorized into infrastructural development, human resource development and economic development programs. While basic infrastructural facilities like construction of roads and bridges, transport and communication, electricity, drinking water supply, major and medium irrigation, credit and marketing facilities have been given priority for speeding up the socio-economic development in the tribal areas, emphasis has also been given on human resource development through programs like establishment of educational institutions to provide informal and formal technical education, general education along with adult education.

Special provisions have also been made for the educational development of scheduled tribes through direct incentives, scholarships, stipends, hostel facilities through

residential ashram schools, material aids in the shape of stationery, books, uniforms etc. Further, emphasis has also been given on health and nutrition, manpower and employment of scheduled tribes keeping in mind the specific needs and requirements of the scheduled tribes.

As regards economic development programs are concerned, in addition to the community oriented infrastructural development programs, a number of family-oriented income generating schemes have been designed through a package of economic programs introduced in various sectors like agriculture and horticulture, minor irrigation and soil conservation, animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry, village and cottage industries etc. This has been done with a view to generating additional employment opportunities for the benefit of each of the tribal groups to enhance their earning capacity. It is true that no developmental activity for benefiting the tribal population can succeed unless exploitation of tribals in various forms is prevented. A number of protective and anti-exploitative policies and Acts were also enacted. The purpose of all these was to improve their quality of life.

Experience suggests that government's intense efforts to draw these tribes from subsistence economy into the wider economic framework of the country through legislative protection and progressive socio-economic programs have not met with much success. The increased investment and change induced by numerous tribal development programs have helped the tribals but marginally, which is neither in commensurate with the needs of the tribals on the one hand and the money spent on the other.

With this perspective in mind the present study was carried out in Daringbadi block of kandhamal district of Orissa by taking it as a case study. The main objective of the study was to explore the dynamics of tribal development institutions and programs so as to find out the forces and factors that affect the functioning of the institutions and programs either helping or hindering the process of development. It was also attempted to study the participation of tribals themselves in the decentralised governance and development administration with a view to examine the nature of transition from traditional 'village council' of tribals to modern local political institutions such as PRIs and their role and performance in tribal development in terms of their leadership pattern, awareness, perception, and participation in panchayat activities. Attempt was made to study the nature and extent of corruption and leakages in the delivery process as well as the role of development personnel in the implementation of development programs. While the analysis of the issues presented above was made on the basis of primary data collected from the field from a variety of respondents, a critical analysis of the approaches and policies and plans and programs was made on the basis of the secondary data collected from a variety of sources. The details of the findings of the study are presented in the following sections.

#### **Socio-Economic and Cultural Characteristics of Tribes of Kandhamal District**

Generally, tribal people of Kandhamal inhabit in

forests, hills, plateaus, and naturally isolated regions and hence are designated as adivasi, girijan, vanyajali (aboriginals, hill-people, forest dwellers) and several such other nomenclatures which signify either their ecological, economic or historical cultural characteristics. At this juncture, it needs to be mentioned that among the various tribes living in the district, the villages and beneficiaries selected for the present study mostly belong to the numerically dominant Kondh tribes with a few exceptions. The Kondhs, or the Kui, as they call themselves, are the largest tribal groups in Orissa numbering over one million. With a sex ratio of 1030 females per 1000 males, their total population was recorded to be 9, 89,342 as per 2001 census. Usually the Kondhs of Kandhamal practise shifting cultivation, settled agriculture and animal husbandry. Besides, they also work as wage earners, hunter and food gatherers. With the increase in population and increasing land alienation, the amount of agricultural land started decreasing. Shortage of rainfall, lack of irrigation facility and low fertility of the soil resulted in poor yield. Economic insecurity from agricultural land forced the Kondhs to go for other occupations.

#### **Daringbadi Block: A short Profile**

Daringbadi block located at a 125 KMs distant from the district head quarter, Phulbani is considered to be the most vulnerable block in the district in terms of poverty, poor infrastructure and various other forms of backwardness. Its geographical area is of 1211 square KMs was established in a golden Morning on dtd. 26-01-1961 in Boudh & Phulbani District. As per 2001 data, the block consists of 24 Gram Panchayats and 283 revenue villages inhabiting 19519 households with 93530 populations. Out of which ST population is 54783 that is more than 58 percent of total population.

#### **Findings on Socio-cultural constraints of Tribals Versus current educational practices:**

There are certain socio-cultural constraints in a tribal society, which render the spread of formal education difficult among the tribes. Tribal ecosystem, their habitat, and home atmosphere constitute a major constraint that prevents generation of any zeal for formal education. For the tribals, forest is the perennial source of food, fodder, drink, shelter, pleasure, pastime and games. The glamour of tribal habitat is so strong that the tribal child right from infancy remains submerged and inebriated in the splendour and vehemence of its richness and scenic beauty. This fascinates the tribal child and very quickly he becomes an inextricable part of his habitat.

When a tribal child comes to school leaving the home atmosphere, he finds himself in an altogether different world. He is periodically separated from the company of his usual peers and on the contrary, asked to adjust to the discipline of the school, which he disdains as Curtailment of his freedom. In addition to this, the village schoolteacher, who is most often a non-tribal gable to speak; tribal language, scares the little tribal child. The home culture of the tribal child and the school culture run almost parallel to each other. Therefore, the tribal child loses normal composure in the

school atmosphere.

Language is a part, product and vehicle of culture and as such, it is very crucial for education. A child's informal education and the process of enculturation are accomplished through his mother tongue. According to Bebura, a child's cognitive system is in perfect correlation with its language system and hence, his receptivity is higher when he is taught in his mother tongue. But in India, hardly any attempt has been made to standardise tribal languages by developing scripts, elaborating lexis and writing grammar and dictionaries in tribal languages to impart education to them in their vernacular. Except in the case of very few tribal languages, education in the tribal languages has not been possible so far. A tribal child, coming to the school for the first time, finds all the activities of the school conducted in a language, which he cannot follow. The difference between home language and school language acts as a major barrier for the tribal children. When countries all over the world have special educational programs for their ethnic minorities, in India, we hardly have any special educational program for the tribals. Of course, in Orissa and some other states like Maharashtra, there are separate schools for tribal children. But these schools have nothing special to offer or cater to the special educational needs of tribal students except that they are residential schools where the expenses are borne by the government.

Studying on the tribal economy it was understood that the tribal economy in most cases, is below the subsistence level. Economic pursuits of tribals are merely struggles for survival in which all members of the family are engaged. Even the small children of school going age do not remain idle in tribal societies. They assist their parents in a variety of ways. Because of their family structure, which is in most cases nuclear, they take care of their younger brothers and sisters in the absence of their parents, tend the domestic animals and birds and remain useful to parents as apprentices. As such, they are not spared for schooling because their absence at home brings additional problems to their parents.

Another distinct phenomenon in tribal societies observed was their drinking habit. Their go-happy life prompts them to live on today, but not for tomorrow. They do not think of tomorrow. Whatever they earn as their wages, particularly the male tribals spend a substantial part of their earning on drinking alcohol. Drinking of desi daru (country liquor) not only deprives their family members of the basic minimum of life, but also kills their mental faculty. They fail to perceive and think critically of their development. The drunkard father hardly pays any attention towards the educational needs and requirements of his son and daughter, if at all they are going to school.

Ignorance about tribal social structure, their economy, culture, and more particularly the way life is organised for the poor tribals among planners and administrators contribute largely towards the failure of development programs. Often the background of the planners and administrators (who are mostly non-tribals) and the background of the people they work for are not similar. The two live in world poles apart. As Mathur rightly remarked, one harmful consequence of the dissimilarity in

background is that the development programs are influenced more by what the planners think the people need, than by what the people think they need for themselves." Ultimately, the development programs prepared in disregard of the socio-cultural practices and without taking the needs and requirements of the tribals into considerations fail to bring the expected results.

#### **Findings on Corruption and Leakages in the Delivery Process**

Needless to mention that the quality and quantum of development that we have achieved so far is far from being satisfactory, when we compare it with the amount of money spent over the years. Corruption and leakages in the delivery process, among others, have largely contributed to the failure of most of the development programs meant for tribals. Large-scale leakages in the delivery process and other forms of corruption in the implementation of development programs have rendered the development administration ineffective and incapable of realising the socio-economic and educational development of the tribals. Taking undue advantage of the ignorance of the poor and illiterate tribals, development officials exploit them and corner lots of money. This is the view commonly held among the academics, intelligentsia and the Non-Governmental Organisations. In the course of the present inquiry, most of the tribal beneficiaries complained that invariably they had to give some kind of commission for getting some form of assistance under the development programs. While the complaint was made by beneficiaries cutting across the schemes, the people who were alleged to have taken commission was not confined to the VLWs or other block level officials alone. In fact, the representatives of the people themselves like Ward Members and Sarpanches did take commission for helping the tribals to obtain some assistance.

#### **Findings on the Suitable Personnel Policy & Institutional Arrangements and their Role in Implementation of Development Programs**

Personnel constitute the bedrock of an administrative system. Successful functioning of an administrative system or that of any organisation depends on the role that the personnel play in discharging their duties towards achieving the organisational objectives. As the institutional arrangement for tribal development consists of the personnel (their interacting roles), organisations and agencies (structure) and procedures (process), the functioning of tribal development institutions and administration, to a great extent, depends upon the underlying psychological propensities, i.e. personnel's beliefs, values, attitudes and motivation, etc. which influence their interactions and largely determine the performance of the system. Notwithstanding the Government of India's policy for tribal development that we should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development, it has not been possible so far to employ adequate number of tribals in the tribal areas for the task of implementing the development programs. In contradiction to the policy framework that some technical personnel from outside would no doubt be needed especially in the beginning and we should avoid introducing too many

outsiders into tribal areas, the government has been sending more and more outsiders into tribal areas on transfer as a measure of punishment. Since employees transferred to tribal areas on punishment can not be expected to put their heart into work, they always spend time and energy seeking transfer elsewhere. This is not to deny that there are no qualified personnel working in the tribal areas. In fact, there are some honest, efficient and committed officials who give their best for the development of the tribals. But their number is very less. Out of 15 officials interviewed for the purpose at district level, 7 were found to be quite competent and concerned about the tribals, their problems and worked sincerely and efficiently for improving the life of the tribals. But in case of 65 officials interacted at GP level around 60% of them are incapable and not committed. In fact, the researcher came across some officials, who in addition to their routine duty used to go out of their way to help the tribals. But the number of such committed officials was very less.

Since the performance of tribal development depends largely on the role that the personnel play in achieving the organisational objectives, there is a pressing need for the recruitment of right kind of personnel on the basis of their aptitude for and understanding of the tribal problem and sympathy and empathy for the tribals. Further, value orientation of personnel through orientation and training programs may help in promoting extension motivation among the officials, which can help ensure the credibility of the development administrative system to a large extent. From an analysis of the structure and processes of the institutional arrangements for tribal development, it was found that the major stumbling block in the development of the tribal communities has been the difficulty of state governments in evolving a viable institutional structure and administrative system and procedures to cater to the specific needs of the tribals.

With a view to finding out the reasons for the unsuccessful performance of tribal development programs, the study focussed upon crucial issues like their awareness on the development programs, participation in planning and decision making, Participation in Palli and Gram Sabha, selection of beneficiaries, selection of specific schemes by the beneficiaries either on their choice or by imposition, skill upgradation training, monitoring and visits of officials etc. almost all the findings were unsatisfactory.

#### **Findings on Education, Awareness and orientation**

The educational attainment of tribal beneficiaries of the sample villages under the study shows that out of 350 beneficiaries interviewed 148(42.28%) are illiterate and 84 (24%) are only literate. The rest less than 46% are literate with schooling ranging from only literate to 10+2 standard. It further shows that only 2 (0.57) beneficiaries out of 350 beneficiaries taken for study have attained +2 standard and 11 beneficiaries (3.14) have attained high school which shows that majority of the tribal people living in remote area of this block are either illiterate or not even attained class one.

A comparison between panchayats close to the block and district headquarters and of the panchayats

situated in far off places in this respect shows that the dependence on government officials was more in case of the latter. While the percentage of motivation by government officials was comparatively less in case of panchayats situated near the block and district headquarters, in other panchayats situated far from the block headquarters, the dependence on government officials was very high.

#### **Findings on Monitoring, Supervision and Coordination**

While co-ordination and integration of efforts of many developmental departments, actors and agents is integral to the administration of developmental programs, monitoring, supervision and follow-up action are critical to the successful implementation of any program of social and economic change. Especially when it involves programs like agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, in addition to the extension services required from time to time, follow-up action through frequent field visits and supervision are essential for ensuring the smooth running of the programs. But unfortunately, as discussed earlier in the preceding chapter, co-ordination, integration, follow-up action, monitoring and supervision in the implementation of tribal development programs in the study area has been woefully inadequate.

From the focus group discussion and personal interviews of the tribal beneficiaries of different development programs particularly under the goatary, poultry, turmeric cultivation sectors it was revealed that the development officials pay scant attention to these rather neglected but crucial matters. Since most of the tribal beneficiaries are illiterate, ignorant, and not properly trained in the profession and the program under which they are provided developmental assistance, it becomes the responsibility of the development officials to help and guide the beneficiaries in the execution of those programs to make it a success.

Though 73d Constitutional amendment Act had created a large number of representative and leadership positions for the Scheduled Tribe people, the participation and performance of the tribals in PRIs and their role in tribal development has not been very satisfactory- From the field work conducted in 12 Gram Panchayats in the interior highland areas of Daringbadi block reveals that most of the ward members were elected unopposed. The election of a large number of tribal ward members as unopposed reflects, not the unanimity among the people of a ward to elect a person of common choice but, lack of interest among the people to contest election and take part in Panchayat activities. The participation of tribal leaders in decision-making, planning and other developmental activities was found to be very limited. Though tribal members had not much idea about their role and the role of panchayats in the development of their villages, they evinced interest in PRIs and used to attend the meetings regularly. But they hardly take part in the discussions and deliberations. They usually agree what the sarpanches or Panchayat Executive officers (PEO/VLW) used to say and carry the message to their respective constituencies. A remarkable thing that we noticed in the tribal areas was that compared to male tribal representatives, the female tribal panchayat members were

more vocal and active in taking part in the panchayat affairs. But because of their limited knowledge and lack of awareness and experience about procedural matters and other details they used to be marginalised by the dominant sarapanch and other members of the Panchayats.

**Rethinking on Institutional mechanism for Tribal development:**

At present institutions working for the tribal development is far away from the development needs of the tribal. Provision of financial assistance to the poor, ignorant and illiterate is not going to solve their problem without paying attention to their inalienable rights and dignity, educational, morale and cultural needs. Visible institutions are located far away from them and invisible institutions and principles are never applied in the tribal development process. Tribal development institutions should be as close as to the tribal people and should be headed by a tribal person. Nodal functionaries of every sections of tribal development should be headed by the tribal persons. Each programs , schemes formulated for tribal development need to be widely consulted involving the tribal functionaries working on the ground.

**Perspective Planning:**

Perspective Planning for the development of SCs and STs should be prepared by setting clear objectives, resources available/ requirement, outcomes and goals with periodic bench mark surveys for the regions, Districts, ITDPs/ITDAs, MADAs, Clusters (areas, villages) by setting realistic targets.

**Allocation of proper resources:** States/U.Ts and Central Ministries/ Depts. are not allocating funds proportionate to SC and ST population towards Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan in their annual Plans which need to be looked into.

**Decentralized functional autonomy:** The guidelines for the decentralized district level planning, allocation of resources of at least 30% to district bodies by most of the States are yet to follow this. More financial and executive powers need to be given to the implementing agencies at the District/Project level functionaries with infrastructure and supporting mechanism for timely execution of projects with the involvement of Sts.

**Integrated Planning:** Integrated planning of the sectoral departments programmes and execution of common programmes at the District and project level through pooling of resources and single line administration advocated in tribal areas is not working effectively though it is in place in some States like A.P and Orissa. It needs attention.

**Effective Monitoring mechanism:** Monitoring mechanism observed is weak in the States and is being done by the nodal social welfare and tribal welfare departments only for their own departmental schemes and there is no proper and regular monitoring mechanism for the overall SCP and TSP programmes/ schemes and 20 point programme at the State,

District, Block and village level. Monitoring Committees at the State, District and Block level need to be established and functionally operative. The tribal people need to be oriented to share the responsibility in this regard owning the program.

**Review Meetings:** The review meetings are irregular and routine in nature. Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings in Scheduled Areas which are mandatory are not regular. The State Governor's report is not filed regularly. It needs special attention.

**Social Audit:** Every State need to have Social Audit with the involvement of elected representatives, beneficiaries and credited VOs/NGOs on the completed programmes/schemes. Personnel posting in Scheduled Areas: Deployment of efficient, sincere and honest Officers at the DRDAs, ITDAs, Blocks and GPs needs to be ensured for the effective implementation of SCP and TSP and other developmental programmes with proper incentives for the posting and functional efficiency for the successful implementation of the strategies and schemes.

**The role of nodal Ministries and Planning Commission:**

The nodal Ministries of Social Justice & Empowerment and Tribal Affairs have issued guidelines for SCA to SCP, SCA to TSP and Article 275 (1) of the Constitution besides operating many of the fully or partially central supported schemes need to be implemented effectively through timely and proper releases, monitoring by periodic field visits, calling of reports and conducting evaluation.

**The role of NGOs:** The involvement of NGOs, SHGs or any responsible CSOs based at local level is to be strengthened in development activities of STs and SCs. Their role in each state need to be charted out by the State to supplement the efforts of the state administration. Their involvement in planning, information dissemination, conducting of Social Audit and effective monitoring of Government programmes need to be properly chalked out. However, the credentials of VOs/NGOs and their activities need to be ascertained before giving them responsibility.

**CONCLUSION**

Making institutional arrangement and administering tribal development process is a very difficult task. It depends upon a lot of factors and forces that comprise the institutional arrangement and development administration as well the environment in which it operates. So to help strengthen the system of tribal development institutions and administration to carry out the tribal development programmes in an efficient manner, the study comes out with the suggestions and policy prescriptions. Based on the findings and the perceptions developed in the course of the investigation, we suggest a modified operational model of tribal development institutions which can help overcome the shortcomings and the lacunae in providing better administration of development programmes.

While the structure of the institutional arrangement and administrative system must be made simple,

transparency and accountability should be brought into the operation of the system. Tribal development consists of deliberate efforts by the tribals along with planners, administrators and the voluntary organisations, which need to be reoriented towards the new cultural and social ways of life and actions. It is the system of social relations and cultural understandings, which are crucial to the success or failure of tribal development programmes. In order to have greater chances of success, relevant cultural and social factors must therefore be integrated in to the planning and administration of all plans and programmes. It would be worthwhile, if some of the tribal representatives along with representatives from NGOs are made a part of the development process right at the level of formulation of different development programmes for the tribals.

People should develop along the lines of their own genius and should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional art and culture. Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. We shall train them to shoulder some responsibility and build up ownership in the program implementation. Some technical personnel from outside will no doubt, be needed, specially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory. We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions. We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but the reality of human character that is evolved.

Since the focus of the study was to explore the dynamics of tribal development institutions and program in the form of forces and factors that affect the functioning of tribal development process, it is obvious that we did not intend to come out with an alternative system of tribal development process. Placing the study within the normative framework of the tribal development institutions and administration as adopted by the Government of India in pursuance of protection development and integration approach; we rather attempted to find out the lacunae and the shortcomings in the operation of the system. We, therefore, sincerely hope that the suggestions and policy prescriptions made above on the basis of the findings of the study and the perceptions developed during the investigation will go a long way in reinventing the tribal development machinery for increased developmental performance with efficiency, effective people's participation and accountability.

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<sup>1</sup>N. K. Behura, "Constraints in Tribal Culture for Formal Education", in Buddhadeb Chaudhuri (ed.), *Tribal Transformation in India*, Volume TV, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1992.

<sup>2</sup>The USA has educational programs like Early Childhood Project, Experimental Nursery School Programmes, Bilingual and Bicultural Education Programmes, Humanistic Education Programmes etc. which are primarily meant for the American Indians and other ethnic minority groups in the country. Britain has such educational programs as Sesame Street Television Programme, Bernstein Group Programmes for its emigrants and ethnic minority groups. New Zealand has Maori Play Centres for its Maori learners.

<sup>3</sup>Liquor prepared indigenously out of rice, mahua flowers and many other forest produce.

<sup>4</sup>In order not to be caught by police, the tribals or the Liquor vendors prepare daru in the forest or on the hilltop from a secluded place. In a hurry to finish the job as quickly as possible, and to have quick fermentation and maximum return, the liquor vendors and the tribals often apply chemicals and fertilisers. While this ensures quick fermentation and maximum return, in the ultimate analysis, it not only kills the mental faculty of the people, who take it, but also make most of them physically sick and weak.

<sup>5</sup>H. M. Mathur, *Anthropology and Tribal Development in Traditional Societies*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995.

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