International Seminar

on

Indian State and Indigenous / Tribal Peoples: Revisiting Philosophical Foundations of Constitutional Guarantees

Organized by

Bodoland University &

Center for Social Justice and Governance
Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Supported by

Tribal Intellectual Collective India

Venue: Bodoland University, Kokrajhar

Date: 28th and 29th March 2014
Seminar Theme:  
Indian State and Indigenous /Tribal Peoples – 
Revisiting Philosophical Foundations of Constitutional Guarantees

Concept Note

With a population of 104.3 million, the indigenous/tribal peoples in India are recognized as ‘Scheduled Tribes’ by the Indian Constitution. Out of 5,653 distinct communities in India, 700 of them are considered to be ‘Scheduled Tribes’ notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India. The Constitution of India, which came into existence on 26th January 1950, addresses Indigenous peoples or Scheduled Tribes in as many as 209 Articles and 2 special Schedules - these articles and special schedules are protective and ameliorative in nature. Article 341 and 342 provide for classification of Scheduled Tribes, while Article 330, 332 and 334 provide for reservation of seats in Parliament and State assemblies. Indigenous/tribal peoples are the original inhabitants and the first settlers in specific geographical habitations of the region which became India in 1947. They live on about 15 percent of the country’s land in various ecological and geo-climatic habitats, ranging from plains and forest to hills and inaccessible areas. They are objects of various categorization processes from the perspective of the ‘other’. Notwithstanding the same, they identify themselves as indigenous peoples. ‘Scheduled Tribe’ is a politico-administrative term used for the purpose of administering certain specific constitutional privileges, protection and benefits from the state.

In the current context we witness indigenous / tribal peoples encountering a crisis never observed before. On one hand, there are forces of assimilation/mainstreaming/co-option operating on them at a rapid and massive scale. On the other hand, the massive deployment of state forces to facilitate the tribe’s willing acceptance of the state nation which at times coupled with an understated and hidden neo-liberal agenda, compels them to operate within the nation state’s bounded, ‘autonomous’ and rigid boundaries, within a frame of negotiated integration. Squeezed between these determined alternating resolute forces, the varied indigenous / tribal communities across the country have responded differently to each of these forces, operating singly and in combination. While some of their responses have been within the realm of the socio-religious and socio-cultural, some have been within the socio-political and politico-economic domains. Central in the formulations and articulations of these organic tribal resistances, is the overt, yet subtle, pulsating endogenous need to differentiate themselves from the ‘other’ and to protect and preserve their critical geopolitical and social spaces in the arena of territory, culture and power.

Within such a reality we consider it imperative to provide through this International seminar a critical platform that would attempt to provide rigorous historiosophical analysis of the State - Indigenous/Tribal Peoples relationship and facilitate the unraveling of historio philosophical foundations of various empowering mechanisms enshrined in the Indian Constitution. This seminar envisages engaging with fundamental questions pertaining to the lived realities of indigenous peoples within India. The conference will be a two days engagement on the below mentioned themes:

1. The Contextual Reality of Indigenous/Tribal Peoples Today: Articulating the Concrete Conditions from within
2. Revisiting Debates about Constitutional Mechanisms guaranteed by the State to Indigenous/Tribal peoples: Identifying Historical and Theoretical Contours
3. Constitutional Mechanisms that Protect, Promote and Preserve: Sixth Schedule, Fifth Schedule, Inner Line Permit, Hill Councils, Total Protection, Land Rights, Political Representation etc
4. Indigenous / Tribal people’s movements for safeguarding constitutional rights: Theorizing struggles from (i) North India, (ii) Central & East India (iii) North East India (iv) South India
Please send your abstracts (300 words) within any of themes stated above by email along with your contact details (email, phone number and postal address) and current institutional affiliation to daltrijournals@gmail.com

Details and updates also available at:

www.bodolanduniversity.org  
www.tiss.edu  
www.daltrijournals.org

All papers submitted to the conference organizer and meeting necessary standards will be published in the online, open access Daltri Journals.

Timeline:

Last date for receiving abstracts: 31 January 2014  
Intimation regarding acceptance of abstract: 7 February 2014  
Last date of submission of full paper: 7 March 2014

Hospitality and Traveling:

Second class railway fare (to and fro) will be given to participants whose papers are selected. The conference fee is Rs.500 per participant (to be paid to organizers at the registration desk). This is inclusive of a conference kit, boarding and lodging.

For further details, contact seminar organizers:

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