‘Revisiting and Reassembling Tribal Studies in India - Special Focus on the North East’

A National Conference organized by:
Centre for Social Justice and Governance, TISS, Mumbai,
Don Bosco Institute of Social Sciences, ADBU, Guwahati
&
Tribal Intellectual Collective India

ADBU Conference Hall
25th & 26th of March 2013

Call for papers

Tribes constitute over eight percent of India’s population and occupy around twenty percent of the country’s geographic area. Diverse tribal communities are spread across the country with a high concentration in the central, eastern and north-eastern regions. Their ancestors have bequeathed to them serene water bodies, forests, diverse flora and fauna – around which their rich histories, spirituality and cultural diversity are intrinsically woven.

Their territories abundant in minerals and natural resources have recently become geopolitically conspicuous – invoking the interests of imperious neoliberal forces. The growth-driven development paradigm posits a trajectory of tribal displacement and impoverishment, raising fundamental questions pertaining to development and governance in tribal areas.

When compared with other social groups in the country, tribes rank the lowest in all human development indicators. Forty eight percent of the total tribal population is illiterate. Female literacy is below twenty percent in 108 districts. With regards to health and unemployment, the numbers are far worse. The National Crime Records Bureau Report reveals that tribes in India continually end up as victims of various crimes such as, murder, rape, kidnapping, abduction, arson and trafficking. The tribes and indigenous peoples of the country, who have become synonymous with low income, unemployment and poverty due to exploitation and indiscriminate neglect, are confronted, yet again, with the threat of dispossession, subjugation and displacement.

In the context of north-east India, it can be seen that the efforts of the legislature, executive and judiciary have done little to alleviate the plight of a large number of tribes. Tribal areas presently display distorted contours and contradictions that are far from being congruent to the democracy of India. The fact that tribal areas are torn apart by strife, conflict and militarization only highlights the persistence of varied politico historical contradictions. Governance in these areas has failed to deliver the promises of the fruits of independence and development to the country’s first citizens.

Within Tribal Studies a lot of effort have been invested to understand and articulate paradigms of intervention. Critical initiatives towards tribal empowerment have made much contribution in different parts of the country. However, the approaches of these interventions have largely been top down and issue-based; most often focusing on issues of livelihood, education, health, etc., and negating key fundamental issues pertaining to the organic reality of the communities. This has led to what is now called ‘tribal disempowerment’. In this light, the unique lived experiences and ground
realities of the tribes and indigenous peoples of the north east merit a just relooking and revisiting for purposeful re-examination and intervention. Within such a frame, it is proposed that we interrogate i) trajectory of Tribal Studies in India (ii) indigenous methodological approaches to capture the lived-reality of the tribes and indigenous peoples; and iii) appraising and apprehending the intervention perspectives that would arrest the present predicament of the tribal people.

As social work education celebrates its 75th year in India, the Assam Don Bosco University (ADBU) and Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai jointly seek to commemorate this event by revisiting and reassembling tribal studies and tribal social work within the country in general, and specifically for this conference; north-east in particular. Papers that deal with these themes are invited.

There will be four thematic sessions spread over two days and Papers may be submitted addressing only the themes below:

1. Revisiting Tribal Studies in India: Identifying Theoretical Shifts
2. Reassembling Tribal Studies in Northeast: From Context to Text
3. Articulating Indigenous Methodologies: Clarifying Tribal Epistemology
4. Tribal Social Work: Reformulating Axiology, Practice and Intervention

Please send your abstracts (300 words) by email along with your contact details (email, phone no, postal address) and current institutional affiliation to the following email ID: bodhi@tiss.edu or victor.narzary@gmail.com

Details and updates also available at:

http://tiss.edu and http://dbuniversity.ac.in

All completed Papers will be published in the online “Journal of Tribal Intellectual Collective India”

Timeline:

- Last date for receiving abstracts: 27th of January, 2013
- Intimation regarding acceptance of abstract: 31st of January, 2013
- Last date of submission of full paper: 10th of March 2013

Hospitality and Traveling:

There is no funding from any source for this National Conference. Those interested in participating in the Conference may come so at their own expense. The organizing committee will make modest arrangements for lodging only. Food and travelling will be borne by individual participants.

Contact Conference organisers @

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