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Status and Major Problems of Tribes in India

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ABSTRACT: Some time ago the Sentinelese tribe of Andaman and Nicobar Islands became the subject of wide discussion. The matter was such that some members of this tribe had killed an American tourist. Significantly, their attitude towards the outside world and external interference has generally been hostile. This is not the first time such an incident has been seen. Whenever outsiders tried to make contact with these tribes, they adopted violent attitudes. Due to this attitude, before the independence of the country, the British government gave them the status of a criminal tribe under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, and their children were separated from their parents after the age of 6 years. However, after independence, the Government of India changed the status of their Criminal Tribes to De-notified Tribes. These tribes like de-notified and nomadic/semi-nomadic. In simple words, nomadic tribes are facing many problems even today. Their pitiable condition among other members of the society is not hidden from anyone. In such a situation, the question arises that what is the reason that these tribes are not able to make contact with outsiders? Why do they feel alienated from the modern world? The question is also what problems are these tribes facing? In this article an attempt has been made to find answers to these questions.

KEYWORDS: Species, Diversification, Geographical Distribution

I. INTRODUCTION

The term “tribal” or “Adivasi” creates an image of half-naked men and women in our mind, wielding arrows and spears, wearing feathers on their heads, and speaking an unintelligible language. Even as the majority of the world’s communities continued to change their lifestyles to keep up with the world’s “progress,” there were communities that remained true to their traditional values, customs, and beliefs, allowing them to live in harmony with nature and their unpolluted environment. The so-called civilised world labelled these communities as natives, uncivilised people, Aborigines, Adivasis, Tribals, Indigenous, uncontacted people, and many other such terms. In India, they are commonly referred to as Adivasis/Girijans.

Tribes in India:

Tribes are human communities that live in a different definite territory, and have a different culture, different customs, different language and they marry only within their own community. Simply put, tribes have their own descendants, ancestors and common deities. They are usually nature worshippers. In the Indian Constitution, where they have been called 'Scheduled Tribes', on the other hand, they are also known by many other names, such as tribal, primitive-caste, forest dweller, prehistoric, uncivilized caste, illiterate, illiterate and tribal group etc. Although the original source of Indian tribes is once considered to be species like Proto Australoid and Mongols spread over the entire land area of the country. Another source of these is also the Negrito species, whose descendants are still present in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is worth mentioning that unity in diversity is the identity of Indian culture and at the root of this is definitely the tribes located in different regions of India, who live in different regions, giving a unique identity to Indian culture through their culture. Even today in India, there is a diversification of culture along with tribes from north to south and east to west. The status of tribes across India can be easily taken by understanding their geographical distribution.

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Geographical Distribution of the Tribes:

On the geographical basis, the tribes of India are divided into different parts such as North and Northeast region, Central region, South region and Island region. The Terai region of the Himalayas, the North-Eastern region are included under the North and Northeast region. Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Southern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand and all the states of the Northeast come under this region. Tribes like Bakarwal, Gurjar, Tharu, Buxa, Raji, Jaunsari, Shouka, Bhotia, Gaddi, Kinnauri, Garo, Khasi, Jaintia etc. live in these areas. If we see the central region, it includes the plateau and hilly regions of peninsular India. Madhya Pradesh, South Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Southern Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha etc. States come in this region, where Bhil, Gond, Reddy, Santhal, Ho, Munda, Korwa, Oraon, Kol, Banjara, Meena, Koli etc. tribes live. Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala etc. states come under the southern region, where tribes like Toda, Korma, Gond, Bhil, Kadar, Irula etc. have settled. The tribes of Andaman and Nicobar usually come in the island area. For example- Sentinelese, Ong, Jarawa, Shompen etc. Being a topic of recent discussion, it is necessary that we take a cursory glance at the

Sentinelese Tribe:

This tribe is a Negrito tribe living on a restricted North Sentinel Island. According to the 2011 census, their number on the island was around 15. While the Andaman Islands are inhabited by four Negrito tribes – Great Andamanese, Onge/Onge, Jarawa and Sentinelese, on the other hand Nicobar is inhabited by two Mongoloid tribes – Nicobari and Shompen. Along with the Sentinelese, other tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands – Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa and Shompen are included in the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of India's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

Problems of Tribes Living in Different Regions of India:

Today, India has achieved the status of the world's sixth largest economy, but there is still a section which is marginalized. Under this section those tribes come who are living in remote areas and facing many problems. Tribals live in areas where there is little or no access to basic amenities. So they are facing many problems.

1. If we talk about social problems, then even today they do not find themselves comfortable in establishing social contact. Due to this they feel a sense of socio-cultural isolation, land alienation, untouchability. Along with this, the condition of deprivation of education, entertainment, health and nutritional facilities is also available in them.
2. Even today a large section of the tribal communities are illiterate due to which they do not understand the spoken language. They are not even aware of which schemes of the government are for these sections, which is the biggest reason for their social backwardness.
3. Talking about their economic backwardness, the main problem in this is poverty and indebtedness. Even today, there is a section of the tribal community who is making a living by working in the homes of others. Parents are unable to educate their children due to financial constraints, and sell them to big businessmen or brokers for money. So the children are either forced to adopt the heinous act of the society or else they have to face human trafficking. As far as girls are concerned, they are usually pushed into such a disgusting swamp like prostitution. In fact, the biggest reason for the backwardness of the tribes is their economic backwardness, which deprives them of their other facilities.
4. Religious segregation is also a major aspect of tribal problems. These tribes have their own separate deities. The biggest reason for this is the practice of untouchability towards them by other sections in the society. If we go back a little, we find that these tribes were thrown out of the society as untouchables and non-Aryans, entry into public temples and use of holy places were banned. Even today, taking their position is the same.
5. These are all aspects due to which the tribes are still not able to establish their contact with the outside world. To find a solution to all these problems, it would be appropriate to discuss some of the developmental aspects adopted by the government.

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Steps taken by the government for the upliftment of tribals:

- Schedule 5 in the constitution provides for the administration and control of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes, while on the other hand, schedule 6 provides for the administration of tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. Apart from this, Article 17 prohibits any kind of untouchability in the society, so under the Directive Principles of Policy, the state has been ordered under Article 46 to ensure that the education and economic interests of the Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections protect it.
- In order to protect the interests of Scheduled Tribes in a more effective way, a separate National Commission for Scheduled Tribes was also established in 2003 by the 89th Constitutional Amendment Act. The political interests of the tribes have also been protected in the constitution. In proportion to their number, seats have been reserved in the State Legislative Assemblies and Panchayats.
- Apart from the constitutional provisions, there are some functions which the government also looks after the interests of the tribes at its level. These include- government grants-in-aid, facilities for grain banks, efforts for economic progress, proper education system for representation in government jobs, such as construction of hostels and availability of scholarships and providing cultural security etc. With this, separate departments have been set up for the welfare of tribals at the Center and in the states. The Tribal Advisory Council is a good example of this.
- As a result of these initiatives, the literacy rate of tribals which was about 10.3% in 1961 has increased to about 66.1% as per 2011 census. In order to facilitate getting government jobs, special relaxation has been made in the age limit and eligibility criteria of the members of the Scheduled Castes.
- The recent government has also done important work in the direction of upliftment of tribals. For example, Eklavya Model Residential School scheme has been started for the students of Scheduled Tribes (ST). Its objective is to provide middle and higher level education to the students living in remote areas. On the other hand, Scheduled Tribe Girl Education Scheme will prove beneficial for the girls of Scheduled Tribes in low literacy districts.

II. CONCLUSION

Despite these commendable steps, there is a need to further strengthen the tribal development across the country. It is true that a certain section of the tribes shy away from coming into the mainstream of the society, but in such a situation, their proper development and protection also becomes important. Although the government at its level is making better efforts to improve the condition of the tribes, but more changes are needed in the work of governance. The benefits of the schemes do not reach the tribals. This obstacle has to be removed.

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