



Schedule Tribe Participation in Sports

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Abstract:

Sports is an essential part of the society, which exists in various forms throughout the evolution of the society. The presence of sports can be witnessed as much in simple society as in a complex advanced society. Sports is a worldwide phenomenon and people discuss about sports at workplace, at home, on campuses, with friends and colleagues. Conversations with strangers also emit from a common topic of sports. Social relations often revolve around sports. Individuals identify with teams and athletes in such an extent that the outcomes of games influence their behaviour, actions and interactions. Those activities, though highly organized and institutionalized, are not commercialized and, therefore, do not offer the participants the promise of a professional career. Scheduled Tribes (ST) in India have a significant, though often overlooked, role in both sports and culture.

Keywords: *Sports, Tribal Society.*

Introduction:

It further enhances their personal status as they describe and critique athletes, games, teams, coaching decisions, and media commentaries. Sports often broadens the social networks which extends to workplace, politics, education and other spheres of their lives. The experience of playing sports is often remembered as special and important in their lives. In doing so, the narrative takes an undertone of historical past and also brings forth the contemporary location of sports in postmodern society. looks at sports in tribal society in India and identifies the underlying factors and impact of sports in tribal society. Land alienation, displacement and systematic oppression, has made it very challenging for the tribal societies and communities to develop

and prosper. For any society to develop and grow, stability and peaceful environment is essential. Struggling and fighting against unlawful encroachment, being displaced from the home land, and to begin a livelihood in a displaced land has become an integral part of tribal narrative and history. Sports not only creates opportunities for conversations but it also forms and nurture relationships. Thus sports are a very important part of the society as well as the members of that society. Games on the other hand captures the spirit of most informal, unorganized youth sports. There are also many recreational sports played with friends and strangers alike and what might be called “folk games.” The emotional intensity, group solidarity, and sense of achievement that often occur in sports make sport participation

more memorable than many other activities. Sports as an institution is an important aspect of every society. One may find the presence of sports in every form of society, whether it were ancient Greek or the modern states. Most sports are governed today are governed Hobbesian war-of-all-against-all notion of competition. They contribute to India's sporting achievements, particularly in sports requiring physical prowess and agility, and their unique cultural traditions are vital to the nation's diverse heritage. Efforts are underway to empower these communities, focusing on education, health, and socio-economic development, while also preserving their distinct cultural identities. By taking away forest lands for industries and plantation forestry instead of preserving natural species that provide livelihood to these people, the government was depriving them of the basic means of livelihood. This narrative is a long standing one with little to merge change, throughout the passage of time. It seems as if the world has been spinning a little faster and yet the stories/ biographies of these indigenous people stand still. The success stories are rare but it is worth mentioning the conflict over Niyamgiri which was won by Odisha's Dongria Kondhs as well as the Baiga tribe of Madhya Pradesh who have become the first indigenous people to get habitat rights in India after a century-long struggle. Challenges seems to become a part of the existence of indigenous lives which looks inevitable. The research embarks upon and looks at these indigenous society through the lens of sports and understand the impact and significance of sports in the lives of tribal people. The study would be carried out in the states of Jharkhand and Orissa. The rationale of choosing these states lies in the fact that these two states were a part of the chotanagpur plateau.

Scheduled Tribe A Constitutional Concept:

A 'Scheduled Tribe', on the contrary, is primarily an administrative and constitutional concept. It refers to a tribal community, which is enlisted under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution. According to the Indian Constitution, a tribe alone can be specified as Scheduled Tribe. But at the same time, the word tribe is nowhere defined in the Constitution. Furthermore, the Constitution is also silent about the principles or policies to be adopted for specifying a "tribe" as a scheduled tribe. According to Article 342 of the Constitution, "The President may, with respect to any State or Union Territory and where it is a state, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities, which shall, for the purpose of this Constitution, be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory, as the case may be." Thus, Article 342 only clarifies that for any ethnic group to become eligible to be specified as a Scheduled Tribe, it should necessarily be a tribe in the first place. In other words, non-tribal castes or communities are not eligible to be specified as Scheduled Tribes. Despite the difficulties, which stood in the way of identification of tribes as Scheduled Tribes, there has been complete awareness about the extreme social, educational and economic backwardness of the tribal communities among the policy makers, planners and administrators of the country. But before introducing protective and ameliorator measures, there was a need to draw a list of such tribal communities as required care and protection for their growth and development. The first list in this regard was drawn in the year 1931 under the name "Primitive Tribes". Subsequently, under the Government of India Act, 1935, a list of "Backward Tribes" was

specified for the provinces of India. In fact, the list of tribes specified under the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 was drawn by making additions to the list of “Backward Tribes” under the Government of India Act, 1935.

Sports in India:

Looking at the Indian context, there are many sportsmen who hail from humble background, having little or no means of livelihood. For example- in hockey, we can look at the Dilip tirkey who hails from Orissa but went to become a celebrated person in Indian sports arena, especially in Hockey. In contemporary times, we should also look at other players like M.S Dhoni, Suresh Raina, Irfan Pathan, Yusuf Pathan, Rinku Singh in the IPL. Women cricket team also sheds light in this context. In the same spirit, at how sports has impacted the lives of tribal Adivasi communities in India, especially in the tribal region of Orissa and Jharkhand. These tribal states have presented many notable sportsperson (both sportsmen and sportswomen) like Jaipal Singh Munda, Ignius Kujur, Dilip Tirkey, Nilam Sanjeep Xess, Birendra lakra, as well as deep grace ekka, salima tete, Lazraus Barla (Olympian) are some of the women who have made effective contributions to the Indian Sports. Nikki Pradhan, who was named a member of the Indian women’s hockey squad which will travel to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for the upcoming Olympic Games, has become the first female hockey player from the state to participate in the international sporting event. Nikki Pradhan, India midfielder and the first female player from Jharkhand to represent the country in Olympics spoke favourably about Jaipal Singh’s contributions.

Participation of the Scheduled Tribe Players:

Oraon and Munda. During the study most of the talented players were found to belong to these three tribal communities. These communities have more exposure to education and they are more aware about different schemes and facilities meant for tribal people. At different sports associations Oraon forms the majority (45.45%) followed by the Santals (37.76%), while in districts the Santal forms the majority (55.56%) followed by the Munda players (19.44%). It may be because these three tribal groups have more exposure about sports. Hill tribes like Bhutia, Tamang and Lepcha also involved themselves in different mainstream sports like football, archery, Karate (Table No. 3.i and 3.ii). In this context name of two sisters Paril Lepcha and Leerum Lepcha should be mentioned. They have own a number of medals in state and national level games. Their parents were also archers and they have established Gorkha Archery Training Centre at Kalimpong for giving training to the upcoming players. Paril Lepcha is now working under West Bengal police service. Some other tribes are also participating in different sports.

Educational Status of the Scheduled Tribe Players:

As per available data the players of different associations show that they are mostly studying in class IX to X (40.32%) or have studied upto that level. Some of the players are continuing after Madhyamik. Only 3 females were found to be graduates. The district level data on 36 players depict that the players are either studying at the middle school or in class IX-X as most of the identified players of five districts are sub junior or junior level players. Only one male graduate player was found from the district

(Table No. 4.i and 4.ii). It is important to note that the players do not get chance to attend school regularly. Retention in one class or dropout is a common scenario for the talented ST players. The reason is more attention in sports than in education. The hostellers do not even attend school for months and sit for regular examination.

Conclusion:

Government of India has an unwavering commitment towards development of Tribal communities. While anticipating the tremendous challenges in developing them, and at the same time conserving their cultural heritage, for a population so diverse and unique in their own ways with more than 705 different tribal communities spread across the country, the ministry has envisaged and implemented several initiatives. In India sports are considered to be of great economic value. Some mainstream team games like cricket, football, hockey, kabaddi are played at the international level. Individual players also have contributions in international competitions in the events like archery, athletics, gymnastics etc. Such sports fetch lots of money to the players. Special sports quota is there in government jobs. The Scheduled Tribe players can take sports professionally and catch the opportunity to apply for the government jobs. In the recent decade commercialisation of sports led many players to become a global entity. Although the Scheduled Tribe players could be hardly visible in commercialised platform of sport, but the talented players can be successful at international level if they receive proper coaching.

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