

TRIBAL ECONOMY OF JHARKHAND : CRYING ON ITS PITEOUS POSITION

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Abstract : *Jharkhand has got a heterogeneous population dominated by the tribal population. The main reason for formation of Jharkhand as a state was to improve the condition of the tribals living in this area. However, there has not been much improvement in the condition of the tribals even today. Around 40.8 percent of total population and 51.6 percent of schedule tribes in rural Jharkhand still live below poverty line which is much higher than the all India figure of 25.7 percent and 45.3 percent respectively. The literacy rate among the rural tribe is 57.1 percent which for India is 59 percent (Census 2011). The infant mortality rate of schedule tribes in rural Jharkhand is 93 per 1000 live births which is much higher than the all India figure of 62 per 1000 live births. It may be mentioned that there was no neglect about and the issues concerning tribal development was brought into the centre of agenda immediately after independence. But over sixty years of planned development has not bridged the gap between tribal and non-tribal communities. There special case of context specific culture and kinship based land ownership was largely ignored (Guha 1999). This has led to widespread displacement of the tribals from their land due to large scale industrialization projects and deterioration in their economic condition. Overall it may be concluded that central Indian tribals including those in Jharkhand are lagging behind in all aspects of development and 65 years of planned economy has not been able to bridge the gap.*

Keywords:- *Economy, development, livelihood, deforestation & migration and strategic planning.*

Introduction :

Jharkhand was constituted on 15th Nov. 2000 as 28th, State of India. It is known for its natural resources, minerals, cultural speciality and diversity of tribes. It is also called “Ruhr of India” for greatest stock of coal. Jharkhand is bordered by the states of Bihar to the north, Orissa to the south, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh to the west and West Bengal to the east. It has a population of 32.99 million (2011) consisting 26.2% tribals. Jharkhand has 32 types of tribal communities. It has 24 districts, 212 blocks and 33,816 villages. Literacy rate of Jharkhand is 66.41%. Jharkhand is playing a lead role in the output of coal, mica, copper, kyanite, china clay, fire clay, etc. It has around 40% minerals stock of whole country. This state is also blessed with nature and natural resources. 29.61% geographical area of Jharkhand is covered by forest. Collection of forest produces like Mahua, Kendu leaf, Pithore, Karanj, Char, Shakhua Flower etc. are one of the main sources of survival of poor people in Jharkhand.

Jharkhand at a Glance :

Agriculture, Forest Products, Hunting, Wage Labour are the main source of livelihood of rural peoples of Jharkhand. There is a presence of backwardness in the agriculture, education, health, power, road and other infrastructure sectors. It is said that Jharkhand is a rich state of poor people.

Table-1
Jharkhand at a glance.

	2011	2001
Total population (Appx)	3.3 crore	2.69 crore
Actual population	32,988,134	26,945,829
Male	16,930,315	13,885,037
Female	16,057,819	13,060,792
Population growth of India	22.42%	23.19%
Sex ratio	948	941
Density /Km ²	414	338
Literacy rate	66.41%	53.56%
Male literacy	76.84%	67.30%
Female Literacy	55.42%	38.87%

Source : Compiled by the research from census 2000 & census 2011.

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Table – 2

District wise population Rural and Urban population, literacy rate of Jharkhand (2001)

Sl. No.	Districts	Population	Rural Population	Urban Population	Literacy Rate
1.	Ranchi	27,85,064	18,07,243	9,77,821	65.69
2.	Dhanbad	23,97,102	11,41,744	12,55,358	67.49
3.	Hazaribagh	22,77,475	17,48,406	5,29,069	58.05
4.	Palamu	20,98,359	19,73,266	1,25,093	45.67
5.	W. Singhbhum	20,82,795	17,31,897	3,50,898	50.70
6.	E. Singhbhum	19,82,988	8,91,784	10,91,204	69.42
7.	Giridih	19,04,430	17,82,066	1,22,364	45.16
8.	Bokaro	17,77,662	9,73,005	8,04,657	62.98
9.	Dumka	17,59,602	16,44,690	1,14,912	48.31
10.	Gumla	13,46,767	12,73,025	73,762	52.35
11.	Deoghar	11,65,390	10,05,539	1,59,851	50.53
12.	Godda	10,47,939	10,10,931	37,008	43.73
13.	Garhwa	10,35,464	9,92,825	42,639	39.39
14.	Sahebgunj	9,27,770	8,29,639	98,131	37.91
15.	Chatra	7,91,434	7,49,414	42,020	43.35
16.	Pakur	7,01,664	6,65,635	36,029	30.54
17.	Koderma	4,99,403	4,12,654	86,749	52.73
18.	Lohardaga	3,64,521	3,18,325	46,196	53.97
19.	Jharkhand State	2,69,45,829	2,09,52,088	59,93,741	53.60

(Source : Jharkhand Ek Adhyayan, Dr. Bupal Kumar Mahto, Pratiyogita Sahitya, Edition 2006, Page no. 92, 94)

According to table 1 & 2, Jharkhand population is 2,69,45,829 consisting 2,09,52,088 rural population and 59,93, 741 urban population i.e., 20.95 million peoples of Jharkhand reside in rural areas. This population has increased from 2.69 crores to 3.3 crores for 2001 to 2011. The population growth is 22.42% in one decade i.e. from 2001 to 2011. Jharkhand economy is mainly based on agriculture. Its main reason is low urbanization. Districts having high rural population, nearly 80% peoples of those districts are engaged in agriculture. Only East Singhbhum and Dhanbad districts having higher urban population than rural population. Around 77.76% Jharkhand population reside in 33,816 villages. Jharkhand is also a backward state in terms of education Literacy rate of Jharkhand is only 53.6% which is 11.24% lower than the national literacy rate (64.84%). Dhanbad, Ranchi and Bokaro districts having higher literacy rate than other districts as per census 2001. Literacy rate has increased from 53.56% to 66.41% from census 2001 to census 2011.

Jharkhand state has plenty of natural resources specially minerals and forest, despite of this it is a matter of concern that 77.76% people reside in rural areas, 80% peoples are dependent on agriculture and around 23.22 lakh families are living below the poverty line.

Tribes of Jharkhand:

Jharkhand is a land of tribals since ancient times. Jharkhand is known for diversity of tribes. Presently, Jharkhand has 32 types of tribal communities. They are Asur, Baiga, Banjara, Bathudi, Bedia, Binjhia, Birhor, Birjia, Chero, Chik Bariak, Gond, Gorait, Ho, Karmali, Kharwar, Khond, Kisan, Kora, Korwa, Lohra, Mahli, Mal Paharia, Munda, Oraon, Parhiya, Santhal, Sauria Paharia, Savar, Bhumij, Kol, Kawar and Kharia, of which 8 tribes have been kept in the category of primitive tribal groups. They are Asur, Birhor, Korwa, Birjia, Mal Paharia, Sauria Paharia, Parhiya and Savar (Hil Kharia). Tribal population of Jharkhand was 26.3% in 2001 and 26.2% in 2011 of the total population. It becomes clear from Table-2 and Table-3.

Table – 3

Schedule Tribe Population in Jharkhand at a glance.

	2011	2001
Total population	70,87,068	86,45,042
Male population	35,65,960	43,15,407
Female population	35,21,108	43,29,635
Sex ratio rural	989	1003
Urban Total	965	1007
% of ST to total population of Rural area	23.9%	23.4%
Urban	2.4%	2.8%
Total	26.3%	26.2%
Rural Population		78,68,150
Urban Population		7,76,892

Source : Compiled by the research from census 2000 & census 2011.

Table – 4

List of Districts more than 50% ST in Jharkhand census 2011.

District	Total population	S.T. Population	% of ST to total population
Khunti	5,31,885	3,89,626	73.3
Simdega	5,9,578	4,24,407	708%
Gumla	10,25,213	7,06,754	68.9%
West Singhbhum	15,02,338	10,11,296	67.3%
Lohardaga	4,61,790	2,62,734	56.9%

Source : Data compiled by researcher from different website census 2011.

Table – 5

Growth Rate of Total Population and Tribal Population of Jharkhand at Different Census

Sl. No.	Census Year	Total Population	Growth in Percentage	Total Population of tribals	Growth in Percentage
1.	1961	1,07,36,428	—	45,32,342	—
2.	1971	1,42,28,238	32.52	45,69,880	8.28
3.	1981	1,75,85,661	23.59	53,19,370	16.61
4.	1991	2,18,48,860	24.25	60,44,010	13.42
5.	2001	2,69,45,829	23.32	70,87,068	17.30
6.	2011	3,29,88,134	22.42	86,45,042	22.00

(Source: Jharkhand Land and People, V.N. P. Sinha and L.K. P. Singh, Rajesh Publications, Edition 2013, Page No. 212).

As per table no. 3 Jharkhand has 70,87,068 (26.37%) tribal population consisting 35,65,960 males and 35,21,108 females in Census 2011 where as in 2001 the total population of tribal is 86,45,042, consisting 43,15,407 males and 43,29,635 female. Table-3 reveals uneven distribution of tribal population. According to number of tribal population Ranchi district has got the first position with highest concentration of tribals (11.64 lakh) whereas in terms of percentage of tribal population to district population, West Singhbhum has highest percentage i.e., 65.36% of the total West Singhbhum population are tribals. Uneven distribution of tribal population can be seen in Table-2. It shows that only Ranchi (11.64 lakh), West Singhbhum (8.06 lakh), East Singhbhum (5.52 lakh), Dumka (4.95 lakh), Simdega (3.60 lakh) and Pakur (3.12 lakh) have nearly 50% tribals of the total tribal population of the state. Koderma and Chatra have lowest concentration of tribals, 4,067 thousands and 30,384 thousands only.

In the table-5 growth rate of total population and tribal population of the state at different census has been shown. It reveals that growth rate of tribal population is comparatively lower than the non-tribal population. In the decade 1961-71, growth rate of Jharkhand population was 32.52% whereas tribal growth was only 8.28%. During 1971-81 population increased by 23.59% and tribal growth was recorded 16.61%.

In the decade 1981-91, population of the Jharkhand increased by 24.25% and tribal growth was registered only 13.42%. Similarly, during the decade 1991-01 population of the state has registered an increase of 23.32% whereas tribal population has increased by 17.3% which is lower by 6%. Table-5 also shows unbalanced growth rate of state population and tribal population. It becomes clear from table-5 that tribal population is increasing but growth rate is not satisfactory in comparison to growth of non-tribal population. It is pertinent to point out that in 2011 the growth rate has decreased from 23.32% in 2001 to 22.42% in 2011 where as the growth rate of tribal population has increased from 17.30% in 2001 to 20.0% in 2011.

The main reasons of slow growth of tribals are that nearly 94% tribes reside in rural areas. The other factors being low literacy rate, more dependency on forest produces and agriculture, lack of basic amenities facilities, lack of medical facilities etc. Most of the tribal people of Jharkhand live in rural areas which are hilly, remote and forestry. They live at the peak of mountains specially primitive tribes. They like to live a solitary and mild life. All tribes have their own religious rituals, conventions, customs, family clan, birth and death beliefs etc. They live a simple life. Tribes of Jharkhand are simple and innocent. According to Census 2001, literacy rate of the tribal population is 40.7% which is 12.9% lower than the literacy rate of Jharkhand (53.6%) and 6.4% below than the all tribals literacy rate at a national level (47.1%). Literacy rate is found too lower in primitive tribal groups. Forest is the lifeline of tribals in Jharkhand. They collect forest fruits, roots, leafs, flowers etc. Sale of forest produces is the source of livelihood of tribals. They hunt wild animals. Tribes of Jharkhand are skilled in trapping wild animals. But due to deforestation, availability of forest produces have declined. This is an alarming sign for existence of a number of tribals specially those who spend whole day in the gathering of forest produces and hunting wild animals. Agriculture is an important source of livelihood of tribals. Due to lack of resources, irrigation facilities, conventional method of agriculture and monsoon based agriculture etc, they do not grow sufficient quantity of crop. Tribes do labour work in those months in which they do not get involved in agricultural work. Labour work is also a main occupation of some tribes.

They do not have proper house, drinking water, school, healthcare, road and other important facilities. Tribes of Jharkhand live in comfortless society. They are far away from the advantage of development. Population of primitive tribal groups (PTGs) are declining. They are struggling for existence and they are on the verge of extinct specially Birhor primitive tribe, which is a matter of anxiety. This could be shown in the following table-6.

Table – 6

Population of Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) of Jharkhand from 1961 to 2001.

Sl. No.	Name of PTGs	Population				
		1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
1.	Asur	5,819	7,026	7,783	9,623	9,094

2.	Birhor	2,438	3,461	4,377	8,083	6,535
3.	Birjia	4,029	3,628	4,057	6,191	5,443
4.	Hill Kharia	1,08,983	1,27,002	1,41,771	1,51,634	16,25
5.	Korwa	21,162	18,717	21,994	24,871	24,027
6.	Mal Pahariya	45,423	48,636	79,322	86,790	60,783
7.	Parhiya	12,268	14,651	24,012	30,421	13,848
8.	Sauria Pahariya	55,605	59,047	39,269	48,761	61,121
9.	Savar	1,561	3,548	3,014	4,264	9,904

(Source: www.tribal.nic.in and Jharkhand Ki Janjatiyan, Dr. Vimla Charan Sharma & Kirti Vikram, Crown Publication, Edition 2006, Page no. 452).

Economy of Tribes :

Tribal economy is not confined to one source rather it is based on several sources. Tribes are dependent upon more than one source for livelihood. The main sources of economy of tribes in Jharkhand are as follows:-

- (a) **Agriculture :-** Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of tribes in Jharkhand. Tribes are involved in agriculture like Santhal, Oraon, Munda, Banjara, Bedia, Binjhia, Birjia, Ho, Kanwar, Parhiya and Savar etc. They mainly grow Paddy, Maize, Wheat, Marua, Kurthi, Gondhali, Pulses and Vegetables. But they do not have proper agricultural land, irrigation facilities, agricultural tools and fertilizers etc. They use conventional method of agriculture. They do not grow crops in adequate quantity. This is due to lack of necessary means and knowledge. So, tribes of Jharkhand are also dependent on other sources for livelihood. Oraon tribes are good agriculturist and they are mainly situated in the west of Jharkhand. They are also expert in producing vegetables and other cash crops.
- (b) **Forest Produces :-** Forest produces are backbone of tribal economy. Collection of forest produces like Mahua, Tendu leaves, Khukhdi, Bahera, Gungu leaves, Pithore, Honey, Wax, Herbs etc. are also the main source of livelihood of tribes specially primitive tribes. They use forest produces for food and some tribes sell these produces in local market for money. Due to deforestation availability of forest produces has decreased. Mahua and Tendu leaves are main sources of income of tribes who reside in forest or near forest.
- (c) **Hunting :-** Tribes of Jharkhand also need to hunt for food and livelihood. Trapping and hunting wild animals are the main occupation of some tribes specially Birhors. They hunt monkey, rabbit, sahi, deer, kharha and birds etc. They are skilled in hunting. They use net and shore for hunting. Hunting plays an important role in tribal economy.
- (d) **Fishing :-** Some tribes have adopted fishing as a sub occupation such as Asur, Bedia, Bhumij, Baiga, Ho, Karmali, Kharia, and Oraon etc. Generally they do fishing for food. But when they catch excess fish then they sell it for some money. They use net, fish hook and fishing line for catching fish. They make these means themselves. Fisheries is an important source of earning. It supports economy of tribes. Now this occupation is in the verge of distinct as the farmers are using pesticides and fertilizers.
- (e) **Livestock :-** Livestock is also a means of livelihood. Many tribes have adopted it as a sub profession. They mainly rear Goat, Pig, Hen, Rabbit, Duck, Sheep, Pigeon, Ox, Buffalo and Cow etc. Number of cattle depends upon financial position of tribes. Some tribes rear livestock for food, customs and ceremonies and some tribes rear for sale. They sell them in local market and earn some money. It also supports tribal economy. Tribes who are involved in the animal husbandry work are Asur, Banjara, Baiga, Chick Bariak, Birjia, Kharwar, Sauria Paharia, Kora, Kisan, Mal Paharia, Santhal, Munda and Oraon etc. They mostly preferred to rear low cost livestock such as goat, pig, hen etc. Because, they are not able to maintain fodder or grazing, treatment and other facilities. This livestock is the emergency money. Mainly they sell their livestock in festivals, marriage and any other incidents or in emergency. Livestocks are emergency money for tribes.
- (f) **Labour Work :-** Almost all tribes do labour work. When they are not farming, they do labour work. Wage labour is a main sub occupation of tribals. They work as a labour in farms, mines, factories, hotels, brick-kins and road construction etc. They also do works like rickshaw pulling in towns, stone cutting and bidi rolling etc. Mainly they do labour work in near towns or states, but they also go far away in search of work/employment. In off session after completion of agriculture work, they migrates to other nearby states in search of work.
- (g) **House Hold Industries :-** House Hold Industries (HHI) is an important source of tribal economy. Some tribes like Birjia, Birhor, Baiga, Mal Paharia, Chik Barail, Gorait, Lohra, Asur and Karmali are involved in HHI. HHI like blacksmith, rope making, basket making, weaving cloths, mats, pots, sikia, cot, pattal, door-frame and countenance etc. They are skilled in making these goods and mainly use raw materials of forest. Forest is a lifeblood for tribals.

Thus, tribal economy of Jharkhand is not based on one source but is a mixture of several means.

Tribal Problems :

Tribes of Jharkhand are backward from the social and economic point of view. They have less significant transformation in their society till now. For this, following problems are perceptible :-

- Most of the tribes live at the peak of mountains, forests, hilly and remote area and they do not have any basic facilities.
- Tribes do agriculture work for livelihood but they do not grow sufficient crops because they use traditional method and means of cultivation, they do not have agricultural land, equipment, irrigation and other necessary facilities.
- Forest produces and wild animals are also important sources of tribal economy but due to heavy deforestation, illegal cutting of forest and hunting wild animals; availability of forest produces and wild animals has been decreased. This is not a good sign for tribals.
- They are under the burden of debt and are exploited by money lenders.
- Tribes believe in ghost and witchcraft. Superstition is present in their society till now.
- They like to live a mild life in forest and hilly areas. Till today, no roads have been build which is connected to their villages. So, there is a problem of basic communication.
- They have lowest level of literacy rate and they are facing problem of unemployment.

- Most of their villages are affected by terrorism which is one of the major reason for under development.
- They are not aware vis-à-vis development programmes run by the government. They are far away from the advantage of development programmes.
- More than 90% of tribals of Jharkhand live in remote areas. A major part of them sleep hungry and they are suffering from malnutrition. Thus it becomes clear that there are certain drawbacks in implementation of development programmes.
- There is a lack of honest effort on the part of the government regarding the development of tribes.

Feasible Solutions :

The researcher wants to give the following feasible solutions for the socio-economic upliftment of tribes of Jharkhand.

- As the tribes live in forest and remote areas, road should be constructed for their communication facilities so that they easily mix up with the general people and can avail the opportunities to get the fair price of their products.
- Strategic planning is needed for the implementation of development programmes and schemes. The beneficiaries should participate in planning and it should be according to their nature and behavior.
- NGOs and intermediaries agencies should be involved in between the government officers and beneficiaries for better understanding of their problems and implementation of the programmes.
- They should always interact with the tribals in their mother tongue so that, they can freely express their feelings, sentiments, problems and feasible solutions in front of development authorities.
- The government should concentrate in providing all the basic infrastructures like irrigation and agriculture tools and techniques.
- Modern techniques of agriculture should be implanted among the tribes gradually, as they are very orthodox and traditional in their nature and behavior.
- Government should motivate them to involve in such business which suits their nature and behaviour like herbs and medicinal plant, patta and basket making, products manufactured by bamboo, bee-keeping and honey collection, fisheries, animal husbandry like goat, pig, hen, sheep etc. and also provide them market for selling.
- Forest is an important means of livelihood of tribals in Jharkhand. Almost all tribes are dependent on forest specially primitive tribes. They live in forests, eat forest produces, make goods by forest raw materials and sell forest produces. Government should protect the forest for existence of tribals.
- Tribals are exploited by money lenders. Government should provide financial facilities at cheap rate specially micro-finance facility at the time of their need and sudden problems and should encourage them to take loans from government agencies and intermediaries rather than money lenders.
- Awareness is sine-qua-non for transformation and upliftment in terms of socially and economically both. Government should start extensive Awareness Abhiyaan among tribals to remove conventional presumptions and superstition from their society. It should be done by their participation and with we feeling.
- Education is the base of development but the literacy rate is lower in tribal society. Its main reason is their poverty and they are always in anxiety of bread and work. Children help their parents in family work rather than go to school. According to Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC) dropout rate of tribal population in Jharkhand is 25%. Its an alarming trend. Without education, development is not possible. Government should formulate such plans which can encourage education among tribals and try to keep literacy rate of tribals at the level of non-tribal literacy rate. In order to achieve this objective, government should take care of their livelihood by providing basic facilities for agriculture and allied activities. So that, they can be self sufficient in food, health care and employment problems.
- Last but not the least, government should ensure that development programmes and policies are fully implemented and its advantage reach to the beneficiaries. Programmes and schemes should be evaluated and changes should be made from time to time according to its need and requirement.

Sum-Up :

Tribals constitute 26.2% of the total population of Jharkhand. Without their upliftment Jharkhand cannot march together with the economy of other states. The rate of tribal economy growth is decreasing due to deforestation, industrialization and migration. This is an alarming stage. The government should give special package and special attention for their inclusive growth. Thus, there is a need of strategic management for the upliftment of tribals in Jharkhand.

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