

Economic marginalization: A case for scheduled tribes of India

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Abstract

The present research effort emphasizes over the perpetuating and continuous isolation, segregation and remonstrance to inclusion of the scheduled tribes of India into mainstream development inertia and the factors that promulgate such exclusion in their case. The literature analysis gives an in depth understanding of the historical events that have cemented these tribes to such conditions of poverty, inaccessibility, economic and social primitiveness. It also includes public and government policy decisions as well as individual efforts towards these tribes inclusion and moreover it leads us to some important and pragmatic solutions and recommendations which can serve remove the present inadequacies towards holistic inclusion and ensure propagation of economic autonomy to the scheduled tribes while preserving their cultural idiosyncrasy.

Keywords: Scheduled Tribes, poverty, economic backwardness, isolation, development, holistic inclusion, economic autonomy, cultural idiosyncrasy

Introduction

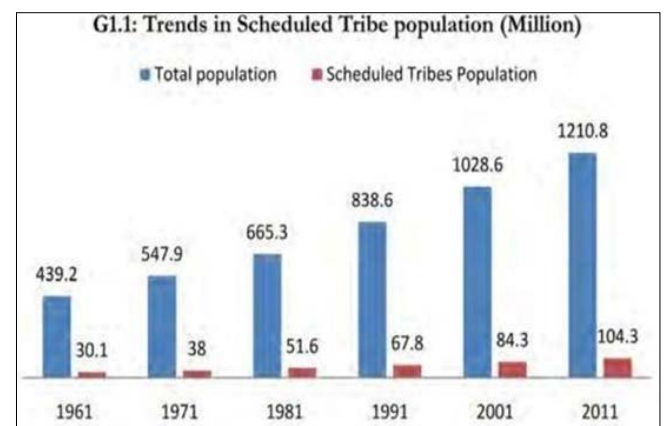
Today our nation stands on the pedestal of taking off towards becoming a developed nation; however this goal cannot be realized until the people and the communities they belong to continue to be neglected and are forced to remain into a state of poverty exclusion hunger and unemployment our nation though renowned for its diversity in ethnic populations at times fails to evidently realize its fragmented scenario and inequality I distribution that relegates many communities to live a life of adversity as in comparison to the populace that is able to reap the tremendous benefits of scientific and economic growth. The purpose of this research isn't only to describe another marginalized ethnic group but also to describe the stark inequality that remains to be a part of our nation even after seven and a half decades of independence. The emphasis of this effort is to highlight the problem of Economic marginalization of the scheduled tribes of India. One of the major reasons of choosing this segment of population is that India's Scheduled Tribes (STs) being an important part approximately 8.6% of the country's population, with diverse cultures, traditions, and histories despite their rich heritage, STs have historically faced marginalization, exclusion, and vulnerability, holding back their social, economic, and human development. This research paper aims to explore the complex issues surrounding ST's inclusion and development, examining the current demographic conditions, and government initiatives aimed at promoting their welfare and development. By analyzing the challenges that are presently being the factors that are at the root of causing hindrance this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the ST's situation and inform policies and interventions that can promote their development and integration into mainstream society, while preserving their cultural identity and promoting their economic self sufficiency and opening up opportunities of perpetual prosperity.

Present Demographic Condition

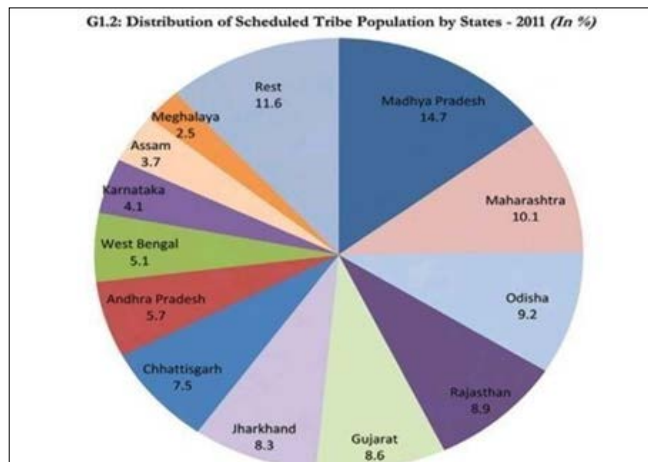
Now we shift our focus over the present conditions in which these scheduled tribes find themselves in and how they continue to remain under vulnerable and inaccessible situations.

- Scheduled tribes are found to be present in 30 states and union territories and the individual ethnic tribes are defined to be around 705.
- The population of tribes as per census 2011 stands to at 10.43 crore, which makes about
- 8.6 percent of the population. 89.97 % of this population resides in rural areas while only
- 10.03 percent have adapted to urban life.
- The growth of tribal population has been around 23.66 percent from 2001 to 2011 which is higher than the total population growth rate which had stood at 17.69 %
- Sex ratio amongst Scheduled tribes shows a promising figure as it stands at 990 females per 1000 males while the rest of the country this ratio was 940 females per 1000 males. (Indian Statistical Report)

A deeper analysis of the trends of population growth of scheduled tribes is described here:



Mostly these tribes reside in two geographical regions of the country Central India and the north Eastern region. A major chunk of this population resides in central India in highly remote terrains. Madhya Pradesh (14.69%), Maharashtra (10.69%).



Orissa (9.2%), Gujarat (8.55%), Rajasthan (8.86%). Other areas include north eastern states (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh).

Literacy rates are described as proportion of people above the age of 7 who can read and write at least in one recognized language. Although Literacy rates amongst the scheduled tribes has showcased improvement ,still on many parameters it falters to extend its reach to a effective scale the literacy gap for notice between tribal men and woman has not shown any significant decline

The literacy rates showed a growth rate of 11.86 % points from 2001 to 2011 for ST's while for the rest of the population it was 8.15% points which gave a promising lookout however during the same time period the male female literacy gap fell by approximately 5%.

S2.3: Percentage Enrolment of ST students to all categories			
Year	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary
1995-1996	8.8	6.1	4.9
1996-1997	9.2	6.3	4.9
1998-1999	9.6	6.7	5.1
1999-2000	9.4	6.9	5.0
2000-2001	9.7	7.2	5.4
2002-2003	9.7	6.9	5.4
2003-2004	9.8	7.5	5.6
2004-2005	10.5	8.1	5.6
2005-2006	10.6	8.5	5.7
2006-2007	10.8	8.5	6.1
2007-2008	10.8	8.2	6.3
2009-2010	11.2	8.6	6.3
2010-2011	11.0	8.7	6.4

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, M/HRD, 2010-11

Enrollment Rates: Amongst ST's hasn't shown much improvements either there has been slender growth in these numbers as can be witnessed.

Dropout Rates: Refer to the amount of students who leave school in a particular year and not renew further education.It

stands as an evaluative indicator that allows to understand the state of literacy of a community as well as their incapability to complete a specific standard of education.

In case of tribal communities these numbers are staggering at higher elementary stages of formal education.

Healthcare

Healthcare facilities and its availability stand as one of the most critical indicators that guarantee the survival and welfare of a population. A look towards the health and nutritional state of Tribal population is discussed further:

India/State	Under-5 Mortality Rate Among ST, 2001 and 2005-06		Other	
	2001	2005	2005	Ratio
Sikkim	91	36	60	0.60
Nagaland	96	66	54	1.22
Maharashtra	86	70	47	1.49
Manipur	83	71	38	1.87
Karnataka	86	78	60	1.30
Assam	84	83	101	0.82
India	123	96	59	1.63
Arunachal Pradesh	145	101	79	1.28
Andhra Pradesh	90	112	63	1.78
Rajasthan	138	114	70	1.63
Gujarat	80	116	56	2.07
Chhattisgarh	131	129	109	1.18
Odisha	126	136	64	2.13
Jharkhand	103	139	93	1.49
Madhya Pradesh	155	141	80	1.76

- Infant mortality and under 5 mortality rates help in understanding the spread as well as availability and affordability of basic health amenities required for survival.
- Maternal mortality rates and maternal health amongst tribal population is also one of key indicators pointing towards an area of concern. As per national healthcare surveys only 32.8% of tribal women have a probability of receiving care from a doctor during pregnancy same is almost true for antenatal healthcare which is available to only 32.4% of tribal women
- Only 17.7% of the women belonging to tribal community gave birth in medical facilities which is the lowest for any segment of population.

As per reports revelations there is a Shortage of total sub centers, primary health centers, community health centers by 5638,1086,268 across all states respectively which shows the inadequacy of healthcare infrastructure for tribal populace.

Employment and basic amenities

A major section of Tribal population still remain dependent upon forests for their livelihood , and therefore provisions for basic necessities are sourced from forests ,this section is perhaps the most vulnerable to inaccessibility of healthcare, education ,susceptible to poverty , malnutrition etc.

S 6.1: Basic Amenities in India- A comparison of All Social groups and STs (Census 2011) (figures in percentage)			
S.No	Indicators	All Social Groups	ST
C	Waste water outlet connected to (Closed drainage)	18.1	6.1
4	Availability of Kitchen & Type of Fuel Used by Households for Cooking		
A	% HH having separate kitchen inside	61.3	53.7
B	Households Cooking inside house and the type of fuel used		
	Use of Smoke emanating fuel for Cooking : Fire-wood/ Crop residue/ Cowdung cake/Coal, Lignite, Charcoal	63.99	87.5
	Use of non- Smoke emanating fuel for Cooking : Kerosene/ LPG/ PNG/ Electricity/ No cooking	35.58	12
C	Households Cooking outside house and the type of fuel used		
	Use of Smoke emanating fuel for Cooking : Fire-wood/ Crop residue/ Cowdung cake/Coal, Lignite, Charcoal	91.9	95.62
	Use of non- Smoke emanating fuel for Cooking : Kerosene/ LPG/ PNG/ Electricity/ No cooking	7.21	3.34
5.	Lighting		
	Electricity as main source of lighting	67.2	51.7
	Kerosene as main source of lighting	31.4	45.6
	Solar energy as main source of lighting	0.4	1.1
	Others	0.9	1.6
6.	Financial Inclusion		
	Households availing Banking services (%)	58.7	44.98
7.	Communication facilities		
	Mobile Phone connectivity	53.2	31.1
	Both (land line and mobile)	6.0	1.8
8..	Possession of some Important Durable Assets		
	Television	47.2	21.9
	Bicycle	44.8	36.4
	Computer / Laptop	6.3	4.4
	Two wheeler	21.0	9
	Four wheeler	4.7	1.6
	Households with TV, Computer/ Telephone/mobile phone & Scooter/ Car	4.6	1.3
	Not having any of the above items any	17.8	37.3

Note * fuel wood consists of fire wood/ crop residue/ cowdung cake/ coal, lignite, charcoal Source: Census 2011

- For comparative understanding between Scheduled tribes access to basic amenities and other social groups we have a data set below that describes the conditions of the former and how they are unable to reach their full potential in the absence of these amenities.

S5.1: Percentage Distribution of Workers by sex						
	STs		All		Gap	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Total Workers						
Male	53.2	55.6	51.7	68.9	1.5	-13.3
Female	44.8	44.4	25.6	31.1	19.2	13.3
Main Workers						
Male	43.5	63.9	45.1	75.4	-1.6	-11.5
Female	23.9	36.1	14.7	24.6	9.2	11.5
Marginal Workers						
Male	9.7	40.2	6.6	49.2	3.1	-9.0
Female	20.9	59.8	11	50.1	9.9	9.7

Source: RGI, Census of India 2001, 2011

- As per Census of 2011 the number of male workers in the main workforce from tribes were 63.9% out of a total workforce of 55.6% the rest 40.2% came under marginal category however this condition stands worse for women as from a total workforce of 44.4% about 36.1% only are in the main workforce rest 59.8% are under marginal category.

Government policies and Individual Efforts for inclusion of ST's

Now as we have described the present conditions of the scheduled tribes we can access the problems they continue to face on an everyday basis given in such circumstances the government of India has also enacted various schemes and policies in the direction of improving the conditions of these tribes as well as ensure their holistic development and inclusion into mainstream development. Some individual organizations and NGO's have also made a significant contribution towards the alleviation of scheduled tribes a detailed description of such initiatives is the part of this section of this research. (DAPST)

Jal Jeevan Mission

The government of India launched this mission so as to ensure provision of adequate and safe drinking water the government since its operation has allocated around Rs 19101.17 crores since 2019-20 for the ST people by ensuring provision of tap water. More than 1.40 crore rural households have been provided tap water connection in ST concentrated areas .

PM Awas Yojana (Rural)

This movement was initiated as an attempt to provide basic housing facilities to rural population which takes ST

population into a huge account, to ensure that they get a suitable home and fulfill their aspirations the government has allocated Rs 41687 crores for ST populace since 2015-16, this has led to sanctioning of 65 lakh houses out of which 54 lakh have already been constructed to fulfill the dreams of the tribal people for basic shelter.

National Rural Livelihood Mission

The major objective of this drive was to alleviate the economic conditions of tribal people by providing them better employment opportunities it emphasis was upon setting up SHG's especially for women it also aims to provide a capital subsidy to the ST population of Rs 20000 as a ceiling limit for every ST person.

PM Kisan Samman Nidhi

This scheme was aimed to provide ensure financial aid to farmers under which 1 crore of ST farmers are registered and are enjoying its benefits.

PM Poshan Shakti Nirman

In order to reach the target of getting a healthy and disease free nation this strategy was undertaken to fulfill the nutrition requirements of children through mid day meal programme this led to cover almost 1.5 crore ST students and also increased their enrollment rates into formal education sphere.

Anganwadi Services

A program initiated by the ministry of women and child welfare so as to ensure provision of maternal services and healthcare as well as provide awareness about hygiene and other basic necessities to pregnant women and provide with nutritional and medical accessibility for them , A total amount of Rs 17314 crores have been funded during 2014-15 to 2023-24.

Tribal Research Institutes

The government has led to the establishment of many tribal research institutes for the preservation and fostering of its traditions and cultures as well as procure more individuals of the scheduled tribes to take part in the process of policy formulations and recommendations so as to nurture the relations with tribal communities and develop ties that can ensure their holistic development and inclusion into the main development model furthermore these efforts will ensure sustainable growth for these communities for a long era and usher in a new dynamic of cultural identity confluence.

Obstacles for Inclusivity

Even after years of efforts and policies directed towards ensuring growth and development of the scheduled tribes still this segment of the population remains highly vulnerable and marginalized being still fragmented into isolated corners of our society still unable to receive the benefits of the process of inclusive development on a

massive scale one of the major reasons of this is the inability of the public departments to disperse the benefits of the growth projects to these marginalized sections a more brief understanding of such problems is what is addressed in this section:

- **Bureaucratic Delays:** Delays in disbursement of funds and benefits and lack of timely allocation have obscured the process of growth.
- **Limited Awareness:** lapse of communication and limited coverage with tribal populace as well as many tribes residing in difficult terrains makes very difficult to spread the efforts to every individual.
- **High population growth rate:** tribal population still has a very high population growth rate that makes it very difficult to ensure provision of sufficient facilities especially healthcare which also makes its inadequacy more evident.
- **Naxalist Activities:** though on decline the forested regions of the country especially in the central India where lies the majority of tribal population is infested by naxalism and this stands as being a humongous problem for development as these naxals ensure that the tribes remain isolated and underdeveloped so that their population can act as a recruitment ground for them.
- **Cultural stigma:** One the major problems still is the skepticism amongst the tribes regarding the mainstream culture and society as they still have mistrust of being exploited and losing their cultural identity and so this fear does at times makes them hesitant to take up modern practices and techniques of livelihood, healthcare etc.

Major Recommendations

This section brings us perhaps to the most important segment of this research and that is to provide realistic solutions to the problems facing the achievement of economic inclusivity and autonomy to scheduled tribes and methods that can help to reach these goals.

Broadening the scope of welfare schemes so as to cover a larger section of population as still a major chunk of ST populace has not been included in policies.

Covering the gaps in healthcare and basic amenity provisions so as to ensure a reduction in levels of mortality and morbidity as well as reducing chances of epidemics amongst the ST populace.

Social drives and Community interactions can improve the understanding of tribal cultures and practices and could also open up new avenues of cultural confluence and could usher a faster inclusion and acceptance of tribes into mainstream society without threatening their cultural diversity.

Widening the coverage of formal education along with skill development can bring a transition into the Tribal populace

as this can bring an evolution in their economic system where rather remaining dependent on primitive livelihoods they would be able to reap the benefits of modern employment opportunities and which can bridge the gap between them and economic independence and this requires development of skill centers, schools, higher education institutes, within their possible reach along with the provision of quality education which will then allow for building capabilities amongst their youth for taking up employment in better avenues and this can allow for a trickledown effect for the entire community.

More efforts should be directed by government to ensure safety and security of these tribes from naxalist and terror groups which takes them as nothing but as a source of recruitment and a way to continue their nefarious activities there is requirement of bringing awareness amongst these tribes regarding this issue so they can also cooperate in bringing an end to such activities.

A major emphasis also is needed to be given to women empowerment and reducing the gaps in male and female participation in workforce so as to reduce the exploitation and crimes of domestic violence which are witnessed amongst the tribes and also developing a platform for redressing crimes against women and also efforts should be made in the direction of improving their financial autonomy so as to allow them to live a life of stability and independence.

Major investments both private and public could be made into creating a platform for Agro based industries for ST's as these remain very much employed in agricultural sector such investments can help in commercializing as well help in improving productivity and can change their patterns from subsistence production to that of surplus for markets.

Conclusion

Summarizing the scheduled tribes of India constitute a significant proportion of our population and their inclusion into mainstream economic hemisphere can serve as a major boost for our economic and societal transition though their present condition is one of extreme misery and poverty attempts are being made to alleviate their condition these however remain inadequate and has limited coverage and to fill in these gaps we have attempted to provide some realistic solutions and meaningful interventions that can enhance the effectiveness of our policies aimed towards the welfare of the scheduled tribes of our country. Furthermore this research stands as also an attempt to ensure that every individual, community, ethnicity that our country is proud to foster gets its fundamental aspirations fulfilled and that the very dream of our esteemed Dr B.R. Ambedkar's of guaranteeing economic freedom and equality becomes a reality.

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