



CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF TRIBAL WOMEN

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Abstract

Tribal women are the indigenous people who live in the lap of the nature, and depend on natural resources for their livelihood. They constitute the major segment of Indian society. Scheduled Tribes constitute about 8% of the Indian population. There are 573 scheduled Tribes living in different parts of the country, having their own languages different from the one mostly spoken in the state where they live. The tribal women, constitute like any other social group, about half of the total population. The tribal women are more illiterate than men. The present study focuses the challenges faced by tribal women and its remedial measures. And identify the Articles of our Indian Constitution to safe guard Social Justice on Tribal women, special schemes of our central Government and State Government have been noticed to overcome the challenges.

Key Words: *Pathological and Indebtedness.*

Introduction

Tribal women are the indigenous people who live in the lap of the nature, and depend on natural resources for their livelihood. They constitute the major segment of Indian society. Scheduled Tribes constitute about 8% of the Indian population. There are 573 scheduled Tribes living in different parts of the country, having their own languages different from the one mostly spoken in the state where they live. The tribal women, constitute like any other social group, about half of the total population.¹ the tribal women are more illiterate than men. The present study focuses the challenges faced by tribal women and its remedial measures. And identify the Articles of our Indian Constitution to safe guard Social Justice on Tribal women, special schemes of our central Government and State Government have been noticed to overcome the challenges.

The Main Challenges of the Tribal women

Poverty: Poverty is a socio pathological problem related to the maintenance of basic or minimum needs of survival. Poverty and indebtedness are related. They are interrelated and inter dependent. The tribal take majority of loan from the moneylenders.

Illiteracy: Lack of awareness about importance of education among the parents of Tribal and they trend to push their children into traditional works of the family appeared to be the key reason for the poor educational status. Their response to education is poor.

Lack of Clean Drinking Water: The tribals have to depend on ground water or well for drinking water. They have to use the water of pond for cooking and drinking purposes. They wash their cloth on the same pond. This affects their health.

Lack of Awareness towards Health Education: They face a number of problems related to health and sanitation. Due to lack of communication facilities, they are not able to get the awareness about the health programs. It is very difficult to have a reasonable standard of living with a large number of members in the family having only one or two earning members.² The migrant tribal women should be motivated to adopt the family planning methods to limit the size of their families.

Lack of Proper Houses: Tribals houses are made up of simple raw materials available in their environment with simple technology. Their houses do not have windows, rooms, drains and latrines etc. They have only one room in the house, which is used for all purposes, unhygienic conditions affect the health of the tribals.

Physical And Sexual Exploitation of Tribal Women : The principal causes of Physical and sexual exploitation of the migrant tribal women and girls in cities were poverty, lack of employment opportunities, un organized nature



of labour force, misunderstanding of the local people, and lack of community support to victims of sexual exploitation.

Lack of communication: The tribals live in a remote area which is surrounded by hills, mountains, rivers etc. these are natural barriers of communication.

Constitutional provisions of Tribal women

The constitution has given more than 20 articles on the redressed and upliftment of underprivileged with policies on positive discrimination and affirmative action with reference to S.T.

1. **Article 14** confers equal rights and opportunities to all.
2. **Article 15** prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of sex, religion, race, caste etc.
3. **Article 15 (4)** States to make special provisions for advancement of any socially educationally backward classes.
4. **Article 16 (4)** empowers the state to make provisions for reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens, which in the opinion of state, is not adequately represented.
5. **Article 46** state to promote with special cares the educational and economic interests of the weaker section, especially the ST and protects the social injustice and all form of exploitation.
6. **Article 275** grant-in aid for promoting the welfare of ST and raising the level of administration.
7. **Article 330** - Seats shall be reserved in the House of the People for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes .
8. **Article 332** Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States.
9. **Article 332,335** stipulates the claims that the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.
10. **Article 244(1)** tribal welfare communities to be setup for the welfare of the tribes.
11. **Article 22(2)** 73rd and 74th amendments - to ensure effective participation of tribal in the process of planning and decision making.

Extension to scheduled Areas Act 1996. Amendments of Constitution are extended to the Scheduled Areas through Panchayats.

These constitutional provisions of the Government of India helped in the development of the tribes and their education.

Welfare Schemes of Tribal Women

The major policies of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs aim to ensure the overall development of both Scheduled Tribe men and women. However, in tribal society women often suffer from a greater disadvantage than men.³ Therefore Ministry of Tribal Affairs is trying to ensure that women benefit equally from general schemes also put forth some special schemes meant for the benefit of ST women and girls as given below:

1. Scheme of Girls and Boys Hostels for STs: Under the scheme, Central assistance is given to States / UTs / Universities for construction of new hostel buildings and or extension of existing hostels. State Governments are eligible for 100% central share for construction of all Girls' hostel.
2. Scheme of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas: The objective of the scheme is to provide residential schools for STs to increase the literacy rate among the tribal students and to bring them at par with other population of the country. Under the scheme, State Governments are eligible for 100% central share for construction of all Girls' Ashram Schools in naxal affected areas.
3. (iii) Scheme for Strengthening Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts: This scheme is being implemented in 54 identified low literacy Districts where the ST population is 25% or more, and ST female literacy rate is below 35%, or its fractions, as per 2001 census. Any other tribal block in a



- district, other than aforesaid 54 identified districts, which fulfill the same criteria for tribal population and ST female literacy rate, are also covered.
4. The areas inhabited by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and naxalite affected areas are given priority. This scheme aims to bridge the gap in literacy levels between the general female population and tribal women, through facilitating 100% enrolment of tribal girls in the identified Districts or Blocks, more particularly in naxal affected areas and in areas inhabited by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), and reducing drop-outs at the elementary level by creating the required ambience for education.⁴ The scheme is implemented through Voluntary Organizations (VOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and autonomous society institutions of State Government, Union Territory Administration.
 5. Ministry provides 100% assistance for running and maintenance of educational complexes for ST girls which include free education, boarding and lodging, books, uniforms, medical help, coaching, incentives to girls, periodical awards, etc. The scheme envisages convergence with the schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya of Ministry of Human Resource Development. It meets the requirement of primary level students as well as middle, secondary level students and provides residential facility to ST girl students to ensure their retention in schools.
 6. In addition to above, to maximize retention of ST students within various stages of school education and promoting higher learning, monetary incentives are provided by Ministry of Tribal Affairs in the form of scholarships such as Pre Metric Scholarship, Post Metric Scholarship, National Overseas Scholarship, Scholarship for Top Class Education and Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for ST students.⁵
 7. Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub Scheme (SCA to TSS): It is 100% grant from Government of India. Its objective is to bridge the gap between Scheduled Tribes (ST) population and others by providing support for education, health, sanitation, water supply, livelihood, skill development, minor infrastructure etc. It is a flexible scheme and supplements the efforts of the line Ministries/Departments.
 8. Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution: It is 100% grant from Government of India. Funding under this programme is to enable the State to meet the cost of such schemes of development as may be undertaken by the State for the purpose of promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes in that State or raising the level of administration of Scheduled Areas therein to that of the administration of the rest of the areas of that State.⁶ The Ministry has insisted upon the States, that in intervention under Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub Scheme, and under Article 275(1) grants, one third beneficiaries should be women girls.
 9. Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana: National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC), an apex organization under Ministry of Tribal Affairs is implementing this exclusive scheme for tribal women. Under the scheme, Scheduled Tribes women can undertake any income generation activity. Loans up to 90% for scheme costing up to Rs.1 lakh are provided at a concessional rate of interest of 4% per annum.

Some Major Schemes of Other Ministries are as Follows

The Department of Rural Development is implementing various rural development programmes namely, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) and National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) to bring about overall improvement in the quality of life of the people in rural areas, including tribal women. Department has been earmarking funds towards Scheduled Tribe Component (STC)(erstwhile Tribal Sub Plan) under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G) and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).



There is a provision of 5% of the allocation at national level as reserve fund which can be utilized for settlement of households benefitted under the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 commonly known as FRA beneficiaries. Primitive Tribal Groups and beneficiary families of the FRA are being covered on priority to achieve saturation. Under DAY-NRLM, the guidelines stipulate that at least 50% of the women beneficiaries shall be members of the SCs/STs.⁷ Funds are released to the States STs under ST Component and utilized as per programme guidelines.

Following schemes administered by Ministry of Women and Child Development are intended to benefit all women, including ST women:

1. **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme** : It is a social campaign of the Government of India that aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls.
2. **One Stop Centre Scheme**: The main objectives of the scheme is to provide support and assistance to women affected by violence at private or at any public place, irrespective of caste, class, religion, region, sexual orientation or marital status.
3. **Women Helpline Scheme**: The Scheme of Universalisation of Women Helpline is intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence through referral and information about women related government schemes programs across the country through a single uniform number.
4. **Ujjawala** : A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Working Women Hostel
5. **Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme** for the Children of Working Mothers.
6. This information was given by Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Shri Jaswantsinh Rhabhor at Lok Sabha.⁸

Conclusion

At present Schedule Tribes have improved better condition to a great extent but still a large number of them are backward in every respect. To conclude, it may be stated once again that though the women in the tribal society in India enjoy a greater freedom to mix and move around, their social organisations and institutions are still discriminatory particularly with regard to the customary laws that guide the ownership of property and inheritance or also with regard to exercising authority both in the domestic and public spheres. In order to solve the problems faced by migrant tribal women and girls in cities, the Government should involve the local NGOs and provide such organisations sufficient funds for effective work. These NGOs should, first of all undertake tracer- studies for identification and rehabilitation of migrant tribal women and girls in cities.

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