

## *Chapter 7*

### **Summary and Conclusion**

#### **Summary**

Till the advent of the British, the tribal world in India was comparatively free from outside interference. The tribals derived self-sustenance from the land which they cultivated in common. Colonial rule differed basically from pre-modern forms of administration in one important respect. The British tried to open up the entire country in order to be able to rule and exploit it effectively. The tribes were drowned into the network of communications that the British built up. Unaware of the complexities of the monetary system and the laws and regulations that had been imposed by the new colonial order, the tribals soon lost most of their land to these newcomers and were evicted from their traditional holding. With a sensitivity formed out of isolation and relatively intact social order, they revolted more often than not and far more aggressively than any other community counting the Indian peasant.

The policies have been enunciated with regard to the Indian tribals. The strategy of seclusion was neither possible nor desirable. Assimilation as encouraged by few was unacceptable for the reason that it would imply imposition of mainstream culture. Only such policy should be accepted which makes the tribes enjoy the fruits of current society and hitherto enable them to continue with their separate identity.

The integration approach was mainly the brain child of ultimately adopted due to the influence of Jawaharlal Nehru, the former Prime Minister of India. Pandit Nehru's attitude towards the tribals was a part of his philosophy of social justice and modernization. The notion of social justice remained an essential part of India's freedom struggle and a characteristic of Gandhian philosophy. As a chief front-runner of the Indian

National Congress, Pandit Nehru was dedicated to this concept. His reliance in equality and social justice was also persuaded by his opinion that the ignored and subjugated peoples of the world had a right to equality and freedom. His sentiments were born out of his involvement in the struggle for Indian freedom.

The integrative approach consists two kinds of measures (1) Protective and (2) Promotional. The first concerns policies that have been taken to protect tribal culture and traditions, while the other is identical with the development and welfare programmes take on by the government through plans and by other generous agencies to make tribal life better.

Many social agencies and social workers are also giving their efforts to raise the feebler sections of our society in their own way. Among than the Bharatiya Adimjati Sewak Sangh is the foremost. The Government, has sought co-operation from all directions in framing tribal policies and delegated power to them. The social workers have assumed the combination of both semi-officials and scientists.

The Indian Constitution contains several articles that have the object of promoting and shielding the comforts of the Scheduled Tribes. Thus, Article 46 of the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV of the Constitution of India) recommends 'the State shall promote, with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.' The present policy of the government of India, permeated with loads of respect for tribal cultures and traditions, is strongly contrasting to any sort of intrusion by outside agencies who are contributing to the obliteration of tribal art, culture etc.

Since Independence several plans and programmes have been implemented for all round development of the Scheduled Tribes but the achievements so far made by them in the field of economy are not encouraging. The Government of India realized that the backwardness of the tribals would have a contrary effect on the growth of India as a whole. Developmental strategies have therefore been formulated to bring the tribals closer to the mainstream of society, so that they eventually became a part of it.

Tribal economy, wherever it is found, is characterised by backwardness in relation to modern standards. Tribals use primitive technology which is available from ecological environs and conventional outlook. Economic organisation of Indian tribes is no different in this respect from that in other parts of the world. Basically, tribal economy is uplifted such that they enjoy the basic subsistence needs.

In West Bengal the tribal folk are interspersed among other communities, but in certain areas their concentration is quite high. The Scheduled Tribes of West Bengal are generally engaged in agriculture, either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. Numerous tribal persons including both male and female, are engaged in mining and quarrying as unskilled workers in the tea plantations of North Bengal, forests and industries as well as in areas like. This section of the population is quite backward, both socially and economically, compared to the remaining population.

The two estimates provided by Lakdawala and Tendulkar for rural and urban areas in West Bengal have been shown below. It indicates a diminution in the number of ST people who subsides below the poverty line in both rural and urban West Bengal. In rural West Bengal it decreased from 62 per cent in 1993-94 to 33 per cent in 2009-10 and in Urban West Bengal it decreased from 39.4 per cent to 20.6 per cent.

The Directive Principles of the India Constitution encourages education among the Scheduled Tribes of India. Both the Governments at the Centre and the States have a

special responsibility in this regard. The Backward Classes Welfare Department accomplishes numerous educational schemes intended to banquet education amid the ST in West Bengal. The dropout rate was more than 40 per cent for the Classes I to V, more than 65 per cent for the Classes I to VIII and more than 80 per cent for the classes I to X during 1989-99 to 2009-10. In the latest year, in 2010-11, the dropout rate has been much lower than the earlier years. This dropout rate has been evident for both boy and girl students. Eleven Five Year Developmental Plans have been completed yet the development of education among tribals is not satisfactory.

Health is another sphere in which the tribals in India suffer from want of attention. Their problems are complicated by extensive poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition. They suffer from the absence of pure drinking water and have to put up with poor living conditions. Maternal and child health services are yet to be accessible since national health has not reached all parts of the country. Being the most exploited and neglected section of the population, they often fall victim to diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, gastroenteritis, filariasis, measles, tetanus, whooping cough and skin diseases etc. They also prove to some diseases of genetic origin like sickle cell anaemia, alpha and beta thalassaemia, glucose-6, phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency etc. Many among them also suffered from night blindness.

For STs in West Bengal, the percentage share of nutritionally increase people in the rural area outnumbered the urban area. In 1993-94, 71.4 percent of rural STs were nutritionally increased compared to 62 percent in the urban STs. The rural-urban gap of nutritionally increase ST people increased in 2011-12 compare to 1993-94. In 2011-12, 70 percent of urban STs were nutritionally insecure; the corresponding share in rural area was 87.5 per cent. ST people spend more on food consumption which reflects from the increase of their level of monthly per capita food expenditure. But the change of their

consumption pattern from traditional food consumption to modern consumption leads STs more nutritionally insecure.

The rate of infant mortality among the tribals is high. A high percentage of women die in trying to give child birth. This is understandable because the average level of calories and protein consumed by tribal women is below the level recommended for pregnant and lactating women. Consumption of liquor, the problem that pure water is not always available and lack of sanitation facilities are other factors that contribute to this state of affairs. The health status of the tribal folks of West Bengal is not different from that in other parts of the country. They are largely unaffected by the developmental process carried out in other part of India.

The objective of social protection varies extensively from reducing poverty and vulnerability, forming human capital, empowering women and girls, better livelihoods, and dealing with economic and other tremors. 'Safety nets' are those arrangements of social protection which assists people to avail the rudimentary requirements during crisis. Typical short-term goals are to alleviate the instant influence of shocks and to smoothen consumption.

The Ministry of Welfare is the nodal Ministry for inclusive policy, planning and synchronization of the programmes of advancement for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. It maintains liaison with different Central Ministries and State Governments in this regard. A commission for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes consisting of a Chairman and not exceeding four other members including a Special Officer appointed under Article 338 of the Constitution, who is known as the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, was set up in July 1978. Its duty is to explore all issues regarding Constitutional safeguards, reservation in public services and implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, with precise focus on the objective of deletion of

untouchability and invidious discrimination arising from there. The Commission too have to deal with the socio-economic and other pertinent conditions that lie behind the commission of offences in case of persons belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes and recommend appropriate remedial measures.

The enforcement of Indian Constitution has brought remarkable change in the lives of weaker sections. Part III and Part IV of the Constitution are meant to ensure social equality, economic equality political justice for the development of these people. The reservation policy, though not completely successful, has helped to some extent for development of the weaker sections. The atrocities committed against weaker section are being dealt with by SC and ST Commission, which has been vested with legal powers. Similarly, the atrocities committed on women, including women from weaker sections, is being monitored by the National Commission for Women. Labourers are also protected by various legislations, but after the introduction of globalization, the implementation of labour laws has been are liberalized to the benefit of employers.

If we want to understand the present wretched condition of the tribals of India, we have to trace the historical past and follow it up in a sequential order. This will unfold an elongated antiquity of disorganization, deprivation and frustration.

## **Conclusion**

India is the hub of tribal population in the world. The tribal world in India remained comparatively placid till the advent of the British. The colonial system bore harshly on the tribal communities who were formed out of isolation and relatively intact social mechanism of control, they revolted more often than not and much more brutally than to the rest of the community counting Indian peasants. Colonial rule differs basically from pre-modern forms of administration in one important respect.

Before the attainment of Independence, the great debate about the future of Indian tribes centred round the dual concepts of isolation and assimilation. The British government broadly followed the model of indirect rule in its colonies, dependencies and protectorates. Since Independence several plans and programmes have been implemented for overall upliftment of the Scheduled Tribes but the achievements so far made by them in the field of economy are not encouraging. In order to understand their present wretched condition, we should look back to the historical past and follow it up in a sequential order. After Independence, the Government realized that the backwardness of the tribal group would have an adverse effect on Indian society. Developmental strategies were therefore formulated intending to bring the tribals closer to the mainstream of society, so that they eventually became a part of it. In addition, a closer look into the geographical and cultural matrix of West Bengal shows that the colonial parameters for categorization and definition of tribes based on characteristics for instance primitive traits, distinct culture, backwardness, geographical isolation, etc., have in most cases either served their purposes or have become redundant with the passage of time.

During the pre-independence period tribals subsiding in forests, hills and even on the plains were secluded from the mainstream of national life. Their status was unsatisfactory due to the policy of ignorance and exploitation followed by the administration. The architects of the Indian constitution gave special emphasis regarding the tribal problems, keeping in view the nation's commitment to equality and social justice as cherished in the Preamble of the Constitution.

The Indian Government took various extensive welfare schemes for securing the comforts of the tribal people and their socio-economic upliftment. Embedded in the Indian Constitution are several articles that have the object of promoting and safeguarding the comforts of the Scheduled Tribes.

Planned economic development was adopted as the national policy in India soon after Independence. The tribal communities like all other constituent groups in the nation, were expected to bestow to the national endeavour in terms of quality without discrimination of any kind. The administration reached that it was obligatory to make some exceptions for tribal areas and that they may not entirely be fetched under all institutions and laws prevailing elsewhere in the country. Many schemes of development were thus formulated and implemented. Efforts were taken to advance the Scheduled Tribes socially, economically and culturally.

Programmes related to the specific needs of the tribal community have been undertaken. In all such cases we have to remember that tribal development programmes have to be integrated with the ongoing rural development programmes for the elimination of poverty.

A realistic and holistic approach to tribal development alone can produce good results. The tribals are generally considered as mere beneficiaries and are not been involved either in the decision-making procedure or in the implementation. As the anomalies of the tribals are unique, it is essential that they are actively involved in future in both the planning and implementation of welfare programmes. Both total and sectoral evaluation should be undertaken and they must remember the fact that although the Government policies and programmes for the tribals have helped to recover their living standard but still one third of them remain poor.

Educational backwardness exists at the root of the economic, social and political backwardness of the tribal communities in India. Both the Central and State Governments have been making some efforts to increase education among the tribes. The Scheduled Tribes communities of West Bengal have made some progress in the field of education during the post-Independence period as a result of various measures undertaken in this

direction by the state government.

The Education Division of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs makes all efforts to enhance the actions of the Ministry of Human Resources Development and the State Governments/UT Administrations by directing innumerable schemes with the intention of creating an attractive way to education through infrastructure like erection of hostels for ST students, formation of Ashram Schools, Vocational Training Centre together with utmost maintenance of ST students within different phases of school education and endorsing higher learning by issuing economic incentives in terms of scholarships like Pre-Matric Scholarship, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship and National Overseas Scholarship for ST students. The Backward Classes Welfare Department implemented numerous educational schemes intended at diffusing education among the ST in West Bengal.

Hence, it is the most important duty of the Administration to get a quick impetus through which the Scheduled Tribes of West Bengal may come up at par with the other advanced segments of the society, at least in respect of modern education. Although the Eleventh Five Year Developmental Plans have completed, yet the development of education among tribals is absolutely slow.

The health standard of tribals can be improved by spreading information among them about the Primary health care facilities imparted by the government at little or no cost. Information in matters like diet and nutrition should also be made easily available. The health standard of the tribal society is meticulously associated to their value system, philosophical and cultural traditions, and social, economic and political organisation. Each of these aspects has a deep influence on health, which in turn influences all these aspects.

A health care system providing basic precautionary and remedial services can significantly improve health outcomes within tribal communities. The impact of such an

intervention is felt particularly in the most susceptible sections of the society, old people, women, infants and children. Incorporating health education and monitoring programs can greatly reduce preventable deaths and help individuals to be better-informed about taking decisions regarding health-related problems.

ST people spend more on food consumption which reflects from the increase of their level of monthly per capita food expenditure. But the change of their consumption pattern from traditional food consumption to modern consumption leads STs more nutritionally insecure.

Our Constitution, recommends some provisional measures to aid the backward sections to upgrade to the level of the remaining section. There are also certain permanent safeguards to protect the rights of the minority of any section of the community who are considered 'minority' from the numerical, not communal, standpoint, with the purpose of averting the democratic contraption from being used as an engine of oppression by the numerical majority.

The Indian Government has introduced numerous social protection programmes for which a major part of the finance is drawn from the federal budget. These programmes span the complete life cycle of poor individuals and cover various dimensions such as health, education, food security, shelter, employment and livelihoods. The major social protection programmes, currently being implemented in India are funded by the Central Government.

The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) introduced by the Indian Government from 15th August, 1995 was a momentous move in the direction of fulfilment of the Directive Principles as enunciated in Article 41 and Article 42 of the Constitution. The programme intends to ensure basic national standard for social assistance to the households living below poverty line.

As the problems of the tribals are unique, it is essential that they are actively involved in both the planning and implementation of welfare programmes which the government undertakes for their benefit. Both total and sectoral evaluation should be undertaken in this respect. We must always remember that though the Government policies and programmes have helped to advance the standard of living of STs, one third of the tribals are still backward.

Tribal communities linger to be vulnerable till date, not only for the reason that they are poor, and illiterate in comparison to the general inhabitants but also because they are to convey and deal with the residual society. A little step in bureaucratic programmes can do little to offset the pauperisation, exploitation and crumbling of tribal communities. As a result of this, the tribals continue to suffer from a number of problems and issues which require immediate attention of the Government. Violation of civil and political rights, land estrangement, dislodgment and false hearing for repossessing minor forest produce are only some of these. As India's flourishing economy necessitates more resources, the indigenous peoples are continued to be seized, ensuing a robust sagacity of isolation amid them and further exacerbating social skirmishes. The laws meant at shielding indigenous peoples from frequent inadequacies but their execution is far-flung from pleasing. India has an elongated past of indigenous people fighting their rights.