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THE CHANGING TRENDS AMONG TRIBALS IN VIEW OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY PHENOMENA

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INTRODUCTION

This article presents the paradigm shift of tradition and modernity concepts in order to know how tribal people are advancing towards their development and keeping intact their traditional values. It gives a historical review of the changes that have been introduced during pre – independence period and post – independence period with the initiatives of government programmes and welfare schemes. The present generation of tribal people are stepping towards their growth and development. Yet it can be realised that the various schemes of government could not reach the majority of people as their population growth rate has increased by 25.67% during the decade of 1981 to 1991 against the growth rate of country's population that is 23.79% during the same decade.

The tribal population as per 1991 census report amounted to 67.76 million representing 8.08% of nation's population and they spread across the country mainly in forest, hilly and remote areas. The characteristics of these tribals are known for isolation, distinctive customs, backwardness, and lethargic to come in contact with other Non – tribal communities. But the scenario has been gradually changing as social inclusion policies are introduced to make them actively participate in education and employment sectors through protective legislative reservation policies since independence period.

Historical perspective of Tribal Welfare and Development

During the British rule, the tribals were isolated from the masses. This approach was described as "Leave them untouched" and no deliberative efforts to develop tribal people were taken. Tribals were kept away from rest of the population. In words of Verrier Elwin (1934) The tribal areas were considered as national parks and tribals were specimens in a human zoo, their contact with other community people was reduced to minimum level, this approach was known as isolationist one.

Later assimilationist approach paved the way for tribal people to come in contact with neighbouring non – tribals, which resulted in gradual acceptance of Hindu culture by the tribal people. There was an argument against this approach because non – tribal customs and traditions were imposed. These two policies or approaches which were followed by the Britishers made the planners to introduce integrationist approach. The brainchild of this approach was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then prime Minister of independent India. This policy consisted of two types of measures for tribal development, namely, protective and promotional policies. The former one aimed at protecting tribal culture and traditions. The latter one included the welfare programs for tribals through five year plan policies. The Constitution of India gave a statutory recognition for tribal communities and created scheduled areas. Special representations in Parliament, legislative assembly and local bodies were planned and duly implemented. Reservations in government services, use of local language for administration and to practice and profuse one's faith were constitutionally recognised.

Article 275 (1) Provided Grants – in – aid from union to states for promoting the welfare of tribal people. The Dhebar Commission (1961) insisted on economic development of tribals by mobilising and protecting the resources like land, forest, cattle wealth and village industries. Duly in 1961 special multi propose blocks were created and Ministry of home affairs provided funds for tribal community development. In second five – year plan, tribal development blocks were created in the areas where 60% of the population were tribals. During three annual plans (1966 to 1969), special funds were allocated to tribal development blocks. In fourth and fifth plan periods, tribal development agencies and ITDP (Integrated Tribal Development Projects) were initiated for tribal welfare. During sixth plan, minimum needs program and in seventh plan, LAMSP (Large Agricultural Marketing Societies Programme) aimed at removal of women's backwardness. In eighth plan, Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) and MADA (Modified Area Development Approach) plans aimed at developing skills, improvement of irrigation and electrification facilities in tribal areas. In ninth five – year plan, intellectual property rights on medicinal plants were given through patent / ownership rights for tribal people.

Amidst all the plan policies and programmes, what changes have been occurred among the tribals in respect to their present life compared to past generations is the prime factor which will be discussed in this article.

OBJECTIVES

1) To examine social and cultural changes among tribals.
2) To examine how education and employment facilities influenced their living Lifestyles.

STUDY AREA

The author has chosen the Kalvapally Village, Thadvai mandal of Mulugu district to study the changing lifestyles of tribal people.

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SAMPLE

A sample of 40 people selected conveniently of whom 20 males, 20 females again, half of that is 10 each from male and female side were elders those who crossed 50 years of age and rest of the males and females belong to adult age that is below 20 years.

METHODOLOGY

An informal interview with the respondents was conducted to know their views and practises, including their living situations. Observation of their atmosphere and surroundings was made to estimate their living standards etc.

This study is based on primary data and secondary data taken from various published books and text.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It has been noticed by the author that norms and practises are getting more modernised. Social change among the tribes is taking place at individual familial, economic and social spheres. The following findings prove that there is gradual change in living styles of tribal life.

1. Due to urbanisation, industrialisation, and modernisation, there is growing concept of individualisation among younger generations. As against groups or "we" feeling. Individual concerns are growing faster, the craving individual identity and growth is the concern of present generations.
2. The present generation is advancing towards urbane culture as the education and employment facilities are more than compared to schedule areas and villages.
3. The concepts of isolation, social exclusion and discrimination are diminishing and tribal people are developing social relations with other communities and it is observed that they are adopting and becoming more inclusive with the mainstream of society. In this view, the factors of acculturation are accepting the modes of more improved and sophisticated lifestyles.
4. There is a cultural lag phenomenon as they are adopting more materialistic life than the traditional ways of dressing and other walks of life. Only it seemed that the elders are carrying their traditional ways of living and sticking to native / scheduled areas and still practising traditional modes of agricultural and allied activities. The younger generations with their developed educational standards and skills are searching for jobs and employment in and around urban Centres.
5. One of the major findings is that consuming alcohol or drinks is not treated negatively, all the youngsters, elders, males and females consider it as a part of their culture and family entertainment.
6. The family structure is dynamically changing. The elders witnessed three generations living jointly against the younger generations are preferring small family nurses and are in favour of nuclear families.
7. The respondents all said that women enjoy more or less equal status with their male counter parts and participate in all community ceremonies and festivals.
8. It is noticed that the dowry system is prevalent and demand for dowry is more during the marriages.
9. The female respondents have a way in choosing life, partner and widow remarriage is allowed in their communities.
10. All the respondents said that they are utilising the civil supplies like rice, dal, oil, etc provided by Ration shops.
11. Respondents who are aged beyond 60 and respondents who are widows are benefiting old age and widow pensions. But they are not aware of shramic card or labour card and other schemes of government, especially that of ITDA, etc.
12. All the respondents are utilising their political rights, such as adult franchise and male counter parts are more actively participating in political activities.
13. The educated women have membership in self – help groups and starting their small business activities, such as petty shoos, marketing goods, etc.
14. Almost all younger generations are entering in educational institutions. The majority of the elders are illiterates.
15. All family members worship one deity unlike other family members in Hindu culture, worshipping deities of their own choice.
16. The elder respondents are still practising traditional methods of herbal treatment of ailments and believe in spirits. But it is not so in younger generations. They are preferring modern modes of treatment for ailments, especially allopathic treatment.
17. Elder respondents claimed that the deliveries were carried out in homes with the help of mantrasanis and deliveries at home are not preferred by younger generations and they preferring hospitals for deliveries and treatment.
18. Almost all adult respondents have opted for English medium education, and they can speak their vernacular Hindi and English and travelling to nearby urban areas for their education
19. Old people and women are staying at homes in their villages and youngsters are moving to cities and urban centres in search of education and employment. Many elders are depending on forest - based activities and hunting and gathering.

CONCLUSION

The younger generations are adopting for more modernised and sophisticated lifestyles, whereas elders have become the torch bearers of the traditional lifestyles and ways of living. But in terms of marriage and other customary practises, the tribals are specifically endogamous in nature and all are following the customs festivals, ceremonies. Here no differentiation can be treated among elders and youngsters. Finally, all people respect their elders and aged persons and the community / family bond is very strong among tribals.

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