

STATUS OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN INDIA : CHALLENGES AHEAD

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Abstract

The Tribes as well as women are disadvantaged group in India and other parts of the world, so tribal women forms most vulnerable section of the society. The policies and programmes for development could not change their position much. The socio-economic development of this community has been much lower than other sections of the society. All the development indicators of this community ARE far below the rest of population, this section of the society feel excluded, alienated and helpless to assert for their right. The Twelfth five year plan clearly brings out that the tribal poverty in 2009-10 stood at 47.37 per cent compared to all India figure 33.8 per cent .The gap between ST and other BPL categories has widened to 18.5 per cent from 14.5 per cent in a decade between 1993-94 and 2004-05, vindicating lower rates of inclusion for ST than other categories of poor. The literacy rates for tribal population are far less than national average. As against the all India literacy rate in 2011 of 74.04 per cent , ST literacy rates were a low 59 per cent ,while female literacy rates at 49.4 percent were nearly 16.06 per cent below the all India rate of 65.46 per cent .There are districts in India says Twelfth Plan “where the female literacy among Adivasi’s is less than 10 per cent ”. This gap is consistently widening from 1971-2011. This practice shows that women are seen as assets and not liabilities in tribal societies. They substantially contribute to the workforce, income and wellbeing of the family and are accorded due respect and credit for it. The husband consults his wife in all important questions, including property matters.

The national average for undernourished is 14 percent where as the ST score for underweight is at 26 percent which is more than double the national average. ST children with anemia are higher at 79 percent compared to all India average of 72 percent. The government’s efforts to bring the tribals into the ‘mainstream’ and its policies of protective discrimination have accelerated the process of change. The tribal women enjoy high status as far as social indicators of development are concerned, on the other hand economic and political indicators are on lower rung of overall process of development.

An attempt is made here to give overview of social , economic, political and religious status of tribal women in India. The paper is also intended to give some suggestions for social inclusion of tribal women so that they can have equal share of pie in the process of development. Addressing the tribal problems will definitely add to the growth of the economy with higher pace.

Speaker's CV

Dr. Sudhir Singh has obtained his Ph.D from South Asian Division, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Presently he is teaching in the department of political science at Dyal Singh College, University of Delhi, New Delhi. Dr Singh has over one decades of Teaching & Research experiences. He has contributed enormously on diverse issues of Asia-Pacific in general and South Asia in particular. Three books and 16 edited papers are to his credit. Besides he has contributed 27 chapters in different books and 23 research papers in the Journal of national international repute on the diverse issues on Asia-Pacific. Also, he is a regular panelist on Television Channels on diverse issues of foreign policy and governance. He has organized as well as participated and presented papers in 87 International seminars and 131 National Seminars.