

Inclusive Growth and the Tribal People

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ABSTRACT : *The Indian economy has climbed on a high growth path since mid 1980's. Despite the high growth over the past two decades, concerns have been raised over the growth not being equally distributed. These concerns were answered by inclusiveness in the 11th five year plan in 2007. This paper is a humble attempt to study the progress of tribal people towards inclusive growth. The study is based mainly on primary data.*

KEYWORDS: *Tribal population, inclusive growth, tribal development.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The term Scheduled Tribes first appeared in the Constitution of India. Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution". The criterion followed for specification of a community, as scheduled tribes are indications of primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, and backwardness. This criterion is not spelt out in the Constitution but has become well established. The Scheduled Tribes (STs) are historically disadvantaged people recognised in the Constitution of India. During the period of British rule in the Indian subcontinent, they were known as the Depressed Classes. One of the greatest challenge facing by the Indian government since independence is the provision of social justice to the scheduled tribe population by improving their social economic status. Tribal population constitutes the weakest section of India's population from the ecological, socio-economic and educational aspects. They mainly contribute a major share of widespread poverty in the nation. The reason being they have been exploited and practically deprived of many civic facilities since so many centuries. The British government did provide some facilities for the upliftment of the tribal population in the towns and villages such as education, transport, communication, medical etc. but these facilities were inadequate and mainly with vested-interest. However after independence many steps have been taken by the government for their upliftment and adding them to the mainstream of development. So far India has successfully completed Eleven Five year plans. The strategy of the 11th FYP was "towards faster and more inclusive growth". Even the 12th FYP emphasizes on "faster, more inclusive and sustainable growth".

II. INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Inclusive growth is a concept which advances equitable opportunities for economic participants during the process of economic growth with benefits incurred by every section of society. Inclusive growth should result in lower incidence of poverty, significant improvement in health outcomes, universal access of children to school, increased access to higher education and improved standards of education including skill development. It should be reflected in the form of better opportunities for employment and livelihood and also in improvements in basic amenities like water, sanitation, housing, electricity etc and special attention for backward sections of populations like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, for women and children, minorities and other excluded groups. "Towards faster and more inclusive growth" reflects the need to make growth "more inclusive" in terms of benefits flowing through more employment and income to those sections of society which have been bypassed by higher rates of economic growth witnessed in recent years. The recognition of the need for more inclusive growth by our planners is a welcome shift in emphasis from mere increase in growth rates to improvement in standards of living of those weaker sections of the society through increase in employment opportunities as well as better delivery systems to ensure access to intended benefits by intended benefits. With this background, this paper is a humble attempt to study the progress of the tribal population of North Guwahati in Assam towards inclusive growth.

Objectives and Research Methodology

The main objectives of this paper are to study the

- 1) Socio- economic condition of the tribal population
- 2) Benefits received from the government by the tribal population

Inclusive growth and Tribal development :India is a home to large number of tribes. According to the census of 2011 of India, the scheduled tribes comprise of 8.6% of India's population. The current tribal population in Assam stands at 12.4 per cent of its population. There are 23 notified Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Assam with the Bodos (40.9 per cent) making half of the total ST population .The other STs (both plains and hills) include Miri, Karbi, Rabha, Kachari, Lalung, Barman in Cachar, Borokachar, Deori, Hajai, Mech, Dimasa, Hajong, Singhpoho, Khampti and Garo, Biata, Khasi, Jaintia, Synteng, Pnar, War, Bhoi, Lyngngam, and Kuki,Chakma, Hmar. The present study is based mainly upon the primary data. For the purpose of analysis primary data have been collected from the five villages of North Guwahati, a tehsil of Kamrup district, of Assam. And from each village data has been collected from twenty families by purposive sample method. Thus 100 sample families have been selected.

The following points are revealed by the study:

- 95% of the sampled households in the research area are Bodos and the rest are Garos.
- About 75% of the population is illiterate, 20% have done their primary education and the rest 5% constitute high school passed out, matriculates and graduates.
- 85% of the households are dependent on agriculture, 7% on animal husbandry, about 5% ekes out their livelihood as wage labourers and around 3% works in government offices, schools, companies and are self employed.
- Study also showed that the monthly income of the households ranged between Rs 5000 to Rs25000. It has been found that female headed households have less income than the male headed households.
- About 40% of the households have houses made of concrete walls and tin roof and the rest 60% live in houses made of bamboo sheet walls and straw roof.
- Water supply is availed by around 75% of the households.
- Road connectivity is good.
- Almost 70% of the households have electricity connections.
- About 95 % households use toilets (pucca and Kutcha).
- 72.8% households are aware of the tribal development schemes like post-matric scholarships, sewing machines, weaving materials, mosquito nets, ducklings and piglets. But only 13% households have benefitted from these schemes. The main reason for fewer beneficiaries is the complicated procedure of the sanctioning of the schemes.
- 12% of the household said that their economic condition have improved due to tribal development schemes. But majority denied. So it means that the government has failed to reach to the tribal population. It is also found that some of the households have concrete houses, engine run vehicles from the money they got by selling off their lands to industrialists and individuals. But since they have no skills, their stock of money diminished by unproductive consumption.

III. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION:

The study found that the socio-economic conditions of the tribal people of North Guwahati are not appreciable. Their standards of living are still low. Moreover the tribal development schemes have not brought any changes in the life of majority of the tribal people .Inclusive growth is not making the fruits of development available and accessible to the tribal population of North Guwahati. In conclusion, it can be summed up that "Inclusion" should be seen as a process of including these excluded sections of the population as agents whose participation is essential in the very design of the development process and not simply welfare targets of development programmes. It is necessary that steps should be taken to make these people informed about the development schemes. At the same time procedures of sanctioning of the schemes should be made easy so that the number of total benefitted families increase.

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