

IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON ADIVASI WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN ANDHRA PRADESH

*K.Bhanumathi
Samata

Introduction:

The Vision of Andhra Pradesh (A.P):

Andhra Pradesh is one state in India which is gaining international repute as the fast track state and the cyber state with its doors wide open to private investment, foreign capital and strives to be the up market technology hub. The Vision 2020 document of the state government is a definite projection of the direction in which policy and governance are envisioned where the implicate theory of certain 'growth engines' being the chaperons of development reflects the blinkered approach to socio-economic progress. A state which was created by the vision of Telugu stalwarts like Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu, Veeresalingam and others is now prostrating before the likes of Wolfensons and McKinseys to give it its future vision. And this is the fundamental tragedy of Andhra Pradesh today under the liberalisation process.

It is the first state in Asia to directly invite the World Bank to implement its Structural Adjustment Programme. This transformation is being realised through a frenetic exercise called the A.P Economic Restructuring Programme which not only aims at fiscal reforms through external funding and privatisation, it also brings in the social sector under its reform agenda.

These reforms, with the expressed objectives of improving efficiency of governance and reducing misutilisation of resources are reversing state policies through calling for privatisation of infrastructure and social sector activities/institutions. It also emphasises on sectoral reforms in order to attract private investment so as to reduce its fiscal burden. Power, irrigation, roads, ports and social infrastructure like health and education are the focal sectors of reforms in the new economic programme.

The government of A.P has been building up the theory, over the past few years, that it is overburdened by expenditures due to stress from social subsidies and welfare programmes and due to public corruption in utilisation of public services important of them being power and water through non-payment and mis/over-utilisation of resources. Having built up this theory, it is going ahead with certain fundamental changes in most of its policies which mainly affect the poor and the marginalised.

The areas of fiscal reforms therefore concentrate on restructuring/privatisation of power sector, enhancing power and water tariffs, relaxation of prohibition, reducing food subsidies, amendment or neglect of social sector laws like land reforms, protection of tribal lands, etc, inviting private sector into health and education under the theory of users' financial responsibility for services rendered, making public/communities

* Working with Samata, a NGO, on advocacy for tribal and environment rights in Andhra Pradesh. Is member of a national alliance of mining struggle groups called "mines, minerals & PEOPLE", particularly on strengthening the National Network of Women & Mining

responsible for infrastructure needs through promoting users' participation and voluntarism while making most jobs contractual in nature.

As stated in the Vision document, the thrust of development is corporatisation of all sectors through incentives and speedy governance for industrial investments, introduction or upscaling of technology in agriculture, farming and forestry, education and health, creating a conducive ambience for foreign capital inflows from industries and global financial institutions. Thus, a number of these measures have already been initiated in order to prove eligibility for external loan and aid. Thus, the financial borrowings of A.P from external sources which today amount to Rs.42,000 crores, are increasingly falling in the social sectors like health, education, rural and tribal development programmes and basic infrastructure creation.

Implications of this Restructuring Programme to the Adivasis of Andhra Pradesh

The paper presented here is a critique of the new economic policies in the state of Andhra Pradesh and their impact on the lives of adivasi people. Specifically, the paper deals with the analysis of education and health policies in the context of adivasi women and children and the future implications on their status. It looks into the alarming nature of state perceptions on the social sector allocations and responsibilities or lack of them with regard to adivasi communities. Most of the perspectives are drawn from experiences in working and living with Adivasis, mostly in Visakhapatnam district of A.P.

Demographic Background:

Andhra Pradesh is the fifth largest state in the country and covers a geographical area of 2,75,068 sq. kms and has a total population of 663 lakhs spread over 23 revenue districts. It has rich dry and moist deciduous forests covering area of 3776 sq.kms forming 23% of the total area. The state also has a vast coastline stretching across the Bay of Bengal. The per capita income of A.P is Rs.3,364 (1989-90 current prices) and the net state domestic product is 5.03 between 1991-2 and 1997-98. The state has a large Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population of 16.3% and 6.3% respectively, as per 1991 census.

The Adivasis of Andhra Pradesh:

The total Scheduled Tribe (ST) population in Andhra Pradesh is 4.2 million. Officially, there are 33 ST communities mainly spread over nine districts. The tribal regions of A.P come under the Central Indian tribal belt and are also part of the Eastern Ghats. They have a rich bio-diversity of flora, fauna, adivasi communities and mineral wealth and are close to the ports of Kakinada and Visakhapatnam. There are nine districts in the state which have scheduled (notified tribal) areas with a population of 2.6 million inhabiting the hills and thick forest regions and the rest of the tribals are distributed sparsely in other districts.

The present economy of tribals in A.P is a consumption economy with the main occupations being settled agriculture, *podu* (shifting) cultivation and collection of Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) which totally comprise 88% of their occupation status. A vast variety of food grains, millets, pulses like rice, ragi, maize, jowar, legumes, vegetables and fruits are cultivated in the valleys and uplands/hills most of which are consumed domestically. Pulses and spices like chilly are the main source of cash flow

from agriculture. In some of the areas closer to plains tribals have learnt to cultivate cash crops like cotton, cashew and chillies.

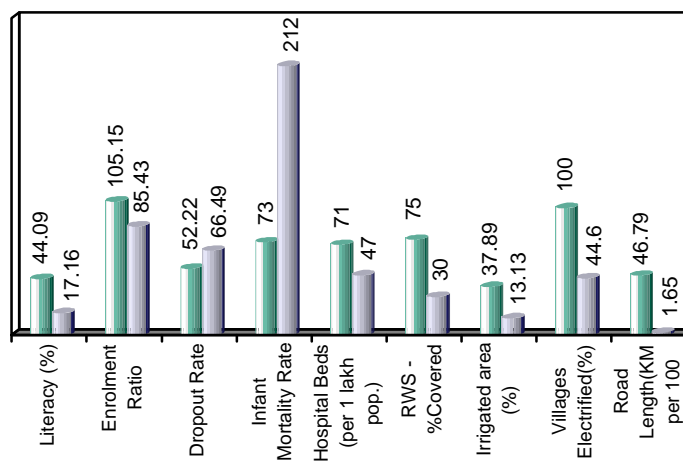
As against the general literacy rate of 44.09, literacy among the tribals it is 17.16 and among tribal women is 8.68. The literacy and other basic development indicators among the primitive tribal groups like the Khonds, Chenchus, Gadabas, and others are even less than this average.

Constitutional Protection for Scheduled Tribes in A.P:

Andhra Pradesh has been one of the more progressive states as far as tribal law and administration are concerned until the liberalization process was initiated. As under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the state has a history of enforcing protective legislations for the tribal people through laws like the Scheduled Area Moneylenders' Regulation (1960), A.P Scheduled Tribes Debt Relief Regulation (1960), the Land Transfer Regulation Act of 1959 which later was amended as Act 1/70 strengthening the tribal rights over their lands and resources. These positive safeguards were also the result of a series of tribal revolts (pithuris) since the British administration whenever government interference overrode customary laws and control over natural resources and traditional practices. The last three decades were also marked by violence and disturbances in the agency tracts due to the heavy presence of the extreme left forces and their armed conflicts with the State.

In Andhra Pradesh Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA's) were created in order to provide single line administration so as to deliver prompt and accessible government services. Legal provisions like special agency courts were also set up to give speedy justice to tribals. Girijan Cooperative Corporation Ltd (GCC Ltd) was established to remove the stranglehold of moneylenders and traders through purchase of agricultural and forest produce and extend credit to tribals and to provide an effective public distribution network in the interior forest areas. Tribal administration vastly improved after these institutions were created but have not managed to address the crucial issues of basic human and fundamental rights of the tribal people. The Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) was formed consisting of political representatives and administrators in order to advise and guide the policies of the state on tribal matters.

PRESENT STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT



State as a whole Scheduled Tribes

An overview of problems faced by Adivasis in A.P:

Land Alienation:

The adivasi people in the state have historically been vulnerable to largescale exploitation from non-Adivasis from the plains and due to severe neglect from the government. In spite of the existence of constitutional safeguards and reservations, the apathy of the state government has led to vast areas of land in the agency (tribal) areas being transferred to non Adivasis or non tribals. Especially this is prevalent in the foot hills where the majority population is adivasi, yet the areas have been excluded from Scheduled Areas, implying that the tribals do not enjoy the legal protections enjoyed by those in the hills. The official record of the Tribal Welfare Department for the year 2001-2002 states that out of the 69,170 cases of land alienation in the state, only 23,635 have been restored to tribals which indicates the pace at which cases are disposed where tribal lands are concerned.

Forest Issues:

The next serious problem is the complexity of issues related to forest lands and the tribals' access to these resources. Ambiguities over revenue-forest boundaries have given opportunities for both departments to victimize the tribals on false cases. Notification of forest lands created a number of problems where tribals living within forest enclosures were not demarcated as areas under community use making them illegal encroachers into forest lands. In the districts of Visakhapatnam and East Godavari this is a very widespread problem.

'Development' Projects in the region:

Non-forest activities like setting up of industries, mining projects, construction of big reservoir and other 'development' projects led to large scale and multiple displacement of tribal population who were forced to migrate. They face constant harassment for being 'criminals' and are forcefully evicted from lands occupied by them. Their rights and access to forest resources are curtailed by government and local communities who were the earlier settlers. Such problems are highly prevalent in districts like Visakhapatnam where cross border migration from neighbouring Orissa due to projects like Bailadilla, NALCO, HAL and other Mining projects, DBK railway line, five reservoir projects, tourism industry and government infrastructure have led to severe pressure on land and forests.

Development Neglect:

The performance of the government in the agency areas in the last five decades has a humiliating record whether in providing basic amenities and infrastructure, education, medical services, or in extending support and linkages to agriculture, forest produce, irrigation and other activities. This has ensured that tribals remained illiterate, indebted, susceptible to endemic diseases and neither capable to protecting their traditional institutions nor being able to compete with the mainstream.

The Emerging Macro Policies:

The natural wealth of the tribal areas in A.P is under new forms of threat with the liberalization policies of the state government. Forest resources, minerals and the natural beauty are projected as the major vehicles of commodification of the region by relaxing the stringent constitutional safeguards related to tribal lands. The government has invited industries to set up tourism projects and holiday resorts, mining projects, develop infrastructure for film industries and

forestry/medicinal plantation projects. Since the Land Transfer Regulation Act of A.P is a legal deterrent to private, multinational and NRI bidders, government has been pressurizing the TAC to pass resolutions for amendment of the Act so as to invite private participation and industries.

This threat is most severe in the district of Visakhapatnam which has rich mineral resources and has commercial potential to attract mining, tourism and film industries. Mining leases, to an extent of 2000 acres were illegally sanctioned by the state to private industries in this district evicting tribals from their lands until the Supreme Court judgement in 1997 declared that all such leases were null and void. However, the state is not dissuaded from renewing its efforts for alienating tribals from their lands for industries. The future survival of the tribals is dependent on the strength of their struggle to resist these 'development' policies of the state which work against any form of social justice.

Each of the above problems has a plethora of conflicts related them. However, this paper looks at two primary concerns of the adivasi people in the face of liberalisation - education and health. Even before the constitutional discriminations for the development have begun to be implemented in proper earnest, the state as a social welfare institution has ceased to perform its role. A direct outcome is on the education and health conditions of the tribal people.

Tribal Education: Status and Issues related to women and children:

Tribal education in Andhra Pradesh has been a slow process of integration into formal mainstream education. It is replete with problems of lack of understanding of tribal culture, inaccessibility and dispersed nature of tribal habitations, multi-lingual barriers and thrusting of Telugu as the medium of education in tribal schools, socio-cultural disparities between tribes and between tribals and outsiders, poverty and most of all, neglect of development needs and basic amenities for either tribals or non tribals posted as teachers in these areas and non allocation of resources for tribal education. Even after more than 50 years of independence, education has not reached the tribal regions largely due to lack of political will in making the tribal communities a priority for development.

Status of Literacy, Enrollment and Dropout among Scheduled Tribes in A.P:

Out of a population of 41 lakhs, the literacy rate among ST men, as of 1991 Census, is a mere 25% and that of women is 8.6% (after a highly imaginative interpretation of the term literate). Official figures for drop out rate at the primary level of education among ST's and SC's is between 73% and 82%. While the enrollment of tribal children in primary schools is 4,57,748 students, those who reach high school level in the entire state are about 10,000. While the total number of tribal habitations in A.P are close to ten thousand, those covered by primary schools are only 6138 leaving atleast a third of the tribal hamlets inaccessible to even basic literacy opportunities.

Dropout rate among tribal children is highest in the primary level itself (66%). From a total population of 20,56,664 ST women, there are just 21 women with post graduate degree! The enrollment of ST girls (1993-94) from the primary level to Class XII is 2,32,486 which is only 36.71%. There are just 6,595 who have reached middle level of school and 28,541 at the primary level - in the entire state! The drop out rate among ST girls is 89.20% most of which is in the primary level itself. In districts like Visakhapatnam where there is a high concentration of Primitive Tribal Groups like the Khonds, Gadabas, Porjas the female literacy levels are much lower (7.83%) than the state average.

Literacy Rate: 1991

Sl. No.	District	Among the total S.T. Population			Among the rural S.T. Population			Among the urban S.T. Population		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
	Andhra Pradesh	17.16	25.25	8.68	15.44	23.26	7.29	37.48	48.18	25.65
1	Srikakulam	19.70	28.98	10.41	18.90	27.95	9.88	55.06	69.87	36.73
2	Vizianagaram	15.68	22.53	8.79	14.80	21.56	8.02	15.14	60.04	41.42
3	Visakhapatnam	16.59	25.18	7.83	15.84	24.24	7.33	58.02	70.89	40.63
4	East Godavari	22.04	27.53	16.48	20.63	25.81	15.47	50.21	58.84	39.31
5	West Godavari	24.06	29.11	19.02	23.58	28.44	18.74	29.19	36.08	22.05
6	Krishna	21.68	29.90	13.28	17.94	25.97	9.82	33.63	42.24	24.57
7	Guntur	20.90	29.84	11.49	18.08	26.59	9.23	31.52	41.76	20.26
8	Prakasam	21.17	29.81	11.90	19.91	28.88	10.22	26.96	34.20	19.46
9	Nellore	16.36	20.78	11.66	14.49	18.55	10.14	25.33	31.69	18.81
10	Chittoor	21.06	28.40	13.19	18.85	25.92	11.26	40.04	49.57	29.74
11	Anantapur	26.74	38.50	14.09	23.96	35.51	11.63	49.08	61.74	34.57
12	Cuddapah									
13	Kurnool	24.86	36.76	12.02	20.58	31.00	9.63	42.34	58.80	22.49
14	Ranga Reddy	17.31	26.06	7.88	12.25	19.99	4.06	36.46	48.09	23.02
15	hyderabad	44.92	56.38	32.29	-	-	-	44.92	56.38	32.29
16	Nizambad	12.22	20.61	3.64	11.24	19.44	2.88	38.18	49.97	24.87
17	Medak	11.49	19.57	2.92	10.47	18.23	2.30	40.91	55.15	22.69
18	Mahaboobnagar	10.07	16.76	3.10	9.46	15.99	2.69	45.99	58.56	30.35
19	Nalgonda	14.50	23.82	4.21	13.51	22.60	3.53	42.54	55.73	25.19
20	Warangal	13.39	21.22	4.90	12.52	20.15	4.27	33.66	46.04	19.90
21	Khammam	16.16	24.01	8.02	14.68	22.34	6.72	40.31	51.39	29.00
22	Karimnagar	12.31	20.09	4.08	11.28	18.76	3.36	26.17	37.39	13.81
23	Adilabad	17.67	27.39	7.55	16.62	26.19	6.70	49.99	61.88	35.84

The percentages have been calculated on the total S.T. population, exclusive of the population in age groups 0-6.

Source: Census of India 1991, Series – 2, Part-II B(ii)

Statement Showing Percentage of Literacy Tribe Wise and Sex Wise Among STs of A.P. in 1961, 1971 and 1981

Sl. No	Tribe	1961			1971			1981		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Andh	8.39	0.14	4.50	17.81	1.68	10.07	13.77	3.10	8.54
2	Bagatha	10.70	1.03	5.98	11.72	1.35	6.62	14.70	2.16	8.52
3	Chenchu	8.55	3.20	5.95	8.02	3.98	6.59	13.34	5.92	9.71
4	Bhil	51.11	2.63	28.91	13.55	2.45	7.86	28.67	8.33	19.92
5	Gadaba	4.00	1.04	2.52	5.00	1.20	3.43	10.60	3.04	10.59
6	Gond	5.02	0.26	2.65	5.97	2.57	5.35	10.27	1.25	5.75
7	Godugu	7.46	1.12	4.27	-	-	-	21.46	13.29	17.41
8	Hill Reddi	4.32	0.92	2.62	6.78	1.53	4.23	20.67	7.76	1.57
9	Jatapu	6.61	1.38	4.00	7.49	1.41	4.48	14.40	4.85	9.63
10	Kammara	4.84	0.94	2.90	12.47	2.92	7.76	12.15	4.31	8.26
11	Kattunayakan	3.45	-	1.35	24.81	7.50	15.22	35.12	17.01	26.32
12	Kolam	1.78	0.09	0.94	2.57	0.19	1.36	5.20	1.29	3.26
13	Konda Dora	5.36	1.07	3.22	5.09	0.97	3.29	9.07	2.45	5.79
14	Konda Dapu	8.07	1.98	5.07	8.12	2.70	5.50	22.51	14.33	18.49
15	Kondareddi	3.09	0.64	1.85	6.68	1.90	4.25	11.13	4.44	7.77
16	Khond	1.79	0.15	1.01	1.52	0.25	0.92	2.09	0.36	1.26
17	Kotia, Benthoriya	5.80	0.74	3.32	9.80	1.10	5.45	15.15	4.40	9.71
18	Koya	4.88	1.04	2.97	6.45	1.39	3.93	11.86	3.88	7.89
19	Kulia	5.00	2.22	3.53	7.83	26.03	14.58	16.67	6.09	11.62
20	Mali	11.13	3.64	7.41	13.03	1.67	7.53	16.49	2.79	9.73
21	Mannedora	8.91	5.66	7.17	9.34	1.96	5.61	9.89	3.49	6.72
22	Mukadora	5.08	0.68	2.95	3.60	0.26	1.95	6.08	1.54	3.84
23	Nayak	10.52	1.59	8.79	10.39	0.74	5.44	8.67	2.20	5.48
24	Pardhan	9.63	0.52	4.78	15.18	2.58	8.72	25.76	5.16	15.38
25	porja	3.31	0.26	1.82	4.53	0.18	2.39	5.06	0.70	2.88
26	Reddidora	4.15	0.26	2.20	3.49	0.23	1.86	4.21	0.81	2.54
27	Rona Rena	-	-	-	14.29	-	8.33	5.97	2.04	4.31
28	Savara	12.67	0.40	6.61	3.95	0.73	2.36	9.28	2.90	6.15
29	Sugali	7.68	1.61	4.72	10.11	2.63	6.48	9.94	1.88	6.02
30	Thoti	22.10	1.15	12.09	17.74	6.59	12.99	31.40	4.88	17.94
31	Valmike	118.57	2.97	10.71	20.09	5.02	12.87	28.38	10.03	19.37
32	Yanadi	7.53	2.16	4.84	8.46	3.07	5.85	10.73	4.54	7.74
33	Yerukula	12.23	3.71	8.03	15.28	5.02	10.23	20.83	8.04	14.55
Total:		7.26	1.48	4.41	8.47	2.13	5.34	12.02	3.46	7.82
Gen. population of A.P.		30.18	12.03	21.19	33.19	15.75	21.57	39.30	20.40	29.90

Source: Census reports of 1961, 1971 and 1981

Statement Showing the Enrolment General and ST Students in Andhra Pradesh

I Enrolment (1993-94):

Sl. No.	State	All enrolment			ST enrolment		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Pre-Primary	33167	24716	57883	762	479	1241
2	I - V	3887158	3254304	7141462	320466	205245	525711
3	VI - VII	904397	617684	1522081	43243	16147	59390
4	VIII - X	928492	560832	1489324	35930	10566	46496
5	XI - XII	5022	3172	8194	116	49	165
		5758236	4460708	10218944	400517	232486	633003

A comparative study of tribal education in 1979 and 2000 shockingly reveals that there is no vast difference either in the number of educational institutions or in the enrollment and dropout rates among ST students. Whereas there were 399 Ashram Schools in 1979, there are only 507 in the year 2000. This single figure reflects that government has not progressed far in reaching out to tribal communities where education is concerned.

Status of Tribal Educational Institutions in 1979

As on year 1976

Sl. No.	Institution	Tribal Welfare Dept.	
		Number	Students
1	Ashram schools	399	26746
2	Primary schools	1740	37729
3	Upper primary schools	115	4052
4	High schools	75	3630
5	Junior colleges	6	305

As on 1995-96

Sl. No.	Institution	Tribal Welfare Dept.	
		Number	Students
1	Residential Schools	65	17800
2	Ashram Schools	507	95450
3	Hostels	505	58260
4	Post-matric Scholarships	-	45000
5	Best Available schools	-	5482
6	Single Teacher Schools (GVVK)	4957	148700
7	Maa-Badi	2350	70500

While the state government accepts this inglorious scenario of tribal education, what the government desires to do in order to bring a golden era into A.P is further inglorious. It attributes poverty as the main cause for this state of affairs. It has come up with a vision wherein 99% literacy is to be achieved by year 2020. For the year 2000 the target for ST male literacy was 50% and for females, 25%. The government has come nowhere close to this target and in all likelihood, may never reach this target even by the year 2020.

Garbed in eloquent aspirations of providing high quality, effective, marketable and state of the art education, the new education policy has all the makings of being a vehicle of social disaster. Neither does it directly address the educational problems by creating more educational institutions nor does it address the problem of poverty for improving the participation of tribals in education.

Dictated by the World Bank, the A.P education reform package has a three pronged 'socialist' strategy of:

1. universal education through greater investments from 'development aid institutions' and from 'consumers/users'
2. encouragement of active private sector participation for providing quality education
3. drawing upon the 'voluntary' services of communities through 'Education Volunteers', 'shram daans', etc

Implications of this policy to the tribal people in A.P:

Dependency on External Loan:

Aiming for universal education would be universally applauded and more so if the government was to show such keenness in remote tribal areas. However, the primary hitch lies in the dependence on external aid for investment into education. Government can fulfill its promises only when an aid agency chooses to invest. Hence tribal education today is a highly project dependent and programme oriented activity and a tribal school is opened as long as there is project support and is shut down at the end of the project period. Education is no longer the primary area of investment from internal allocations of the government and is based on the vagaries of transnational loan agreements.

A recent example of this in AP is the education components under IFAD covered for certain districts with tribal concentration. A number of community schools were started in almost all the tribal villages in these districts which were hitherto not covered under any education facilities. After the IFAD programme was closed, so were the schools and the children were asked to go back to tend their cattle. At present it is the World Bank funded APERP, through the DPEP package, which now covers new areas as those districts covered under IFAD have already been 'developed.'

Education no longer a fundamental duty of the State:

Under the IFAD project the government has come up with a novel approach to education by claiming people's share to education services. Community Schools, Maa Badis and other nomenclatures given to these so called people's schools were started with collecting fees from

tribal parents whereas our constitution has directed that it is the fundamental duty of the government to provide free primary education. A large part of the education loan were spent from IFAD and UNICEF funds for teacher training under a programme called 'Joyful Learning' and for developing education material between 1994-98 in Visakhapatnam district. When the project funds dried up, the schools themselves were closed down making wastage of the training and the material was left to rot.

Privatisation - the Immediate Mandate:

Primary education under the new policy has ceased to be the primary responsibility of the state. By seeking to privatise education, the state has made a volte face from its role of ensuring social justice, especially in the tribal context. Primitive tribal communities (and more so the women of these communities) like the khonds, the chenchus, the konda reddies and others among whom literacy levels are much lower than the average figures, will never be able to access even primary education for their future generations. Today the tribal welfare department does not have the funds to provide food for the hundred thousand children residing in its ashram schools and is having to make ad hoc emergency arrangements.

The popularly used term "tenth failed" continues to be the status of most tribal youth which was also quoted by Haimendorf the renowned Anthropologist who first wrote about tribal education in A.P. Most of the tribals employed in government service are in the Class III and IV grades and the state has produced only one officer of the rank of IAS in all these years.

Inspite of the existence of large industries like Singareni Collieries, ITC Bhadrachalam and others in the tribal regions like Adilabad, Khammam and Warangal districts, which recruit skilled and professional workers on a large scale, tribals are unable to meet the necessary qualifications. The state government has failed to provide technical education relevant to the industries in this region. Those who do have the skills and qualifications are not absorbed into these industries, as social justice is not the mandate of the private and corporate sectors.

The most recent announcements made by the Education Minister of the State that all Junior and Professional Colleges are being phased out to the private sector or to private cooperatives includes the educational institutions in the tribal areas as well and foredooms an alarming trend that is to set in.

The concept of encouraging community participation and voluntarism has no noble motive behind the theory other than to shift the burden of education completely on to the shoulders of the poor. The tribals are expected to pay for their education. They are expected to volunteer to construct their school infrastructure, extend the services of one among their community to teach the children and undertake the management of the school. The government contributes a monthly honorarium of around Rs. 300 to the teacher as the sole caretaker of ensuring 100% literacy in his village. This contribution is terminated from the government's side once the project ends and the people may choose to continue with his services from their contributions alone.

This scheme of things have proved to be the cheapest option for the government because it reduces its education expenditure by multiple folds and can escape having permanent teachers on its payroll. However, there is a great hiatus between tribal teachers who are on the permanent employment of the government where they receive high salaries and incentives, and

those who are hired for an honorarium. This sudden rise in economic levels of a few has created a section of elite and powerful teachers' lobby in the tribal regions who are alienated from their cultures and who enjoy a dangerously high political clout.

The much touted impetus being given to IT shows no traces of percolating down to the tribal youth who have no avenues open after high school education. It is amidst these ironies that the government is publicising its e-governance efficiency in remote tribal and rural areas where the farmer can access his ration card at the click of a mouse!

Atrocities on Tribal Girls in Residential Schools:

Over crowded, lack of basic infrastructure, insufficient and indisciplined staff, insufficient diet continues to seriously ail the Ashram Schools across the state so much so that atrocities, sexual harassment and pregnancies among tribal girl students is reportedly high. The state government does not have the finances to provide even toilets and dormitories for tribal girls' hostels. In a health camp organized by Samata in 11 Tribal Girls Hostels in Visakhapatnam district, it was found that not a single school had toilet facilities, girls have to walk more than a kilometer for washing and bathing, incidence of sexual exploitation was quite rampant and they were all hushed up.

The lack of infrastructure facilities and shortfall of personnel like women wardens for girls' hostels, lack of medical facilities has given the male staff of these hostels leverage to resort to sexual harassment. No legal action has so far been taken in any of the incidents of atrocities reported to the authorities and instead the tribal girls are branded as 'immoral' in nature. Such lack of sensitivity on the part of government, and more so, cultural prejudices especially with regard to tribal women and girls is an important factor which acts against the girl child education in the tribal areas.

The sudden 'affluence' of the government tribal teachers who are paid high salaries and allowances when compared to their earlier state of poverty has created an elite section among the tribals. Instead of the motivation to bring education opportunities to their communities, they have begun to exploit them, influence the political powers and get away with harassment of their girl students. With the market forces invading these remote areas in the near future, such cultural and social chaos is imminent to happen where women become the worst victims.

Appalling Allocations for Tribal Education:

The present state budget for tribal school education under non plan is just about 650 lakhs 90% of which goes into expenditure on salaries alone and the plan budget for the whole tribal welfare department is 282 lakhs. This is the status of tribal education after the government claims that 70% of the funds received under tribal welfare are spent on education alone. The crux of the matter is not what percentage of the whole tribal welfare fund is allocated to education. The glaring reality is the fact that it is appallingly insufficient and slanderously misplaced and has no political accountability.

Tribal Health Status and State Policy on Health:

No single aspect of human life can be attributed to good or bad health as health is a holistic issue and various micro and macro conditions have direct and indirect impact of people's health. An analysis of a community's health status has to encompass its culture, its social and economic status and the larger external political influences and policies. Hence, the health situation of the tribal people in Andhra Pradesh are a result of these complex matrices of political decisions especially since liberalisation of the markets have reached up to the nooks and corners of the tribal habitations as well.

The state health policy is exactly on the lines of education where the state seeks to:

1. promote primary health care through decentralisation of health services by involving local communities
2. encouraging private investment in tertiary and secondary levels
3. promoting family welfare and population control
4. strengthening the performance of the public health system, and
5. enhancing health awareness

The future vision and planning of the state health system is being drawn up under APERP which would act as a Bible for implementing health programmes. Focussing on the above areas of health intervention, the strategies for achieving health for all are:

Community Health Workers (CHW's):

The Government will develop a programme that uses voluntary Community Health Workers to deliver simple health services, backed by a system of referrals to sub centres. The CHW's will need to provide 24-hour service on call and be compensated reasonably by the local community. In parallel, the State will 'consider' supplementing the current system of providing basic care through PHC's. This is how the policy defines making health accessible to all!

In the tribal areas, there is an army of 'trained' CHW's (all tribal women) appointed by the health department. They are medical practitioners without an idea of health and can manage to recognise four types/colours of medicines occasionally provided to them by the department. For the greater part they are unpaid assistants of the field level health staff. Their salaries are to be met from contributions of the community.

Increased Private Sector Participation:

In the existing situation where government provides free health care in the primary health centres, the number of tribal women who have access to these facilities are minimal. Where infant mortality rate is as high as 212, where 90% of childbirths are performed at home by traditional methods without any access to professional medical services, where women have multiple pregnancies and miscarriages, where there is no tertiary care during or after pregnancy, where government fails to deliver even simple iron tablets, where women and children are increasingly becoming vulnerable to new diseases hitherto non existent among tribals - the government, instead of strengthening its health support systems, has serious plans to withdraw. Especially areas like diagnosis of diseases like malaria, charging of fees for beds in government hospitals, etc which affect the poor will be privatised.

Health Budgets and Priorities:

At the policy level the state government expenditure on public health tripled from Rs.450 million to almost Rs.1,200 million with emphasis on primary health care, health services, family welfare and community development. A number of national health programmes like UIP, NMEP, CSSM, NTCP, NLEP, and others are implemented in the tribal areas of A.P and there has been a significant increase in state allocations in all these areas.

In the tribal areas, however, it appears as if family planning and population control are the primary areas of concern for the government instead of immunisation, safe deliveries and motherhood, endemic diseases like malaria and gastro enteritis, communicable diseases, goitre, etc. The health staff are given monthly targets for family planning, particularly sterilisation while there are no such targets for immunisation or bringing down mortality.

The ANM's and other health staff in the tribal areas visit the villages only to round up 'eligible couples' who are their potential targets. Tribal women are forced into sterilisation and lured with small incentives to adopt unsafe family planning methods. In areas where infant mortality is very high, it is ethically questionable how the government is pursuing population control with such venomous zeal when it has made no attempt to reduce the incidence of infant and child mortality among tribals. The Tribal Welfare Department or the health departments do not provide for treatment of cases with serious endemic diseases in these areas like goitre, sickle cell anaemia, malaria, etc although specific programmes exist in the policy.

Whereas statistics show an absolute increase in health education and training, allocation for training of nurses and para-medical health workers has reduced and the concentration is on providing for higher education in health. This is one important reason for neglect of health services in tribal areas as these areas are largely dependent on health workers, quacks or traditional healers. Professional medical doctors show no motivation to work in these remote areas and either fulfill the minimum mandatory period of service and then make all efforts to get postings in urban centres or manage to be absent from their areas of posting through fraudulent means. After liberalisation, there is a greater out-flow of medical professionals for higher education or more lucrative job opportunities outside the country while some are, on record, posted in some primary health centres in the tribal area!

Especially there is no training provided to dais and CHW's on safe deliveries, motherhood and gynaecological problems and hence none of the government programmes ever reach out to tribal women. There is a total absence of training or services in traditional systems or ayurveda which are most relevant to the tribal context and where the tribal women are themselves knowledgeable and have access to using these sources of medicine. However, research on traditional knowledge systems and herbal/natural forms of medicine which in no way benefits the tribal people, is on the rise by external research and donor agencies.

Health Related Services:

A good health policy does not stop at distribution of medicines but has a comprehensive approach to health. A good health policy would concentrate on a good economy, creation of safe and hygienic basic amenities and preventive health. The new health strategy of A.P for the tribal areas has no mention of providing safe drinking water which is one of the most serious problems in the tribal areas. Every year there are wide spread deaths during the monsoons as a result of diarrhoea and water borne diseases. Malaria is another serious

epidemic here. The whole state health machinery is geared towards distribution of chloroquine, spraying of DDT and taking of blood smears while there is not a single village which is provided with sewerage and sanitation facilities.

The government does not look at proper housing, food sufficiency and other important needs as linked to tribal health. Reduction in food subsidies to the poor has had drastic consequences on the food intake of women who are the first to sacrifice their share to the rest of the family. The state government has reduced the amount of rice and other domestic items given under ration and has placed a ceiling on the size of the family it provides ration to. It has increased the cost of rice from Rs. 2.00/kg to Rs. 6.00/kg while the quality of rice supplied is the most inferior quality. GCC Ltd, which runs the public distribution depots in the tribal areas of A.P is under the threat of being closed down or privatised under the new economic policy and has been deliberately made to reflect all the evils attached to a public sector enterprise.

Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP):

The tribals of A.P earn a greater part of their livelihood through collection of forest produce (NTFP) which is sold at the weekly markets. GCC Ltd has monopoly rights over purchase and trade of NTFP in A.P. Increasingly, GCC Ltd does not have the capital flow to purchase forest produce from the tribals who are forced to sell to private traders under highly exploitative conditions. While the monopoly law restricts the tribal from selling his produce for a better price in the open market, it does not bind GCC Ltd to purchase all the produce coming out of these areas.

Tribal women who are actively involved in collection and sale of forest produce face severe exploitation from traders and do not get a fair price for their labour. This market exploitation has repercussions on the consumption of food by tribal women for whom NTFP is the only source of cash flow either to purchase food or other domestic items for the household. A good example is the case of tribal women from a small tribal village called Gonduru in Visakhapatnam district. The women were trained for processing and packaging of tamarind, an important NTFP from this area. However, they are prohibited from selling this value-added product in the open market where they receive a better price, because of the monopoly restriction. Even after the visit of the chief minister of the state who spoke eloquently of the women's skills and promised to support all the women's groups through better marketing linkages and to relax the restrictions, the women are forced to sell their products 'illegally'.

Launching fanciful schemes in the name of women's development is the prerogative of the government, and not decentralisation of powers and rights over resources to poor tribal women especially where it concerns their basic sustenance. There is a lack-lustre enthusiasm on the part of the state government to remove these monopoly restrictions and replace them with support price options so that tribals may earn a better income. This is a clear indicator of how privatisation is not for the benefit of the poor but only where the industry/ the capital owners are to flourish from such policy changes.

The new agriculture and forest policies and their impact on tribal women's health:

The Joint Forest Management programme in A.P launched in 1993 has been implemented in most of the tribal villages, particularly in Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Adilabad districts. With the aid of development incentives like construction of roads, check-dams, etc, the tribals are being drawn into forming Vana Samrakshana Samithis, the pre requisite being that they give up their podu cultivation and take up plantations suggested by the forest department. The impact of this is being seen among the tribals in Visakhapatnam district where the tribals have less to consume, particularly the diverse traditional varieties of crops, as most of the lands have been converted into plantations. Tribal women now get to consume less food unless they purchase from the market. Women's knowledge in forestry is being downsized by the new tribe of external technical consultants forcing their expertise of forestry on to them.

The external funding projects to the tribal areas with World Bank in the lead are pressurising for new forms of economy in these areas and are pushing for constitutional amendments to bring in corporatised agriculture, large farm holdings, hybridisation and extension of agricultural loans so that farmers can grow cash crops and high capital intensive crops. In Visakhapatnam district, the tribals have rich traditional systems of agriculture, horticulture and vegetable cultivation which reflect the diversity of crops, the consumption nature of economy and the optimal usage of land and resources with minimum capital and external support.

In this district, the government has over a period, been trying to shift the economy of the tribals into new forms of monocultures without forethought to the hazards that they would be exposing the tribals, especially the women who have an important role in the traditional form of agriculture. One of the most fearsome aspects of this new shift is the lack of any information or awareness to tribals on the skills required, the seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, the patterns and yields and the influence of macro market forces on these crops.

Alcoholism and Tribal Women's Struggles:

Under the new economic policies of the state, revenues are to be earned from lucrative sectors like sale of liquor. The ban that was imposed on sale and consumption of liquor after strong protests from women across the state, was lifted by the present government as it felt that it could not overcome the state deficits without income from this important source. The heavy burden of debt accumulated by political decision-makers is inflicted on poor women who have to work harder, not for a better nutrition and quality of life, but in order to keep their men swaying in the liquor dens and the state out of troubled waters! The state is directly responsible for such indirectly negative policies affecting women's health.

When tribal women in PNDPalem village of Visakhapatnam district refused to allow the liquor mafia to set up its outlets in the tribal villages, they were brutally 'punished' for daring to defy the local powers and excise authorities. The mafia swooped down on them with the excise police in tow, their houses were demolished, they were dragged into illegal custody, tortured physically and mentally, forced to drink the urine of the men as a result of which one of the women succumbed to the injuries. The police refused to even register the case filed by the women. Legal suits filed against the excise authorities has led to constant harassment on the women. This nature of brutality is encouraged by the state so that women would rather face the hazards of alcoholism than the wrath of the authorities.

Tribal Women's Health and Forest Rights:

All natural resources in the forest (where unfortunately tribals also live) are under serious threat of privatisation in the state under the rationale that industry has the capacity to invest whereas people and government do not have the resources to do so. Hence, handing over of forests to mineral, paper, wood based industries would lead to economic progress of the country as well as improve the incomes of forest dwellers. In the year 2000 the state government passed a G.O (No.112) to transfer forest lands to industries like Reliance and ITC Bhadrachalam through the village institutions of Vana Samrakshana Samithis. Strong protests from NGO's and opposition parties who highlighted the government's back door approaches to privatisation of forest resources, led to hasty withdrawal of the proposals.

Similarly, in A.P the mineral wealth found in the tribal areas was attempted to be sold away to private mining industries either by illegally transferring tribal lands or even worse, by removing the constitutional safeguards (Fifth Schedule of the Constitution) to the tribal people. Mining is one of the important growth engines in the new reforms package of the government and most of the minerals in A.P are found in the tribal areas. With all the pretensions of bringing in prosperity to the tribals, the state government passed a resolution last year to amend the state laws under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution where industries would not be hindered by legal obstacles.

Impact of Industrialisation on Tribal Women's Health and Status

The Case of Visakhapatnam district:

In Visakhapatnam district land in the scheduled area was given to big private mining companies like the Birla Periclase, a group of Aditya Birla in the years 1991-97. The mining operations consisted of laying a road to the mine-site. The Border Roads Organisation, a wing of the Indian Army was hired to undertake this task. The posting of more than three thousand military forces in such an interior tribal pocket led to severe abuse and exploitation of tribal women and girls. They were being exposed to new forms of health hazards like AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

In a region where the government is unable to deliver its basic health responsibilities it has ignored the emergence of new health problems on tribal women. Gang rapes and sexual violence which were reported to the authorities, were brutally hushed up and no punitive action was ever taken. State violence against women struggling against the mining project also saw an increase under the influence of corporate pressure to suppress social protest. Thus social protection for tribal women started deteriorating even before the actual mining operations took place whereas social evils and health problems like these are completely absent in their traditional way of life.

The nature of economy that the new policies of the A.P government are ushering in are corporatisation of forests, agriculture and other resources of the tribals driving them out of their lands. Tribal women are worst affected as they can neither claim employment nor do they have the skills to face the new economic situations. The condition of tribal women in Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh is a result of decades of displacement, industrialisation and economic reforms at the cost of the tribals. Forced into migration and facing harassment from revenue and forest officials over 'illegal encroachments' tribal women

have been pushed into prostitution and other similar forms of livelihood in the tribal towns of Araku, Paderu, Chintapalli, etc.

Although these are macro issues related to the entire tribal population, they have very subtle but very definite intrusion into tribal women's rights, status and health. In the traditional economy, a tribal woman has a vital role and control over the resources of the land. Whether agriculture or collection of forest produce, the tribal economy cannot do without the women's contribution. In spite of non existence of written laws the tribal women enjoy an economic status and decision making powers over the surrounding natural resources unlike women in external societies. The customary practices ensure that resources are available, accessible and sustained for women's usage either for food, medicinal purposes or for domestic consumption. Their economy recognises the needs of the women from the land and the forests. Tribal women are therefore at an advantage to other rural women as their health needs are met to an extent, from the forest even in the absence of any external medical services.

Conclusions:

Unmindful of the tragedy that is to confront the tribals, the state government is going ahead with its liberalisation policies in these remote tribal areas by inviting multinationals and Non Resident Indians for taking up tourism, mining, film, agri-based and other industries in the name of tribal development. What happens to the tribal women and their health is of no consequence to the government as women's bodies are considered negotiable commodities in lieu of economic prosperity of a few industries and political powers. This is the gender justice and gender equality situation of Andhra Pradesh under the structural adjustment program in the post liberalised state.

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