

Development Programmes And The Tribal :A Study On The Santals Of Birbhum District

Dr. Prasasti Ghosh

Associate Professor, Birbhum Mahavidyalaya, Suri, West Bengal

“A tribe is viewed historically and developmentally as a social group existing before the development of ,or outside of state” (Wikipedi),1. The term ‘Adivasi’ is implied to the tribal people. The term Adivasi(Adi=original and vasi= inhabitant) has become known to many people. The ILO has classified them as indigenous people and they are living in this subcontinent from unrecorded period. The scheduled tribe first appeared in the constitution (Article 366(25)) of India. India the vast geographical area with diversified ecological ,cultural and linguistic zones have given shelter to more than five hundred tribal community constituting 08.6per cent (104281034 population in 2011) of total population(1210569573 in 2011) .They settled mostly live ecologically marginal areas of hills, forest and other places isolated from the main stream. The characteristics by which the tribal people peoples are identified as a)primitiveness, b)distinct culture, folklore, belief system; c)geographical isolation and d)shyness to contact with other castes ,e)backward economy and their economy is based on subsistence level where there is no concept of surplus, self sufficient economy and economy depends upon barter exchange.. These are the characteristics of the tribal people. We can get an idea about the tribe and their place in the development and culture of Indian Civilization in the pro historical context. There are 645 tribal communities are living in India and they are at different stages of economic (hunting, food gathering, collection, shifting cultivation etc.)and socio-cultural (preliterate, semiliterate, nomadic/settled, patriarchate or matriachate or patrimatri etc.) levels of development. (Das, 1991)2

The tern development is used in wider sense. The purpose of development programmes is to creat more oppportunity to all the people for better life .Development process involves improvement in the quality of life of weaker section. In a democratic country no community will be remain outside of the main stream. But it is a pity thing that because of some reasons the tribal people are still remain far behind the development programmes and also neglected by the ruler and the people of other caste. In the pre British period the tribal people cou’t taste the fruits of the development and get very little facilities provided by the royalty because they live in the remote and inaccessible areas. For this they cou’t interact easily with other people in spite of they are co-existed with other people since the dawn of Indian civilization as the history of India reveals. This is due to the untouchibility by the Hindu people of higher castes. After that during the British period the ruler want to segregate the tribal people from the main stream and as result of this tribal people who live in remotest area not so benefited by the development programme taken by the ruler. Their policy ‘leave them alone’ cause poor or less development of the tribal community people and they allowed to stay in their own world and for this the world outside their domain was unknown to them.(Raha,1989)3 .Poor and inaccessible communication and less interest of the ruler and the king about them the development programmes taken for them were not so effective and enough in eradication of their poor life pattern. To fulfil the policy of the British ruler to segregate the tribal people from the main stream for the administration. The British ruler invited the Christian missionaries for welfare of them and to converted them into Christianity by which they can run administration smoothly. They took development programmes in villages and towns as construction of roads and communication , schools, hospitals for their own interest .So these measure failed to improved the socio-economic condition of the tribal community.

After independence govt thought that the tribal community have to be involve in all the matters of the country they should be integrated with the main stream. This approach of integration is the brain child of Jawaharlal Nehru. This policy of integration consists of two types of measure as i)the protection of interest of the tribal people through legal administration; and ii)to implement the development programmes to improve their standard of living. The constitution of India initiated the tribal development programmes by incorporating important provision. The programmes are i) statutory recognition of tribal communities , ii)creation of scheduled areas for the development of the tribals as ITDP,MADA, LAMPs and some development schemes as TSP and SCA ii)special representation in parliament and legislative assembly, iii)reservation in educational institution and govt services in a certain percentage and scholarship at different levels of education and training programmes, establishment of different training centres and iv)recognition of the right to use local language for administration and other purposes to establish their reliability. During each plan period some measures have taken for betterment of their life as development of natural resources (1st plan period), Special Multi Purpose Tribal blocks(2nd plan) and renames TDB in next plan. Recognition of ITDP in 5th plan

The Santals form one of the largest tribal groups in eastern India concentrated mainly in Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Tripura. Generally, the tribal people are identified primitive, illiterate and backward communities. But the Santals are more adaptive and their lifestyle is not so primitive like some other tribe. In Birbhum district (located between 23°32'30" and 24°35'00" north latitude and 88°01'40" and 87°05'25" east longitude) of West Bengal they comprise nearly 6.74 per cent of total population and 89 per cent of tribal population. This district is situated in the eastern side of the Santal Pargana district. This major objective of this study is to give an idea about the development programmes taken for the development of the people of this community and also to make an assessment about the impact of the development programmes in changing their economic and socio-cultural life.

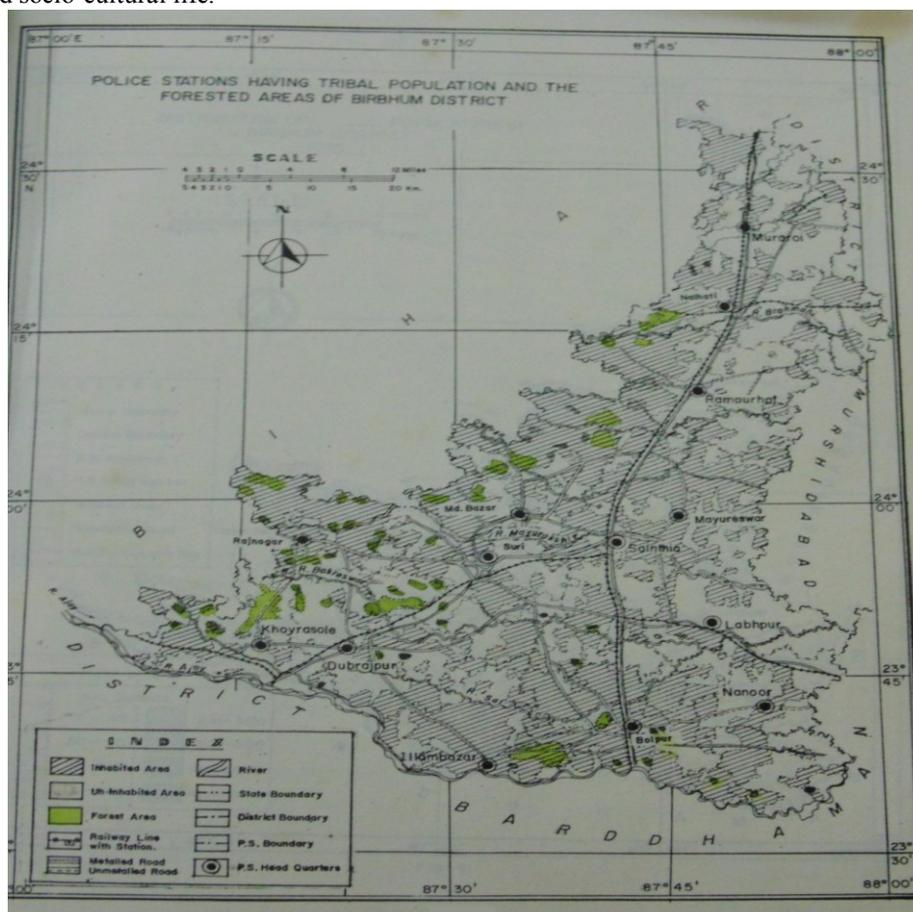


Fig 1: Distribution of Tribal people in Birbhum District.

Habitat and The Santals

The Santals are the major tribal group in Birbhum district are locally known as 'Majhi'. In origin they belong to Austro-Asiatic kol group branched from the Austric family. They like to identify themselves as Hor (Man) not Santal Bodding, 1983). They are concentrated in the western part and gradually decrease towards east (Fig-01). They form by and large the immigrant race within the present jurisdiction but some authors as Hunter, Dalton, Risely and the administrators Mc. Alpin of eighteenth century portrait Birbhum AS the Homeland of the Santals. In 1872 Santal population in Birbhum was 6954 and it increases to 182814 in 2001

Socio-Economic Life and the Santals

In pre Independence period with the established of East India Company the Indigo cultivation make the tribal people landless labourer. They occupy agricultural land and forest areas for indigo cultivation. After independence the programmes taken for then change their socio-economic life. Educational attainment is the most important among the qualities of a population. Level of literacy and the educational attainment are most important measure in socio-economic development of a nation and eradication of poverty may be possible by education. Literacy level varies between i) areas, ii) sex, iii) various social groups, and iv) various occupational groups. In the Indian constitution, article 46, 23, 25 and 29 deal with education. In Birbhum several schemes have taken by the govt for the improvement of educational level among the Santals. The data (Table-01) reveals that the allotment of funds in different schemes and the no of student (beneficiaries in different schemes is increasing from 1981 to 2010-2011. I has found that nearly 50 per cent of allocation is used for hostel charges.

The 'Ashram School' which is originally based on the principle of Mahatma Gandhi is decreasing. Now for the tribal community some schools constructed at junior high to madhyamik

Table-01
Allotment of Funds with Beneficiaries in Different Scheme for Education (in %), 1980- 2012

Sl.No.	Name of Scheme	1980-81		1985-86		1989-90		2012(in n0)	
		A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
1	Book Grants and Exam Fees	7.43	24.2	8.51	43.57	8.53	16.23	N.A	14313
2	Hostel Charges	40.69	11.15	49.35	9.68	50.87	9.61	N.A	1560
3	Maintenance Charges	21.23	18.85	25.93	22.28	18.58	17.67	N.A	9221
4	Vocational Training	10.62	4.89	1.91	1.94	2.51	2.36	N.A	30
5	Coaching	0.35	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.1		N.A	75
6	Ashram Hostel	11.55	1.96	6.14	1.03	0.06	0.95	N.A	135
7	Compulsory Charges	2.65	37.84	2.59	20.2	4.29	33.18	N.A	10170
8	Post Matric Scholarship	5.48	1.08	6.16	1.91	8.9	---	N.A	---

A= Allotment B= Beneficiary Source: Office of Welfare for SC andST, Suri, Birbhum.

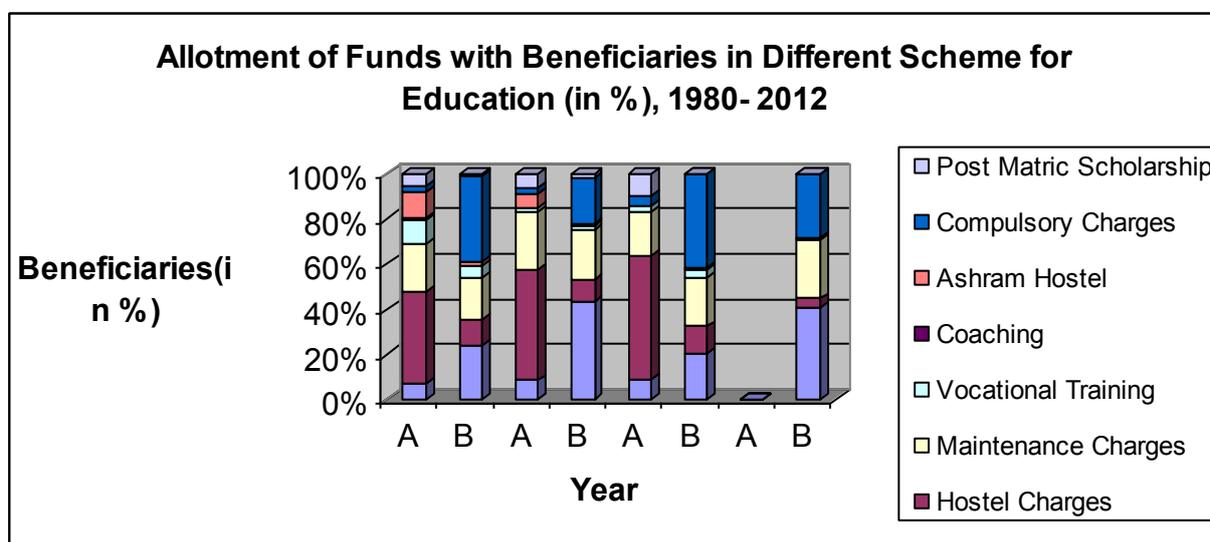
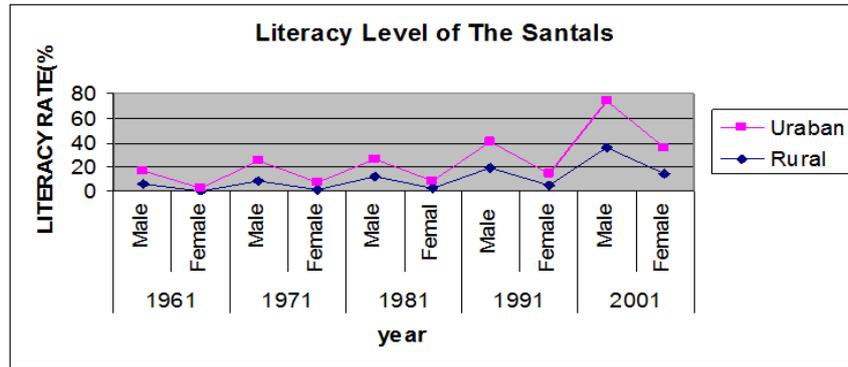


Fig 2: Allotment of Funds with Beneficiaries in Different Scheme for Education (in %), 1980- 2012 Level and in most of the schools some seats are remain reserved for them. 117 students got hostel charges, 182 students whose parents are engaged in unclean profession got scholarship for education. 75 educated unemployed boys and girls got computer training free of cost. National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation introduced education loan scheme in the name of Adivasi Shiiksha Rrinn Yojana in which an eligible persons can get concessional loan for professional and technical course to PhD conducted by govt or govt sponsored colleges or institution. These schemes for improvement their educational level and construction of schools increase their literacy level as the data (table2) shows. Percentage of literate person

Table-02
Literacy Level of The Santals (in %) ,1961 to 2001

	1961		1971		1981		1991		2001	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Femal	Male	Female	Male	Female
Rural	6.15	0.48	8.16	0.78	12.49	2.14	18.8	4.36	35.78	14.6
Uraban	10.07	1.5	17.16	6.45	14.24	5.69	22.17	9.98	38.11	21.32

Source: Census of India, West Bengal Series, Birbhum District, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001.



have increased. This improvement in literacy level has positive effect in changing the economic and socio-cultural life of the Santals. These educated persons can save themselves from exploitation by other people.

These educated young persons do want to engage in traditional occupation. Together with these development programmes for improvement of educational level together with reservation policy in different types of job by the govt help the people to change the occupation pattern for betterment of their living. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry of Tribal Welfare, Govt of India have taken some measures for economic development. These are: a) ITDP, LAMPS, AMSY under NSTFDC (income generation scheme), b) job oriented scheme as manufacturing, fashion sampling technology, tool room training and computer. By these schemes the tribal boys got opportunity to introduce themselves with the modern technologies and economic world. They start to engaged in new jobs leaving their traditional activities as the statics (table-03) reveals. No of beneficiaries taken loan for small business is more than other. Tailoring also introduced to them. Fig-04 shows the changes of occupation. Changes in occupation among the females is more than males. Engagement in secondary and tertiary sector is more than primary occupation. No of females is more than male in these sectors.

Table-03
No. of Beneficiaries Taken Loan for Different Occupation Under NSTFDC Scheme, 2007-2011

Year	Small Business	Piggery	Milch Cow	Goat+cow	Piggery+M. Cow	Paddy	Grocery	Tailoring
2007-09	163	30	-	-	-	-	-	-
2009-10	141	17	14	06	07	-	-	-
2010-11	73	-	-	-	-	30	09	09

Source: West Bengal Finance Corporation for Scand ST, Suri, Birbhum, W.B.

Table-04
Occupation Structure, 1971 and 2001

Year	Total Worker		Cultivator		Agril. Labour		Household Industry		Other Services	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1971	91078	19969	5314	923	18162	7672	3537	479	2517	254
2001	91648	101296	12490	4151	19999	12737	423	603	8406	4113

Source: Census of India, West Bengal Series, Birbhum District 1971, 2001

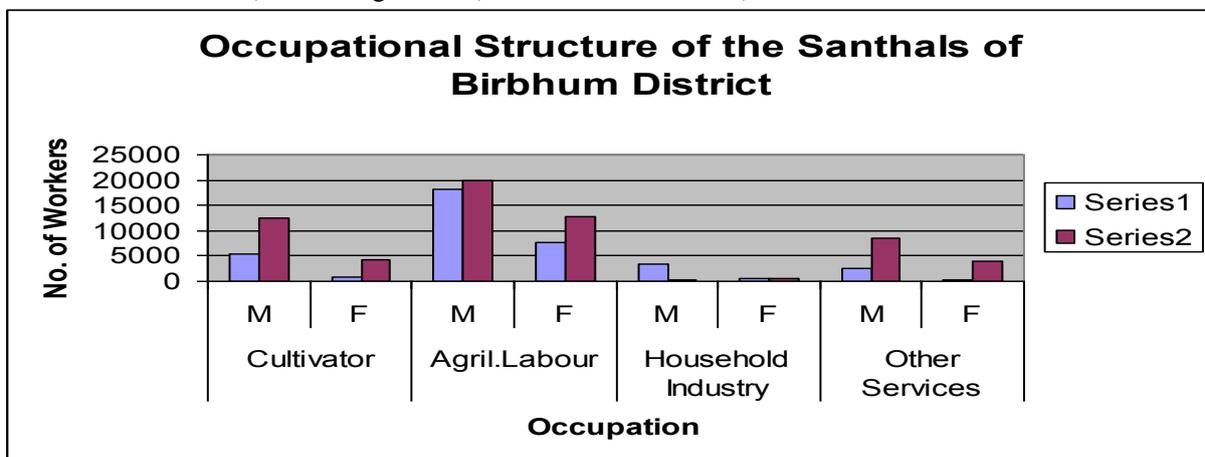


Fig 3: Occupational Structure of the Santhals of Birbhum

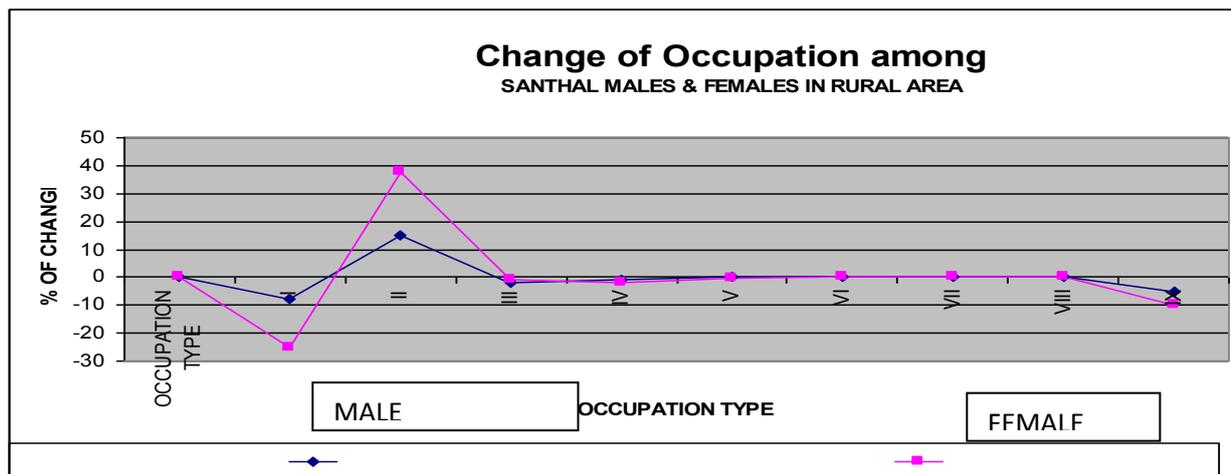


Fig 4 : Police Station Having Tribal Population and the Forested Areas of Birbhum District.

- I CULTIVATOR
- II Agricultural labour
- III Mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, etc
- IV Household Industry
- V Other than Household Industry and Manufacturing
- VI Construction
- VII Trade and commerce
- VIII Transport, Storage and Communication
- IX Other services

Socio-cultural Aspect and the Santals

The Santals in this district is mostly rural, illiterate and hard working. The change in socio cultural status is also changing based on the development of infra structural facilities .Most of the villages are interconnected by roads which result decrease in inter regional disparities in all sphere of life. Food habits and material culture is changing gradually. They wear modern dresses, use cosmetics and metal ornaments .Pattern of celebration is also changed .The young educated people do not want to dance in traditional pattern.

The Development programmes are not only act as the accelerating force in the changing processes. Cultural diffusion and acculturation through the interaction with other non tribal people in each spheres also bring changes in long term process .The Santals called themselves' Hor Hopon' or sons of Man. In early days they had their traditional institution through which they made acquainted with their cultural heritage. In pre independence period Christian missionaries brought them under the impact of modern education. In post independence period several programmes taken by the govt and the centre to propagate education among the Santals. Together with these programmes reservation policy in jobs taken by the govt results changes in their socio cultural life . Santal traditional society gradually transformed to modern society.

References

- [1]. Wikipedia, p1.
- [2]. Das,A.K(1991),Scheduled Tribe-A Socio-Economic and Cultural Profile in West Bengal, Bulletin of C.R.I, Kolkata, p2-4.
- [3]. Raha,M.K(1989);Introduction in Tribal India(vol-1),Ed.Manis Kr Raha, Gian Publishing House,Delhi,pxxii-xxiv
- [4]. Dr. Prasasti Ghosh(1993),Demographic Profile and Changing Occupational Character and Economic Status of the Santhals of Birbhum District (thesis),