

Determinants of Economic Backwardness of Tribal Communities in Tripura

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INTRODUCTION

The twin concepts of deprivation and discrimination are closely interlinked with tribe and race. In Indian context, Schedule Tribe (ST) and Schedule Caste (SC) are the marginalized social groups. Historically, these groups have been suffering from discrimination and exclusion from the mainstream population in economic and social spheres. Even after 70 years of Independence, there is still visible inequality between marginalized (STs & SCs) and mainstream population in case of major human development components and socio-economic variables. The Schedule Tribe population constitutes (disadvantaged group) at 8.6 percent of the total population of the country as per 2011 census. The overall lower socio-economic position of the STs, made the framers of the constitution, to realise that unless some special provisions for safeguarding the interest of the segment of people is made, they will remain backward for centuries. As a result some specific provisions have been incorporated in the Constitution to provide social justice to the members of their tribes through protective discrimination. Consequently these protective discrimination policies, no doubt, since Independence improvement in social and economic conditions has been recorded among these categories of the society, but desirable outcome is still far away from the reality.

In Tripura, the disadvantaged tribal population is at 31.7 percent (2011 Census) of the total population of the state. As recognised by the Indian constitution there are 19 tribes in Tripura and among them major tribes are Tripuri (50.75%), Reang (16.13%), Jamatia (7.14%), Halam (4.90%), Chakma (6.84%) and Mog (3.25%). About 96 percent of tribe lives in rural areas and their livelihood mostly depends upon agriculture & engaged in shifting cultivation. Among the tribal groups there is clear diversification in cultural, social and economic and the difference in the level of attainments of various aspects of their wellbeing particularly in the socio-economic positions.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyse the socio-economic status of tribal communities in Tripura
- To compare different tribes in terms of their economic status
- To formulate an alternative strategy for bringing about a radical improvement in the socio-economic status of the tribal population

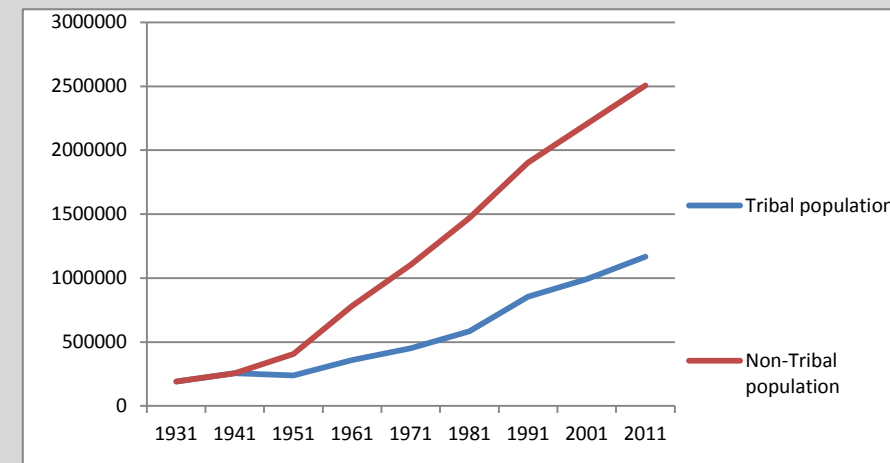
METHODOLOGY

- For the purpose of this study Secondary data have been collected from various Government institutions, agencies, books, Journals, websites etc. are considered.
- Tribal communities are found in all the Districts of the State. For the purpose of the study six tribal dominated districts have been considered as all major tribes are adequately representing in those Districts.
- Out of 19 Tribal groups, six major tribes have been considered for the study; they are Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Chakma, Mog and Halam. These tribes shall be selected in conformity with their population size as they constitute 93 percent of the total tribal population in the State.
- The available data has been analysed using usual statistical tools like -ratios percentages, averages, figures, graphs, etc.

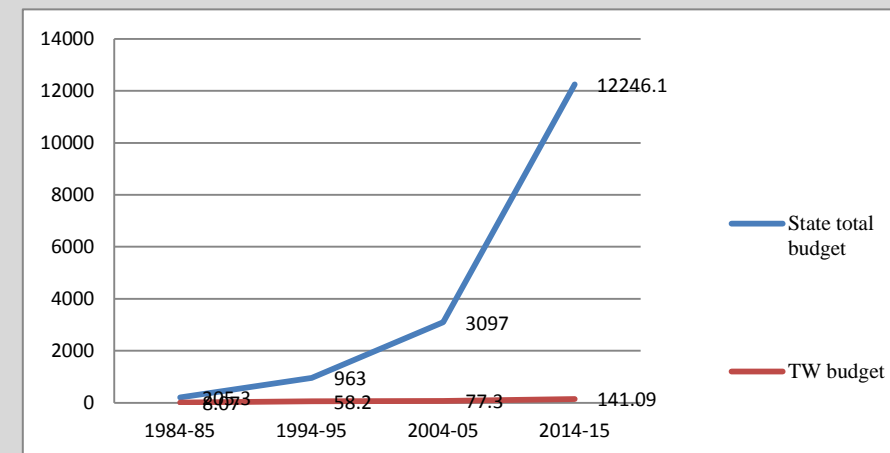
SIGNIFICANCE

The attempt in this study is to depict the general situation of tribal communities and also bring out the differences the level of development between tribal and non-tribal communities. Tribal Welfare Department was established in 1970 with the objective of providing socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes in a coordinated and planned manner. In the recent years State Government has introduced 20 points, 25 points and 37 points (Himswkang) for overall development in tribal area apart from implementation of other regular tribal development schemes. However, the official data reflects variation among the various aspects of development tribal people. The present study is therefore is an attempt to examine the development of the tribal communities of the State and formulate strategy for bringing about a radical improvement in the socio-economic status of the tribal population.

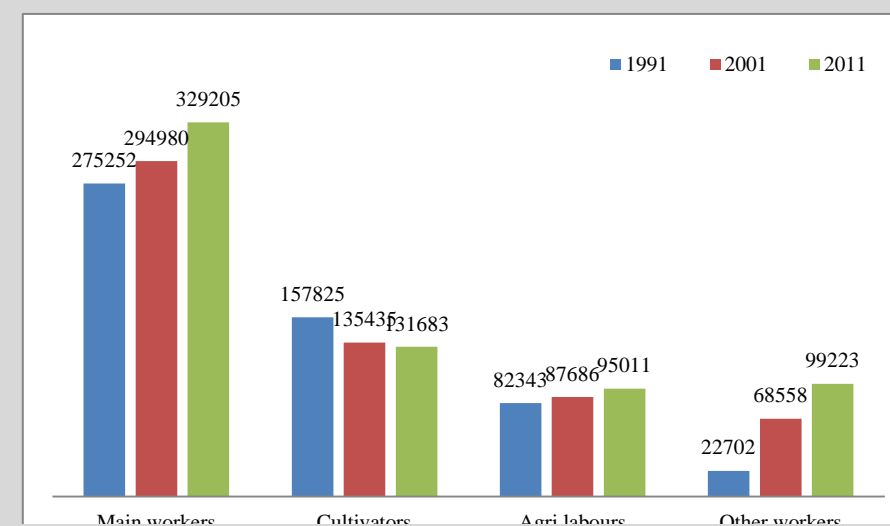
Variation of Tribal Population in the State



State and TW Dept. Budget comparison (Rs.in crore)



Tribal workers Transition



FINDINGS

- Percentage of Tribal population is decreasing trend over the period of time.
- Tribal welfare budget which was 6.03% of total state budget during 1994-95 that reduced to 1.15% in 2014-15.
- Road connectivity, educational & health institution, drinking water sources, electricity, H.S Schools and Colleges are inadequate in the tribal area compare to non-tribal area
- Tribal literacy rate increased from 40.37% in 1991 to 79.05% in 2011, but still there is gap of 11.80 % with the non-tribal literacy rate.
- There are only 85 nos. out of total 392 Higher Secondary Schools and 3 nos. General Degree Colleges out of total 22 in the tribal area.
- TSP expenditure has increased considerably from 234.17 lakhs in 1985-86 to 1183.94 lakhs in 2014-15, but at times not utilising in TSP area.
- 26.80% people are living in thatch roofing house, 53.08% of households don't have electrical facilities, 36.30 % of household not having toilet, 92.58% household depend on firewood for their domestic cooking purpose and 29.28% of household not covered with safe drinking water.
- 19596 nos. land restoration petition applications were rejected and 94 cases are pending as on March 2015.
- Still there are 16,948 nos. of jumia families in the state who are fully depend on jhum cultivation.
- Land holding is decreasing and thereby transition of tribal agriculture worker to non-agriculture is increasing.
- 40.98% of tribal students passed in 2016 TBSE examination, whereas overall pass percentage is 55.37% in the state. There is a gap of about 14%.
- Tribal employees are not adequately representing in all Government departments.
- So far 1,24,502 tribal families have been vested with Forest Land Right, but economic benefit to those families not yet fulfilled.

CONCLUSION

- Tribal welfare budget provision must maintain at least 6% of total state budget.
- Basic amenities like housing, electricity, drinking water, toilet facilities may be provided to all tribal families.
- Steps must be adopted to increase tribal literacy rate at par with non-tribal literacy rate and more HS schools and colleges should be set up in tribal area
- TSP fund should be utilised only in tribal area only rather than non-tribal area.
- For proper restoration of tribal land rejected applications should be re-examined and restoration of tribal land may be ensured.
- Appropriate jumia settlement scheme should be initiated early.
- Formulation of proper welfare schemes appropriately for all development of tribal is necessary.

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