

Research Article

Inclusive Policies and Status of Inclusion of Adivasis*

Pankaj Deep

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India
Email id: ppankaj@gbu.ac.in

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ABSTRACT

India being a democratic political system, the government is committed to removing imbalances and inequalities in society so that everyone will get an equal share in the country's growth and development. The Eleventh Five Year Plan has once again emphasised on the need of inclusion "...towards more faster and inclusive growth...". Since 1951 special preference has been given through affirmative action and various policies have been made with a view to bring about a desired change in the life of the tribals. The broader aim of the developmental policies is to make them (able) unable, reach to the unreached and empower them, so that they can lead a life as they wish to do with self esteem and self dignity. But the very paradox of our development policies are that even after seven decades of India's establishment, with Constitutional protection, legal support and policy intervention we could not solve the problems that the tribal people of the country is suffering i.e. the problems of hunger, poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and other social disabilities. Study argues that in spite of many legal provisions and pro state action the condition of tribals are very vulnerable. They are lagging with all parameters of human development to other people. Their representation in the public institution is not adequate and fair enough. Democratic text of inclusive society could not make possible and far from realisation in contextually for them.

Keywords: Democracy, Discrimination, Inclusion, Inclusive policies, Social exclusion

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy can have many connotations in practice. India, for instance, has reshaped and transformed democracy as much as democracy has reshaped and transformed India. The general assumption pertaining to democracy is that democracies can best serve the interests and welfare of the disadvantaged section of population which often undemocratic regimes cannot serve or ignore. Undoubtedly using democratic process to promote social changes towards greater social justice is a hard work but it is necessary and proper vehicle for doing so (Young, 2000). The inequality and social identity based deprivation is pervasive in India. The Indian democracy provides a legitimate space for contestation and accommodates differing views. This does not mean that every one's views count and there is possibility of a dominant perspective being legitimized in the process. The development perspective in India, for instance, does not give justice to the legitimate demands of the disadvantaged section of population in the society especially the Scheduled Tribes. It does not take care of equity and redistribution. It ignores social justice, which is the main ethos of democratic governance as mentioned in the preamble of our Constitution "Justice economic, political and social... Equality of opportunity..." (Bakshi, 1997). And its outcome is impoverishment of the masses and snatching of resources by a few, accumulation by encroachment, grabbing land forcefully, displacing people, and uprooting from their livelihood by use of force with well designed help of state apparatus. The direct manifestation is social unrest, acute poverty, hunger, starvation, fast and unnecessary depletion of natural resources and livelihood. This is the paradox of our development paradigm. Since its Independence, India has been making its own arrangement and designing structures and policies to accommodate different interests in a highly diverse multi lingual, multi ethnic, and unequal unequal society. In the Constitution, we have provisions for social justice; it envisages that it is the state's responsibility (mandate) to take care of its citizens in general and the marginalised like scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in particular in terms of economic security, social security, infrastructure for human development and all other basic needs for a dignified living etc. Since the first Five Year Plan in 1951, we have been endeavouring with various approaches and policies to address their disabilities and for improving the well-being of this disadvantaged section of the population through various special provisions to integrate them into the mainstream society. But the paradox of our protectionist and development approach is that even today after seven decades of our establishment these targets of our development planning remain unrealised unreleased. We have a democratic political system where so many welfare programmes have been implemented since independence and yet the tribals have been struggling for their survival and even they are in malnutrition and starvation (The Hindu, 1st January

2020). What are the reasons for this scenario? Why is the state unable to reach the marginalised like the tribals? Why is delivery of public goods and services far below expectations? Why has development almost failed to deliver? An attempt has been made to answer these questions in the context of tribal development in India. How the inclusive policies are able to include of the state able to include the tribal (excluded) into the mainstream society and if yes then to what extent? These are the questions which would be explored through the finding of the study. It is in this context this paper tries to uncover the causes of deprivation and exclusion despite the implementation of inclusive policies over a period of time. In other words, the social and economic injustice can continue to exist in the most democratic countries like India.

STRATEGY OF TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

The subject of Scheduled Tribes development assumes a great relevance in the Indian context in the light of the fact that about nine percent (8.63%) of India's population are Adivasis (Census, 2011), (hereafter scheduled tribes and adivasis have been used interchangeably throughout the article). Many scheduled tribe development plans and programmes have been launched with various approaches but most of them yielded no satisfactory outcomes. Paradoxically, the gap of tribals and non tribal dichotomy has been widened. The government of India has partially failed to provide basic needs, and to solve the problems of the most ancient inhabitants' of this land. They are living in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression with humiliation by the mainstream people. These disadvantaged people suffer from varieties of problems and could not access modern health care facilities, to sanitation arrangement, to clean water, to modern markets etc. and struggling with life for survival. These disadvantaged people are lacking basic opportunities of health care, education, gainful employment and economic and social security.

After two and half decades of implementation of four successful five year plans and three annual plans, it was realized by our policy makers and policy administrators that the situation of the tribals have not made visible change and the welfare policy benefits could not benefit them as we anticipated. In terms of development, their achievement is still way behind the mainstream development process. Further, the government realized that the general plan schemes and programmes designed for the overall development of all the people in the country, hardly improves the vulnerable socio economic condition of the adivasis. The general welfare programmes of the government did not percolate down towards the improvement of the vulnerable condition of the tribals. Therefore, to tackle the situation and to improve the socio-economic condition of the tribals, the then government thought differently and

introduced the special plans within the plan, known as the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) in Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-1978).

The strategies of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) foresee to channelize the flow of outlays and benefits from all the sectors of development in the annual plans of the states, Union Territories, and Central Ministries, at least in proportion to their population both in physical and financial terms (GOI, 2012-13). The broader objective of the TSP was both area development and socio-economic development of the individual family through individual beneficiary schemes. Area development aims at the development of the areas, which includes infrastructure, irrigation facilities, communication, health care, drinking water supply, promotion of education, development of horticulture, soil conservation, rural electrification etc. The main focus is to narrow the gap between the levels of development of the tribal on one hand and the areas and the other groups on the other. The objective also includes the improvement of the quality of life of the tribal communities. Broadly, it covers economic, social and educational development of the communities.

The approach used in this paper is much concerned with the opportunities that the people have, to improve the quality of their lives. Here in the paper the efficacy of development strategy and state's delivery of public goods and services of basic necessities in tune with the social justice both recognition and distributive paradigm to its people have been examined (Craig and Gordon, 2008; Guru, 2008). The ability of the state to provide basic necessities to its toiling masses to enable them to lead a life with health and self-dignity have been explored.

Though numerous developmental activities are carried out for tribals based on the plans, policies and programmes, keeping the major problems in view and socio-economic empowerment, but the desired result is yet to be achieved. The policies could not improve the situation of the vulnerability of tribals. Despite the fact that it has brought forth a perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status of these communities, yet the schemes, which applied, to them are not able to cater to the needs and aspiration of the people fully and have somehow failed to solve the problems of imbalances and zero down the gap between the STs and the general population. A review of the important achievements quantified through various developmental indicators and the serious gap that exists till today under the various core sectors such as economic development, employment and education are detailed highlighted below.

Tribals Living Below Poverty Line (BPL)

It is beyond doubt that poverty among tribals has been decreased over a period of time from 1951 to 2010. But if we have a close look at poverty related data among

Table 1: Poverty Among STs and Other –Rural Urban India (2004-05 and 2009-10)

Social Groups		Year (%)	
		2004-05	2009-10
STs	Rural	61.9	47.1
	Urban	35.0	28.8
Others	Rural	26.2	21.1
	Urban	15.8	11.9
*Total	Rural	41.8	33.8
	Urban	25.7	20.9

*Total includes SC & STs population. Source: Rural Development Statistics 2017-18, National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Retrieved from: [www://org.in/nird.docs/RDS/RDS 2014-15/ data/sec-10.pdf](http://www://org.in/nird.docs/RDS/RDS%2014-15/data/sec-10.pdf)

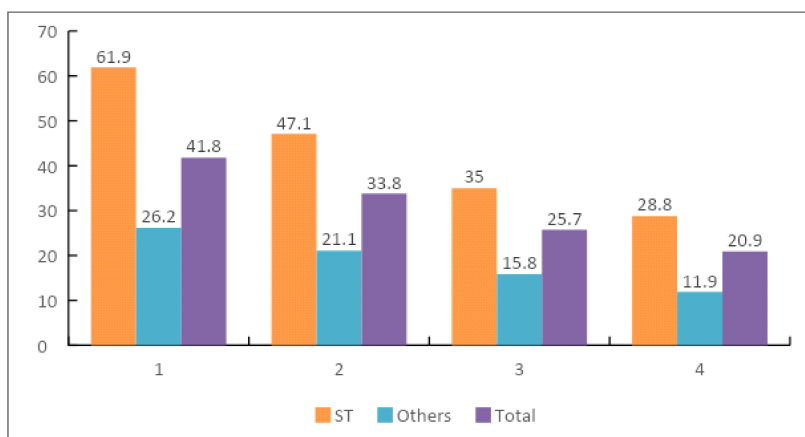


Figure 1: Poverty Among STs and Other –Rural Urban India (2004-05 and 2009-10)

Source: Rural Development Statistics 2017-18, National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Retrieved from: [www://org.in/nird.docs/RDS/RDS 2014-15/ data/sec-10.pdf](http://www://org.in/nird.docs/RDS/RDS%2014-15/data/sec-10.pdf), (based on data in the Table 1).

the social groups, then it is the tribal population whose percentage is higher than the others. The Incident of poverty among STs has always remained very high.

The percentage of tribal families living below the poverty line (BPL) has shown a declining trend between 2004-05 and 2009-10. The same trend is noticed with the general population also. Both in percentage as well as in absolute number the tribals are poorer than any other group. The incidence of poverty amongst the STs still continues to be very high with 47.1% and 28.8% living below the poverty line (BPL) in rural and urban areas respectively when compared to the figure of 21.1% and 11.9% in case of other population in 2009-10.as shown in Table 1.

Education Among Tribals

Undoubtedly there has been a substantial increase in the literacy rates of tribes during the last three decades. But the gap between the literacy rate of tribals and those of the general population (all India level) is still persisting and far away. Data in Table 2 reveals that the gap between general (total) female literacy and STs female is 18.94 per cent in 2001 and 15.15 per cent in 2011. So far the gap of literacy rate between the STs male and general male is concerned, it is 16.13 per cent in 2001 and 11.47 per cent in 2011. The gap is still far apart and clearly visible as shown in Table 2.

Representation of Tribals in the Central Government Job

Literacy and education of the person has a direct correlation with opportunity of getting good employment. It is beyond doubt that only education simply will not

Table 2: Literacy Rate of STs and Total Population from 1991 to 2011 (India) (%)

Year	*Literacy of Total population (LTP)			Literacy of Total ST population (LTSTP)			Gap between ST and General population LTP-LTSTP
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	
1991	52.2	64.1	39.3	29.60	40.65	18.19	22.6
2001	64.8	75.3	53.7	47.10	59.17	34.76	17.7
2011	73.0	80.0	64.5	58.96	68.53	49.35	14.04

Note: *Total literacy includes General population and SCs & STs total population.

Source: Author's calculation and compilation based on (i) Government of India Census (1991- 2011), (ii) Government of India (1995). *Educational Development of SCs and STs*, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resources Development, New Delhi in Figure 1 and 2.

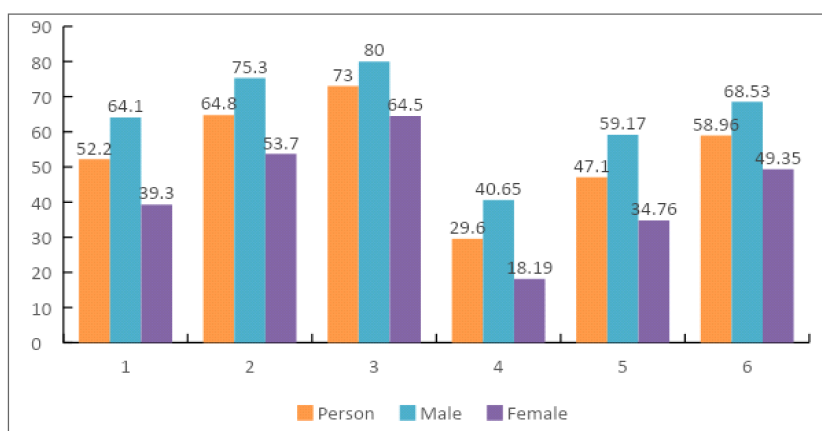


Figure 2: Literacy Rate of STs and Total Population from 1991 to 2011 (India) (%)

Source: Based on Table 2

necessarily provide employment to the job seekers there are so many factors are also attached with it. But it is certain that without education it is quite impossible to get the opportunity of good employment. And in the globalization era and the new liberal economic phase technical and higher education needed much for the job opportunity. Since tribals are not as educated as other in terms of technological and English education and could not fulfill the demands of the job market which exclude them from the employment opportunity. Therefore, they could not compete with others in the highly competitive job market and could not access lucrative jobs like class A and B jobs etc. Their accessibility is limited to only Group D and C and only in a few cases they could reach to Group A and B. Their representation in Group A and B category Job is mismatched with their share of population in India.

Furthermore, the compartmental division of the Indian society into different hierarchical social groups on the patterned of graded inequality/ hierarchy which discriminate and exclude the lower ladder of group i.e. tribals by the mainstream society. Put in differently, it means the social exclusion is the denial of equal opportunities imposed by certain groups of society on others that leads to inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society (Thorat and Kumar, 2008). This is the reason even after more than seven decades of implementation of affirmative action and reservation policy in India the tribals are not able to represent as per their population in different government services which is shown in Table 3. After seven decades of our special targeted policy of positive discrimination we failed to produce even a Supreme Court Judge among the tribals. Their representation in higher judiciary is almost zero. If we have a close look in to the central government job and the representation of tribals in different class of job in grade 'A' government job only 4.3 per cent, in grade 'B' 4.5 per cent, in grade 'C' it is 6.5 percent and in grade 'D' it is 6.9 per cent. It clearly shows that the top label posts are yet to make open entry for tribals even if they have reservation to get entry in to the job many high label positions include University Vice-Chancellor, Department Head, Government Department Secretary, in higher judiciary and other group A and special appointment job are beyond their reach. It is only in Group C and D they are merely visible nearer to their proportion of population.

Table 3: Representation of STs in central Government Services on 1.1.2005

Group	Total	STs
A	80,589	3448 (4.3%)
B	1,39,958	6230 (4.5%)
C	20,36,103	131678 (6.5%)
D	7,67,224	55032 (6.9%)

Source: Government of India. 2012. Indian Reference Book 2012, New Delhi: GOI.

Social Identity based Violence Against Tribals

India is a multi ethnic country, which is characterized by a highly unequal, multi-racial and multi-castes society. Diversity and differences have been the hallmark of our society and it is rooted in the history (Xaxa, 2008). Democratic political system with a well designed constitution has its own agenda for social transformation which derecognises the hierarchy of castes and strives through various legal provisions to build a casteless society (Shah, 2004). To cater to this diversity and to develop inclusiveness, there is a need to have a social cohesion and social solidarity. Consequently, many positive measures have been taken to ameliorate the socio-economic condition of tribals, so that, eventually they will not suffer from the social identity based discriminations. For that reasons the constitution strictly prohibits social discrimination. Article 15 (2) and Article 17 read as, ‘Untouchability’ is abolished and its practices in any form are forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of ‘Untouchability’ shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law” (GOI, 2010, p.8). It has been followed by much legislation including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 (POA Act, 1989). Law will not be applicable and get its results, unless it is implemented with care. In spite of well designed laws and protection of tribals they have been suffering from caste/ ethnic based humiliation, brutality and torture by others as shown in Table 4 and Figure 3.

This social identity based violence affects economic, social, human well-being and their functioning and freedom. The official statistics suggest that during the year 2015 to 2017 over three years about twenty thousand (19969) cases of different crimes were registered throughout the country. The crimes committed on adivasis have been invariable over the years in the country and across the states (as given in Table 4). However, most of the incidences of crimes committed on tribals are either unreported or underreported. The invariable violence and economic disadvantages has further aggravated their suffering.

Data in the Table 4 depicts the crimes committed against the STs during the years 2015 to 2017 and its trend in all India levels. Data says that crimes against this

Table 4: Crime against the Tribals (All India Level)

S.No.	Time Period	Crime against STs	Total
1	2015	6276	19969
2	2016	6568	
3	2017	7125	

Source: Government of India (2017). N.C.R.B., Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi: GOI

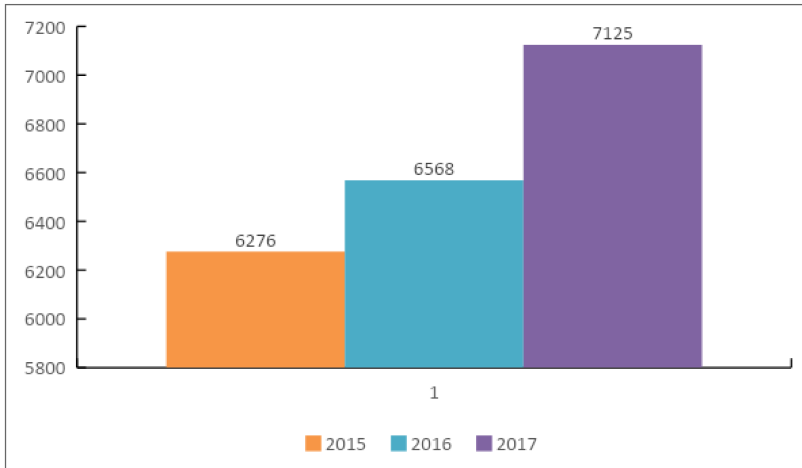


Figure 3: Crime Against STs (2015-2017) India

Source: Government of India (2017). N.C.R.B.,op.cit.

community are increasing every year. In 2015 it was 6276 and in 2016 it was increased to 6568 and in 2017 again increased to 7125. Instead of decreasing crime against tribals it is increasing every year. This seems to be because of the paradox of provisions and laws that we are having in the present days are not implemented both in letter and spirit. It is because of that the state is trying to extract a confirmation of compliance to pay due respect and recognition to adivasis from the recalcitrant upper strata social group which they actually do not want to do so. This is the paradox of our society. The upper strata social group don't take the moral lead in offering unconditional due recognition (co equal and due respect) to those social groups – here to the tribals, deprived of this recognition (Guru, 2008). However, on the contrary the upper caste social groups seem to be deploying discursive strategy to escape from this constitutional obligation (Ibid).

Issues and Concern

Poor economic opportunity breeds poverty and it has a direct correlation with social insecurity, low living standard, vulnerability, livelihood, human development and well being of the tribals. (Sen, 2000). Economic insecurity is linked to the lack of education and again lack of education causes lack of employment opportunity (Ibid: 24). There is a spiral impact and cause and effect issues. If a person has well economic health he/she is capable to spend on his/her children's education in terms of educational expenses is concerned and they can get modern and best education available in the market. Because of education there is every chance that they can get better job

opportunity. Education has also determining influence on the rate at which economic progress is achieved and benefits, which can be derived from it. To realize the idea of equality and social justice the Indian constitution lays special emphasis on the education of the Scheduled Tribes through special provisions (Article 21-A & 46). However, by simple having policy will not deliver its objectives it depends up on the proper implementation of the said policy and its outcomes which are in questions. Political democracy cannot exist in isolation without economic and social democracy. For the strengthen of political institution and democratic ethos we need to give importance to the social and economic democracy. That is to say eradication of structural inequality like social hierarchy. It produces antithesis to solidarity and fraternity so we are lacking fraternity, brotherhood and fellow feeling. There must be human equality. We need to abide by the spirit of the constitution and not just its legal provisions. The preaching of the constitution like equality, liberty, justice and fraternity must be practiced in toto. The cultural question and social relations has to be addressed properly otherwise the text of equality cannot be converted into context and the POA Act 1989 alone can't provide the social protection from social identity based atrocities against tribals. The socialistic ideas and economic democracy as given in DPSP should be taken seriously when the government makes its policy. Otherwise the inclusive development with aims to have an inclusive society would be a distance dream

CONCLUSION

Formulation of good policy will not automatically realize its objectives. It involves well implementation and good management, which includes participation of the people, proper phase wise evaluation and monitoring. The basic objective of the developmental efforts is to increase the per capita income and strengthen the material aspects of tribal culture through better utilization of the environmental resources. But after seven decades of completion of plan development it is found that the state is not able to reach the unreached and solve their problems. The social status of adivasis are at the bottom of the ladder of Indian social hierarchy. The state of Indian tribes is one of the worst in the world. If we go by the multidimensional poverty index the tribals will be even worse than their poor counterparts in the Sub-Saharan states. They are the most vulnerable section of the society in terms of broader development indicators. Hence only by making good policy will not automatically translate into action and achieve its objectives. The core issue is the implementation and its outcomes. How is it being implemented to realize the goal? It shows the gross commitment failure on the part of government to implement constitutional provisions to deliver social justice to the tribals at large.

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