



Remarks and suggestions

By

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At the

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Breakaway Group 'A' – Tribal Issues**

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- Smt. Droupadi Murmu, Convener and Hon'ble Governor of Jharkhand
- Shri Arjun Munda, Hon'ble Minister of Tribal Affairs
- My dear fellow Governors

- At the outset, I must mention that Mizoram has the highest percentage of Scheduled Tribe (ST) population amongst all the States, at 94.4% according to the 2011 Census. As such, the population is overwhelmingly tribal, which means that virtually all activities are for the benefit of the tribals. The State Government is by the tribals and for the tribals. Therefore, there is no possibility of discrimination by the State Government against the tribals.

- At the same time, we all appreciate that the Union Government is very much for the tribals as well, and that the Union Government has undertaken many initiatives for the benefit of the tribals. Having said that, there are a few points where the Centre can provide meaningful guidance and assistance.

- To begin with, I would like to raise two points which I feel are the need of the hour. The first point is the provision of proper conveyance for ailing persons with serious medical problems amongst the tribal population. It is very unfortunate that the tribal areas are also the poorest and most backward areas, with extremely poor connectivity. Therefore, all possible measures must be taken to provide quick and proper conveyance to tribals with serious ailments in times of emergencies.
- The second point on which we may pay special attention may be the promotion of art, film festival etc., as a separate item for the tribals. This will showcase the wonderful diversity of our nation's different tribes, which will go away towards national integration. With these two priority points, I continue with my remarks on a few topics.

- **Protection of cultural uniqueness of tribes -**
- While the protection of cultural uniqueness of tribes is not an issue at the intra-State level in Mizoram, care must be taken that influx and assimilation of the tribes is avoided at all cost. In order to enable posterity to continue preserving the cultural uniqueness of their respective tribes, a number of projects continue to be taken up with Central support. Currently, with support from the Ministry, festivals of tribes such as the Mizos, the Chakmas, the Reangs (Brus) are being celebrated in Mizoram. Continued support for these and other projects such as the setting up of tribal museums may be effective steps towards preserving tribal culture.
- **Special residential schools in the tribal areas -**
- In Mizoram, tribal population, and the whole population as such, is scattered in a number of small villages. While elementary education is forthcoming in the villages, access to secondary education and higher secondary education is difficult. Therefore, the number of school dropouts at this stage

dramatically rises. While other factors may be present, it is certain in Mizoram that lack of easy access to secondary and higher education is a predominant factor. In order to bridge this gap, the Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) provide the desired solution in terms of providing quality education, residence, and mainstreaming of the tribal population by joining the CBSE board. Currently, there are two (2) functional EMRS Schools in the whole of Mizoram, with a few more under construction or approved in-principle. In addition, it is suggested that college hostels for tribals may be set up in all the towns of Mizoram where colleges are established.

- **Handloom and Handicrafts**
- Handloom and handicrafts are traditional industries which are common amongst a number of tribes. Especially in North East India, the different tribes have distinct colourful traditional attire and dresses which are highly marketable. Assistance may be provided to the tribes by helping them find suitable markets

for their products, both at the national and at the international level. Emporiums selling woven tribal handlooms, such as the Dilli Haat in Delhi, may be set up in all the metros in order to popularize them.

- **Bamboo**

- Bamboo has been used extensively by the tribals for a number of products. Different types of handicraft items can be made from bamboo, which find market for both their practical usage as well as aesthetic value. In this regard, attention may be drawn to my State of Mizoram, which accounts for 14% of the bamboo cultivation in India. My State Government has placed priority on harnessing this bamboo resource. Perhaps more attention can be paid towards Mizoram in this regard.

- **Exchange of students**

- Exchange of students between different parts of the country may be a suitable practice which can bring about appreciation and respect for the different tribal cultures flourishing in the

country. As such, support may be given to more and more cultural exchange programmes, which may take place between the tribal cultures themselves, and also with non-tribal cultures.

- **Healthcare**

- In my State of Mizoram, the Sixth Scheduled areas are the poorest and most backward areas. To make matters worse, these areas have very few or limited access to modern healthcare facilities. Moreover, road communication is extremely poor in some areas, making it very difficult to reach the larger towns in times of emergencies. While the extension of modern medical facilities to these areas is the long-term solution, a suggestion can be made for the utilization of helicopter services in these times of serious medical emergencies.

- **Conclusion**
- In conclusion, while lauding the current actions taken, I request the Centre to continue providing valuable support to the tribals, who are amongst the most vulnerable sections of the society. With this, I conclude my remarks.
- Jai Hind.