

The Crisis Among Tribal Youth In India During Covid-19-A Sociological Study

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Abstract

Globally, Sickle cell disease (SCD) is one of the major public health problems. In India, it is more prevalent in tribal communities. Tribal communities are socio-economically disadvantaged and constitute 8.6% of India's population. Lack of developmental measures in India has always led the tribal population to dwell at the margins without proper resources of economic sustenance. The article tries to critically review of the tribal population in India, the measures taken by the Government.

Keywords - Tribal, Prevalent, Socio-Economically

Even today there is a shortage of many needs in the tribal area for examples lack of awareness, lack of hygiene, lack of nutritional facilities, lack of availability of non-farm activities, inadequate health infrastructure, restricted movement to forest areas. Lack of developmental measures in India has always led the tribal population to dwell at the margins without proper resources of economic sustenance. The article tries to critically review of the tribal population in India, the measures taken by the Government. Among the several world democracies, India is hit not only with high death records with higher levels of inequality. The nationwide lockdown was announced in India on 24 March 2020 for 21 days in a short notice. As of 1 September 2020, 785,996 active cases and 65,288 deaths were reported by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). In the lockdown led to forced migration, closure of the market system, laying off workers and employees, increase price in essential goods, failure of the education system and increase sexual violence in rural and urban areas. If we compared to other

western countries, majority of cases in India are found in the age group of 21-30 years (514 deaths) and 31-40 years (537 deaths) as of 27th April 2020. However, the number of cases and deaths could have been low if the country's medical facilities and state machinery had worked hand-in-hand from the beginning. There are also reports of a lack of testing facilities, which delayed the confirmation of actual cases and the number of cases may be more than what is reported. There are also unreported deaths in local level hospitals. At the margins are the tribal population affected by inequality and lack of awareness, employment, education, healthcare, hygiene and so on. A report by the United Nations Human Rights (UNHR, 2020) emphasizes that the pandemic has hit the indigenous people throughout the world "disproportionately. Countries like Costa Rica issued guidelines for the prevention of the pandemic in indigenous territories; New Zealand introduced cultural practices that help the indigenous population to cope with the pandemic and also maintain the traditional culture; the Ministries of Health in Colombia and Peru established the COVID-19 Bio National Committee to address the situation of the indigenous people living in the Amazon transborder areas (UNHR, 2020). Crises and Inequality among Tribal Youth, According to the 2011 Census, the tribal population constitutes 8.6% of the total population in India. The majority of this population resides in rural areas, where healthcare facilities are usually poor and are even poorer in the regions scheduled for tribal people. The tribal population residing in rural areas has increased from 10.4% to 11.3%, While that residing in urban areas increased from 2.4% to only 2.8% (MOTA, 2013: 5-7). It is also interesting to note that the majority of tribal people are located in small states like Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland, and so forth, which are mostly devoid of infrastructural development. Mizoram has the highest proportion of tribal population of tribal population counting to 94.43% (MOTA, 2013: 7). Inequality in Economic Condition, According to the 2011 Census, 45.3% of the STs in rural areas and 24.1% in urban areas fall in the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category. Further, 44.82% of other Backward classes (OBCs), 20.06% of SCs, and only 11.89% of ST household own land. Approximately, 90% of the ST household do not own land as an economic asset, which makes them work on other's lands as agricultural laborers or other works of cultivation and the informal sector as well. Unemployment survey of 2013-2014 (Cited in MOTA, 2017: 34-35) that 48.2% of the ST youth have been employed for a period of 12 months and 47.4% of the ST youth have been employed for 6-11 months. This indicates that more than half of the ST

youth also remain unemployed for a maximum time at area against 26.75 in the rural areas (The Hindu, 2020).

Crisis in Educational Facilities, literacy rate in tribal population has improved from 47.1% in 2001 to 59% in 2011. The national average is 73%. Youth literacy rate in the rural areas for tribal youth has increased by 12 percentage points for the male youth, and scheduled tribes (ST) female youth literacy rate has increased by 21 percentage points. Mostly tribal population is still dependent on farm-based occupations, although there is a recent trend of a shift to other occupations as well. According to Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of tribal youth in secondary (ix-x grades, 14-15 years), senior secondary (x-xii grades, 16-17 years), and higher education (above xii grade, 18-23 years), it is very difficult to find tribal youth employed in the formal sector with a high salary. According to GER senior secondary level in the year 2014-2015 is 72.2%, while it is 38.8% at the secondary level and it is only 13.7% at the higher education level. Although from 2011-2012 to 2014-2015, there has been a slight increase in the enrollment rates, it is not as high as seen at the primary level among the tribal children, where GER is 103.2% at the elementary level (6-13 years). This essentially implies that by the time tribal youth moved from primary and elementary levels of education to secondary, senior secondary and higher level education, there is a significant drop-out of these youth.

Drop-out rate among the tribal youth is 62.4% in the year 2014-2015 in the I-X grades. There is even a stark difference in the Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR), where the GAR is 100% for tribal children at the primary education, almost equal to 101% at the national level. However, the GAR above higher secondary level is only 7%, which is much lower than the national average of 13% (MOTA, 2017: 25-27). During the period of COVID-19, as a result of complete closure of schools and complete dependence on mobiles and laptops as the only medium of school studies, the high GAR of tribal children at the primary level. More than 50% of the ST households do not own any phone (MOTA, 2017: 31). During lockdown, closure of schools affected tribal children. State machinery did not take any measure before making online classes compulsory for students in schools and colleges. That means, majority of tribal population, due to lack of assets, are pushed at the margins for a period of one whole year. There has been no major announcement from state government or central government about any scheme that could help tribal children cope with the pressure of the current education system.

The crisis among tribal women, as a result of pandemic, there has also been an increase in domestic and sexual violence of women in rural and urban areas. One in every three women has been affected by domestic or sexual violence by an intimate partner during the pandemic (WHO, 2020). According to World Health Organization (WHO) report 2020, pointed out that during epidemics, mainly women with disabilities, refugees, displaced women, and living in conflict-affected areas are most vulnerable. This scenario not only in conflict- afflicted areas but also in such tribal areas, where women have to indulge in a sexual act as a result of poverty in their locality. AS a result of poverty, lack of employment, lack of infrastructure for education, tribal women have become most vulnerable. There are 1477 complaints were made between from 25 March to 31 May 2020, were made by women for domestic violence in India. According to news reports number of complaints of domestic violence received during this period is more than what has been registered in the last 10 years (The Hindu, 2020). The reports shows that 47% of married in 15-49years age group have experienced “emotional”, “Physical”, or “sexual”, violence. 65.4% of ST women suffered violence but never expressed about it. It is very difficult to point out how many complaints of domestic violence have come from tribal women, as there is no detailed report of breakups.

Conclusion

To summarize the article, it will be apt to say that to date, tribal youth in India are facing inequality in terms of employment, health care, opportunity, infrastructure and stigmatization, lack of proper awareness and ecological constraints. Women and men are suffering from loss of job and economic sustenance, the women suffering from domestic violence and many problems. The schemes that have been proposed by the government do not help mitigate the crisis faced by the country’s tribal youth. It is difficult to consider that tribal youth will be able to cope with the pandemic. Very difficult to believe that the tribal youth can handle the condition of precarity prevailed in the pandemic.

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