AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF TRIBAL FARMERS IN BIJNOR DISTRICT OF U.P. STATE

ABSTRACT

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Submitted by Mohammad Awais

Under the supervision of Dr. Rais Ahmad (Associate Professor)

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In the present study the tribals are socio-economically backward as compared to the non-tribals. Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for the overwhelming majority of the tribal population in the study area. Different agricultural strategies have been launched after 1966 in the country to bring about economic development in agriculture sector. In the study area, where agriculture is the main occupation of tribals, they are still backward. So as to eradicate the problems of tribal people, it becomes necessary on the part of the policy makers to identify and quantify the socio-economic factors which are inhibiting their growth and development.

Keeping these views in mind an analytical study of socio-economic conditions of tribal farmers in Bijnor district of U.P. state was conducted with the specific objectives. These are to study the different aspects of tribal development in India, to review the socio-economic features of tribes in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, to highlight the state of agriculture in the study area, to examine the socio-economic conditions of tribal farmers, to compare the tribal farmers of Bijnor district in Uttar Pradesh with the Udham Singh Nagar district in Uttrakhand so as to analyze the levels of socio-economic development and to suggest viable measures to overcome constraints so as to improve the socio-economic conditions of tribal farmers.

Under the selected districts of Bijnor and Udham Singh Nagar four blocks had been selected viz. Kotwali, Najibabad, Afzalgarh and
Gadarpur, for comparative study which have largest population of Buksa tribes. Farmers from the different categories like landless, marginal, small and medium were selected on the basis of their land holdings.

Primary data were collected from the sample tribal farmers on different socio-economic aspects with the help of structured collective questionnaires and secondary data were collected from different official sources. The data were computed with simple statistical tools like frequencies, percentages and averages.

The present study has been divided into seven chapters. **First Chapter** serves as an introduction containing the conceptual framework, significance of the study, statement of the problem, objectives and study area and methodology. A review of literature related to tribal studies is carried out in the **Second Chapter**.

**Third Chapter** sketched about the tribal development in India. The Constitution of India has not only made specific provisions to protect tribals who make 8.2 percent of the total population but also has imposed the Constitutional obligation of regular review of performance and development effect directly to the President of India.

With the dawn of independence and adoption of the Constitution of free India, the British Policy of Isolation and Non-interference was replaced by a policy of integration through development. The tribal population in India can be classified into four discernible divisions. (1) Tribals who confine themselves to original forest habitats and are still distinctive in their pattern of life. They may be termed as tribal communities. (2) Tribals who have more or less settled down in rural areas, taking to agriculture and other allied occupation. This category of people may be termed as semi-tribal communities. (3) Tribal who have
migrated to urban or semi-urban and rural areas are engaged in ‘civilized’ occupation in industries and other vocations and who have, with discrimination, adopted traits and culture of other population of the country. These may be classed as ‘semi-assimilated’ tribal communities. (4) Totally assimilated tribals.

Immediately after the independence, it was recognized that certain communities needed special attention for their protection and development. The development programmes through Five Year Plans have been the mainstay of our way to integrate the tribal into the mainstream. With the onset of Five-Year Planning after independence, a new era ushered in, particularly in the socio-economic development of the weaker sections. The Planning Commission laid down the objectives and strategies for tribal development from time to time.

The history of tribal development during plan period is long back but main efforts have given in the Fifth Plan, which provided a sub-plan for the tribes. Popularly known as Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), it had many components like ITDP (Integrated Tribal Development Project), Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) Pockets, Clusters, Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) and Dispersed Tribal Groups (DTGs). The funds for implementing these projects were to come from sources: TSP of Central Government, TSP of State Government, Special Central Assistance, and Institutional Finance from credit institutions, banks, etc.

The TSP as originally conceived had a two pronged strategy: promotion of developmental activities to raise the living standards of Scheduled Tribes and protection of their interest through legal and administrative support. The TSP mechanism has, however, become routine
and humdrum in most of the States with little awareness of its original objectives.

The tribal people live in contiguous areas unlike other communities. It is, therefore, much simpler to have an area approach for development activities as well as regulatory provisions to protect their interests. In order to protect their interests with regard to land and other social issues, various provisions have been enshrined in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution.

The Fifth Schedule under Article 244 (1) of the Constitution defines “Scheduled Areas’ as such areas as the President may by order declare to be Scheduled Areas after consultation with the Governor of that State. The concept of Scheduled Area emerged during Fifth Five Year Plan which is defined under Article 244 (1) and Article 244(2). The Scheduled Area has been framed to protect the interest of Scheduled Tribes with regard to their land and other social issues.

The long term objectives of the Sub-Plan are: to narrow the gap between the levels of development of tribal and other areas, and to improve the quality of life of the tribal communities. The Sub- Plan is not a scheme, it represents a new approach. The strategy clearly spelt out the problem of tribal development into two parts-(1) that of areas of having more than 50 percent tribal concentration, and the scheduled areas, and (2) that of areas with dispersed tribal population. Besides these two categories, primitive tribal communities at the pre agriculture level of technology were identified as a special group.

The Sixth Schedule under Article 244 (2) of the Constitution relates to those areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram
which are declared as "tribal areas" and provides for District or Regional Autonomous Councils for such areas. These Councils have wide ranging legislative, judicial and executive powers.

In the Eighth Plan educational development was further emphasized. The number of Ashram (residential) schools and scholarships were increased. Regional languages were used as the medium of instructions at primary level. Informal and adult education programmes were given priority. On the economic front, more LAMPS (Large Area Multipurpose Cooperative Societies) were opened up to meet the needs of forest resources, credit, and marketing of MFP and supply of essential commodities. About six lakh families were rehabilitated from shifting cultivation.

With the passage of Ninth Plan emphasis is laid on a total integrated effort for all-round tribal development and massive efforts have been made for the socio-economic development of tribal people by the Government through organized economic planning. The plan aimed to empower STs by creating an enabling environment conducive for them. This process essentially encompassed three vital components viz. social empowerment, economic empowerment and social justice. It also focused on tribal empowerment through effective implementation of PESA (Panchayat Raj Extension in Scheduled Areas) in the Scheduled Areas and proper utilization of grants release under Article 275 (i) of the Constitution for the development of scheduled tribes, in general and raising the level of administration of the scheduled areas.

During the period of Tenth Five Year Plan, the programmes for child and women development, irrigation, measures to improve income of
tribals from forest produce and development of forest village were to receive financial assistance and attention. The Tenth Plan identified the priority group requiring the basic needs and living in different geographical regions with varied socio-economic conditions. Primary health care services in tribal areas are extended by involving local NGOs. Indigenous medicine and the traditional knowledge and method of healing are encouraged in attending to the health needs of the tribes.

The Eleventh Plan will attempt a paradigm shift with respect to the overall empowerment of the tribal people, keeping the issues related to governance at the Centre. The operational imperatives of the Fifth Schedule, TSP 1976, PESA 1996, RFRA 2006; the desirability of a tribal-centric, tribal-participative and tribal-managed development process and the need for a conscious departure from dependence on a largely under-effective official delivery system will be kept in view during this shift.

**Fourth Chapter** deals with the socio-economic assessment of tribes of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state of the country but has a small tribal population. They constitute the weakest section of the society and form distinct ethnic groups which have preserved their own separate culture identities in their original environment despite the ravages of time. In June 1967 five communities of the state were constitutionally declared as “scheduled tribes”. These are: Tharu, Buksa, Bhotia, Jaunsari and Raji. Apart from these there are some other tribal groups found in Uttar Pradesh these are: Gond, Dhuria, Nayak, Ojha, Pathari, Raj Gond, Kharwar, Khairwar, Saharya, Parahiya, Baiga, Pankha, Panika, Agariya, Patari, Chero, Bhuiya and Bhuinya.
The Scheduled Tribe population of Uttar Pradesh is 107,963 as per 2001 Census, constituting a meager 0.1 per cent of the total population (166,197,921) of the state. The decennial growth of tribal population has been 42 per cent, which is 16.2 per cent higher than the growth of total population (25.8 %) during 1991-2001. The state has a total of five major Scheduled Tribes and about 18 other tribal groups. The tribal population of the State is predominantly rural with 88.8 per cent of them residing in villages.

On the other hand Uttarakhand state contributes only 0.83 percent to total and 0.3 to the tribal population of India. The state has registered 20.9 per cent decadal growth of scheduled tribe population during 1991-2001. There are total of five notified scheduled tribes in the state, and all of them have been enumerated in 2001 Census. These are: Tharu, Jaunsari, Buksa, Bhotia and Raji.

**Fifth Chapter** described the agricultural panorama of the study area. In the study area summers are very hot while winters are fairly cool. In summer, the temperature goes up to 44°C in the month of May and June with desiccating dust-sweeping winds locally known as “Loo”. The monsoon commence in the last of June or in the first week of July, major part of rainfall is received during the month of July, August and September. Few showers of rain also occur during winter months. Winter rains are however uncertain and may benefit or adversely affect some of the Rabi crops. The total reporting area in Bijnor district was estimated at 464578 hectares during the year 2010. The total reported area of district Udham Singh Nagar is 243162 hectares out of which net sown area are 118376 hectares constituting 48.68 percent of the total reported area.
The total number of operational land holdings in district Udham Singh Nagar was 85641, covering an area of 155040 hectares. Land holding up to 4 hectare comprises 89.15 percent of the total holdings and command 54.23 percent of total cultivated land. Land holdings 4 to 10 hectares covers 31.09 percent of total cultivated area. Land holdings greater than 10 hectare constitute only 0.81 percent of total holdings and cover 14.65 percent of the total cultivated area.

In Bijnor district the size and distribution of land holdings is that total number of operational land holdings are 317311 spreading over the area of 343922 hectares. Majority of the land holdings falls under the head of below 0.5 hectare which makes 42.97 percent of the total operational land holdings. Land holdings from 0.50 to 1 hectare comprise 22.52 percent of the total holdings amounting 14.82 percent of total area. Land holdings 1 to 2 and 2 to 4 hectare covers an area of 25.62 and 28.30 percent of total area respectively. Land holdings 4 to 10 and above 10 hectares add up to 3.66 and only 0.16 percent of total holdings which forms 18.17 and 3.01 percent of the total area.

Cropping pattern of the district Bijnor includes both Rabi and Kharif crops in which more than 50 percent of the total area is covered by the sugarcane followed by the cereal crops (wheat, rice, barley and maize), fodder, vegetables (potato, onion and other vegetables), pulses (black gram, green gram, lentil, gram, pea and pigeon pea) and oilseeds (mustard, sesame, ground nut, sunflower, soybean and linseed) occupying an area of 169180, 29237, 3563, 3359 and 3350 hectares amounting to 39.96 percent, 6.90 percent, 0.84 percent, 0.79 percent and 0.79 percent of the total area under the crops respectively.
In the district Udham Singh Nagar wheat and rice are the most important crops among the cereal crops. Rice is the largest growing crop occupying an area of 108017 hectares accounting for 42.76 percent of the total cropped area followed by wheat with an area of 83029 hectares constituting 32.87 percent of the total cropped area. Thus, the rice and wheat together cover three fourth of the total area under crops. Sugarcane is another significant crop occupying 15.10 percent of the total cropped area. Pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and fodder crops together cover a small part (8.82 %) of the total cropped area.

The sources of irrigation available in the both districts are canals, tube wells, wells, ponds etc. Live stock population in both districts includes cows, buffaloes, sheep, goat, horse, pig and poultry birds which are accounted more in Udham Singh Nagar district. Number of banks are more in Bijnor district than Udham Singh Nagar counterpart.

Tribals are distributed in only three blocks of Bijnor district while in Udham Singh Nagar it is spreading in all blocks of the district which makes a total population of 2427 and 110220 respectively. Buksa a primitive tribal group is common in the both districts and most of them are farmers. In district Bijnor only Buksa tribe and in Udham Singh Nagar, Buksa and Tharu tribe constitutes the tribal fabrics.

Chapter Sixth analyses the socio-economic conditions of tribal farmers which also incorporate the study of tribal farmers and a comparison between tribal farmers of Bijnor and Udham Singh Nagar districts. The Buksa is an agriculturist community. Almost all the Buksa population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Pressure of increasing tribal population, their pressing needs and fragmentation of land
due to growing generations have caused the problem of land alienation among some Buksa families. The economy of the Buksas is thus based on agriculture and animal husbandry. The secondary occupations include service, wage labourers, basketry etc. They also rear cows, buffaloes, goats, horses and poultry birds. They also keep kitchen gardens, collect tendu patta, make ropes and do carpentry.

Majority of the families are nuclear on tribal farms of Bijnor district than Udham Singh Nagar counterpart. Youth members of the tribal families are more or less similar on both tribal farms. Most of the tribal people are illiterate on tribal farms of Bijnor. Housing condition is poor on the tribal farms of Bijnor as compared to Udham Singh Nagar. Nearly all tribal households are electrified in Udham Singh Nagar. Drinking water sources are good in Udham Singh Nagar. A good number of transportation means available on the tribal farms of Udham Singh Nagar while transportation means are poor in Bijnor. A good proportion of family members are engaged in subsidiary and casual occupations on both type of tribal farms. Size of land holdings is less on the tribal farms of Bijnor district. Sources of irrigation are poor on the tribal farms of Bijnor. Mostly they are availing hiring services for irrigation from non-tribal people. Tribal farmers of Udham Singh Nagar are more agriculturally mechanized than their Bijnor tribal farmers’ counterpart. Numbers of live stocks are more on tribal farms of Bijnor because of there is forested area nearby their villages. Major constraint in improvement of agriculture is irrigation on the tribal farms of Bijnor. Priority for future investment in agriculture is irrigation on both tribal farms. In case of tribal farmers of Bijnor fellow cultivator are major source of agricultural knowledge. Extension staff is
main source of agricultural knowledge on the tribal farms of Udham Singh Nagar. The main financing agencies of the area are the commercial banks, cooperative societies and local money lenders. The credit taken from these agencies is mostly utilized by tribal farmers of Bijnor for unproductive purpose, as compared to tribal farmers of Udham Singh Nagar. Crops grown on the both type of tribal farms are more or less same. Area under Kharif crops is greater on the tribal farms of Bijnor while area under Rabi crops is greater on the tribal farms of Udham Singh Nagar. Sugarcane occupies large areas on the tribal farms of Bijnor. Use of plant protection measures are less on the tribal farms of Bijnor because of their poverty and unawareness regarding the application of the pesticides. Yield of various crops raised on both type of tribal farms are more or less similar. Both types of tribal farmers sells their agricultural produce to the village traders, hawkers, mandi, haat and sugar crushers, sugar mills, oil expellers and government purchase centers as per kind of the produce. On an average marketed surplus of various crops is more on the tribal farms of Udham Singh Nagar. Gross crop income, on the tribal farms of Bijnor is slightly lower than Udham Singh Nagar farms. Non–agricultural income from subsidiary and casual occupations constitutes a minor part of total income on both types of tribal farms. From the above description it is finally said that the socio-economic condition of tribal farmers of district Udham Singh Nagar is better than the tribal farmers of Bijnor. Hence it is imperative to suggest some viable measures to improve their socio-economic conditions. Finally the Seventh Chapter provides summary, findings and implied policy suggestions to improve the socio-economic condition of tribal farmers.