

Exclusion and Marginality among Scheduled Tribes in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT: Scheduled tribes in Visakhapatnam district are experiencing social exclusion and rendered vulnerabilities to various forms of exploitations. The paper explores the different dimensions of power relations which constitute the marginalization process. The political limitations and social experience of marginality are mainly focussed in the context of their undeclared scheduled areas in the Ravitamakam Mandal in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. The paper contest the notion of 'Inclusive Development' in the light of plights suffering by the scheduled tribes as their villages are denied the status 'Scheduled Areas' according the Fifth Schedule of Indian Constitution. The paper further explains about resource politics and the role of NGO towards fighting for their rights and privileges of the scheduled tribes in this region. Few suggestions are made towards making these scheduled tribes as partners in the 'Inclusive Development' process.

INTRODUCTION

Until recently, the concept of 'Social Exclusion' has become a contested concept. The plethora of definitions on social exclusion ranges on different categories, various social, economic, political, religious processes experienced at both individual and collective level reflects the nature and magnitude of the issues that confronts especially the marginalised sections of the society. The inadequacy of a single definition that can be applied to all the socially excluded categories across time is noted to be both an obstacle and a benefit to its meaningful application (deHaan, '98; Silver, '94).

In its original conception, idea of social exclusion sought to replace many labels, categories, and issues such as social problems, debates on poverty, caste discrimination, alienation of religious minorities, and any other aspect which affects individuals well being.

However, in the case of Scheduled Tribes of Visakhapatnam and Scheduled Tribes of other districts elsewhere, whose villages are not included and undeclared as scheduled areas are caught in a disadvantaged position due to historical and political process. Madanipour *et al.* (2000) takes on the relational view of social exclusion, emphasises structural or social process affecting society in such a way that 'some groups experience social boundaries as barriers preventing their full participation in the economic, political and cultural life of the society within which they live, is clearly manifested in the villages of whose habitats come under non-scheduled (plain) areas, thus PESA is not applicable for these scheduled tribes.

The paper is an empirical study to call into question the popular and largely uncontested ideas of inclusive development, to unravel the social realities of the scheduled tribes non inclusion of scheduled areas by the Government of India in many parts of Andhra Pradesh.

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Taking a processual approach as its base, the paper seeks to understand how the scheduled tribes are being marginalised in the context of modern politics. The hegemonic and minority dominant non-scheduled caste communities operate and exploit the vulnerable tribal communities are becoming victims in everyday life. Attempt is made to record the social experiences and social responses to the predicament of marginality of these scheduled tribes. Few suggestions are given for the policy makers to alleviate the suffering and marginality of the scheduled tribes of Ravitavakam mandal of Visakhapatnam district.

SCHEDULED AREAS

'Scheduled Areas' has been defined in the Indian Constitution as "such areas as the President may order /declare to be Scheduled Areas". Paragraph 6 of the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution prescribes following procedure for scheduling, descheduling and alteration of Scheduled Areas. The criteria followed for declaring an area as Scheduled Area are preponderance of tribal population; compactness and reasonable size of the area; under-developed nature of the area; and marked disparity in economic standard of the people.

These criteria are not spelt out in the Constitution of India but have become well established. They embody principles followed in declaring "Excluded" and 'Partially-Excluded Areas' under the Government of India Act 1935, Schedule 'B' of recommendations of the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas Sub Committee of Constituent Assembly and the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission 1961. At the time of devising and adopting the strategy of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) for socio-economic development of Scheduled Tribes during Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79), certain areas besides Scheduled Areas, were also found having preponderance of tribal population.

A review of protective measures available to the tribals of these newly identified areas vis-a-vis Scheduled Areas was made and it was observed that a systematic use of protective measures and other powers available to the executive under Fifth Schedule will help in effective implementation of the development programmes in Sub-Plan Areas.

Therefore, in August 1976 it was decided to make the boundaries of the Scheduled Areas co-terminus with the Tribal Sub-Plan areas. Accordingly, Clause (2) of the paragraph 6 of the Fifth Schedule was amended vide the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1976 to empower the President to increase the area of any Scheduled Areas in any State.

Scheduled Areas in Andhra Pradesh

- The 1950 'Scheduled Area Order' by the President of India, declared 9 districts in Andhra Pradesh.
 - Adilabad, Mahaboobnagar, Khammam, Warangal, East Godavari, West Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam.
 - A total of 5,400 Tribal villages were declared as 'Scheduled Areas' in the Fifth Schedule.
 - In 1976, The Government of India has given consent to modify the 1950 Scheduled Area Act.
 - Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharastra, Himachal Pradesh, tribal villages were identified and added to the list.
 - During that time, The GOI has requested to send the list of villages with tribal population.
 - The A. P. State Government, has identified 753 villages with predominant tribal population.
- In 1980, the A.P. Govt has sent the list to Government of India.
- In 1980, the Government of Andhra Pradesh enumerated 805 Girijana (adivasi) villages to incorporate into the 5th Schedule of the constitution.
 - Tribal villages of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Bihar, who submitted lists at the same time, have been incorporated in the 5th Schedule.
 - Yet, Tribes of the 805 villages in A. P. have been waiting for the government to implement this measure.
 - The State of Andhra Pradesh, where the Tribal Sub-Plan areas are not coterminous with Scheduled Areas, has also furnished a proposal to this effect which is under examination.
 - Andhra Pradesh Government has identified the following villages as 'Villages with Tribal Population'.

- Srikakulam District: 240 villages; Vizianagaram District: 170; Visakhapatnam District: 55.
- East Godavari District:40; West Godavari District:1; Khammam District:3; Warangal District:77.
- Adilabad District:164; Mahaboobnagar District:3; — Total: 805 Villages
(*Source: Tribal Welfare Department, Andhra Pradesh Government)

Andhra Pradesh State Government Initiatives

- 1976 Andhra Pradesh State Cabinet Resolution.
- Ordered a Fresh Cabinet Resolution to declare the Scheduled Areas.
- Koneru Ranga Rao Committee : To study the agricultural land issues.
- 50 per cent or more tribes can be declared as Scheduled Area.
- State Government Agreed, could not implement – Central Government consent is required.
- 1/70 Act : Tribal Areas Lands need to be protected from Non-Tribes.
- (This is not applicable to Non- Scheduled Areas) though lands belong to tribes
- East and West Godavari Districts villages of Andhra Pradesh: Do not register Tribes' lands to Non- tribes (Pending)
- The ITDA Project Officer has written a letter to MRO of Ravitakam Mandal MRO soliciting Population List of Tribes/ Non-Tribes, land particulars, during the year 2002.

RAVITAMAKAM MANDAL

Cheemalapadu Panchayat

The sixteen habitations under Cheemapadu panchayat are: 1. Cheemalapadu, 2. Mulakalapalli, 3. Kalyanpulova, 4. Bangarubanda, 5. Kadapeda, 6. Jogumpeta, 7. Gangampeta, 8. .Rochupakalu, 9. Thatiparti, 10. Dokulampadu, 11.Kunjarti, 12. Valasapalem, 13. Ajaypuram, 14. Venkatapuram, 15.Tamakampeta and 16. Jogaripeta.

For Valmiki, Konda Dora and Manne Dora, the Tribe Certificates are issued by the RDO, while for

Bagata, Khond and Gadaba, the Tribe Certificates are issued by the MRO.

All the scheduled tribes practice settled cultivation, along with minor forest produce collection from the surrounding forests. While there are some economic disparities between Bagata Valmiki, Konda Dora, Manne Dora and the most vulnerable tribes Khond and Gadaba. Both Gadaba and Khond tribal communities are most victimized by the non-tribal population compared to the other tribal groups, due to illiteracy and low negotiation skills.

Loss of Autonomy and Non- Political Representation

Though there is 90 per cent of tribal population in all the habitations and more than thirteen habitations are 100 per cent tribal population, there is no political representation from the tribes. A few non-tribals are representing the whole Cheemalapadu panchayat.

PESA is not implemented in these tribal hamlets, as MPTC and ZPTC elected members are from the Non Tribal members, due to the fact that these villages come under Non Scheduled Areas. In the context of the present Panchayat Raj elections, tribes have no control of governance and are being represented by the Non Tribal members.

Agricultural Land, Land Transfers and Unused Government Lands in Cheemalapdu Panchayat

The agricultural and non agricultural lands (houses) can be purchased by the non tribals in these villages, which is against to the 1/70 Act. Even a thumb impression of the tribal who own the land is enough to purchase. All the land disputes are settled in Civil Court Jurisdiction, against Revenue Courts in the Scheduled Areas. Due to open land deals and any one can purchase lands belonging to tribals, there is growing number of touts in these villages who negotiate tribal lands for a cheaper price.

In Scheduled Areas, any government unused land can be given to the tribes either for housing purposes or any commercial development. Videh (2003) reports that despite the categorical legal imperative, land alienation of the tribes in scheduled areas persist, and in large areas of the country it is now endemic. Behura and Panigrahi (2006) points out that the Article 19(5)

of Indian Constitution safeguards tribal interest in property. While the rights of free movement and residence throughout the territory of India and of acquisition and disposition of property are guaranteed to every citizen, special restrictions may be imposed by the state for protection of the interests of the members of the scheduled tribes under Article 19(5). Unfortunately this constitutional provision is not practiced in these villages. Even non locals from Z.Bennavaram (8 km to Cheemalapadu) encroaching land in Cheemalapadu area by influencing the local non tribals. There is no mechanism to stop these land grabbing.

Position of Jobs in Government Organizations

Government of Andhra Pradesh has a special order: In Scheduled Areas, in every government department, some jobs must be given to the Scheduled Tribes. Most of the educated youth are denied jobs in neighboring scheduled areas, thus leading to unemployment-frustration and vulnerability towards joining with extremist groups.

Loan Facilities: Institutional and Non Institutional

In Scheduled Tribal Areas, non institutional loan arrangements by the private money lenders are guarded from high interest rates and grabbing the agricultural field / houses if there is no repayment. Additionally, all the money lenders must register with the MRO. This is not happening in these non scheduled tribal areas, thus tribes who have taken loans from the money lenders are paying high interest rates and are vulnerable to give away their lands.

Loss of Tribal Identity

Due to the presence of non tribal population tribals are being influenced by the caste Hindus. Tribal customs, norms, mores are being eroded and are being replaced by the mainstream Hindu cultural ethos. Changes are manifested in marriage system as the bride price is replaced by dowry, Construction of Rama Temple, and unnecessary spending on family functions which are not part of tribal culture are now being practiced by the tribes.

Additional Issues

These tribals could not get the jobs assigned to them in the eleven Mandals of Visakhapatnam.

Education facilities in these areas are less as compared to those of the Scheduled Areas: Tribal Ashram Schools, MPP schools, Government Elementary Schools, Tribal Girls Ashram Schools, are lacking.

Marriage alliances are not taking place due to demarcation of Scheduled Areas and Non Scheduled Areas. Additionally there are also livelihoods problem in these areas.

The 'Rajiv Yuva Kiranalu' jobs in the private sector are given to these tribals, but they could not cope up with the skills and demands of the private organizations, so they lag behind and leave the jobs offered to them.

SUGGESTIONS

There is an urgent policy intervention is needed to address the issues related non inclusion of the villages of Cheemalapadu panchayat as 'Scheduled Areas', as most of these villages are inhabited by the historically disadvantaged under privileged tribes. To mitigate their existing problems particularly land related issues, and to protect the scheduled tribes from land alienation, a specific alternative guidelines must be framed to stop land purchase and land grabbing by the non tribes in these villages with immediate effect.

As of now, there is no Tribal Advisory Council to address these issues. To deal with these issues, a separate cell should be formed within the ITDA to look after the welfare of these tribes in the non scheduled areas. 10 per cent of fund should be allocated to the tribes of these non scheduled areas within the total budget sanctioned to the ITDA. Tribal welfare administration must not only confine to the scheduled tribes in the scheduled areas, they must ensure welfare to the tribes in the non scheduled areas. Administrative changes are necessary to see the welfare of the scheduled tribes in the non scheduled areas. Government functionaries must be sensitized about tribal culture, needs and aspirations of the scheduled tribes. A Committee should look into the various land related issues of the tribes in these villages. A separate Tribal Girls Hostel should be initiated to encourage tribal girls' education in these

villages. Employability training should be given to the needy youths of these tribes.

Until a suitable protective mechanism is adopted for the scheduled tribes of these villages, local resource politics and power structures continues to surface through entrenched social inequalities which further marginalized the tribes from the other communities.

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