



Tribal Development in Odisha: Identifying Infrastructural Gap and Institutional Constraints

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Abstract

Tribal development has become an emerging area of research in the present era. The successive regimes in India have placed priority on inclusive economic growth and social justice keeping tribal development in the realm of policy framework. In this pursuit several tribal development programmes have been undertaken to achieve development and welfare of tribals in the country. Despite quite a good number of measures undertaken by the government the tribals remained far from the mainstream of civilisation. Odisha is the homeland of 62 tribes and comprise second largest tribal population in the country. Of the total population in the state 22.8 percent are tribal and eight districts of the state have more than 50 percent tribal population.(SCST-2015-Research, Govt of Odisha).The aim of this paper is to identify the infrastructural gap in analysing the institutional constraints in the process of tribal development trends in Odisha. The endeavour is to put in place the causes of institutional constraints and the nature and extent of tribal development in Kalahandi District of Odisha. The objective is to resolve how their traditional life styles, remoteness of habitations, disperses population etc have affected the trends of tribal development. The sole purpose of this paper is to identify different issues like indebtedness, low literacy level, malnutrition, poverty diseases and exploitation with other parameters to measure the nature and extent of tribal development. The study is done in Saralanji village of Medinipur panchyat in Kalahandi District.

Keywords: Infrastructure, Institutional Constraints, Economic Growth, Policy Framework

Introduction:

The tribal communities in India as well as in odisha are characterised by economic and social marginalization, primitive existence, geographical isolation and educational backwardness. (Rout, 2015) They remained vulnerable to exploitation, distress migration and debt traps in India. Faced with challenges on account of relative exclusion, steadily livelihood base, literacy, poor access to rights and the tribes in general have been deprived since long. The tribal development has been recognised by the policy makers as a challenge and to take that as target to be accomplished through institutionalisation. The primary aim of this paper is to study the tribal development trends in Kalahandi district of odisha and prioritise the infrastructural gaps. In this work effort has been put by the researcher to study some of the significant infrastructures and the gaps within relating to tribal governance mechanism. The care has been taken to study the existing financial infrastructure, village material infrastructure, household

material infrastructure, education infrastructure and health infrastructure in Kalahandi district. The study reveals that development process has been subjected to some amount of institutional constraints and apathy. The study area Saralanji village is in Bhawanipatna Assembly constituency of Kalahandi, though only 8 KMs from the district headquarter but the visible infrastructural gap tells a different story. The study reveals that the people of the village are not conscious of policies and programmes under taken by the government so also not getting expected benefits from the policies meant for them as a result that creates the gap in strengthening the tribal development process.

Tribes in Odisha: A Glance

The tribal demography of odisha is not only rich but also diverse. Odisha occupies a unique position in the tribal map of the country. Majority of the Tribes of odisha live in hilly and forest regions. They are unique for their simplicity, honesty, and single mindedness, culture of intimacy, family attachment and affinity to nature (Satapathy, 1993). Their economy is largely subsistence, oriented, non-stratified and non-specialised. Their social system is simple and their aspirations are limited. Though they in odisha suffered from social, economic and educational backwardness due to geo-historical reasons, they have their own distinctiveness and social cultural milieu. (Annual Activity Report-Odisha 2021) In odisha there are 62 Scheduled Tribes, speak as many as 74 dialects. According to 2011 census the tribal population of the state is 95, 90,756 constituting 22.85% of the total population of the state and 9.20% of the total tribal population of the country. There are 62 different tribal communities including 13 particularly vulnerable tribal groups in the state. In numerical terms odisha has the third largest concentration of tribal population in the country after Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. (Annual Activity Report- Odisha 2021)

Kalahandi the study area is a tribal dominating district of odisha and occupies the south western portion of odisha. Major tribes like the Gonds, Kondhs, Sabars, Banjaras , Prajas, Bhunjias and Pahrias are inhabitants of Kalahandi Districts. As per 2011 census the tribal population in the district is 28.5% tribal (DSHB, 2020) .The district has an area of 7920sq.kms which shares 5.09% of landmass of the state and occupies 7th rank in term of area. The total population of the districts is 15, 77 Lakhs comprising of 1454882 rural 121987 urban populations as per 2011 Census.

Tribal Development: The Concept

The concept of tribal development emerged since the beginning of the plan period. The focus is to create an enabling ecosystem of equal opportunities of education, health and livelihood and to ensure sustainable development for the tribal communities while preserving the unique identities and culture of these communities. The tribal development as a process being conceptualised to ensure the livelihood and food security and that can be sustainably improve through promoting an efficient, equitable self-managed and sustainable exploitation of the natural resource at their disposal. The core idea behind tribal development is to empower the tribal to a considerable level.

Objective of the Study

To study the socio economic position of tribes in odisha

To analyse constitutional provision for tribes in odisha

To study the tribal development process in Kalahandi and saralanji village.

To trace the institutional gap and constitutional constrains in the process of tribal development in Kalahandi

Methodology

The researcher adopted descriptive and analytical methods. Both primary and secondary data are used in this study to know about the socio economic status of the tribal in Kalahandi in context of infrastructural gap and institutional constraints. The data collected through field study on a random sampling basis has been analysed. The sources accessed are mostly the census of India publications, SCST-2015-Research, Govt of Odisha, and Report of National Commission for schedule Tribes, Annual Activity Report-Odisha-2021 and District Statistical Hand Book-2020.

Research Problems

The researcher expressed his discontent to the fact that despite various developmental measures undertaken by the governments the development process in Kalahandi district of odisha is found to be not adequate. The expected development in the socio and economic condition of the tribes is negligible. No much improvement has been noticed in their day to do life. The distance of the study area though only eight kms from the district headquarter but development in this area has not witnessed any impact. There are several economic and social constraints which are present in addition to infrastructural gaps. The research problem is to know that what prevents the development process to become adequate and significant.

Tribal Development in Odisha

The tribal development process in odisha has become the subject of research in recent days. Odisha occupies a unique position in the ethnographic map of India having the largest variety of tribal communities. Being one of the fascinating ethnographic states of the country, it has been the homeland of as long as 62 different tribal communities including 13 particularly vulnerable tribal groups. As per 2011 census the tribal in odisha counts for 22.85 percent of total population of the state and contributes 9.17 percent to the total tribal population of the country. (SCSTRTI, 2018). The development status of tribes in odisha and subsequent changes in the development process needs careful analysis to know the tribal development.

Ever since independence the government of odisha with the support of Union Government have been trying to improve the overall quality of life of the tribal people by bringing them to the mainstream. The government is trying very hard for the improvement of socio economic condition of tribes by implementing development schemes through its different agencies and institutions, such as tribal development block, Grampanchayat, Integrated tribal development agencies, large size agricultural, Ashram school multipurpose cooperative society and other agencies. (Behera, 2020). The main objective of the tribal development schemes of the government are to raise the productivity levels of the tribals , development of human resources , education, elimination of exploitation in the field of alienation and other schemes. Most of the tribal villages in odisha are located in inaccessible hills and forests which stand as a constraint in the path of development.



Constitutional Provisions on Tribal Development

Constitutional provisions are living instruments to safeguard the interest of the people in general and tribes in particular. Special provisions for tribes stand to prevent discriminations and they are not arbitrary discrimination but the protective discriminations. Protective discriminations are indispensable for tribal development. This provision stands to protect their rights. It improves the standard of living of tribal. The objective of the provision is to empower them socially and economically to see them with the mainstream society.

There are various constitutional safeguards for the protection and upliftment of tribal in India in general and odisha in particular. We may discuss some of the important safeguards.

1. Educational, Economic and Public Employment-related safeguards.

Article 14: Equality before law and equal protection of law

Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste sex or place of birth.

Article 15(4) : The state is permitted to make any special provisions for the advancement of the SCs and STs

Article .224: In part X of the constitution envisages a special system of administration for certain areas designed as Scheduled areas and tribal areas.

Article 244 A: It deals with the formation of an autonomous state comprising certain tribal areas in Assam and creation of local legislature or council of ministers or both.

Article 275: The union government can provide the special grants for the welfare of STs.

2. Political Rights

Article 164: It empowers the state to establish special ministry of welfare of the scheduled Tribes in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

Article 330: Reservation of seats for SCs and STs in the House of the People

Article 332: It deals with the reservation of seats for SCs and STs in State Legislative Assembly

Article 243D AND 243T: It deals with the reservation of seats in Panchyati Raj institutions and Municipalities for SCs and STs respectably.

Article 338 A: Under 89 Constitutional Amendment Act of 2003 a new Art 338 A is added to form a National Commission for STs. The separate national commission for STs came into existence in 2004.

3. Employment Rights

Article 15(5) It provides reservations to scheduled tribes in the educational institutions.

Article 16 (4) and 16(4 A): It provides reservation to scheduled tribes in employment and promotions. The tribals in India are facing significant challenges that are making their lives difficult.(Source

Despite various provisions granted by the constitution the tribals are not able to come out of difficulties due to the following issues faced by them. One major problem is the exploitation of their natural resources. The government's policies of liberalization and globalization prioritize using resources for economic growth, which clashes with the traditional tribal view of resource utilization. This has led to the extraction of resources from tribal territories, causing ecological damage. Another issue is forced displacement due to large development projects. Many tribal areas have been taken over for these projects and the displaced communities often struggle to find proper rehabilitation. Other problems faced by the tribals are mostly like some suffer from poor health conditions, with shorter life expectancy and higher rates of diseases like Sickle Cell Anaemia. There are also conflicts among tribes over access to natural resources and territorial control.

The interests of market forces often take precedence over the well-being and security of the tribal people. Many tribes are left unemployed or forced to work in exploitative and low-paying jobs. Globalization has worsened the situation, exacerbating social exclusion and vulnerability for the downtrodden tribes. This has even led to sub-national movements seeking greater autonomy or recognition for tribal areas. Tribal women are particularly affected as they are often directly impacted by corporate exploitation of their lands. Poverty drives many young women from tribal areas to migrate to urban centres in search of work, where they face exploitation and poor living conditions.

Specific Policy and Programmes for the development of tribes in Odisha

Odisha has the largest tribal concentration after Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra in the entire country. There are some of the major policies and programmes which have been under taken in the state for the welfare of the tribals. The Tribal Advisory council (TAC) formed in Odisha on 24 June 1950 has been advising the state government in time to time in development matters of tribals. (Rath, 2018). In the initial days the Community Development Programme special project known as Multipurpose Tribal Blocks were started in 1956 on an experimental basis. Development of the tribal people in line with their culture and to safeguard their interest, forest and forest based resources is the major objective of multipurpose tribal blocks.

However the policies made by the state governments in par with central government for the development of tribals mostly focuses on certain important issues with an objective to resolve the issues in due course of time. They are mostly lower human development indices, inadequate basic infrastructure facilities, diminishing control over natural resources, constant threat of displacement, persistence of regional imbalance, non-employment and many more. Therefore the policy shall facilitate translation of all constitutional provisions into realities at the grass root level, concerning the scheduled tribals of the state.

The principal objectives of the state policy for ensuring tribal development are mainly a) Regulatory Protection b) Socio economic empowerment c) Protection of Traditional and Cultural Rights d) Access to privileges

Tribal development in Kalahandi district: An analysis

Kalahandi district is one of the southern located districts in Odisha. It is bounded by the Balangir district in North, Rayagada district in South, Kandhamal district in the east and Nuapada district in the west. (DSHB, Kalahandi, 2020). The district has an area of 7920 sq.kms which shares 5.09% of landmass of the state and occupies 7th rank in term of area. The total population of the district is 15.77 Lakhs comprising of 1454882 rural and 121987 urban populations as per 2011 census. The district shares 3.76% of state's population. (DSHB, Kalahandi, 2020). As per 2011 census the scheduled caste population is 286580(18.17%) and scheduled tribe population 449456 (28.50%).

The district is having total 2253 villages and 13 blocks of which three blocks are urban blocks. There are 2116 inhabited villages and 12 uninhabited villages. (DSHB, Kalahandi, 2020). The researcher randomly selected SARALANJI village of Bhawanipatna, the urban block. The village is just eight KMS distance from Bhawnipatna, the district head quarter. The attempt has been made in this study to know the nature and extent of development in this tribal village.

The objective of the study is to know the available infrastructure in Saralaniji village and to trace the infrastructural gap. The dimensions of infrastructure are mainly Finance infrastructure, Village material infrastructure, Household material infrastructure, health infrastructure, Education infrastructure.

The distribution of ST population in different blocks in Kalahandi district, male and female wise shows that in Kalahandi district the total ST population is 449456 of which 221171 are male and 228285 are female.(Census 2011). There are three urban blocks in Kalahandi district, they are Bhawanipatna ,Junagarh and Kesinga. In Bhawanipatna block 27779 are ST male and 28785 are ST female and total ST population is 56564. (DSHB, Kalahandi, 2020). In Junagarh 14899 are ST Male and 15003 are ST female and total ST population is 29902. The Kesinga block is having total ST population is 31849 of which 15845 are ST male and 16004 are ST female people. (DSHB, Kalahandi, 2020).

The field study was carried out in Saralaniji village in Medinipu village Panchayat of Bhawnipatna block. This village is inhabited by 799 ST people out of which 396 are female and 403 are ST Male. There are 205 houses in the village; total literacy rate 49.3% of which 19.3% female literacy and 30% is male literacy. The rest of the population are illiterate. Total Working population in the village is 53.7%. (Source Census 2011). During the field study **113** people were interviewed through closed ended and open ended questioner. The questions were asked mostly on the infrastructural availability taking the Finance infrastructure, Village material infrastructure, Household material infrastructure, health infrastructure, Education infrastructure and Information infrastructure dimensions.

Under *financial infrastructure* dimensions availability of banks and any other means of transaction have been mapped as parameters. It is found that in Bhawanipatna block except the urban region there is no banking or ATM facilities available in most of the villages so also in Saralanji. The villagers go to Medinipur for using ATM which is four Kms from the village. The *village material infrastructure* includes the road connection to the villages, all weather road, brick road or availability of public transport. It is studied that there is a very thin pacca road connecting to the main road which is

presently in very bad condition. The researcher studied that half of the total length of the road is very badly damaged which needs immediate reconstruction but not yet being paid attention by the administration. There is neither public transport system nor even facilities of any other means of transport.

In the *household material infrastructure* the parameters are availability of electricity for domestic use, availability of drinking water, use of cooking gas, number of household having pucca houses and toilets. The study reveals that out of 205 houses in the village only 43 houses are having electricity connection for domestic uses. Besides this 23 houses were having the connection some years back but now that has been not in used conditions. In some portion of the village there is solar light system of which 20 households are consumers. So far the drinking water facility is concerned there are 7 numbers of bore wells of which 3 are damaged and not in working condition. In addition to that more than half of the households fetch water from streams. It is found that recently there is a water pipe connection to the village but water supply has become a matter of irregularities. This is to mention here that no household has a water connection except the common source of drinking water. As it is found from household survey only 11 houses have the LPG gas connection but rest of the houses are using only fire wood for cooking.

The researcher gathers the data from household survey and direct observation about the use rate of individual household toilet under Swachh Bharat Mission. Information about types of toilet pan and awareness about the use of toilet on regular basis was obtained through the questionnaire. Out of 205 household a total number of 202 house hold have been provided with toilets. And out of 202 only 41 households are using the toilets and 181 do not use them. They go to open places to defecate which show the absence of consciousness among the inhabitants. And 181 toilets are used to keep their domestic animals (Goats, hen) and fire wood. Access to toilet is too low in the village and that leads their bad health conditions. The most prevalent reason for not using toilet is due to habit of the household for open defecation.

The study aims at finding out the availability and access to health care system in Saralanji village. This is done under the dimension of *health infrastructure* and with reference to various parameters like availability of basic health care facilities, availability of medical unity, health centre and supply of medicine by appointed health workers. It is found that the village does not have a community health centre. Out of 132 respondents 60 respondents admitted to use medicine from the Angwadi centre and most of the time not getting benefited from the centres. Facing with severe health issues they move to the urban health centre at Bhawnipatna. 21 respondents admitted that they use the traditional method of treating their illness. The study reveals that the level of consciousness among the people of Sarlanji about health matters is very low. The villagers are found to be living in an unhygienic environment and lack of awareness led them to suffer from various health issues.

The education infrastructure is another dynamics used by the researcher to know the extent of tribal development in the field of education. In this dynamics the parameters are applied mostly to know the level of awareness regarding education, to assess the facilities available in the school, the enrolment,

the drop out percentage and causes behind. According to census 2011 the literacy rate in Saralanji village is 49.31% out of which 58.5% male and 38.89% female literate. There is a government primary school in the village. The school has class I to V and total number of students enrolled for the session was 74 but total number of students coming to school is 47. Out of these 47 students there are 17 girls and number of 30 boys. This gives a very poor enrolment and the total number of teachers is 2. The research reveals that there are various issues and challenges faced by the education infrastructure. The issues are poor infrastructure, non-attendance, lack of extracurricular activities, lack of teaching learning materials, Poor learning results, lack of proper toilet and sanitation and most importantly the dropout rate in the school. It is found that the dropout rate rises after class V because this is the suitable age when the children are put in to work in the field or any other sector enhancing child labour practice. This is also learnt that the issues occurred in education infrastructure are due to financial conditions of the parents and lack of interest of the kids, uneducated parents, orthodox thinking among the parents and low infrastructure. In entire villages there is only 2 boys went up to higher secondary school and not a single girl went to higher education. The health condition of parents is also found to be major constraints for the children especially the girls to discontinue their study. The interest level for the children is too low so far going to school and completion of education is concerned. However in this research the attempt has been taken to identify the gap and constraints taking the study area in relation with various aspects of their lives.

Deciphering the infrastructural gap and institutional constraints:

In this paper the researcher after completing the field study in Seralanji village of Medipur Panchayat in Kalahandi district tried to justify the objectives of the study. The interpretation is based on the finding as per the selected dynamics and parameters. The study area is completely inhabited by the tribes. All the care pertinently was taken to know and evaluate the socio economic conditions of the tribes. The development process and extent in the village is calculated on the basis of infrastructural application and the gap lies there. The institutional constraints are located under various parameters. Low productivity, poverty, illiteracy, education, unemployment, health, nutrition and hygiene are some of the institutional constraints and they are also related to infrastructural gap.

This is pertinent to mention here that the research problem is expressed on the issues that the village though situated only 8 kms away from the district headquarter Bhawanipatna but the development process is very low. It is expected that by being nearly situated village to urban area the development both infrastructure and institutional should have been more or less significantly visible. However the people are still remaining in a deplorable condition. Be it health infrastructure or education infrastructure the volume of development remains meagre. The problem manifested in various forms like lack of personal hygiene and sanitation, early marriage, absence of effective waste disposal, lack of awareness, tobacco and alcohol consumption, non availability of house hold material infrastructure and non availability of proper drinking water, child labour and less interest towards education among the tribal children, absence of awareness among the parents regarding education and lack of implementation of policies.

The constitutional and institutional provisions stand to uplift the standard of the tribes in this area but the reality tells a different story. During the survey it is found that people though getting the benefits of various developmental schemes but not appearing to be much beneficial for their survival. Due to lack of irrigation facilities and non application of traditional farming system the agricultural production is very less. Many of the governmental policies framed had lacked understanding of the relationship between the tribes and their lands, their attitude towards changes and new happenings in and around their locality. The infrastructural gap has been prominently visible. There is absence of administrative follow up of each policy programme under taken by government in this locality. Several researches have been done in the realm of tribal development across the country but there is no much work found in context of Kalahandi. The problem is that why the real development in all infrastructural spheres do not appear in tribal region. The development process has not been so significantly witnessing in their socio economic standard. The study reveals that most of the tribal in the region are not happy with less administrative intervention in bringing a significant socio economic change in their position. In addition to that in some cases the inhabitants are reluctant to pursue agricultural activities stating their inability to meet the cultivating expenses. So far educational infrastructure is concerned the availability in the primary stage is not so bad but children possess very less interest to continue their study which in a way prevents the development process in the localities.

Conclusion:

The tribal communities are most vulnerable section in odisha in general and Kalhandi in particular. After several eras of various policy programmes implemented both by state and central government the infrastructural gap and the institutional constraints are prominently visible. They still face socio economic challenges in the process of development. After implementation of various policy programmes, constitutional measures to uplift the scheduled tribes the real development appears to be a far cry. This is due to administrative inefficiencies lack of awareness. . Further lack of effective policy implementation, active participation and continuous monitoring hinders the real development among the tribes of Kalahandi.

However there is need for strengthening policy implementation mechanism, enhancement of administrative efficiency, increase awareness and participation, improvement of educational infrastructure, expansion of health care services, creation of more economic opportunities, promotion of inclusive development and more importantly continuous monitoring and evaluation. Lack of policy follow up caused unchanged condition in Kalahandi region among the tribals even after several decades of independence. It is found that the traditional life style remains unchanged with no much impact of change and their mindset remains unchanged too.

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