

Diverse Perspectives in Pursuing Research on Tribals

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:
ASH-2022-10014812

Volume: 10

Issue: 1

Month: July

Year: 2022

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Received: 25.03.2022

Accepted: 19.05.2022

Published: 01.07.2022

Citation:
Jhotham, I. Edward, and P. Kumaran. "Diverse Perspectives in Pursuing Research on Tribals." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2022, pp. 1–3.

DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v10i1.4812>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

I. Edward Jhotham

*Ph.D. Scholar (Full-Time), PG & Research Department of History
C. Abdul Hakeem College (Autonomous), Melvisharam, Ranipet, Tamil Nadu, India*

P. Kumaran

*Research Supervisor & Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of History
C. Abdul Hakeem College (Autonomous), Melvisharam, Ranipet, Tamil Nadu, India*

Abstract

There are diverse perspectives involved in studying the tribal issues particularly in Indian context. One shall assume that it is extremely difficult to understand the various perspectives of tribal studies. Despite shortcomings of its own, anthropological perspective provides base to the tribal studies. Therefore, it shall be considered as the parent perspective since it is the oldest and broader one. It is clearly understood that there is still a need for systematic approach in tribal studies owing to shortcomings in the existing methods and practices involved in tribal studies.

Keywords: Tribals, Research, Perspective, Anthropological, and Culture

Introduction

There are diverse perspectives involved in studying the tribal issues particularly in Indian context. One shall assume that it is extremely difficult to understand the various perspectives of tribal studies, but it can be analysed in an easier way as follows; historical, institutional, development & planning, integration, stratification, gender, administration, anthropological perspectives. When we compare and contrast diverse perspectives of tribal studies, it is crystal clear that the anthropological perspective shall be considered as the parent perspective since it provides base and broader understanding of the tribal issues.

Historical Perspective

It deals with understanding the social, cultural, intellectual and emotional aspects that defined people's lives and actions in the past. It generally attributes to the colonial perspective of tribal society, dealing with different aspects such as society, culture, economy, tribe-caste interaction, land rights, historical forces, social institutions and extra. This perspective largely analysis the socio-economic and political conditions during the British period. British administration in India identified the tribals in different names in different census reports; *Animist, Tribal Animist, Hill and Forest Tribes, Primitive Tribes, Backward Tribes* and *Tribes*. The colonial administration had different attitudes and approaches regarding the tribal communities and also enacted number of laws to administer them. Policies introduced during the British period were directly or indirectly resulted in the exploitation of tribals in different ways. Therefore, The British adopted the policy of isolation to protect the tribals against exploitation and hostility from the mainstream society.

Institutional Perspective

The aim of institutional perspective is to understand the different dynamics of tribal society within the framework of established institutions. It primarily focuses on approach of various institutions towards the tribals. Those who support the institutional perspective firmly favour extensive intervention of governments in both the economic and social affairs of tribals on account of long-term benefits. It also includes the cause of representation of tribals in various institutions. There is also a strong opposition to this perspective in which it is viewed as a hostile environment with no respect for tribals and resistance to their existing way of life.

Development & Planning Perspective

This perspective basically attributes the ways, the tribal issues are addressed by different plans involving the Government of India and state governments. Governments have clearly shown that they are committed for the welfare and development of tribals. The planning efforts of governments are basically focused to address the problems of low standards of living, starvation, poverty, illiteracy, disease, sanitation, housing, and etc. It is clear that tribals are subjected to financial exploitation by the mainstream society. Governments have initiated special schemes and plans for their development.

Integration Perspective

It is an important perspective as it focuses on integration of tribals to the mainstream society with respect to cultural pluralism. This approach was followed by first Prime minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru through five principles of tribal development. These principles gave significance to ideas of tribal pluralism and integration of tribal population with the mainstream. This also includes cultural integration. The integration perspective clearly rejects any sort of imposition on tribals. Development of the tribals shall be an internal process involving tribals without external imposition. We must ensure that their culture, values, feelings and emotions are not heard. Therefore, development should be parallel with their own genius and mind which means the best among them is retained and encouraged.

Stratification Perspective

This explores the internal differences of tribal society as well as their relation with the caste and mainstream society. The position and nature of stratification are completely different in tribal society from the one observed among the mainstream caste society. Though ethics of caste ideology are missing in tribal society, the growing situation of cultural contact with the main stream has made the tribal society to imbibe certain norms determining social differences within the society. This trend has paved the way to new social formations and socio-economic of the people. The tribal social system is completely different from that of the endogamous structure of the caste that is prevalent in the Hindu society. Therefore, this perspective believes that the tribal society is different and unique on its own way. But it is in the process of moving from homogeneity to heterogeneity due to interaction with the mainstream society.

Gender Perspective

Focus on women in Tribal studies has been a recent trend. It evolved out of general concern with issues of women. Indian society being governed by the value system has been in the process of transformation one shall witness a shift in the image and social status of tribal women to be better than women in larger Indian society. Tribal society has been witnessing an unprecedented change in the post-Independence era. With few exceptions, there has been hardly explicit discussion on the status of tribal women. Hence this perspective explores the position, participation and role of tribal women in various dynamics.

Administration Perspective

This perspective exclusively deals with the approach of administering the tribals and their areas. The British administration as well as in the post-Independence era have adopted number of provisions dealing with the administration of tribals and their areas. The British administration enacted separate laws in this regard in order to protect tribals from exploitation. Similarly, governments in the post-independent era have also declared certain areas as scheduled areas for the purpose of sound administration.

Anthropological Perspective

Though there are diverse definitions of tribes it is quite understood that tribal studies still remain the core domain of anthropological studies in India. The term Tribals has many political and racial connotations. The theories and methods applied by the anthropologists are questionable due to various reasons. It is very difficult to study the tribals and their lives in India because of diverse nature of various tribal groups within the country. Despite shortcomings of its own, anthropological perspective provides base to the tribal studies. Therefore, it shall be considered as the parent perspective since it is the oldest and broader one.

Conclusion

As we have studied the various perspectives involved in tribal studies, we can conclude that the anthropological perspective can be more relevant and effective in research on tribals in India. It shall be considered as the parent perspective since it provides base to the tribal studies. It is clearly understood that there is still a need for systematic approach in tribal studies owing to shortcomings in the existing methods and practices involved in tribal studies.

References

Bhattacharya, Bela, and Manibrata Bhattacharya. *Dynamics of Tribal Demography: A Macro-Micro Level Study on the Tribes of South*

West Bengal: Anthropological-Demographic Perspectives. Aparna Book Distributors, 1996.

Chaudhari, Buddhadeb. "Preface." *Tribal Transformation in India: Ethnopolitics and Identity Crisis*, edited by Buddhadeb Chaudhuri, Inter-India Publications, 1992.

Choudhury, Mamata. *Tribes of Ancient India*. Indian Museum, 1977.

Das Gupta, Sangeeta. "Constructing a Tribe: A Case Study of the Oraons and the Tana Bhagatas in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries." *Changing Tribal Life: A Socio-Philosophical Perspective*, edited by Padmaja Sen, Concept Publishing Company, 2003.

Patel, Mahendra Lal. *Tribal Research in India: Approach, Constraints, Structure and Techniques*. Inter-India Publications, 1994.

Ross, Hamish. *Law as a Social Institution*. Hart Publishing, 2001.

Roy Burman, B.K. *Tribes in Perspective*. Mittal Publications, 1994.

Sahu, Chaturbhuj. *Aspects of Tribal Studies*. Swarup & Sons, 2006.

Saran, Anirudha Behari. *Tribal Studies*. Ranchi Offset Printers, 1978.

Verma, R.C. *Indian Tribes through the Ages*. Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1990.

Author Details

I. Edward Jhotham, Ph.D. Scholar (Full-Time), PG & Research Department of History, C. Abdul Hakeem College (Autonomous), Melvisharam, Ranipet, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** edwardjhotham29@gmail.com

Dr. P. Kumaran, Research Supervisor & Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of History, C. Abdul Hakeem College (Autonomous), Melvisharam, Ranipet, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** pkumaran2020@gmail.com