



Research Article

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN INDIA - AN OVERVIEW

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Received: July 25, 2016; Revised: August 02, 2016; Accepted: August 03, 2016; Published: August 07, 2016

Abstract- This paper is mainly focused on the tribal policies, tribal welfare, which have been implemented by the Government of India. The discussion is initiated right from the colonial period and passed through British regime, pre-independence, post-independence and continued to the present day. It is clear that one of the consequences of such an opening up would be to accelerate the process of bringing the tribals into the Indian mainstream, providing further nutritive maintenance to the freedom struggle. Hence, the British were interested in isolating the tribals and this was achieved by forming excluded and partially excluded areas. When the anthropologists also voiced their opinion for isolation, the British ideas of excluding the tribals received academic legitimacy. The study found that the tribal development policies are aimed to protect and initiate the all-round development of tribes to stay in the society by mingling with others.

Keywords- Government, Legitimacy, Tribals Development.

Citation: Misal Dilip M. (2016) Tribal Development Policies in India-An Overview. International Journal of Humanity and Social Sciences, ISSN: 2231-3532 & E-ISSN: 2231-3540, Volume 5, Issue 1, pp.-81-83.

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Academic Editor / Reviewer: Mamata Hatkar, Mishra Mahendra

Introduction

To exercise control over the land of tribals coupled with exploiting resources that could enrich the development of industries at home. It is clear that one of the consequences of such an opening up would be to accelerate the process of bringing the tribals into the Indian mainstream, providing further nutritive maintenance to the freedom struggle. Hence, the British were interested in isolating the tribals and this was achieved by forming excluded and partially excluded areas. When the anthropologists also voiced their opinion for isolation, the British ideas of excluding the tribals received academic legitimacy. Subsequently, many tribes rose in rebellion and gradually all of them came under one or the other policy. Tribals revolted against the administration. All tribal communities demonstrate a common-trait resistance against the British policies to administer them. It was resistance to a new system, a new class of people, taxation, evangelization, new landlords, moneylenders and officials. The erosion of traditional rights over forests, restriction on shifting cultivation, exploitation by local functionaries was also the causes for such protests. With various local modifications, the British policy for tribals continued till the Government of India Act, 1919.

Tribal Development Policies in India:

Basically, Tribal Development approaches found support in the three important policies or theories, namely (i) policy of isolation / segregation, (ii) policy of assimilation, and (iii) policy of integration. The protagonists of these policies look into the tribal problems in their respective ways. These policies to the tribal development may be separately considered in the context of pre-independence and post-independence periods.

Tribal Development in Pre-Independence: This includes the policy of isolation, policy of assimilation and the policy of integration. The policy of isolation is widely known as "National Park theory", popularized by Dr. Verrier Elwin. This policy was adopted by British rulers in the pre - independence period and even after

independence this policy was continued for some time. Nationalist politicians and social workers like A.V. Thakkar advocated this policy; G.S. Ghure is also a protagonist of this policy and whose main objective is a constant assimilation of tribals and a result of constant contact of the tribals with the rest of the Indian population and the efforts of social reforms towards development. The policy of integration is the outcome of the serious research activities undertaken by social anthropologists in India. Their main objective is "social integration and cultural assimilation".

Tribal Development in Post-Independence India: This is also includes the policy of isolation, policy of assimilation and the policy of integration. The tribal areas were the last to come under British power, due to their difficult terrain and inaccessibility. The tribal people also continued to rise in rebellions for a longer period for asserting their rights to self-governance particularly in relation to their rights over land and forests. The British declared some of the tribal areas as "excluded" and some as "partially excluded". The assimilation of the tribal people with the rest of the population is another approach; India is a continuous process of ensuring the culture contact with the neighboring population. In India, the tribal people have come into contact with various other communities and situations leading to assimilation in different parts. Some tribals have gradually accepted the Hindu way of life and others have accepted Christianity. After independence, the British policy of Isolation and non-interference was replaced by a policy of integration through development. Social Scientists focused their attention towards the conditions of the tribals and began to discuss how best to deal with them. One school of thought led by Dr. Verrier Elwin argued to protect the aborigines by completely isolating them from the rest of India. Mr. Elwin later shifted his stance. A second school of thought led by G. S. Ghure opined total assimilation of the tribals into national mainstream as essential. A third school of thought believed that tribals should be integrated into the Indian society but not necessarily assimilated which means that it aims to preserve their identity. G. S. Ghure, made

an elaborate discussion on the three solutions suggested for the tribal problem, viz., A) No change and revivalism, B) Isolationism and preservation, and C) Assimilation are discussed various approaches from an anthropological point of view. The Government of India came to the stand that the tribal population cannot be left to lag behind and get further not isolated, nor can the natural resources in tribal areas be underutilized. For all problems, integration of tribes into the national mainstream is considered to be the solution.

Constitutional Safeguards for Tribals:

In pursuance of the policy of integration, several provisions were made in the Indian constitution. The most important provision of the Constitution is article 244 which provides for administration of Scheduled Areas in accordance with the Schedule-V of the Constitution and the administration of Tribal Areas (Assam State) under Schedule-VI. Articles 5, 16, 46, 244, 275, 330, 332, 334, 335, 339 and 342 of Indian Constitution provided specific provisions for the advancement of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. There are reservations in educational institutions, services, political bodies, special relaxations in age, qualifications etc. Further, the provisions allowed for the necessary funds for Tribal Development Programmes. Many special provisions were made in Schedule-V of the Constitution in the interests of the Tribal areas. Clause-6 of the Schedule -V empowered the President of India to declare any area as Scheduled areas where a predominant concentration of tribal people is located.

The Constitution has two clear objectives. Firstly, to assist the tribals in enjoying their existing rights unhindered or unobstructed by others, secondly, to develop the areas and promote economic, educational, and social progress among them. In this clause, protection of their rights and interests come first. The Fifth Schedule also gave wide powers to state Governors empowering them even to modify the existing enactments and make regulations for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes. Article 338 of the Constitution provides for instituting a Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The objective of appointing the Commissioner is to report on the administration of tribal areas in general and the provision of educational and medical facilities, and communications in such regions in particular and the first list of Scheduled Tribes was notified in 1950 by the President of India, which was amended in the Parliament in 1956 on the recommendations of the Backward Classes Commission. Under the provisions of Article 339 of the Constitution, the Government of India has set-up the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission. The report was submitted by the Commission in 1960-61, further specified the policies to be followed towards Scheduled Tribes. The report suggested the following criteria for declaring any area as a Scheduled Area: Preponderance of tribals in the population, Compact areas with reasonable size and marked disparity in the living standards of the people.

The Commission suggested that the tribals should be assured that their rights over in the land are safe, and that the Government and society are there to protect them. Further, the Commission pointed out that the tribal should be made confident that no one will tamper with his way of life or his beliefs and customs. The report also suggested that, the tribals should be made to realize that change and is indispensable without which development is possible, and that development is intended to secure for him, and his family greater opportunities of life along with the rest of the people in the country, of which he is an inseparable part. In the light of this background of pre and post-independent thinking about the tribals, the first Prime Minister of India gave a serious thought to the problems of tribal development and suggested enlightened approach, which is known as Nehru's 'Tribal Panchasheel'.

Working with Fifth Schedule:

The Constitution offers two paradigms of political-administrative framework for tribal areas and tribal people. In fact, the principles behind the two paradigms can be treated as arch-stones of a tribal policy. They are contained in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, which embodies a paternalistic interface between the tribal, and the Sixth Schedule whose provisions epitomize devolution of authority in certain spheres for autonomy and self-governance. Considering the low position occupied by the tribal population in society, a sincere paternalistic

attitude after independence could not normally have been misconstrued. The states have been enjoined to protect the tribals from exploitation and injustice on the one hand and to promote with special care their educational and economic interests, on the other hand. The populist compulsions of the present day politics have spawned a stream of rhetoric on the two clauses of the Directive Principle, but matching action in the field is scarce. The lackadaisical executive performance in the field, could in a sense, be interpreted as erosion of the sanctity of a directive principle of the Constitution. If a directive principle has not attracted sincerity of purpose, one is liable to ask the question whether a policy would. Nevertheless, this is not alibi for the non - evolution of a policy, if otherwise justified. But the policy should comprehend and may concordantly transcend the two dicta of the directive principle.

Working with Sixth Schedule:

As mentioned earlier, the Sixth Schedule confers a degree of autonomy to the District Councils to constitute in certain States of the North-East. They have powers, inter alia and to legislate on certain subjects, administer justice to a certain extent through village councils or courts, collect and impose taxes as specified. While the general design of autonomy does enable the people of the concerned districts to make laws, administer justice and perform other sundry acts through their own institutions "in accordance with their own genius", two points need consideration. The first relates to a financial arrangement. According to Clause 13 of the Sixth Schedule, "the estimated receipts and expenditure pertaining to an autonomous district which are to be credited to, or are to be made from, the Consolidated Fund of the State shall be first placed before the District Council for discussion and then, after such discussion, be shown separately in the annual financial statement of the state to be laid before the Legislature of the State". It appears that these provisions have not been followed in entirety in the State of Assam.

The Autonomous District Councils have voiced the grievance that, as a rule, no opportunity for discussions of financial position is afforded neither them nor adequate weightage given to their views by the state government. On the contrary, they are presented with a financial fait accompli. Secondly, the provision in clause 16 of the Sixth Schedule conferring powers to the state government to dissolve a District Council has been resented, as it is liable to be misused. It seems that the two devices need to be implemented in a spirit of mutual understanding, respecting the autonomy implicit in the Schedule. Five years plan-wise, tribal development policy is presented.

Nehru's Tribal Panchasheel:

Nehru's initial idea of the integration of the tribal communities with the rest of the Indian population was clearly expressed in his preface written to Verrier Elwin's book philosophy for North - East Frontier Agency (NEFA). The tenets of his social philosophy such as, gradualism and passive interference of the states were explicit in his policy of integration of the Indian tribes. In addition to these, he forwarded a five-point programme for the very purpose of integration of the tribes with the rest of the Indian society. These were: People should develop along the lines of their own genius and imposing of anything on them should be avoided. Their own traditional arts and culture should be encouraged. Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected. A team of their own people should be building up and trained to do the work of administration and development. Introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory should be avoided. The areas should be administered or overwhelm with a multiplicity of schemes. Their own social and cultural institutions are to be encouraged. The results should be judged, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved. Subsequently, Nehru's concept of tribal integration was reflected in the successive five-year plans. In an elaborate sense due recognition was given to the indigenous techniques involved in the economic structure of tribal India and efforts were made for evolving an amicable economic planning with the assistance of the resources available in these areas. Nehru's emphasis was on optimum utilization of the tribal genius embodied in the techniques of the production process and tribal agriculture. His insistence on the avoidance of imposing anything on them came on account of his discretion and judgment that, he could

perhaps learn from the tribal communities the nature of militancy of the struggles led by the native tribal in history.

Keeping in view the various policies advocated by different organizations, distinguished personalities and constitutional safeguards, the government of India has formulated different strategies for the tribal development in India during the post-independence period. The government has appointed committees, task Forces and working groups to help in the formulation of strategies for tribal development from time to time. The reports given by experts like Renuka Ray (on development of backward areas), U. N. Dhebar (scheduled areas) can be termed as classics. Such is the comprehensiveness of these reports that later committees and experts mostly repeated their suggestions for the amelioration of the problems faced by tribals.

Conclusions

The tribal development policies are aimed to protect and initiate the all-round development of tribes to stay in the society by mingling with others. Hence, the tribal have been given special attention for their upliftment by special designed policies, plan-wise allocations, sup-plan wise allocation, forest policy and Nehru's Panchasheel etc.

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