



Demographic features and problems and prospects of scheduled tribes in India

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Abstract

We have completed 73 years of India's Independence. It has become necessary to think over the social policy guidelines for the Scheduled Tribes and denitrified tribes, which constitute the weakest section of India's population from the ecological, economic and educational angles. Poverty and exploitation, economic and technological backwardness, socio cultural handicaps – some problems which arise with the question of assimilation of these tribes with the mainstream/plains' population, the research objective is to understand the problems and prospect of Scheduled tribes in India and to know the demographic features of scheduled tribes in India.

Keywords: completed, scheduled, Demographic, problems

Introduction

The Scheduled Tribes (STs) is officially designated group of historically disadvantaged people in India. The term is recognised in the Constitution of India and the various groups are designated in one or other of the categories. For much of the period of British rule in the Indian subcontinent, Scheduled Tribes are being known as Depressed Classes. The Scheduled Tribes comprises about 8.6 percent of India's population (per the 2011 census), The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 lists 744 tribes across 22 states in its First Schedule.

The problems of tribal's have attracted special attention of social reformers and political leaders since the attainment of independence of India. Therefore, planned efforts have been made and series of innovative plans, programmes, structures and institutions have been created with a view to bring about change in the lives of the tribal people. Tribal people constitute a different social group in view of their socio-cultural characteristics and varied geographical setting. The tribal people having their own spirit, world view and community feeling, and their own way of life, are sometimes confused with the planned approaches of development programmes.

The Constitution of India envisages that the state shall promote with special care the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people specially the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and their exploitation (Vidyarthi, 1985). Initially a period of 10 years was set to achieve the goal however considering the multidimensional nature of issues the period was gradually extended to ensure the overall development of the tribal people. That is how since Independence concerted efforts in a planned manner have been made for the upliftment of the tribal people and their respective areas.

Former Prime Minister, late Jawaharlal Nehru, said regarding tribes in India "I am not at all sure which way of living is better, ours or theirs. But in some ways, I am quite certain theirs is better. A great deal of things could be learnt from their culture especially in the frontier areas. They are

the people who sing and dance and try to enjoy life; not like people who sit in stock exchanges and shout at each other and call that civilization (Nehru, 1952).

Addressing an All India Conference of the tribal's held at Jagdalpur (Bastar district) in March, 1955, he advised his tribal brethren in the following words: "Wherever you live, you should live in your own way. This is what I want you to decide yourselves. How would you like to live? Your old customs and habits are good. We want that they should be educated and should do your part in the welfare of our country. (Nehru- 1955).

Methodology

This paper is completely based on secondary data, the data has been collected from 2011 census, NSSO, CSO reports, various articles, journals, magazines and wide information is collected from Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Objectives of the study

- To study the problems and prospects of Scheduled Tribes in India
- To highlight the Demographic Features of Scheduled Tribes in India with special reference 2011 census
- To know the constitutional safeguards for scheduled tribes in India

Problems and prospects of Scheduled Tribes in India

India is a country where 60 percent of the area under forests is tribal area. 51 out of 58 districts which have forest cover greater than 67 percent are tribal. Also, 40 percent of people being displaced by dams are tribal's. In all the schedule V or schedule VI states where conflict is prevalent, there is state involvement in the same in one form or the other. These wars are maximally waged in tribal areas with rich minerals. It is the responsibility of the state to make provision for tribal communities to have unhindered access to forests for making livelihoods and securing the livelihoods so provided; promising their viability; keeping an account of their diversity, ensuring dignity and sustainability of work;

protection from all conflict due to the repressive rule of the forest bureaucracy in tribal areas.

The point of autonomy in scheduled areas as laid in Schedule V or VI of the Constitution. There is a Tribal Advisory Council in Schedule V areas. The latter is a body which has both elected and community representative of the tribal communities was formed to advise the Governor on all matters of administration and governance. However, there has been an apparent lack of interest and delay in submission of reports by the Governors. It has been suggested that the formation of Governors' Cells to come up in all Schedule V states which will assist the Governor. Although many schemes have been implemented but there is a dire need for infrastructure, dismal teaching and learning methods, lack of focus, the effect of armed conflict on teacher absenteeism and other school practices have taken a heavy toll of studies of the tribal children. Further, tribal land alienation and dispossession are at the centre of crisis faced by the tribal areas. Also, land acquisitions by the state, manipulation of the records and wrong interpretation of law etc. have led to massive neglect of the tribal's and their needs.

Problems of Scheduled Tribes

- Poverty and exploitation,
- Economic and technological backwardness.
- Socio cultural handicaps – some problems which arise with the question of assimilation of these tribes with the mainstream/plains' population.
- Alienated from their own lands, the tribal landlords have been gradually replaced by the landlords or the moneylenders of the plains.
- Medium of language – Language is one of the important constraints of tribal children which prevents them access to education.
- Economic Condition - The economic condition of tribal people is so poor that they do not desire to spare their children or their labour power and allow them to attend schools.
- Attitude of the parents - As education does not yield any immediate economic return, the tribal parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment which supplements the family income.
- Teacher Related Problems -In the remote tribal areas the teacher absenteeism is a regular phenomenon and this affects largely the quality of education.

The dominant thinking today is assimilation of the tribal people into the mainstream without any disruption. This task has however, been made a complex one because of the varied levels of development among tribal's and their diverse social, political, economic and ecological levels, which in effect differentiate between the nature of their problems. The tribal's are not a homogenous or a monolithic whole. They are hills tribes and plainsmen, forest-based workers and settled agriculturalists, and those who have converted to Hinduism and Christianity and those who are still living their original, unadulterated tribal way of life.

Demographic Features of Scheduled Tribes in India

The main distinguishing demographic feature that differentiates Scheduled Tribes from the rest of the Indian population lies in the degree to which they inhabit rural or urban areas. The Scheduled Tribes population share is 8.6% in nation's population.

Table 1: Population of Scheduled Tribes India: 1961-2011

Census year	Population			Decadal growth rate
	Total	Rural	Urban	
1961	3,01,30,184	2,93,57,790	7,72,394	NA
1971	3,80,15,162	3,67,20,681	12,94,481	26.2
1981	5,16,28,638	4,84,27,604	32,01,034	35.8
1991	6,77,58,380	6,27,51,026	50,07,354	31.2
2001	8,43,26,978	7,73,39,335	69,87,643	24.5
2011	10,42,81,034	9,38,19,162	1,04,31,872	23.7

The above table indicates the population of Scheduled Tribes in India from 1961 to 2011. The data show that in 1981 the decadal growth rate was increased from 26.2 (1971) to 35.8 later the population decadal growth of Scheduled Tribes has been declining gradually due to lack of medical care and other reasons. We can say that 90% Scheduled Tribes are in Rural area, migration from Rural to urban is increasing in smaller way among tribes due to education and job opportunities.

Table 2: Proportion of Scheduled Tribes Population in India: 1961-2011

Census	Proportion of Scheduled Tribes to total population		
	Total	Rural	Urban
1961	6.9	8.1	1.0
1971	6.9	8.4	1.2
1981	7.6	9.2	2.0
1991	8.1	10.1	2.3
2001	8.2	10.4	2.4
2011	8.6	11.3	2.8

The above slab shows the proportion of STs (Scheduled Tribes) population to total population in India, there is upward movement in proportion of population to total population. Rural proportion STs Population is higher than urban.

Table 3: Sex Ratio of Scheduled Tribe Population in India: 1961-2011

Census	Sex ratio of Scheduled Tribes		
	Total	Rural	Urban
1961	987	990	895
1971	982	985	896
1981	983	988	912
1991	987	976	920
2001	978	981	944
2011	990	991	980

The above table reveals that the sex ratio in Scheduled Tribes is in healthy trend, sex ration of STs is higher than Country's total sex ratio (990>943).

Table 4: Literacy Rate of All Social Groups and STs Population (1961-2011) (Figures in Percentage)

Census Year	All social groups			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1961	40.4	15.35	28.3	13.83	3.16	8.53

1971	45.96	21.97	34.45	17.63	4.85	11.30
1981	56.38	29.76	43.57	24.52	8.04	16.35
1991	64.13	39.29	52.21	40.65	18.19	29.60
2001	75.26	53.67	64.84	59.17	34.76	47.10
2011	80.89	64.64	72.99	68.53	49.53	58.96

Source: Registrar General of India

The above table depicts the literacy rate of total population and literacy rate of scheduled tribes from 1961 to 2011, as per the 2011 census India's total literacy rate is 72.99% and STs literacy rate is 58.96% The tribal literacy rate is comparatively very less to the general population. So there is no drastic change in literacy level among scheduled tribes due to they are far away from the mainstream of the society.

Table 5: Key health indicators

Indicators	ST	Total
Infant mortality	62.1	57
Neo-natal Mortality	39.9	39
Post-natal mortality	22.3	18
Child mortality	35.8	18.4
Under five mortality	95.7	74.3
ANC Check-up	70.5	77.1
Percentage institutional Deliveries	17.7	38.7
Childhood vaccination (full immunization)	31.3	43.5
% households covered by a health scheme/insurance	2.6	31.9
Prevalence of any anaemia (<12.0 g/dl) in women	68.5	55.3

Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2005-06

The health condition of Scheduled Tribes in India is so pathetic due to lack of proper medical care in hills area

(remote area), especially infant mortality and under five mortality is too negative condition therefore there is need for framing the appropriate measures to reduce the death rate among scheduled tribes in India.

Table 6

Percentage of population Below Poverty Line (social groups wise) -2004-05								
	Rural				Urban			
	ST	SC	OBC	Others	ST	SC	OBC	Others
All India	47.3	36.8	26.7	16.1	33.3	39.9	31.4	16

Source: Planning Commission

The above data show the poverty in all social groups in India, SC/ST community has more utter poverty and especially in rural area ST community has higher poverty than SC.

Constitutional Safeguards for Scheduled Tribes in India

Several safeguards have been incorporated in the Constitution for safeguarding and promoting the interests and rights of the Scheduled Tribes in various spheres to enable them to join the national mainstream. An overview of the safeguards is as follows.

Table 7

Art	I.A- Definition and Specification of STs Title
Preamble	
342	Scheduled Tribes
366	Definitions
	II.B - Educational, Economic and Public Employment-related Safeguards
15	Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth
16	Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment
19	Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc
46	Promotion of Educational and Economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections
335	Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts
	II.C- Political Safeguards
330	Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People
332	Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States
334	Reservation of seats and special representation to cease after sixty years
243D	Reservation of seats (in Panchayats)
243T	Reservation of seats
	II.D- Agency for monitoring safeguards
338A	National Commission for Scheduled Tribe

Article 46 of the Constitution provides that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the society and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Reservation in educational institution has been provided in Article 15(4) while reservation in posts and services has been provided in Article 16(4), 16(4A) and 16(4B) of the Constitution.

Article 23 which prohibits traffic in human beings and beggar and other similar forms of forced labour has a special significance for Scheduled Tribes. In pursuance of this Article, Parliament has enacted the Bonded Labour

System (Abolition) Act, 1976. Similarly, Article 24 which prohibits employment of Children below the age of 14 years in any factory or mine or in any other hazardous activity is also significant for Scheduled Tribes as a substantial portion of child labour engaged in these jobs belong to Scheduled Tribes.

- Article 243D provides reservation of Seats for Scheduled Tribes in Panchayats.
- Article 330 provides reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People.
- Article 332 provides reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in Legislative Assemblies of the States.

- Article 334 provides that reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and the State Vidhan Sabhas (and the representation of the Anglo-Indian Community in the Lok Sabha and the State Vidhan Sabhas by nomination) would continue up to January, 2020.

Other specific safeguards have been provided in Article 244 read with the provisions contained in Fifth and Sixth Schedule to the Constitution

Other Safeguards applicable in specific states

Article 164(1) provides that in the States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha there shall be a Minister in charge of tribal welfare who may in addition be in charge of the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and backward classes or any other work.

- Article 371A has special provisions with respect to the State of Nagaland.
- Article 371B has special provisions with respect to the State of Assam.
- Article 371C has special provisions with respect to the State of Manipur.
- Article 371F has special provisions with respect to Sikkim

Conclusion

Tribal communities live, in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains and forests to hills and inaccessible areas. Tribal groups are at different stages of social, economic and educational development, it is important to note that the level of socio-economic status has not yet improved in comparison to the efforts done for the purpose. Governmental efforts are not bearing the fruits because there is a mismatch between the programmes and the requirements of the people. It is high time to rethink about the efforts for the improvement of socio-economic status of the tribal's. It would be more beneficial, if the Governmental and other plans prepare for the tribal's social and economic development considering the tribal people requirement and implementation with the approach, which is best suitable for them.

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