

Disadvantaged Tribes of India



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1. *Tribal Livelihood and Governance: Regional Concerns*
edited by V. Srinivasa Rao
2. *Disadvantaged Tribes of India: Regional Concerns*
edited by V. Srinivasa Rao
3. *Challenges of Tribal Development: Contemporary Social Concerns*
edited by V. Srinivasa Rao
4. *Tribal Integration in India: Northeast and Beyond*
edited by V. Srinivasa Rao

Disadvantaged Tribes of India

Regional Concerns

Edited by
V. Srinivasa Rao



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Foreword

At the outset, it gives me a great pleasure to know that the Tribal Cultural Research & Training Mission (TCR&TM) of Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, and the Centre for Regional Studies (CRS), University of Hyderabad, have jointly organised the national seminar with Andhra University and Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh on the larger theme of *Tribal Policies and Programmes in India: Regional Reflections in the Context of Globalisation*. Further, it is indeed a laudable step in bringing out the various papers presented by numerous scholars from different Indian universities to disseminate the best practices of the implementation of various tribal programmes in Indian states into a publication comprising four edited volumes for wider utility.

As a forwarding step towards this objective of the seminar, Dr V. Srinivasa Rao, who is the coordinator of the seminar and also the editor of this book, has succeeded to attract academic insights on tribal issues from around eighty scholars who obtained expertise on their research. The outcome of this seminar is not only to present the scholars' research findings on tribal issues but also to publish their research findings in four edited books.

The present volume entitled *Disadvantaged Tribes of India: Regional Concerns* consists of 19 chapters, excluding the Introduction chapter. These chapters provide a critical insight to understand the regional concerns on tribal issues in India. The research findings are very important from the policy formulation point of view. The current book offers a fairly comprehensive account of a wide range of issues. These chapters bring together

various tribal issues in a multidisciplinary format spanning a range of disciplines such as anthropology, ecology, history, public policy, social work, and sociology.

I am sure that these publications will definitely be useful to understand the tribal issues on various domains and to formulate appropriate policies and schemes for the development of Scheduled Tribes in India in general and of Andhra Pradesh in particular.

Kantilal Dande, IAS
Secretary to Government
Department of Tribal Welfare
Government of Andhra Pradesh

Preface

Why are scheduled tribes disadvantaged community? To have best possible (multiple) answers to this question, one has to read the chapter 'Tribal Tragedies in Independent India' written by Ramachandra Guha (2016) in his book *Democrats and Dissenters*. He, in this chapter, beautifully narrated nine historical reasons ('tragedies' in his language) why are tribals in India deprived or disadvantaged or dishonoured or excluded (or any other such terms can be used). I do not quote them all here in verbatim, but try to paraphrase in a couple of lines. As India industrialised, the tribals have been losing their homes and livelihoods due to projects, dams, mines for the benefit of non-tribals. The tribals in India do not have an 'Ambedkar' who can mobilise all of them to one roof. Their geographical locations, false approach by the personnel in revenue, education, health departments, traditional livelihood practices that cannot be transferred to the new economy, influence of Maoists, invisibility of tribal issues in the national media are some of them. When we closely examine these, we can easily state that it has been the state, market and even civil society that are the reasons for the disadvantage of the tribes (pp. 126-7).

The Introduction chapter of this book has provided many evidences to remind how the tribal regions in India are naturally well off, and how these natural resources are being diverted to the interest of non-tribal development. The World Bank (2011) study which was published by Oxford under the title *Poverty and Social Exclusion in India* has provided a comprehensive analysis on the reasons for tribal exclusion in India. The report found that '... a complex set of contravening forest laws means they are

confronted by barriers in selling their produce from the land, perhaps explaining the high poverty rates among STs in rural areas. Most tribals, therefore, end up migrating, leaving their forest lands to work as casual laborers in urban centers' (p. 10). While arguing on the roots of tribal deprivation in India, the report strongly holds that 'their traditional dependence on land and forests and their widespread displacement from these areas have changed the nature of the relationship tribals share with their land' (p. 10). These interventions by the state pushed the tribals to high poverty in some of the states.

Whether the role of 'fourth estate' is an advantage or disadvantage to the tribal cause? How frequently that we watch or read the tribal issues in our national media? How does media take the responsibility of tribal advocacy to the foreground? These are important questions while to understand whether the media is part of the big capital or giving *capital punishment* to the big capital on behalf of the tribes in India. While answering to all these questions, Sudhir Pattnaik, in the chapter written by him 'Tribal Rights and Big Capital: Critical Reflections on the Growing Dichotomy and Role of Corporate Media' to the edited volume *Adivasi Rights and Exclusion in India* by V. Srinivasa Rao (2019), says that:

... the media in tribal areas reflect a dehumanized and highly insensitive approach. They don't consider tribal communities as human beings who have equal rights to live a dignified life. There was a time when media was confined to print media only. The approach of media to any issue in tribal areas was based on the assumption that they were all ignorant and anything they did was viewed from the perspective of the enlightened souls whose mission was to drive out ignorance and illiteracy. This was very close to the dominant worldview on tribes which worked for mainstreaming them. Now tribes are viewed as people sitting over resources with primitive lifestyles and preventing finance capital from making use of it for maximising profit (pp. 151–2).

Who are the actors against tribal cause that one could find clearly from the above brief analysis? It reveals that the actors, who undoubtedly are not so much interested on the issues of tribal betterment, are state, market and media. These actors are believed to be the strong pillars in a democratic state. Just imagine, if these *strong pillars* are acting against the tribal cause, what could be the better answer to the question 'Why are scheduled tribes disadvantaged community?' raised in the beginning of this Preface? Therefore, the title of this book is *Disadvantaged Tribes of India: Regional Concerns*.

Most of the chapters in this volume are micro-level studies with reference to a particular region or a tribe. However, the chapters in the part one of this volume are of policy concern at national importance. The tribal issues discussed in this volume are culture, development, globalisation, health, identity politics, language, policy, poverty, violence and women with reference to a particular region or with a specific tribe in most cases. While

building various arguments by the authors in their chapters on the issues concerned, the role of state-market-media is in forefront, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, the interconnection and role of these three would always be debated while discussing tribal issues in Indian context. I hope the observations made by each author in their respective chapter in this volume will help the 'state' to execute better policies, the 'market' to ponder upon corporate responsibility, and the 'media' to review their stand of advocacy on behalf of the *silent community* to transform the disadvantaged tribes to the *advantaged tribes of India*.

V. Srinivasa Rao

Acknowledgement

Editing a book is an endeavour with a great challenge and its success purely depends on authors' contribution and their cooperation. I really appreciate and thank each and every author who contributed the paper for building this volume. The total of 19 papers included in this volume were initially reviewed and sent to the respective authors with comments, observations and suggestions for improvement. The editor is thankful to the authors for their timely cooperation. Without their cooperation and contributions, it would not have been possible to bring out this volume. However, the editor is not liable in any way for the arguments, discussions and opinions expressed by the authors in their respective papers in this volume.

I would like to put on record my highest sense of gratitude to TCR&TM, Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, for giving me the opportunity to organise the national seminar and publishing this volume as an outcome of the seminar. I express my thankfulness to Sri E. Ravindra Babu, the Mission Director, for his encouragement and constant support to publish this book; Sri Adinarayana Rao Balivada for taking initiative every time and offering valuable suggestions. Without their initiative, it would not have been possible to bring out this academic and research outcome. I could not thank enough Sri V. Chinaveerabhadru, IAS, the former Mission Director, who initially supported this endeavour. I am thankful to Mr Anand Kumar for his encouragement during the course of this assignment.

I thank Sri Muddada Ravichandra, IAS, Principal Secretary (Tribal Welfare), Government of Andhra Pradesh, for writing the Foreword to this

volume. I express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Appa Rao Podile, Vice-Chancellor, University of Hyderabad; Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University, for their timely suggestions and cooperation to accomplish the task of conducting the national seminar which was a driving force for the outcome of this volume. I thank Prof. Arun Kumar Patnaik and Prof. Sheela Prasad for constant support; I also thank Prof. G. Satya Narayana, Principal, College of Arts and Commerce, Andhra University, for local support.

I appreciate Raghuveer Pinisetty for logistical support in Andhra University during the course of seminar; Bommaka Shiva Kumar and Boya Sree Manasa for their academic support. The editor is also thankful to Rawat Publications, Jaipur, for timely publication.

V. Srinivasa Rao

Editor and Contributors

Editor

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