



Tribal Development in Odisha: Some Development Approach

NITYANANDA BARIK

Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Political Science, Utkal University, Odisha

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Abstract: Government of India has taken a number of development approach for socio economic and cultural upliftment of tribal people in the country. The post independent India has been witnessing implementation and execution tribal welfare policies and programme. Odisha is one of the Eastern part state where tribal people are living in most of the districts. The government of Odisha has carried out a number of welfare measures for the tribal people. As such, the formation of special department at the government level, formation of tribal blocks, Tribal Sub Plan approach, special project implementation, special plan for KBK districts, Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Programmes (OTELP), establishment of tribal academy and research institute, establishment of tribal cooperatives are the thrust areas for tribal development in Odisha. Besides that efforts are made towards tribal women and girl empowerment. The provision for availing scholarship towards education of tribal children is one of the successful initiatives. Thus, the present article is highlighting some of the tribal welfare provisions in the state of Odisha.

Keywords: Tribal, Schemes, programmes, empowerment, Livelihood, Project

Introduction

Scheduled tribe is a community which is isolated from the urban community. Normally, these community lives in remote areas and hilly areas. They depend upon forests for their livelihood and they believe in nature strongly. Now a days tribal people are found in the entire globe. It implies that they are found in many regions of the world and most of the tribal people are poorest among the poor. The tribal community comprises of different sub communities which adopts their socio-economic life style. In India, most of the tribal communities are residing in the state of Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, Maharastra, Gujrat, Rajasthan, West Bengal etc.

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The existence of tribal community has started from very beginning of the society. They are called as the ancient civilization people. They constitute as an integral part of the community where they live. In ancient period, the aboriginal tribes continued to stay in isolation at dense and interior forests with little or no interaction with other people. Historians opined that the early tribal community did not require any tribal policy as they maintain their lives with association with forests and nature. The mediaeval history of India witnessed the rise of tribal community. They revolted against the Muslim rulers with strong dedication. Even few tribal people joined as warriors which ultimately assisted to establish kingdoms inhabited by their peoples. The Rajput and the Gond Kingdoms were the classic examples of evolution. But it can be pointed that no such tribal policy had been initiated during early part of mediaeval period in the regime of Muslim rulers. The later medieval period witnessed that the Muslim rulers adopted a patronizing attitude towards tribal chieftains. They understood the need of tribal community and recognized their courage and authority. As such, the rulers gave them some of the high positions in the administrative hierarchy.

During the British regime in India, tribals were isolated from the mainstream. Under the Scheduled District Act of 1874 the areas of tribal community remained administratively separate. The same provision and principles continued upto commencement of Government of India Act 1919 and Government of India Act 1956 (Verrier, 1943). But the socio-economic status of tribal community had been changed after independence of India. The Constituent Assembly understood the problem of tribal community and took initiation for inclusion of tribal in the mainstream of development. The Government of India followed the policy of isolation in a slightly modified form. As such, special care and welfare measures had been taken to the partial exclusion of tribal areas. In the later part such category of isolation contributed to form an independent Naga state and Jharkhand.

Tribes in Odisha

Odisha stood third largest concentration of tribal population in the country where there were Sixty Two different tribal communities including Twelve Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Around 44.70% of the State's geographical area has been identified as Scheduled Area, extends over 118 Blocks, 21 Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA) and 46 Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) pockets (Mohanty, 2011). The majority tribal peoples are living in many districts of Odisha, including, Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Malakanagiri, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Kandhamal, Gajapati, Keonjhar,

Balasore districts. According to the information of SC & ST Research and Training Institute, Bhubaneswar, 62 categories of tribal Communities have been existed in Odisha These are named as “Bagta, Baiga, Banjara, Bathudi, Bhatra, Bhuyan, Bhumia, Bhumij, Bhunjia, Binjhal, Binjhia, Birhor, Banda (Paroja), Chenchu, Dal, Desua, Dharua, Didayi, Gadaba, Gandia, Ghara, Gond, Ho, Holva, Jatpur, Juang, Kandha Gouda, Kawar, Kharia, Kharwar, Khond, Kisan, Kol, Kolah, Koli, Kondadora, Kora, Korua, Kotia, Koya, Kulis, Lodha, Madia, Mahali, Mankidi, Mankirdia, Matya (Matia), Mirdhas, Munda, Mundari, Omanatya, Oraon, Parenga, Paroja, Pentia, Rajuar, Santal, Saora, Shabar and Tharua”.

Tribal Development Perspectives in Odisha

In post independent period, India saw many development programmes and policies for the development of tribal people. It is impressive that the efforts of B.R. Ambedkar empowered the backward class community. As such, the tribal welfare measures continued to bring them into main stream of development. In no way the Odisha state remained behind it. It implies that Odisha state took many important and relevant steps towards tribal development approach in terms of socio-economic-cultural aspects. Thus, some of the important steps have been placed below:

(i) Formation of Separate Department

A Committee during British regime came to Odisha (earlier it was Orissa) in the year 1938 and submitted its report on the status of backwardness of the tribal people and tribal regions. That report was reviewed in 1946 by the Backward Classes Welfare Section. It resulted in the formation of a separate department in Odisha in the year 1948. That department was called as Backward Class Welfare Department. In the later part, such department was renamed as Rural Welfare Department. At present, it is converted into the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Department, Government of Odisha under the administrative control of one Minister. In Odisha, Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) was formed in the year 1950. Its aim was to advise Government of Odisha in the field of Scheduled development perspectives. It also emphasized on the welfare measures of tribal community and reported to Government of Odisha time to time.

(ii) Formation of Tribal Blocks

A special project, named as, Multipurpose Tribal Blocks have been formed in the state of Odisha under the banner of Community Development Programmes, Government

of India. Its objectives were to make overall development of tribal people of Odisha in terms of their culture, tradition, livelihood, life, safeguarding land, protecting forest, forest based resources, and allied aspects linked to tribal people. On the recommendation of Elwin Committee¹ in the year 1960, the Odisha Government could able to start tribal blocks. Such tribal blocks were constituted on the principles that a block must comprised 50% of the tribal people as per the norms of the recommendations of such Committee (Rath, 2011).

(iii) Tribal Sub-Plan

During the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) 'A Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)' was implemented. Such plan was meant to make assessment on the status of tribal community those who inhabited at tribal concentrated areas and tribal dispersed areas. Such plan was constituted with the broad objectives, such as to make a assessment on the increasing gap between tribal and non-tribal communities and to make steps for reducing such gap, to develop the quality of life of tribal community, to safeguard the interest of tribal people, to wipe out the exploitation and discrimination as faced by tribal people, decreasing the rate of bonded labour, utilizing forest based land, reforming in land pattern and over all socio economic development. The funds for TSP had been allocated from different sources of sanctioned schemes of Government of India. The outline parameter had been given to "protect tribal interests from liquor vendors, land alienation, moneylending and collection of forest produce". The Odisha state also adopted the Tribal Sub-Plan approach in 1979 with focus to develop the tribal community. Its areas were to cover where Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP) had been launched or were to launch. As such Odisha State developed 118 Tribal Development Blocks over 21 ITDP. The Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA) became the executive authority for planning and execution of tribal development programmes in the earmarked areas. As such, it covered 1,549 Gram Panchayats (GPs) and 17,597 villages in Odisha. (Padhi & Panigrahi).

(iv) Special Project Implementation

For the all-round development of tribal communities of Odisha, a number of special projects had been implemented by the Central Government and State Government. During 1988, a special tribal project with financial support from IFAD (International Fund for Agriculture Development) had been started. The project was supposed to be ended within 14 years at Kashipur block of Rayagada district in two phases. The aim and objective of the said project was to develop in all sectors including education,

health, livelihood, agriculture etc. But, in the later part, it failed to cover full term of the project. During continuance of the project for seven years it was found that slight changes occurred among the tribals of Kashipur block. In another instances, an Integrated Livestock Development Project had been started with the support of DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency) in Koraput district of Odisha state. It was stopped in the year 2000 during the pilot project. But, other opportunities in the form of Long Term Action Plan (LTAP) came to the tribal communities of KBK (Koraput, Bolangir, Kalahandi district) region.

In the year 2003-04, the Government of Odisha took another step for implementing a special project for the enhancement of status of tribal communities. The project was named as “Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Programme” (OTELP). It was continued 7 districts, that is, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Koraput, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Malakanagiri and Nabarangpur of Southern region of Odisha in the initial stage. Such project proceeded with financial assistance from International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), Department for International Development (DFID) and World Food Programme (WFP) for period of 10 years. As it was long term project, it aimed at standardising the food habits, enhancing in the pattern of livelihoods, promoting sustainable natural resources and developing socio economic status.

(v) Special Plan for KBK

The Long Term Action Plan (LTAP) had been implemented in the in KBK² districts which comprises total of Eight (8) districts, Fourteen (14) subdivision, Thirty seven (37) Tehsils, Eighty (80) blocks, one thousand four hundred thirty seven (1437) gram panchayats, twelve thousands two hundred ninety three (12293) villages and areas of 47,810.2 Sq. kms. (Padhi & Panigrahi). The implementation of said project was settled by the Government of India in the year 1995. The project aimed at reaching its targets within initial period of seven years. Its objective was to integrate the locally available resources with the development measures. But the project could not progress significantly in improving the socio-economic conditions of people of tribal communities. During the period 1998-99 to 2006-07, the KBK project was needed to revise as per the sectoral development situation in the field of drought management, poverty eradication, education and health facilities, life culture, reducing mortality rate, employment opportunities, social security and infrastructural development. The fund was allocated to different areas of development perspective programmes and was monitored by the administrative mechanism. Basically, it focussed on the major programmes like emergency feeding for elderly people, nutritious food for children,

safe drinking water, medical and health care services, mobile health units, irrigation of agricultural land, water shed management, educating tribal girls, reducing drop out rate etc.

(vi) Academy of Tribal Dialect and Culture (ATDC)

The Academy of Tribal Dialect and Culture (ATDC) has been functioning at Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha State, since 1979. The aims and objectives of the institute is to improve high quality of research work on tribal. However, following objectives have been associated with the institute. These includes, “Preserving and promoting tribal dialect, art and culture; Organising tribal dialect training centres; Promoting study, dissemination and compilation of tribal literature; Preparation of grammar books and primers in tribal languages; Conducting cultural programmes like seminars, conferences and tribal exhibitions to depict tribal art, culture and heritage; Publication of works on tribal art, crafts, culture and heritage, social customs, language and dialect ; To encourage and organise adult literacy programmes in tribal areas”.

(vii) Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe Research and Training Institute

The Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe Research and Training Institute has been functioning since 1952 at Bhubaneswar. This institute also primarily focuses on the research and training activities for tribal. In another side, it emphasizes on broad objectives which includes “Research activities for diagnostic and monographic studies of the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes; Determination of ethnic status of different communities, STs or SCs; Identification of primitive tribes and pockets to be covered under ITDP”.

(viii) Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation of Odisha Limited (TDCCOL)

The TDCCOL has been registered under the Orissa Cooperative Societies Act, 1962 and has been functioning with effect from 4th October 1967 as an apex cooperative organisation. The main objectives of this Corporation are “To procure Minor Forest Produce (MFP) and Surplus Agriculture Produce (SAP) collected by the tribals at fair and remunerative prices and to arrange their marketing; To supply essential commodities and other consumer goods to tribals at fair price; To arrange for the processing of procured commodities with a view to adding value and creating employment opportunities; To advance consumption-cum-production loans to the tribals in order to protect them from moneylenders”.

Critical Assessment

The Tribal Development Programme in India reached in a critical situation in facing major hurdles during war in the year 1962 to 1965. Again, the rising of Maoists / Naxalites in the forest-based areas hindered the continuation of development projects. Though such organization worked for the benefit of tribal community, yet they stood against the Government schemes and policies. The organizations had been managed and strengthened by the tribal youth and therefore they protected the interest of their existing traditions, customs, rituals and beliefs. In some occasions, tribals reacted and came forward for the social movement against the Government policies. Due to the displacement policies of the Government, tribal people revolted and demonstrated against the Government. Though, the Community Development Programme of India initially focussed on the development of tribal people, but it did not succeed due to its gap in policy formulation and implementation in the first and second five year plan period. Even in the fourth five year plan (1969–74) the benefits of planned expenditures had not reached the tribal community as desired primarily because of their socio-cultural set up.

Conclusion

The presence of tribal population has become a distinguishing feature in the history of Odisha. The tribal people have always been an important segment of the total population. Though they were more numerous in ancient and medieval Odisha, but today they possess a sizable number of the population. The population resides as the indigenous tribal population, mostly in the north – western and south western districts of Odisha with traditional means of livelihood. They depend on forests for their livelihood. During the post independent period, Odisha has implemented a number projects and development perspectives for the tribal community. These policies have been made to empower the tribals in terms of education, health, employment, etc. Thus, in this way the progressive indicators for tribal community in Odisha have been increased and seem to reach at the target point.

Notes

1. Verrier Elwin, a noted Anthropologist, submitted report as chairman of the Elwin Committee to Government of India in 1960 titled as “Report of Special Multipurpose Block Committee”. The in Chapter-III of report has been reprinted as “Tribal Series-I” by Sabara Sanskruti Gabesana Kendra, Koraput.

2. KBK districts consists of eight districts namely, Koraput, Rayagada, Malakanagiri, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Bolangir and Sonepur.

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