

## Evaluation of Tribal Development Programmes with Special Reference to Bharmaur Region of Himachal Pradesh

B. R. Thakur\* and D. D. Sharma\*\*

*\*Department of Geography, Himachal Pradesh University,  
Summer Hill, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India  
Mobile: 09418065518\*, 09418076763\*\**

*E-mail: \*brthakur53@gmail.com, \*\*ddsharma100@rediffmail.com*

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**ABSTRACT** The tribal people of India constitute an integral part of the Indian population and represent a part of Indian culture. The total population of the Scheduled tribes in the country is about 67.8 million. They constitute about 8.08% of the total population. The present study is based on secondary information and provides an overall picture of development initiatives by the Government of India and Himachal Pradesh Government for the upliftment of tribal communities. The present study focuses on the Gaddis, a scheduled tribe, inhabiting Bharmaur region of Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh. The study reveals that a number of development programmes, policies and projects have been introduced to improve the well-being of tribal people. But the issue of tribal development is still alive. It clearly indicates that we have achieved too less in this regard.

### INTRODUCTION

The tribal people of India are a part and parcel of the Indian population and represent a true synthesis of Indian culture (Narayan 2002: 11). The term 'tribe' is commonly used in social science literature, particularly in anthropology to denote certain categories of pre-literate cultures. In the evolutionary perspective, it referred to a societal form intermediate between the band and the nation. In this sense, it represented a territorially defined ethnic group (Dube 1998: 3-4). The tribal societies are characterized by traditional values, use of primitive technology and non-rational behaviour patterns which are incongruent with the values, technology and behaviour patterns of the modern world (Kattakayam 2001: 1). The concept of tribe is territorial as it may be defined as a group of people living in a particular place or area from the time immemorial. The tribe has normally a common territory, a tradition of descent, common language, common culture, a common name, political system, simple economy, religion and belief, primitive law and own educational system (Narayan 2002: 57). Beteille (1977) has aptly observed that the formation of the tribes is a historical process, one needs to have a historical perspective to identify them. It is only by going into the antecedents of a group we can say with any confidence whether or not it should be considered as a tribe (Ahmed 1999: 118).

In a nutshell, a tribe is an age-old indigenous, by and large, unstratified and egalitarian ethnic group in both appearance and content. The other characteristics of tribes may include speaking a common language, claiming a common descent, living in a particular geographic area, having a primitive economy, technology and lack of scientific temperament, almost pre-literate and unaware about the so-called modern knowledge and information, and observing social and political customs based on the principle of kinship.

### Objectives of the Study

The present study aims at analyzing the following two objectives:

- i. To study the development initiatives introduced for the welfare of the Indian tribal communities.
- ii. To examine the tribal development efforts in Bharmaur, a tribal region of Himachal Pradesh.

### DATA BASE

The present study is based on secondary sources of data. The secondary information relating to different development programmes aimed at socio-economic development of scheduled tribes in India have been collected from both published and unpublished sources.

### Scheduling of Tribes/ Tribal Areas

The desire to develop the weaker sections of India's population finds expression in the Constitution of the Republic of India (Kurup 2000). With the dawn of independence and adoption of the Constitution, the responsibility for their welfare and development was placed on the popular government (Hasnain 2001: 343-344). In the first instance, a period of ten years was given to achieve this goal, but as the problem was not of a simple nature to be solved in a single decade, it has evidently persisted through decades (Singh 1999: 18).

It has been viewed that "though India is still a developing country, no country in the world can match its policy, efforts and constitutional provisions so far as tribal development is concerned" (Prasad 1988: 57). It has been rightly pointed out that for years ambiguity has stalked India's official portrait of tribal people (Wilke et al. 1979). Even after independence with the adoption of the concept of scheduled tribes or as they are commonly called, *Adivasi*, did not, however, remove all ambiguity relating to the scheduling policy of tribals (Hasnain 2001: 31). It is true that neither the Constitution nor the governmental authority (executive or legislative) has specifically defined what the word 'tribe' means (Negi 1976: 6). The Scheduled Tribes are "the tribes or the tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribe or tribal communities" which the President may specify by public notification through Article 342 of Constitution (Kattakayam 2001: 29). The concept of 'Scheduled' tribes came into existence only after the Constitution of India came into force on January 26, 1950. The first serious attempt to list 'primitive tribes' in the country was made during the Census of 1931.

There are serious anomalies in the current system of, and procedures for scheduling as there are no clear-cut and scientific criteria for the purpose. The Gonds, for example, are a 'scheduled' tribe in Madhya Pradesh, but a 'scheduled' caste in Uttar Pradesh. A Gujjar Bakarwal *kafila*, a transhumant community, when pasturing in Himachal Pradesh during the summer belongs to the 'scheduled' category, the same group loses this status in its winter pastures in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (Raza and Ahmed 1990: 6). The Kinnaura, Pangwalas and the Lauhola of Himachal Pradesh and the Jaun-

sari of Uttar Pradesh, a composite group of several castes, now enjoy this status (Dube 1998: 6). Thus, it is evident that in some cases whole area/territories where all communities irrespective of their social status have been declared as tribes. Bharmaur tribal area is also such region. Census of India categorizes the population of this region into scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and others.

The Anthropological Survey of India in its 'People of India' series has identified more than 427 tribal groups of Dravidian, proto-Australoids and other races (Mohanty 2002: 15). A careful investigation of the tribal lists published by the official agencies reveals that there are at least 285 different communities (Ahmed 1999: 119). The number of tribal communities recorded in India based on the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes lists (Modification order 1956) is 354 (Census of India 1961). There is, however, no consensus on the actual number of tribal communities inhabiting different parts of the country. According to Burmon (1972), there are about 450 communities throughout the country in the list of scheduled tribes.

### GADDI TRIBAL COMMUNITY OF BHARMAUR REGION

Bharmaur is one of the oldest settlements in Chamba (Bose 1963: 194). The Chamba Royal Vanshvali reveals that the first capital of the Chamba state was founded in 550 AD, at present Bharmaur settlement. The settlement was then known as Brahmapura and it had been conquered from the Ranis by Maru, the first ruler of the State of Chamba. Present day Bharmaur region comprising Bharmaur tehsil and Holi sub-tehsil is situated in Chamba district in the north-western part of Himachal Pradesh. Having a low resource base and fragile ecosystem, Bharmaur region supported only 37230 persons, that is, 20 persons per sq km (Census of India 2001). Having unfavourable climatic conditions, particularly cold and dry, poor geographic accessibility and limited basic infrastructure, Bharmaur is still one of the backward regions in the state. It is one of the notified tribal areas of the state and is largely inhabited by the Gaddi tribal community (Jaglan and Thakur 2006: 13).

The origin of the term 'Gaddi' is shrouded in mystery. Different scholars have given different views while defining the word 'Gaddi'.

Their territory is popularly known as 'Gadheran' or 'Gadaren', that is, the land of Gaddis (Sharma 1973: 244). According to a mythological belief, Bharmaur region is thought to be Mount Kailash. Kailash is considered as 'Gaddi' (the seat or throne) of Lord Shiva. Those who entered the 'Gaddi' of Lord Shiva, addressed themselves as Gaddis (Balokhra 1999: 75-80). 'Gaddi' is a generic nomenclature and the Gaddis are classified into four classes: (I) Brahmins (II) Khatris and Rajputs (III) Thakurs and Rathis and (IV) lower castes such as Kolis, Riharas, Lohars, Sippis and Halis etc. To the lower castes, the title of Gaddi is disputably applied as inhabitants of the Gaderan (Negi 1976: 137-138). Traditionally and in earlier studies, Gaddis are known to be shepherds and semi-nomadic (Newell 1961; Bose 1963; Kayastha 1966; Shashi 1977). Some recent studies conducted on Gaddis classify them as semi-pastoral and semi-agricultural community (Sharma 1973 and Negi 1976:140) and agropastoralists (Agro-Economic Research Centre 1988; Mehra 1992; Bhasin and Bhasin 1993; Bhasin 1996). Anthropologically, Gaddis can hardly be called a tribe. They have been declared scheduled tribe mainly due to their social and economic backwardness and relative isolation (Government of Himachal Pradesh 1980: 1; Agro-Economic Research Centre 1988: 15; Bhasin and Bhasin 1993: 172; Bhasin 1996: 77).

### **Tribal Development Initiatives**

The total population of the Scheduled tribes in the country stands at 67.8 million. They constituted about 8.08 per cent of the total population (Census of India 2001). In terms of development, the tribal communities are at various stages. Some are still in the food gathering stage, some practice settled agriculture, while others are indeed developed and almost at par with the mainstream. Taking these stages of development into account, Indian tribes have been classified into plain tribes, hill tribes, island tribes, primitive tribes and advanced tribes (Mohanty 2002: 15). The development of tribal communities has been one of the important ingredients of the policy of development in India. The socio-economic situation of these communities is somewhat different from the general socio-economic situation in the country (Sree-kumar 2001: 715-716). The formulation of policy and executing

programs for the upliftment of these downtrodden communities at par with the general mass of the country is the process of tribal development (Kohli et al. 1999: 123). The chronology of the process of tribal development may be better understood with reference to pre-independence and post-independence periods.

### **Pre-Independence Period**

During the last quarter of 19th century, the Scheduled Districts Act was passed in 1874 to organize administration uniformly throughout the tribal territories by the Britishers. The tribal areas all over the country came to be called as Scheduled Tracts (Danda 1989: 11). This policy was consolidated through the Government of India Act 1919, whereby the tribal areas were reconstituted under section 52-A of the Act into Backward Tracts after removing them either fully or partially from the jurisdiction of the administrative ministries. The Government of India Act (1935) provided more special protective measures by converting the Backward Tracts into areas of Total Exclusion or Partial Exclusion. It will be recalled that provincial autonomy was granted under this Act.

There is a difference of opinion on the tribal development policy of Britishers. Some scholars viewed it as an attempt to isolate the tribals from the general masses which resulted in the exploitation by non-tribal moneylenders, contractors, Zamindars and middlemen (Singh 1999: 16). The general opinion favoured the gradual assimilation of the tribes into the wider society. A number of voluntary agencies motivated by the Gandhian ideology launched tribal welfare programs in different parts of India. The case of 'Thakkar Bapa' accompanied by a band of selfless workers is the true manifestation in this regard. The Christian Missionaries also made a very significant contribution in socio-economic upliftment of tribals in some areas. Despite aiming at saving the souls of the natives, their philanthropist work in the fields of education and health cannot be ignored.

### **Post-Independence Period**

During the post-independence period, the Government of India adopted a progressive policy towards the tribals, hoping to become the agency for both their protection and develop-

ment. The best exposition of the post-independence philosophy of tribal development was clearly set out by our first Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru (1958), in the form of five principles known as 'Tribal Panchsheel' which were later endorsed by the Renuka Ray Team (1959), Dhebar Commission (1961), and the Shilu Ao Committee (1969) (Sankaran 2000: 520; Sen 1992: 81-82).

The concerted effort for the development of tribal areas was initiated in 1955 in the form of Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Blocks (Hasnain 2001: 368). The most important program for the economic betterment of members of scheduled tribes was started during second Five Year Plan (1956-61) in the form of Tribal Development Blocks based on the general pattern of community development blocks. It was a modified version of earlier programme, that is, Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Block, aimed at intensive development of areas with large concentrations of tribal population (Singh 1983:900).

This program was further expanded during the Third Five Year Plan (1961-66). All the areas where tribal population accounted for two-third or more of total population were covered under this programme. About 38 per cent of the total tribal population of the country spreading over 484 tribal development blocks was covered. With some modifications, the Tribal Development Blocks continued into the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) as well and beyond. In the meantime, this programme was reviewed by a study team appointed by the Planning Commission of India under the chairmanship of Shilu Ao. It was observed that the Tribal Development Block was too small a unit for planning and execution of long-term development programmes e.g. these blocks could not accommodate schemes like soil conservation, major and medium irrigation, secondary and technical education etc. (Hasnain 2001:370).

It was, therefore, decided to evolve a new strategy for the development of tribal areas. It culminated in the concept of a tribal sub-plan during Fifth-Five Year Plan (1974-79) through which a number of viable projects known as Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs) have been evolved. In 1978, National Commission for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was also formed.

In furtherance to the objective of tribal development, the Government of India set up the

Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) in 1987. It is an apex co-ordinating body for the State Tribal Marketing Corporations created to ensure remunerative prices for minor forest produce and agricultural items produced or collected by tribals and to protect them against exploitation by private traders and middlemen. Besides, there are some programmes of the Government of India which lay emphasis on the upliftment of both Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), a poverty alleviation programme launched in 1980, 30 % of the outlay was earmarked for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Since 1990-91, a minimum of 50 % of the total outlay was envisaged for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Likewise, under the major rural wage employment programme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY), at the district level, the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) or Zila Parishad was required to utilize 22.50 % of the funds for individual beneficiary schemes for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Sankaran 2000: 524).

In 1991, the Government of India constituted a committee led by Dilip Singh Bhuria to examine how decentralised governance under Panchayats can be extended to scheduled areas. As a result of this, the Parliament passed Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act in 1995. The Act made the gram panchayat as the basic unit of governance which was never properly implemented.

The Million Wells Scheme (MWS) was launched in 1988-89 with the objective of providing open irrigation wells to poor, small and marginal farmers belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Initially, 20 % of the fund under the JRY was allocated for this purpose and later from January 1996, it was treated as an independent scheme. The Indira Awaas Yojna (IAY) started in 1985-86 as an important component of the Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), later became part of the Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) in 1989-90. It earmarked about 6 % of the funds for the construction of houses for the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and freed bonded labour. The Jawahar Rozgar Yojna was recast from April, 1999 and converted into a new programme known as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna (JGSY) dedicated to the development of rural

infrastructure and implemented through Gram Panchayats. About 22.5 % of JGSY funds are earmarked for individual beneficiary schemes for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SJSY) launched in 1999 is an assimilation of number of programmes such as IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, MWS and Ganga Kalyan Yojana. It has been stipulated that 50 % of 'Swarozgaris' will be from Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes. Preference has been accorded to both these categories under Employment Assurance Scheme as well (Sankaran 2000: 524). More recently, in 2002, the Government of India once again constituted the Bhuria commission to review the working of the Fifth and Sixth schedule. The review has indicated a very clear trend that either the tribal policies are ill-conceived or only partially considered the problems. A holistic policy was never initiated.

It is evident from the above discussion that the five decades of planning witnessed different strategies and varieties of programmes, re-modeled and refined for improving the quality of life of the tribal people. However, the aforementioned programs and efforts of the Government of India have not given the desired results and problems of the tribal development are yet to be resolved. There are number of issues related to tribal development which need immediate attention. These include alienation of tribals from land and forest resources, indebtedness, displacement and lack of rehabilitation of tribals due to various developmental projects. To overcome these problems of the tribals, the Tenth Plan (2002-07) has formulated a Comprehensive National Policy for empowering tribals through their integrated development, which will lay down the responsibilities of the various wings of Government with appropriate accountability (Government of India 2001: 7).

### **Efforts of Development in Bharmaur Region**

Although tribal community constitutes only 4 % of total population in the Himachal Pradesh, it has found a specific attention in the development strategy of the state. The Government of Himachal Pradesh claims to have made concerted efforts for the welfare of marginalized group of scheduled tribes living in difficult areas and leading a subsistence level of existence

in self-contained ecological settings. In order to protect the tribals from dispossession and alienation of their land, the government of Himachal Pradesh passed the Himachal Pradesh Transfer of Land (Regulation) Act, 1968. Section 3(1) of the Act provides that no person belonging to any scheduled tribe shall transfer his interest in his land by of sale, mortgage, lease, gift or otherwise to any person belonging to such tribe except with the prior permission of the Deputy Commissioner of the concerned district. The Himachal Pradesh Ceiling on land Holdings Act (1972) has also taken special care of the problems of the tribal areas.

The process of tribal development in Bharmaur region started in early 1970s, when the Gaddis were declared as scheduled tribes. It got momentum during the Fifth Plan (1974-79), when the concept of tribal sub-plan was introduced and Bharamur was declared an ITDP area. Pangi area was also the part of Bharmaur ITDP at that time. During this period, the top priority was given to the development of transport and communications, agriculture and allied services and social and community services. As per the objectives of tribal sub-plan, various tribal developmental programmes and policies covered under the ITDP were introduced in this tribal area. The 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule empowers Governor of a state to override any law, which is detrimental to the interests of the tribals. A Tribal Advisory Council has also been constituted for this area in June 1978 (Government of Himachal Pradesh 1981: 47).

The administrative measures have been taken to provide stability to the process of development in the region. Single Line Administration was started in the tribal areas with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1988. Such an arrangement has cut down delays and improved the delivery system. The tenure of a government servant is restricted to 2 winters and 3 summers and they are normally transferred thereafter. The government of Himachal Pradesh also takes special care of postings and transfers in the tribal areas and nobody is relieved without his substitute joining first (Attri 2000:442).

The employees posted in the region are granted additional benefits and are also entitled to compensatory allowance at enhanced rate as 125 % of pay subject to the maximum of Rs. 300/- per month. The Himachal Pradesh Government has also granted an overstay allowance

to all such employees in public interest on the recommendations of Maheshwari Prasad committee, after completing the tenure of 3 years in any ITDP other than his/her own ITDP area. Besides this, all the earlier mentioned developmental programmes introduced at the national level for the welfare and development of tribal communities is also in operation in Bharmaur ITDP.

### CONCLUSION

The study reveals that a number of development efforts have been made by both the central government and state government during last 5-6 decades for improving the socio-economic conditions of the tribal people, including Gaddis of Bharmaur region. However, the issue of tribal development is still alive. It clearly indicates that we have achieved too less in this regard. There is need to further strengthen and consolidate the efforts aimed at bringing the tribals at par with mainstream of the society.

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