Empowering tribal Dalits by Roger Lopez

Article published on February 24th 2012 | Society

Capacity building refers to capacity development which is a conceptual approach to development that focuses on understanding the problems faced by the people, government to realize their goals while enhancing abilities that will help them achieve measurable and sustainable results. Capacity buildings are often of the poorer sections of the society. Government with objectives to uplift lifestyle often implements vital missions to achieve it. For instance to create job opportunities they help the concerned section by imparting them with skill training, financial assistance, and capacity building.

Empowering Tribal Dalits:

Approximately 16 million low caste â€œDalitsâ€• live in India. Occupying the lost caste in the countryâ€™s social structure, the Dalits have faced huge discrimination economically, socially, and politically. In villages, they face restrictions on using water wells, enter temple premises attended by high caste people, ability to own land. These â€œUntouchablesâ€• live in isolated places and faces constant physical violence and killings. Their traditional job has been that of street cleaning, disposal of excrement and animal carcasses, and leather tanning. They serve as indentured servants as well.

Currently, several NGOs and the government are taking steps to empower these unfortunate people who live in abject poverty. Though there are subsequent laws to protect their lives and civil rights, strong objections from the higher castes has failed to deliver any impressive changes. As such the empowerment of tribal Dalits is a major challenge for development organizations.

Among the group itself, Dalit women have suffered more. However, they have been taught by helping organizations that their inhuman existence need be their fate for the rest of lives and that they can raise their voice and organize. In order to strengthen and institutionalize this, certain activities have been implemented and stressed for. Some of which are as follows:

1. Legal training and support;

2. Surveys of physical violence and discrimination;

3. Cultural festivals;

4. Seminars and meetings to raise consciousness on the state level;

5. Expressing concerns based on experience resisting human rights violations.

As part of empowering tribal Dalits several activities have been initiated, notable of which are given in brief:

1. Dalit sensitization workshops for both them and non-Dalits that will give a platform to discuss issues confronting the lower class and ways to address them are being organised. Issues on rights, health, accounting and management training are discussed in group forums.

2. Economic development activities to develop livelihoods and advanced training in marketing systems and linking small entrepreneurs and building traditional practices such as crop cultivation with improved farm practices are also being taken up. Skills of carpentry, house wiring, tailoring are also being taught.

3. Strengthen organizations and network to ensure continuance of activities.

Today, efforts are being made to help realize this, and many Dalit organizations have seeked for help and expanded to reach international attention.

Article Source:
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Article Keywords:
Capacity building development , Capacity building in local governance

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