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Economic empowerment of tribes of Bastar

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Abstract

The tribes of Bastar district depends on natural resources. Partly they do forming and rest of the time the collect forest products. Their life style and living standard is not satisfactory. Aiming to reform in education, skill development Central and State Government have lunched many welfare schemes, providing financial support for their education, good health, agriculture and for good future.

Key Words: Tribes of Bastar, Health, Education, Inclusive Growth

Introduction

Having an identity as ‘SAL VANO KA DWIP’ (Island of Sal tree forest) Bastar district is situated in southern part of Chhattisgarh, is the 26th state of India. Having a small land area of 3971 sq km covered with the natural beauty, forest resources and mineral reserves and wild animals. Naturally all living things do some activities for their earnings and people always do something includes a variety of work like reading, writing painting etc which gives only pleasure. But whenever the aim is changed and it has an aim of earning for livelihood is called profession. In the reference of improvement of this situation is called economic activities and for Bastar range these activities are very important.

Indrāvati is the largest river in this region, rises from Dongarla hill of Kalahandi district of Orissa and flows across Naranpur, Dantewada and Bijapur district and finally joins the Godawari River. It covers near about 372 km distance, so the entire rural, hilly and forest terrain of the Bastar district depends on this river.

After independence in undivided Bastar district the tribe those live in dense forest and in the hilly areas are depends on hunting of wild animals and transferable agriculture for their livelihood. These tribes have a special culture, dialogue, customs, sacraments or rituals. They are called backward class in comparison of educated class, but they have a separate and special quality of identity. Forest and forest products play an important role in their economic activities.

Shape of the activity- Weekly market is the main point of their economical activities where they used to sell their collected forest product and purchase their basic commodities to fulfil their both end needs. Weekly market is not only the place of transaction but also a center of social communications. The day of market is celebrated as festival among the tribes in these areas.

Barter system is still enforced in these there due to lack of means of communication and transportations.

Except agriculture the tribes also use to collect forest products and firewood to meet their needs. Their standard of life is very poor even they hardly know how to count things. They used only one to twenty numbers and the number is called ‘kaudi’ means ‘twenty’.

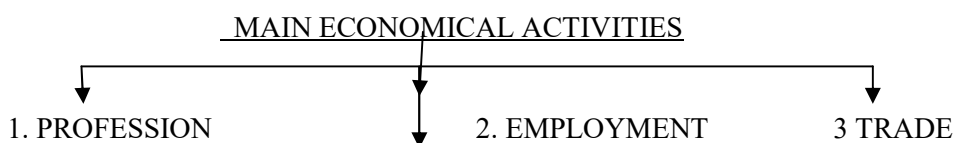
They have invented their own weighing system, measured by ‘Paili & Soli’; a Paili means near about 1.800 kgs and twenty Paili means a ‘Khandi’.

Habitually they belong to a single family and earn for themselves. Agriculture and collection of forest products are their main business and each and every member has to work. Even a physically disable person have to work according to his conveniences.

Elderly people usually weave ‘fish-net’ while women used to go to market for selling breakfast like Bara, Bobo, Bhajia etc. made up of rise flour and grams.

Now-a-days ‘Polai’ system is elevated and very popular among the tribes in Halbi – Bhatri belt of Bastar district. In this system after cutting the crops the poor and helpless people brings chicken, duck, pigeon and fruits including other things according to their status as a gift for the land owner. The land owner accepts those gifts and later gives refund (more than accepted by them) with lots of love.

Giving gift is called ‘Polai lana’ and getting it back by the poor is called ‘Polai dena’ which is an unmatched co-operative multipurpose social life style system among the tribes.



Handicraft is very famous among the tribes as manual skills are:-

1. Clay or ceramic craft,
2. Metal craft,
3. Bamboo craft,
4. Thread craft,
5. Wooden craft,
6. Leather work art

Due to lack of irrigation facilities or system tribes have to depend upon rains; forced to grow single crop. In lack of vocational training centers and any kind of industries they have to depend on forest products, which they used to collect and sold to the co-operative society formed by the government. In the absence of employment tribes in these areas are facing very hard time.

Though, for the development of tribes government has launched many schemes like PM Mudra Yojana and National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) which are helping tribes for generating self employment to raise their income in a big way. Meanwhile, government is also provides scholarship to ST students from primary classes to Ph. D for studies.

Facts and Findings

1. The tribes of Bastar district depends upon natural resources. Partially they do farming and rest of the time the collect forest products for their livelihood. Amidst all their life style and standard of living is not satisfactory. For economic development of the tribes Government must declared supporting price of forest products and should arrange market for those products.
2. Reform in education system, skill development programmes are the need of the time in these areas.
3. Government should launch skill development programme in the tribal areas for upliftment of the tribes.
4. Government should provide employments under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission in these areas.
5. For protection and support of the 'Ghadva' arts and 'Thread art work' of tribes, government should open showrooms across the district which will also help in increasing incomes of the tribes.



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