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Website: www.allindiaaseca.org

E-mail: contact@allindiaaseca.org

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Editorial

There exist two types of understanding as far as development of tribals of India is concerned. People apart from tribals feel that enough protection and privileges have been extended to this section of the society. People from the tribal communities, however, differ based on the experiences and reality of life in different contexts. Some are still ignorant about various provisions of protection or privileges. Few others know about it but are facing difficult to pursue the same. At the same time some others know it fully and take the shelter wherever necessary but seldom use it for the benefit of others. The most discerning section is the students who quite often refer to the provisions of the various enabling legislative and administrative measures. Going by the day to day experience on the treatment being meted out to tribals, these sections of young mind are still discussing whether the provisions are adequate to bring solace and comfort to these sections of the society. Quite often helplessness or the indifference of the administration to implement various provisions is generally observed.

The ongoing debate on the development and associated displacement of vulnerable section of the society that is mostly the tribal communities in India has largely drawn the students' attention. It is being highlighted that when development is conceived whether associated development of the tribals is also being planned as an integral part of the scheme. When fruit of the development is seen or being enjoyed by people related or around the temple of progress that is any plant, factory or infrastructure, then why the people who are voluntarily or involuntarily being evicted from the place where these factories or projects are set up are not being benefited but are being pushed to a corner to lead rest of their life in utter helplessness and in a state of penury and destitute. When the projects such as mining, power plant, large factories, hydro and irrigation projects etc. are boon for the country these cannot be bane for these communities to push them to margin. When some are being in a state of good

condition, it cannot be a source of deprivation for others at the same time.

A detailed analysis would reveal that setting up of modern temple of development per se is not anti people or it is not meant to deprive people from enjoying the fruit of development. It is the people who are at the helm of affairs to implement the good provisions for the betterment of people are greatly responsible for giving the right message to the people. In cases where they do not implement the provisions in letter and spirit and may be it is the insensitiveness on the part of the implementer to bring in good projects for the permanent peace and prosperity among the people, discontentment surfaces. The people are not being treated as equal partners by the planner or the project proponent who only see the future without giving due respect and weightage for the past. Many a times people are also not being briefed suitably or adequately on the benefit aspects and they are also subject to misinformation spread by the vested interest. The recent comment by the Supreme Court that "People do not want power plants but they want bilji" is thought provoking. This statement amply gives a message that projects are required for the growth of the economy and prosperity. We cannot progress without new projects and new initiative. For the overall development of the economy and the county we need projects and the hurdles in the form of peoples' notion that the projects are anti people need to be handled with care and compassion so that everyone should be in a win win position.

Apart from the displacement issue, other provisions of protective measures also need to be dealt with with proper empathy and good understanding. The people should not feel that they are being cheated or betrayed. The solution lies in both social and political intervention. When political intervention is limited by some consideration like loyalty of such affected people to a particular political establishment or political affiliation but respective society or the leaders of the respective society should also get involved. Some

societies are, however, in a very vulnerable state which is not in any way capable of defending their own interest due to poor level of education and non

sustainable economic condition. In such situation or to such section of population, only hope is to expect support and help from the neighbourhood society.

Unraveling Indian Census Data on Santals (Education)

Sanatan Marandi
ABU DHABI, U.A.E.
Sanatan.Marandi@gmail.com

Tripura is the only states in North East where Santals are recognized as Schedule Tribes by the Government of India. Hence, the statistics of various tribal populations in Tripura is available separately in the office of Census Commission of India, New Delhi. Table below gives the Santal population profile in Tripura. Tripura being a small State in North East India, Santals are mostly seen in the district of West Tripura.

<i>EDUCATION STATUS OF SANTALS IN THE OVERALL TRIPURA as per 2001 Census</i>													
Age Group (Years)	Total population			Illiterate			Age Group (Years)	Total population			Illiterate		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
All ages	2,151	1,189	962	1,266	547	719	15-19	180	90	90	76	30	46
0 - 6	416	207	209	416	207	209	20-24	250	185	65	73	23	50
Age 0 to 6				19%	10%	10%	25-29	169	75	94	94	25	69
7	53	22	31	28	8	20	30-34	166	95	71	87	36	51
8	76	38	38	29	10	19	35-39	153	95	58	98	47	51
9	50	31	19	13	6	7	40-44	108	61	47	74	35	39
10	78	38	40	26	10	16	45-49	84	47	37	52	18	34
11	34	21	13	5	2	3	50-54	44	29	15	33	19	14
12	71	36	35	25	10	15	55-59	34	19	15	26	12	14
13	29	13	16	6	1	5	60-64	46	23	23	35	14	21
14	42	21	21	19	7	12	65-69	27	16	11	18	8	10
Age 7 to 14	433	220	213	151	54	97	70-74	16	11	5	11	6	5
				7%	3%	5%	75-79	11	4	7	8	1	7
15 & above	1,301	761	540	699	286	413	80+	13	11	2	9	7	2
				32%	13%	19%	Age not stated	1	1	0	0	0	0

District wise RELIGION profile of Santals in TRIPURA											
Sl. No.	District	All religions	Hindus	Hindu %age	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Budhist s	Jains	Other religions & persuasions	Religi on not stated
1	West Tripura 01	1,870	1,826	98%	5	35	0	4	0	0	0
2	South Tripura 02	13	13	100%	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Dhalai * 03	62	62	100%	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	North Tripura 04	206	201	98%	0	5	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	2,151	2,102	98%	5	40	-	4	-	-	-

The literacy level of Santals in Tripura is 41.14% which is higher than Santal national literacy level of 35%. There are only 7 Santals in Tripura whose education level is graduate and above. Majority of Santals in Tripura i.e. 98% recorded their religion as Hindu during Census 2001. Apart from Hindu, 5 No. Santals recorded their religion as Muslim, 40 Nos. as Christian & 4 Nos. Santals in Tripura recorded their religion as Buddhist.

Supreme Court Judgment on atrocities to a Bhil woman in Maharashtra

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(The Text of the judgment is reproduced below for the readers)

{Continued from January 2013 issue...}

22. India was a veritable paradise for pastoral and agricultural societies because it has level & fertile land, hundreds of rivers, forests etc. and is rich in natural resources. Hence for thousands of years people kept pouring into India because they found a comfortable life here in a country which was gifted by nature.

23. As the great Urdu poet Firaq Gorakhpuri wrote:
“*Sar Zamin-e-hind par aqwaam-e-alam ke firaq
Kafile guzarte gae Hindustan banta gaya*”

Which means –

“In the land of Hind, the Caravans of the peoples of the world kept coming in and India kept getting formed”.

24. Who were the original inhabitants of India? At one time it was believed that the Dravidians were the original inhabitants. However, this view has been considerably modified subsequently, and now the generally accepted belief is that the original inhabitants of India were the pre-Dravidian aborigines i.e. the ancestors of the present tribals or adivasis (Scheduled Tribes). In this connection it is stated in The Cambridge History of India (Vol-I), Ancient India as follows:

“It must be remembered, however, that, when the term ‘Dravidian’ is thus used ethnographically, it is nothing more than a convenient label. It must not be assumed that the speakers of the Dravidian languages are aborigines. In Southern India, as in the North, the same general distinction exists between the more primitive tribes of the hills and jungles and the civilized inhabitants of the fertile tracts; and some ethnologists hold that the difference is racial and not merely the result of culture. Mr. Thurston, for instance, says:

“It is the Pre-Dravidian aborigines, and not the later and more cultured Dravidians, who must be regarded as the primitive existing race..... These Pre-Dravidians are differentiated from the Dravidian classes by their short stature and broad (platyrrhine) noses. There is strong ground for the

belief that the Pre-Dravidians are ethnically related to the Veddas of Ceylon, the Talas of the Celebes, the Batin of Sumatra, and possibly the Australians. (*The Madras Presidency*, pp. 124-5.)”

It would seem probable, then, that the original speakers of the Dravidian languages were outsiders, and that the ethnographical Dravidians are a mixed race. In the more habitable regions the two elements have fused, while representatives of the aborigines are still in the fastnesses (in hills and forests) to which they retired before the encroachments of the newcomers.

If this view be correct, we must suppose that these aborigines have, in the course of long ages, lost their ancient languages and adopted those of their conquerors. The process of linguistic transformation, which may still be observed in other parts of India, would seem to have been carried out more completely in the South than elsewhere.

The theory that the Dravidian element is the most ancient which we can discover in the population of Northern India, must also be modified by what we now know of the Munda languages, the Indian representatives of the Austric family of speech, and the mixed languages in which their influence has been traced (p.43). Here, according to the evidence now available, it would seem that the Austric element is the oldest, and that it has been overlaid in different regions by successive waves of Dravidian and Indo-European on the one hand, and by Tibeto-Chinese on the other. Most ethnologists hold that there is no difference in physical type between the present speakers of Munda and Dravidian languages. This statement has been called in question; but, if it is true, it shows that racial conditions have become so complicated that it is no longer possible to analyse their constituents. Language alone has preserved a record which would otherwise have been lost. At the same time, there can be little doubt that Dravidian

languages were actually flourishing in the western regions of Northern India at the period when languages of the Indo-European type were introduced by the Aryan invasions from the north-west. Dravidian characteristics have been traced alike in Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, in the Prakrits, or early popular dialects, and in the modern vernaculars derived from them. The linguistic strata would thus appear to be arranged in the order-Austric, Dravidian, Indo-European.

There is good ground, then, for supposing that, before the coming of the Indo-Aryans speakers the Dravidian languages predominated both in Northern and in Southern India; but, as we have seen, older elements are discoverable in the populations of both regions, and therefore the assumption that the Dravidians are aboriginal is no longer tenable. Is there any evidence to show whence they came into India?

No theory of their origin can be maintained which does not account for the existence of Brahui, the large island of Dravidian speech in the mountainous regions of distant Baluchistan which lie near the western routes into India. Is Brahui a surviving trace of the immigration of Dravidian-speaking peoples into India from the west? Or does it mark the limits of an overflow from India into Baluchistan? Both theories have been held; but as all the great movements of peoples have been into India and not out of India, and as a remote mountainous district may be expected to retain the survivals of ancient races while it is not likely to have been colonized, the former view would a *priori* seem to be by far the more probable." (See 'Brahui' on Google).

25. In Google 'The original inhabitants of India', it is mentioned : "A number of earlier anthropologists held the view that the Dravidian peoples together were a distinct race. However, comprehensive genetic studies have proven that this is not the case. The original inhabitants of India may be identified with the speakers of the Munda languages, which are unrelated to either Indo-Aryan or Dravidian languages"

26. Thus the generally accepted view now is that the original inhabitants of India were not the Dravidians but the pre-Dravidians Munda aborigines whose descendants presently live in parts of Chotanagpur (Jharkhand), Chattisgarh, Orissa, West Bengal, etc., the Todas of the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu, the tribals in the Andaman Islands, the Adivasis in various parts of India (especially in the forests and hills) e.g. Gonds, Santhals, Bhils, etc.

27. It is not necessary for us to go into further details into this issue, but the facts mentioned above certainly lends support to the view that about 92% people living in India are descendants of immigrants (though more research is required).

28. It is for this reason that there is such tremendous diversity in India. This diversity is a significant feature of our country, and the only way to explain it is to accept that India is largely a country of immigrants.

29. There are a large number of religions, castes, languages, ethnic groups, cultures etc. in our country, which is due to the fact that India is a country of immigrants. Somebody is tall, somebody is short, some are dark, some are fair complexioned, with all kinds of shades in between, someone has Caucasian features, someone has Mongoloid features, someone has Negroid features, etc. There are differences in dress, food habits and various other matters.

(To be continued...)

FROM:

If undelivered please return to:
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