

Jharkhand : False perception of Tribals' development

Punam Sinha, Minakshi Sinha. email: akash.jkd@gmail.com

After fighting over three and half decades for a separate state Jharkhand was carved out from Bihar on 15 November 2000 for the inclusive growth of the local resident but state has failed to see development despite having 40 percent of India's mines and minerals.

The conditions of Tribals are pathetic; they still left in lurch after 15 years of inception of the state. During past 14 years state got 9 tribal chief minister but they have done very little for the inclusive growth of the tribal population.

Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh the other two states were created along with Jharkhand (same year); duos seen huge prosperity and development but Jharkhand always made in news for the wrong reasons.

Tribals in Jharkhand have been given numerous rights and concessions under various statutes of central as well as State Governments but they remain deprived of the benefits arising out of such statutory provisions due to their ignorance.

There is lack of awareness among the tribes population about various developmental programmes launched by Government of India and States, resulting in their exploitation. Tribes are not getting the benefits of the scheme. Callous attitude of the officials irked the tribes whom the Government promised for a better life after resettlement. "The Government should plan schemes according to their habit and culture. Unless they are associated with the mainstream, their development will remain a dream. Tribal people in India account for the highest incidence of a large number of health problems including malnutrition, diarrhoea, and malaria. The tribes depend upon the forest for well over 30 per cent of their food and forest products which are essential and life-supporting items for them.

There are countless constraints responsible for lower pace of these tribes development process than desired. Some of the major constraints are — destruction of forests, lack of awareness, protection of tribal rights and concessions, Poverty, Food Security, Migration, Health facilities including others.

Now-a-days tribal people have been criminalised by definition; rulers have structured a complex laws relating to forests and other tribal resources – laws that were framed without even recognising the existence of the tribal people and their rights.

In most places, it is impossible for the tribal people not to break several laws each day. The forests have been declared the property of the state. This means it becomes an offence for the tribal people – who have been dwelling in these very forests for millennia – to make a living from them. If a tribal person enters a forest with a bow and arrows is an offence. If his cattle graze, as usual, in the forest, he is violating the law and the cattle might be confiscated. If he takes his traditional brew after worshipping the gods, or in social functions according to his traditions, that makes him a lawbreaker. Unless the tribal assert themselves in socio-political life their voice would be crushed.

There should be a plan to help the tribal people fight for their livelihood, culture, languages, customs, traditions and values. Now tribal politicians failed to influence the policies that went against the interest of the tribes. Even after enactment of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 the tribes were not getting its benefits due to lack of awareness about it.