Celebrating 75 Years of Social Work Education in India

**Revisiting and Reassembling Tribal Studies in India - Special Focus on Chottanagpur**

A National Conference organized by:

Centre for Social Justice and Governance, TISS, Mumbai,

&

Tribal Intellectual Collective India

to be held at

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai Campus

12th & 13th of July 2013

*Centre for Social Justice and Governance is Centre within the School of Social Work, TISS. It envelops within its fold twin domains of Caste and Tribes. It focuses on historiographies of Dalits and Tribes on the one hand and policy practice on the other. It offers an M.A in Social Work in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action.*

*Tribal Intellectual Collective India is a collective of Critical Academics actively engaging with Tribes and their lived realities in India. Most of its members are located in the University system and various Tribal Organizations working on issues of Integration and Empowerment.*

*As Social Work education celebrates its 75th year in India, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Tribal Intellectual Collective India, jointly seek to commemorate this event in a series of six National conferences (focused on the North East, Chottanagpur, Himalayan Range, Islands, South and Western Regions) by revisiting and reassembling Tribal Studies and Tribal Social Work within the country. The focus for this particular conference is the Chottanagpur region.*

**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 the Chottanagpur region, 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 democratic principles of India. The fact that tribal areas are torn apart by strife, conflict and militarization
highlight the persistence of varied politico historical contradictions. Governance in these areas has failed to deliver the fruits of independence and development.

Within Tribal Studies a lot of effort has 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 culture, livelihood, education, health, etc. - negating key fundamental issues pertaining to the organic lived 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 Chottanagpur region merit a just re-looking 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.

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 and Reassembling Tribal Studies in India: Identifying Theoretical Shifts
2. Contesting Received Theories: From Context to Text
3. Articulating Indigenous Methodologies: Epistemological Communities in Action
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 Details and updates available at http://tiss.edu. All completed Papers will be published in the Journal of Tribal Intellectual Collective India

Time line:
- Last date for receiving abstracts: 8th of June, 2013
- Intimation regarding acceptance of abstract: 12th of June, 2013
- Last date of submission of full paper: 30th of June 2013

Hospitality and Traveling:

There is no funding from any source for this National Conference. Those interested in participating may do so at their own expense. The organizers will make modest arrangements for accommodation only.

Contact Conference Organisers

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