

CHAPTER II

TRIBAL ASSOCIATION FOR FIFTH SCHEDULE CAMPAIGN

THE ORIGIN OF TAFSC - WITH THE VISION OF "SELF-RULE"

ORIGIN - 1996

TAFSC is a consortium of 35 Voluntary Action Groups working among Tribal Communities in Tamilnadu for their Socio economic Development, Well-being and Empowerment with the vision of achieving Tribal Self Rule as their ultimate. TAFSC strives to empower Tribals through awareness & organization (Tribal Movements) to enable them to critically view and analyze their socio-economic-cultural-political reality and act upon it to bring about desirable changes in their life to be sustainable, self reliant and self governing.

The General background for the TAFSC to emerge...

For centuries, it is Tribals who have been the subject and victim of various kinds of socio economic-political, colonial invasions, and were being driven to the brinks by various forces.

The situation is not so much different even after independence, the legacy of colonial rule still continues with Forest Act Governing the Forest, uprooting the tribal community, depriving their traditional rights, privileges etc. Despite the Constitutional Safe-guard of Vth Schedule, VI Schedule, Protective discrimination and reservation for the socio-economic-educational development - the situations remains same -or have gone from bad to worse. It was this perception, that when Government is indifferent to the problems of the Tribals, when it destroys their culture and their eco-environmental System in the name of development - the voluntary groups -stretched their heads and hands to the problem ridden communities -of course with divergent views, each one with their own perception, programs -starting from welfare, charity, development - even

religious. - But these approaches have not even touched the fringe of this problem

The years long experience and our stock taking of the situation, frequent inter-action with target groups and fellowship with Groups and Organisation Working for Tribals - over a period of time - say ten years culminated in the formation of TAFSC with the ultimate aim of striving for SELF-RULE as constitutional rights, where the whole problems and its causes have been hanging upon. Besides welfare, development programs -Tribals were also to be facilitated to strive for their rights, basic amenities, protection of their resources as well on restoring their alienated lands, resources, culture and lively hood. Around these issues Tribals have been organized as Village groups and as Taluk District - Regional and State level tribal movements by different organizations with different perceptions and priorities - such as Community Certificate, basic amenities, on land alienation, Tribal identity and also Tribals of different Ethnicity, started getting organized on problems common to them on ethnic basis viz. Irular , Kurumba, Malai Kuravas, Nari Kuravas, Kattu Naickers, Kanees etc. etc. and son on. Tribals in the darkness of ignorance and in remote forest and hilly environments started coming out of their way to demand justice -Credit Goes to Voluntary, Chartable, Development and Action Groups -First of its kind in Tribal History -getting together at Seminar, Workshop, Conferences at State level right from Block to State level, rallying on issues both on local and at State level

THE SPECIFIC CONTEXT FOR TAFSC

It was the Bhuria Committee Recommendations for Tribal Self Rule. Tribals upraising, struggles, violent, turbulent situation all over India , especially in North East and Central Part of India provided the background situation - for Tribal Self Rule as ultimate. It was implemented in North East Central Part of India, But not in Tamilnadu, despite having Tribal Area. . It is self-Rule that would determine the Tribals self reliance

A broader and deeper understanding of the New Panchayat Extension Act 1996 formed the background for number of NGOs coming together under the Banner TAFSC, initiated and pioneered by VRDP, one of the leading organizations among Tribals and in building People's Movement both among Tribals and Non- Tribals, especially oppressed and exploited.

Attempts to Scrap V Schedule favoring business corporates: Of late, there has been a drastic change in the political mindset. The central and several state governments are persistently attempting to bring amendments to scrap the Fifth Schedule of Constitution as most of the mining activities are taking place in the scheduled areas. The Fifth Schedule is one among the important out-standing provisions in the Indian Constitution made to protect basic livelihood source. I.e. land belonging to Adivasis living in the Scheduled Areas - the immediate threat of amending this provision of the Constitution and reverting it is to the effect of transfer of Adivasis lands to non-tribal and Corporates. This move has serious implications to the 80 million Adivasis in the country, their very survival and their culture.

The Government has licensed Mining Corporates in Scheduled Area is an illegal act and in violation of Indian Constitution V schedule Article 244 (1). Where as law prohibits transfer of land or immovable property from Adivasis to non-Adivasis.

New Agriculture Policy speak of transferring Forest Land to the private business corporate for plantations and horticulture development to the detriment of Tribal communities and their eco system

Democratic Set Up and process of TAFSC

TAFSC is a democratic structure and has different committees with different roles and responsibilities. Mr. A. Renganathan is the founder of TAFSC and its Convener.

1. ACHIEVEMENTS OF TAFSC ON ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

2400 Housing site patta could be obtained for Tribals in 60 villages Street lights in tribal hamlets were provide in seven districts, 60 villages at the cost Rs.6,00,000

Land restored : 14 acres land in total: 10 acre land in pappireddipatti in Dharmapuri District 3 acre in Karaiyar of Tinneveli, one acre in Thippiparai village in Coimbatore District

Drinking water facilities were achieved in Chinnampathi (Erode) with Well and OHT cost Rs.75,000 Kavichakal village (Kodaikanal) Hand pump at the cost of Rs.7,000 Adimalaipatti (Salem District OHT Rs.12,500 700 children were enrolled in School in 300 villages (Boy 402, Girls 298) 700 children could get Community Certificate at the effort of TAFSC and TAAK Identity Card for collecting Minor Forest Produce in six district (60 village) obtained at the efforts of TAAK and TAFSC. 900 tribals in 300 villages received training on Self Rule, Prevention of Atrocities Act, Panchayat Raj Extension Act, Forest Act, Gender justice

Mr. Kanniappan, Tribal was elected as the President of Panchayat of Malayankulam (Kanchipuram)

Mr Raja, Tribal could win President Position for the Panchayat of petchiparai (Kanyakumari)

Mr. Sasikumar, Ramani, Sankaran, Miss Usa kumari won Panchayat Election for ward member position.

Mr. Gandhi, Tribal, Kola Natham (Salem District) won the election for Panchayat President Position.

Mr. Soundarajan, Mr. Sakthivel, Mr. Selvam, Traibal could win position for Ward Member position in Kuppanur Panchayat of Salem Distict

Mr. Govindhan Ms. Sumathi, Vellayi, Lakshmi of Kanavaiputhur Panchayat won the election for ward member position.

Gram Sabha have been organised in 220 villages

CHAPTER -- III

EMERGING TRIBAL MOVEMENTS IN TAMILNADU -(TAAK)

The offshoot TAFSC has been the process of Tribal Communities in 17 District of Tamilnadu, getting organized through democratic process of awareness and enhancing Tribal leadership for their cause under the banner Tamilaga Adhivasis Amaippuhalin Koottamaippu (TAAK). It was in 1996 had its beginning with the purpose of achieving Self Rule and extension of New Panchayat Raj Act 1996.

Community Based Organisations:

There are many Community based Tribal Organisations in Tamilnadu on ethnic basis as well beyond ethnic divisions. Almost Associations of various ethnic groups are functioning on the question of Community identity, basic amenities and for reservations in Educational and Public sector institutions for admissions and appointments.

Few worth mentioning CBOs are:

- Tamilnadu Palangudi Makkal**
- Kurumba community Sangam ~ Kattu Naickers Sangam**
- Malai Kuravas Federation**
- Kaani Palangudi Makkal F ederation**
- SC/ST Officers Association**
- Malai Vedarhal Koottamaippu**

All the above Organisations, while few are confining their exclusive activities to their communities welfare and development, few

organizations and leaderships are emerging beyond their ethnic division with far sighted vision on Tribal Self Rule drawing inspiration from T AFSC -a welcome trend slowly emerging.

The trend of Tribal getting organized on common issues and problems is quite a new phenomenon of recent origin say in later part of 1990 Being scattered, being ignorance of their rights, lack of leadership have been keeping them non-political, submissive and silent. Having been of recent origin, it would be too early to say what they could and could not, as they are still un-reached.

It is a breakthrough period in the tribal history, who have been historically silent and passive started raising their voice, demanding government basic amenities and their rights, as well questioning the very foundation of governance itself over their polity, with utter disregard for their traditional rights, custom and culture.

THE PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES OF TAAK

Total members of TAAK	17400
Village Council	220
District Council	17

Basic unit of TAAK - Village level council have been formed in 220 villages Cluster, Taluk and District level units have become functional with leadership State level TAAK Organisation have been formed and committees for various function (Monitoring, Emergency, Advisory, Advocacy and lobbying) Village council are emerging as a strong forum with minutes, accounts, correspondence files. Bank accounts Members pay regular subscription. District level unit of TAAK consolidates the activities of its village and cluster level units and forward it to the State level forum of TAAK. Activities District level is being consolidated at State level every month. Tribals at local and at cluster level take action on struggle path demanding community certificate (Cuddalore, Kanyakumari, Thiruvallur, Kodaikanal, Salam, Kollimalai Tribals (TAAK) organised struggles against Bauxite mining