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# A REVIEW OF TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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## Abstract

Because certain groups of society are excluded from the decision-making process due to their unique historical socio-cultural experiences, empowerment inevitably requires political inclusion in the institutions of decision-making as well as a change in the existing power relations. Therefore, proper and effective representation in the institutions of governance is necessary for people to feel empowered in a democratic political system and to participate in making decisions that have an impact on their daily lives. Political inclusion through representation and empowerment are fundamentally connected. Despite the various definitions and approaches to empowerment, it can be agreed that marginalized and previously excluded groups' representation and political presence in institutions of governance will give them significant power to alter the game's rules and to negotiate power relations with the privileged groups of society. Evidently, oppressed groups, including unorganized workers, poor peasants, tribal people, dalits, and women, see empowerment as goals of social justice and economic development in the democratic process. Furthermore, it is expected that the political, social, and economic landscapes will change as a result of the inclusion of excluded groups like Schedule Tribes in politics. Political empowerment, which refers to a group's level of significant representation and influence in political decision-making, is also known as political inclusion. As a result, this essay explores India's political empowerment and tribal development.

**KEY NOTES: Political empowerment, Political inclusion, Social, Economic and tribal development.**

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The term "empowerment" has been controversial and has been used to refer to a variety of social and psychological changes in various circumstances. The idea has been described as "the expansion of people's capabilities and choices, the ability to exercise choice based on freedom from hunger, want, and deprivation; and the opportunity to participate in, or endorse, decisions that affect their lives" in its much wider connotation. The term "empowerment" is used in a variety of situations, including discussions of human rights, economic insecurity, and disadvantaged groups' capacity-building efforts. Developing people's capacities, negotiation skills, and capacity is one key facet of empowerment; the other is acquiring the authority to make decisions or take part in decision-making on matters that have an impact on their life. Therefore, Beresford and Coft define empowerment as "enabling people to exercise power and have greater control over their lives." This entails having a bigger voice in the institutions, organizations, and circumstances that have an impact on them.

Despite the many different approaches and interpretations of the term "empowerment," it is fundamentally connected to the sociological notion of "power" and challenges the conditions of powerlessness

and the unbalanced distribution of power in a society. We can broadly distinguish two ways of defining the meaning of the idea of power in sociological literature on the subject. The Max Weber. And Robert Dahl (1978). Such an explanation, according to (1957), places power in a social relationship where one person exercises power over another due to his or her monopoly of resources that lead to power. The second approach emphasizes seeing power as "power to do something," in contrast to the first view, which views power as "power over someone." This perspective on power emphasizes the abilities or capacities of individuals or groups to achieve results of their choice without engaging in a structure interaction rather than the social relations of power between persons.

The idea of empowerment is similar to this second definition of power in that it gives individuals or groups more control over topics that have an impact on their lives by enhancing their powers, capabilities, and choices. When viewed in this way, empowering a person, a group, or a society may aid in redistributing unjust power dynamics within and between families and communities. Thus, empowerment aims to achieve social equality by delegitimizing the institutions, systems, and social structures that uphold unequal power

relations. Therefore, empowerment is a process aimed at altering the character and direction of the structural forces that marginalize women and other underrepresented groups in a given context. The context is provided. It is also pictured as a means of empowering marginalized groups.

## 1.2 EMPOWERMENT AND POLITICAL INCLUSION

Given that some segments of society are excluded from the decision-making process because of unique historical, socio-cultural experiences, empowerment inevitably requires political inclusion in the institutions of decision-making and a change in the existing power relations. Therefore, proper and effective representation in the institutions of governance is necessary for people to feel empowered in a democratic political structure so that they can express their concerns and participate in making decisions that will have an impact on their daily lives.

Political inclusion through representation and empowerment are fundamentally connected. Despite the various definitions and approaches to empowerment, it is generally accepted that marginalized and previously excluded groups' political representation and presence in institutions

of governance will give them significant power to alter the game's rules and to negotiate power relations with the privileged segments of society. Evidently, oppressed groups like the unorganized workforce, poor peasants, tribal people, dalits, and women see empowerment as goals of social justice and economic development in the democratic process. Furthermore, it is expected that the political, social, and economic landscapes will change as a result of the inclusion of excluded groups like Scheduled Tribes in politics. Political inclusion (inclusion) is another term for political empowerment, which refers to a group's level of influence and representation in political decision-making. Based on Bobo and Gilliam. Because of its influence on a number of socio-psychological variables, including levels of political trust, efficacy, and political knowledge, political empowerment should boost involvement. When talking about black empowerment, it was hypothesized that blacks in high-empowerment areas should have greater levels of confidence in the government, greater efficacy, and political literacy than blacks in low-empowerment areas. All of which ought to result in greater levels of participation.

### 1.3 POWER AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

A relationship between a representative and a constituent is referred to as representation. In this relationship, the representative holds the power to carry out a variety of acts that incorporate the consent of the constituent. When viewed in this light, a representative's power always stems from the constituents' consent, which they give to the representative in order for them to act or decide on their behalf. The function of representation is complex. Burke, Edmund. The representative's responsibility as "one who ought to respect his constituents' options, which ought to prefer their interest above his own, but who ought not to sacrifice his impartial option in deciding for the good of the entire nation."

Whalke et al.'s further explanation of the roles of representatives makes a distinction between three common forms of representation: "delegates," "trustees," and "politicos." The idea behind the delegate position is that representatives shouldn't base decisions on their own convictions or independent judgement. There are two main conceptions of the trustee role: a moralistic conception, where the representative is a free agent and follows what he perceives to be right or just, and a rational conception, where the representative follows his own judgement

based on a review of the available evidence and his comprehension of the issues at hand. Finally, the politician, as a form of representational function, is predisposed in different ways to both trustee and delegate roles. He is more sensitive to competing role assumptions and more adaptable in choosing a style that works for his decision-making. The trustee and delegate orientations should be understood as the poles of a continuum of styles that makes up representation, with a midpoint where the orientations tend to overlap and, within a range, give rise to a political function.

### 1.4 POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Political representation and empowerment literature emphasises two key tenets of representation: substantive representation and descriptive representation. Substantive representation and programmes to be represented are not always carried out by members of the community they are supposed to represent. Significant representation is predicated on the idea that representatives should act on behalf of the citizens, and placing too much emphasis on attendance risks deflecting attention from the more pressing issue of what the representatives really do. The behaviors of the representatives count more than their traits when it comes to substantive representation, according to Pitkin, who defines the term. Acting in the represented

group's (constitutes') best interests and in response to them. Representatives may and probably surely will differ from those they serve in terms of social and sexual preferences as well as in their perception of the genuine priorities of their constituency, she continues. Fair representation is achieved in a more ongoing process, which depends on a level of responsiveness to the electorate, rather than being promised in advance (by selecting one from the same group).

### **1.5 A SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION,**

Modern liberal representative democracies place a high priority on substantive representation, which is based on political parties and party ideas. One might imagine a reformist interpretation of Pitkin's ideas about substantive representation, nevertheless, which gives the representatives an excessive amount of discretion over their decisions and actions. John Phillips. Claims that the change from direct to representative democracy "has shifted the emphasis from what policies, preferences, and ideas they represent to who the politicians are, and in doing so, has made accountability to the electorate a preeminent concern, which minimizes the significance of individuals elected." The effectiveness of representation under this reformist interpretation of substantive

representation rests on increasingly stringent accountability systems that tie politicians more closely to the viewpoints they claim to represent. To make a more general argument, I would like to say that substantive representation in a democratic system manifests itself in three ways: through the activities or participation of representatives in making decisions on their behalf, through responsiveness of the representative to constituent interests, and through the mechanism of accountability, which provides checks and balances on independent judgement and action of representatives.

Descriptive representation, as opposed to substantive representation, places more emphasis on "who represent" than "what policies or ideas the representative is representing." In descriptive representation, "representatives are in their own persons and lives in some sense typically of the larger class of persons whom they represent." The representative is expected to belong to the group she/he represents and should share the same life experiences. It is argued that descriptive representation can signify shared experience as well as observable qualities like skin colour, ethnicity, or gender.

## **1.6 IMPORTANT REPRESENTATIVE IN PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIs)**

In actuality, substantive representation is demonstrated by knowledge of the policies, programmes, and operations of PRIs as well as participation in their activities. In general, there are two approaches to evaluate the degree of elected officials' involvement in the panchayat. The first is done by looking at what happens in the panchayat meetings and in the various panchayati committees to decide on various activities for the general development of the GP, and the second is done by looking into their overall participation in local politics and public life. At this point, it is crucial to emphasise that elected officials' engagement also entails ongoing communication with the people they represent. This interaction enables them to ascertain the interests and needs of the people they serve and to take action to address those requirements.

The theoretical analysis of substantive representation referred to the representation of specific viewpoints held by constituents and the promotion of these viewpoints for the benefit of the constituency as a whole. Understanding the many programmes and policies of the institution is a must when advocating for constituent views and striving to advance constituent welfare.

Therefore, we made an effort to determine the extent to which Scheduled Tribes Representatives were aware of the goals and objectives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and of development programmes that benefited both their particular group and the entire constituency.

## **1.7 DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION IN THE PRIS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ**

For the sake of study, we characterized descriptive representation as a case of "mirror representation," in which the representatives are true to themselves and live lives that are, in some ways, relevant to the larger class of people they represent. The analysis presented here is based on Jane Man Bridge's thesis of "descriptive representation," which provides examples of black legislators who represent their constituents and women legislators who represent their constituents. Man Bridge points out that, in addition to providing a more accurate depiction of the subject, descriptive representation aids the representative in creating a social context and preserving the legitimacy of the subject. The key components of descriptive representation, which increase the equality of discussion in a democracy, are defined as effective communication and the expression of group-specific interests. As

previously mentioned, we looked at three fundamental issues in an effort to evaluate the descriptive representation of Scheduled Tribes (STs): the representation of group-specific interests, the creation of social meaning for the excluded group, and maintaining de facto legitimacy at the Panchayati Raj Instructions (PRIs).

### **1.8 REPRESENTATION OF GROUP SPECIFIC INTEREST, SECTION**

One of the fundamental tenets of descriptive representation is that, because the representatives are members of the target group and have firsthand knowledge of its concerns, it will serve their needs and interests. Since they are expected to communicate effectively with their constituents and are in a position to articulate those constituents' interests, representatives who use descriptive representation are able to present the specific interests of the ground in the best possible way. Because both the representative and the constituents are members of the same group, the constituents also have a tendency to contact their representatives more frequently. A more responsive and responsible government would result from improved communication between representatives and constituents, which is another benefit of descriptive representation. We looked at

the responsiveness and accountability of ST Representatives as well as their efforts to articulate the group's special interests and concerns in the PRIs in order to study the features of representation of group-specific interests of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Panchayati Raj Instructions (PRIs). As a result of greater communication between representatives and constituents, we regarded responsiveness to group-specific interests, answerability, and accountability as outcomes that contribute to stronger deliberative democracy.

### **1.9 CONCLUSION**

We can therefore draw the conclusion that, even though political representation and participation may be necessary conditions to include STs in institutions of decision-making, they are insufficient to give them power, particularly in the absence of institutional arrangements that are supportive of structural transformation and that are enabling. Additionally, it is important to distinguish between representation and participation that results in the empowerment of marginalized communities like STs because both involve overcoming obstacles in different areas of endeavor. While a supportive state intervention can address the issue of underrepresentation, effective participation and, consequently, employment require

multifaceted actions from both state institutions and civil society organisations. Internal community mobilization and the development of identities through forceful politics may be helpful in this approach.

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