

Paradox of Tribal Development: A Case of Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu & Kashmir (India)

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Abstract

The greatest challenge that the Government of India has been facing since independence is the proper provision of social justice to the scheduled tribes, by ameliorating their socio-economic conditions. Scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and denotified tribes constitute the weakest section of India's population, from the social, economic and educational angles. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. Development of tribal population has been a major concern of the nation builders, central and state governments, policy makers, non-government organizations, social scientists, social reformers etc. we have constitutional provisions for social, economic, educational, political, administrative, health and sanitational achievements of the tribal people of our nation. Since our independence various policies, strategies, approaches and models to tribal development have been conceived. From the very beginning of the 1st five years plan to the present 12th five years plan, a number of programmes of tribal development have been formulated and implement. Billions and billions of rupees have been spent in the name of tribal development. But most of the programmes have either failed or could not yield result up to the expectation. In this paper an attempt has been made to access and evaluate the impact of various developmental programmes on the socio-economic transformation of the transhumant tribals of Jammu & Kashmir. The

study was conducted among the Gujjars and Bakarwals of district Anantnag. For this study data from both primary as well as secondary sources was used. The study reveals that inspite of the implementation of various policies and programmes for their development by the state and central governments, these tribals continue to live in pathetic conditions.

Key words: Tribal Development, Gujjars & Bakarwals, Developmental Programmes

1. Introduction

Development is a composite term, which includes various aspects of human activities such as socio-economic, political or technical point of view. Generally, sociologists and social anthropologists strongly believe that socio-cultural factors are integral part of the dynamics of growth and change. United Nations Development Programme measures human development by combining indicators of gross domestic product per capita, adjusted for local purchasing power; life expectancy at birth; adult literacy and the number of persons enrolled in educational institutions. Sociologists and anthropologists do not accept just economic approach to development. Over the decades, sociologists and anthropologists have been constantly engaged in the various areas of development studies.

Mathur (1976) says that they are best equipped to help planners in dealing with the development problems of the poor.

Anthropological studies in India are more among the tribal communities. The special emphasis given on scheduled tribes by the government of India further led anthropologists to concentrate more on the problems of tribals. Their attention is mostly drawn towards various socio-cultural aspects of tribals and problems of welfare. Three main schools of thought with regard to the approach towards tribals in India i.e., isolation, assimilation and integration are well known. Integration has been continuing as the policy for the tribal people in the country. The government of India has been taking special care concerning the welfare of the tribal people ever since independence. During pre-British period, the tribal communities in India remained fully or partially isolated from others in the country, and they remained backward. The British policy of isolation increased the misery of the tribal communities. The founders of Indian constitution seriously considered about the miserable conditions of the tribals who were segregated from the national mainstream and provided for special measures towards them.

Over six decades of independence witnessed the arrival of various committee reports dealing with socio-economic situations of the tribal population, and evaluation of the functioning of development agencies and their policies. Based on their reports, new strategies, initiatives and approaches came into existence for the development of tribals. Consequently, efforts were made in successive five-year plans to uplift the poor tribals living in our country. In spite of all these efforts, desired results have not been achieved. There are several other constraints, which hamper the tribal development process in India. Therefore, tribal development studies continue to receive attention from various scholars.

2. Tribes in Jammu & Kashmir

The constitution of Jammu and Kashmir has notified twelve communities as the scheduled tribes. Eight communities--- Balti, Beda, Bot, Brookpa, Changpa, Garra, Mon and Purigpa, among them were given this status in 1989; And Bakarwals, Gujjars, Gaddis and Sippis were notified as the scheduled tribes vide the constitution (scheduled tribes) order (Amendment) Act, 1991.

All the twelve scheduled tribes were enumerated officially for the first time during the census 2001, recording the population of 1,105,979. The scheduled tribes account for 10.9 per cent of the total population of the state and 1.3 per cent of the tribal population of the country. Most of these tribes are found in Ladakh region of the state. However, the Gujjar and Bakarwal tribes are mostly concentrated in the districts of Poonch, Rajuri and Khtua of the Jammu province and in Kashmir valley they are mostly found in Anantnag, Baramulla, Pulwama, Kulgam and Kupwara districts. Like the other parts of the country majority of the tribal population in the state is living in pathetic conditions. They are lacking the basic facilities of food, shelter, health care, education etc. most of the tribal hamlets in the farflung areas are yet to be electrified and are without road connectivity. On the name of tribal development millions of rupees are spent every year, different policies and programmes are framed but on the gross root level the situation remains unchanged. The present study provides an overview of some of the developmental programmes being carried out among the tribals and an anatomy of the ground situation.

3. Objectives of the study

The basic objectives of this study are (i) To examine and evaluate the impact of various state run developmental programmes on the Gujjar & Bakarwal tribals. (ii) To assess the awareness about the different welfare programmes among these tribals.

4. Material and Methods

The paper is based on data collected from five tribal villages of district Anantnag. A sample survey of 125 randomly selected households

from five tribal villages belonging to three Tehsils of district Anantnag was conducted. In the selected settlements data was collected with the help of a structured interview schedule.

Table 1: Villages Selected for Sample Survey

Tehsil Name	Villages Selected	Actual		Surveyed	
		Population	Households	Population	Households
Anantnag	a) Chakilpora	2640	440	227	35
	b) Gadwail	1155	185	221	30
Duru	a) Harigaws	978	167	161	25
Phalgam	a) ForestBlock	810	129	144	20
	b)Awoora	422	78	136	15
TOTAL		6005	999	889	125

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Development of Gujjars & Bakarwals of Jammu & Kashmir

The development of backward areas in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has been a top priority. Even in 1966, efforts were made to identify the border community development blocks for special treatment because of their peculiar problems and locations. On the recommendation of various teams that visited different parts of the state from time to time, several economically backward areas were identified in 1966 for special attention in the budget allocations. On the recommendations of various committees constituted from time to time, special sub-plans were drawn up for some of the identified bad pockets. The planning department also made special allocations for the implementation of these plans in 1977-78. The government doubled the plan outlays for the various identified bad pockets/ backward districts in comparison to 1976-77. The plan outlay for Anantnag district was Rs. 345 lakhs in 1977-78. Keeping in view these specific problems, the government set up an Advisory Board for the development of Gujjars and Bakarwals in 1974.

During the 7th Five Year Plan attempts were made to ameliorate the lot of these communities

by raising literacy levels, opening mobile schools, grant of scholarship, construction of hostels, supply of books and reimbursement of examination fee.

Besides these, other schemes aimed for their socio-economic advancement such as housing subsidy, development of housing colonies, construction of shopping complexes etc. Against the approved outlay of Rs. 750 lakhs in the seventh plan, the anticipated expenditure was Rs. 961.76 lakhs¹⁶. The proposals for the developments of this community include:

- 1) Development of pastures and grazing land in sub-tropical, temperate and alpine pastures, for which a provision of Rs. 161 lakh has been proposed.
- 2) 100 percent coverage of students from this community under scholarship scheme.
- 3) Extension of the scheme supply of books and uniform to students up to 5th class.
- 4) Construction of girls hostel at Jammu and two transit halts at Srinagar and Jammu.
- 5) Opening of mobile dispensary for migratory grazers etc.

In 1989, eight backward communities of the Ladakh region of the state were granted the status of scheduled tribes, which was further extended to the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities of Jammu and Kashmir provinces in 1991.

However, the members of Gujjar & Bakarwal communities feel that granting of S.T. status has not helped them at all. Paradoxical as it may seem, the number of Gujjar & Bakarwal legislators has actually gone down after the communities were accorded the scheduled tribe status. The leaders of these communities referred that the reservation, which they are entitled to, in various departments is availed by the influential upper class only and the benefits have failed to percolate to the grass root level. Except a few bureaucrats and technocrats, the employed Gujjars & Bakarwals are mostly working on menial inconsequential posts.

5.2 Evaluation and Assessment Of Special Development Programs

Any development programme initiated for the alleviation of poverty and socio-economic underdevelopment cannot achieve the desired objectives, unless it is effectively implemented. The past experience shows that the benefits of all the poverty alleviation schemes have not yielded the desired results. In fact the benefits have not reached the concerned population. The success or failure of any development strategy largely depends on its effective implementation, rather than its mere introduction. A poorly organized programme is bound to prove a flop despite its massive investment because it gives rise to a number of inefficiencies, viz., slow and poor decision, lack of co-ordination of activities, poor specification of duties, corruption and conflict among the members.

An attempt has been made in this section to assess the implementation of the special programme schemes at the grass root level and examine its role in eradicating the poverty and socio-economic backwardness:

5.2.1. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

Among various developmental programmes, the IRDP may be regarded as the core one for the development of rural areas.

IRDP was first programme of its kind which was in the country in 1978-79. It has provided assistance to rural poor in the form of subsidy and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through successive plan periods. Subsequently, Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Supply of Improved Tools Kit for Rural Artisans (SITRA) etc. were introduced as sub-programmes of IRDP to take care of the specific needs to the rural population.

The sample survey conducted in the villages indicates that the people of the area did not know about these state and central government poverty alleviation programmes. Table given below depicts that only 28 percent households selected for the survey had knowledge of various IRDP/ Special Area Programme schemes, while the rest of the households had not heard about any such scheme existing in the area. This indicates very poor performance of implementation agencies, as the schemes were not adequately advised. Although the government agencies claim to have carried house to house survey for the proper identification of target groups, yet the results from the survey did not substantiate their claims.

The actual beneficiaries from the schemes were only 9.6 percent households. These households were from Chakilpora, Gadwail and Harigawas villages. The other two villages did not record any beneficiary from the selected households. Of the total of 12 beneficiaries, 4 had received loan for retail trade and other 8 for sheep and goat rearing. Respondents receiving loan under retail trade activity were not satisfied with the existing level of financial assistance.

As such low-grade assets were purchased. Then they had discontinued the activity owing to the losses incurred. The beneficiaries receiving loan for goat and sheep rearing had received money for the purchase of animals.

About 80 percent of the cost for the purchase of assets was received as loan and subsidy, while the rest 20 percent was borrowed from intermediaries, such as butchers. The survey indicated that the financial assistance received was inadequate, because of which, beneficiaries could not establish economically viable units, and could not purchase standard quality assets.

The low- grade assets resulted in no or low-income generation. Thus the inadequacies of the implementation have defeated the basic purpose of the schemes.

Table 2. Beneficiaries of Special Central/State Schemes

Total Households Selected for Survey	125	Percentage to Total Selected Sample
Households having knowledge Of these schemes	35	28.0%
Households actually drawn Loans	12	9.6%
Purpose of Loan/Subsidy		Percentage to Total Beneficiaries
1)Retail Trade	4	33.3%
2)Goat and sheep Rearing	8	66.6%

Source: Field survey

The results of the survey pinpoints complete failure of the scheme's objectives envisaged for the backward areas. The following points will highlight the problems:

- a. Large-scale disparities in the provision of benefits though these schemes exist, as most of inaccessible, remote areas are not sufficiently covered under the schemes. In fact the purposes of the schemes are defeated, as these far-flung and inaccessible areas require these schemes more than the other areas.
- b. Proper identification of the target group is the basic pre-requisite for achieving the objectives of the schemes. The identification was not done properly as most of the households were unaware of the schemes. Even if the identification was done, the beneficiaries identified were not strictly

according to the norms. This indicates negligence and malpractice of programme functionaries.

- c. The impact of the assistance on income generation largely depends on the economic viability of the development scheme. Non-viability of the scheme was the chief constraint faced by the beneficiaries. The goat and sheep beneficiaries reported that instead of 10 ewes, a minimum of 40 ewes should have been supplied to reap the economies of scale.
- d. The financial assistance given is inadequate, thereby qualitative and standard assets are not purchased. Some beneficiaries end up borrowing money for the purchase of assets, which they have to repay at higher interest rates, resulting in more burdens on the beneficiaries.

- e. Most of the respondents stated corruption, red-tapism, nepotism, political influence and non-cooperation of government officials as the main cause for non-availability/inadequacy of grant of loans/subsidy.
- f. 68% respondents reported that their applications were rejected as they could not provide the necessary bribe to the officials, while 23% reported that sanctioning the loan/subsidy is very lengthy, cumbersome and complicated.
- g. One of the major causes of the failure was reported as non-availability of necessary raw material, feeds and fodder for the purchases of assets. Moreover, lack of proper medical care and guidance for follow up assistance was also stated to be the stumbling block in the programmes, success. Corruption was reported to be the main cause, as the respondents do not receive the full amount in hand for the purchase of assets.
- h. The granting of Scheduled Tribe status in 1991 to Bakarwals and Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir, has not achieved any significant objectives to uplift the community. The job reservation, both at the state and centre level, could be fruitful only, if educational standard of the community is improved. Moreover, representation of this community in the elected bodies and institutions would provide the required confidence to the community.

Keeping the above considerations in view the schemes have not delivered the desired results and hence implementation of the scheme needs immediate revamping.

5.2.2. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work. The Central government outlay for scheme is Rs. 40,000 crore in financial year 2010-11. This act was introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living in rural India, whether or not they are below the poverty line. Around one-third of the stipulated work force is women.

The law was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed on 2 October 2009. The sample survey conducted in the villages indicates that the percentage of actual beneficiaries of this programme is low (27.2%) as the table given below depicts. Among 125 surveyed households only 34 were reported have got actually benefitted by this programme. In Chakilpora 31.4% of the surveyed families have been recorded have got work under MNREGA. Similarly in Gadwail 23.3%, in Harigawas 24% and in ForestBlock 25% and Awoora about 33% of the total surveyed families have been reported have actually got benefitted by this scheme.

Table 4 Beneficiaries of MNREGA in the Surveyed Villages

Village Name	No. of Benefitted Households	Percentage (%)
Chakilpora	11	31.4
Gadwail	7	23.3
Harigawas	6	24.0
ForestBlock	5	25.0
Awoora	5	33.3
TOTAL	34	27.2

4.2.3. Indira Awaz Yojana (IAY)

Initiated in 1985-86, Indira Awaz Yojana (IAY) is the core programme for providing free housing to families in rural areas, targets S.C and S.T households and free bonded labourers.

With a view of meeting the housing needs of the rural poor. IAY was launched as a sub-scheme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana. It is being implemented as an independent scheme since 1st Jan 1996.

It aiming at helping below poverty line (BPL) rural households belonging to S.Cs and S.T.s, free bonded labourers, widows or next kin of defense personnel, ex-service man and retired members of the parliamentary forces and also non-tribal rural poor by providing them with grand-in –aid for construction of new dwelling units. The assistance ceiling for each house in plain area is fixed at Rs 20,000 and for hill and difficult areas as Rs 22,000. The funds under IAY are shared between centre and state in the ratio of 75:25.

Table 4.2 Beneficiaries of IAY in the Surveyed Villages

Name of Village	Chakilpora	Gadwail	Harigawas	Forest Block	Awoora	TOTAL
Beneficiaries with %	6 (17.14)	4 (13.33)	6 (24.0)	4 (16.0)	3 (20.0)	23 (18.4)

Source: Field survey

Bakarwals being pastoral nomads are the most desirable persons to be benefitted by this scheme. But unfortunately, during the survey conducted in the selected villages it came to our notice, that very less percentage of households had actually got benefitted by this scheme. The table given below reveals that In Chakilpora, 17.14% of total surveyed households have got government assistance in construction of houses under this (IAY) scheme.

Similarly in Gadwail only 13.33%, In Harigawas the highest 24% of households were recorded who have got by this scheme. In ForestBlock a total of 16% total surveyed households and in Awoora 20% of families have been recorded during the survey who have got financial assistance from the government for the construction of houses. Thus on the whole, out of 125 serveyed households from 5 villages only 18.4% have received government help in the construction of permanent dwelling. However, higher levels of corruption on the part of administrators and the concerned officials have been reported in the all five villages.

The researcher was informed that village heads together with the village level workers (VLW) are the main players who decide the whole game. They are openly charging their part from the beneficiaries, also in the selection of families their will plays an important role. In order to get them convinced these poor people are arranging handsome gifts for them. Also in most of the cases the beneficiaries have been identified as the relatives, friends or neighbors of the village heads.

6. Conclusion

The development of the tribal population in India has been a major concern of the government, voluntary agencies, NGOs, social reformers, social scientists etc. But even after six decades we are no nearer to the solution of the problem. Rather, things appear to be more muddled than before. Schemes after schemes have been conceived and implemented. Most of them have failed. In most cases the tribal life has worsened. What went wrong? Where did it go wrong? Is our definition of development at fault? Our perception of the problem is erroneous?

The programmes we have conceived and implemented are at variance with the target we have set? Do we have a target at all? I think all these have contributed their mite to the muddle. We are unable to find a single statement as regards the strategy of tribal development in India. No policy paper exists on this important subject, though millions of rupees have already been spent in the name of tribal development.

Note: The Primary data used in this study was basically collected for M.Phil dissertation entitled,

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