

Struggles for Self Governance in Jashpur:

Ever since the community members of the tribal areas in undivided Madhya Pradesh came to know or became aware of their rights, tribal communities have always tried to ascertain their rights one or the other way, either traditionally, customarily, culturally which has been their inherited rights that the nature has endowed them from generation to generation. Till then it was OK. But as the tribal communities educationally, traditionally, financially or to say intellectually growing up it is talking the constitutionally rights along with their customary practices and beliefs.. when we speak about the constitutionally rights for self governance we speak of the Fifth Scheduled and Sixth Scheduled Areas as per the constitution of India, later many amendments have been done and the concept of Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act 1992(PESA) enacted by the central Government of India. But the fate was none of the 10 scheduled area States ¹ drafted the rules and enacted it, no single governor had used their power towards development and upliftment of the tribal communities, though later on Gujarat and Maharashtra government implemented the PESA act, in 2006 Forest Rights Act had been enacted where too power has been stipulated to gram sabha related to ownership, management and governance of tribal resources for the holistic development but unfortunately government agencies failed to implement as it would have been. The major reasons were that the government department related to forest such as Forest and Environment, wild life protection act, Land acquisition, rehabilitation and resettlement Acts etc.. had lots of agreements and disagreement on their policies and the lastly this act was entangled with the arrogance of the bureaucrats.

In Chhattisgarh there are 27 districts out of that 13 districts are fully scheduled areas and 5 are partially. There are 42 tribes among them 5 are Primarily Vulnerable Tribe Groups(PVTGs) who are day today struggling for their livelihood and have many other social, economic and political indifferences, inequality and lack of administrative will power for the holistic development of the tribal communities. As a reason now the tribal communities are trying to find out their ways and means for the self governance and control over their natural resources as per the article 244(1) of the Indian constitution.

Jashpur is one of the districts of Chhattisgarh state where 64% tribal communities dwell, naturally fully covered by the forest and natural resources. environmentally one of the best area in the state to live in all the season. Some of the Tribal communities are well educated along with their agricultural occupations. In the year 2018 in some of the villages like Butunga, Sehairdand, Bachrao and Kalia which comes under the Bagicha Block started to practice their traditional governance system in the form of Pathalgadhi(Erection of Stone and depicting on it the various provisions of 5th scheduled area, PESA Act under Indian constitution.) to ascertain their rights. This activity was going on in the other parts of the state not only in the Jashpur. But due to the anti-tribal development groups or to say the dominant communities who had always been oppression and through the support of then the ruling party of the states the pathalgadhi movement was tried to crush by destruction of the symbols(Erected stone and its platform) of self governance, arresting of tribal leaders and the community members based on the

¹ Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan

false charges by the local administration which was done under the pressure of state government. This very act hurt the sentiment of the tribal communities of the state. The incidents took place in the month of April 2018. Later on all the tribal communities from various districts, organizations, institutions and networks came together to support the traditional rights of the tribal communities, many rallies, agitations and discussions started all over the Chhattisgarh. In the month of June a Mega protest rallies had been conducted in the Kunkuri and Baikunthpur to protest the unlawful act of the government and to release the tribal leaders who had been put into the jail. Seeing the protest of the tribal communities at last the government had to accept and the statement was given in favor of the tribal communities. In the same year there was the state election in the Chhattisgarh the tribal communities united and thrown out the ruling government. Pathalgadhi movement was one of the most important movement towards self governance, later the government notified to conduct PESA gram sabha to pursue the self governance just to show that government supports the tribal rights, culture and custom...but there is always hidden the anti-tribal development agenda which needs to be realized..but a good effort has been began, though it is a long journey to bring the notion of self governance among the tribal communities...