Growth and Distribution of Tribal Population in Jharkhand 1961-2001: A Census Analysis

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Indigenous people of Jharkhand are the Tribals. Jharkhand is the fifth state of tribal concentration in India. The trend of tribal concentration in the state shows that over time, their share in the state's population is declining and indicates that the tribal population is growing at a slower rate than non-Tribals.

Growth of the Scheduled tribes an economically backward social group, could very well serve as one of the indicators of their well being. Low growth rate, in absence of inter-state migration, may be result of low birth rate and still lower death rate or it may be result of high birth rate and slightly lower death rate. So low growth rate reflect advanced stage of demographic transition or a case of population check as suggested by Malthus. The growth rate of non-tribals in Jharkhand is more than national growth rate of total population and closed to national tribal growth rate. However, total population growth rate in Jharkhand is less than national growth rate in the entire time period. This suggests that slow growth of tribals in Jharkhand keeps the state growth rate at lower scale.

Among 18 districts of the State, there were 5 tribal districts in 1961 having tribal population more than 50 percent. In 1991 there were only 3 tribal districts. There was not a single district witnessed steady growth in tribal share in each successive census.

Tribe wise distribution shows that Santal is the largest tribe constituting about 35% of tribal population of state and other major tribes having population more than 5 lakh are Ho, Munda and Oraon. The Asur, the Birjia, the Korwa, the Mal Paharia , the Sauria Paharia and the Savar are primitive tribes and each contributes around 1 percent or less.

During the decades the population of some tribes (out of 30 tribes) has increased at a very high rate and on the other hand the population of some of the tribes has decreased. These extreme cases are mostly observed among the tribes, which are in small number. The causes for the extreme cases are not explainable through the components of population growth except the internal movements.

Census does not provide information on migration for tribals separately. Another source of information of internal migration is language table. This table provides information of the speakers of the tribal languages as mother tongue. It can be inferred that during the period there was no large-scale movements of tribals between Jharkhand and outside. Thus we can say that the growth of tribal population was due to natural increase only.

From the available data of Tribals, though it is difficult to estimate the levels of birth and death rates, it is possible to have some rough estimates using indirect methods of estimation based on age distribution. In view of the distortions in the census age distribution due to errors of age reporting, it is felt that no single method may prove effective. Hence three estimates of vital rates are obtained using three different methods and are indicative of broad trends rather than actual levels. The three methods considered are Differencing Method, Stable Population Analysis C (35) and Rele's Revised Method.

It is assumed that during each decade the age distribution of tribal population was quasi-stable and stable population method can be used and female birth rate can be obtained and which is then converted into birth rate for total tribal population. Death rate can be obtained from growth rate.

The difference between the population in one census and the population aged 10 years and above in next census is approximately equal to deaths of persons aged 5 years and above. These deaths after multiplying by raising factor will provide death rate. In this method we first arrived at death rate i.e. independently from birth rate, which is then converted to Birthrate.

Another method for estimating Birth rate is Rele's method, which does not assume the population to be stable, quasi-stable or closed to migration and hence can be used for estimating fertility levels and trends for sub-national population. Using child women ratios the estimate of GRR and Intrinsic Birth rate is obtained which is then converted to CBR.

Conclusions:

The census data show that the tribal population in the state is increasing but their share in the total population is declining. The age structure of tribal population is "young". The rising death rate is the reason for reduction in population growth rate. Real reason for raising death rate appears to be lack of nutrition and ill health caused by extreme poverty. Spread of industrial and mining waste reduces a land production leads to malnutrition and safe drinking water is not available. Due to malnutrition, incidence of morbidity increases and resistance to infection decreases. Every village has patients suffering from Malaria and Tuberculosis. Malarial death and morbidity were found to be on rise. Clustered housing pattern in tribal villages also increases the risk of spreading diseases. Any development in tribal land should provide them jobs to buy food otherwise it could be curse for them.