

Empowerment of Scheduled Tribes in India: A Study on Developmental Programmes

Dr.G.Vijaya Kumar¹ and Dr.P.Swetha²,

1. *Assistant Professor in MEFA, Department of Humanities and Sciences, S.K.University College of Engineering and Technology, SK University, Anantapuram-515001, Andhra Pradesh, INDIA.*
2. *Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, Veterinary Dispensary, B.Pappuru, Narpala Mandal, Anantapuram District of Andhra Pradesh, INDIA*

Abstract

India has the second largest tribal population in the world next to African countries. Out of the total population of India, STs are found to be 8.6 per cent. and These Tribals are spread across the country and forming more than 700 distinct groups. The highest concentration of schedule tribes is found in North-East states. Despite the multitude of affirmative action policies designed to uplift them, the STs remain one of the most marginalized groups in India, grappling with high rates of poverty, illiteracy, and displacement.. To protect the interest of tribes and their right to ownership of their land and other resources of property, various regulative measures have been taken by the government of India from time to time. To uplift these communities, the government has introduced various welfare schemes aimed at socio-economic empowerment, sustainable development, and the preservation of their rich cultural heritage. These initiatives are designed to improve living standards, promote education, and ensure inclusive growth for tribal populations.. In this paper, we will explore the Plan Outlay for tribal development during the five year Plans and the recent developmental programmes introduced and budget spend to empower scheduled tribes in India .

Keywords: Empowerment, Schedule Tribe, Tribal development, Expenditure, Five year plans

Introduction

India has the second largest tribal population in the world next to African countries .India's Scheduled Tribe (ST) population comprising 104.2 million people which was 8.6% of the total population. These people across over 705 distinct groups, often resides in remote areas. The highest concentration of schedule tribes is found in North-East states. The framers of the Indian constitution have laid lots of emphasis on the welfare and development of our indigenous

tribal population. Tribal communities in the inaccessible regions continue to live in their own 'little world' struggling along against the elements of nature and depending largely on its bounty. Tribes are at different phases of transition. Some tribes have dropped their practices of primitivity now and have largely settled as cultivators. Their mode of farming is no more shifting and unstable. They have combined the occupations like animal husbandry, bee-keeping and cultivation of fruits. They have terraced very large tracks on the mountain slopes and the forest areas. . Their mode of farming is no more shifting and unstable. They have combined the occupations like animal husbandry, bee-keeping and cultivation of fruits.

Indebtedness is a serious economic problem among the tribal in various states of the country. The extent of indebtedness is aggravated by the various rates of interest charged by money lenders. The tribes are unable to repay the loans. The tribes have been alienated from their land by the money lenders, who now pose to be serfs and frequently treat the tribes as bonded labourers.

According to sample study conducted by the Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institutes in different states of India, more than 47 per cent of the total area under cultivation has been alienated from the tribals. To protect the interest of tribes and their right to ownership of their land and other resources of property, various regulative measures have been taken by the government of India from time to time. To uplift these communities, the government has introduced various welfare schemes aimed at socio-economic empowerment, sustainable development, and the preservation of their rich cultural heritage. These initiatives are designed to improve living standards, promote education, and ensure inclusive growth for tribal populations.

Objectives:

To analyse the budget spent on Tribal Developmental Programmes by the government of India

Tools used in the study

The study has used simple quantitative techniques such as percentages, simple and compound growth rates for analyzing the data.

Data and Methodology:

The study is based on the secondary data collected from various sources like published documents, Five Year Plan documents of the government of India, Statistical abstract of India and Records of Tribal Welfare Department, and online sources.

There are approximately two hundred million tribal people in the entire globe, which constitute, about 4 per cent of the global population. They are found in many regions of the world and majority of them are the poorest amongst poor. There are 533 tribes (with many overlapping types in more than one state) as per notified scheduled under Article 342 of the constitution of India in different states and union Territories of the country with the largest number of 62 being in the state of Orissa. Thus, if the sub-tribes and state tribes are taken into consideration, the number will be many more. The Tribal population and its percentages are given below

Table-1 : Tribal Population in India

(Population in millions)

Census Year	Total population	Population of ST	ST percentage
1951	361.1	19.1	5.29
1961	439.2	30.1	6.85
1971	548.2	38.0	6.93
1981	685.2	51.6	7.53
1991	846.3	67.8	8.10
2001	1028.6	84.3	8.19
2011	1210.2	104.2	8.60

Source: Census Reports of India, 1951 to 2011

According to 2011 census, the population of scheduled tribes in the country was 1210.2 million, consisting about 8.6 per cent of total Indian population. The population of scheduled tribes has been found increasing after 1951. The decadal population growth between census year 1981 to 1991 in respect of tribal population has been much more (31.64 per cent) than the same for entire population (23.51 per cent). As compared to the sex ratio for overall population (943

females per 1000 males), the sex ratio among the scheduled tribes is more towards females (990 females per thousand males)

An overview of schemes/programmes for schedule tribes:

- Grant-in-aid to NGOs for ST including Coaching & allied schemes and award for service exemplary.
- Vocational Training Centre's in Tribal areas
- Educational complex in low literacy pockets
- Investment/prime support to TRIFED
- Grant-in-aid to TDCs for MFPs
- Village Grain Banks
- Development of Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)
- **Support to National/State ST Finance & Development Corporation** : to accelerate economic and income generation development activities amongst STs whose annual income is below double the poverty line.
- Promotion of tribal culture
- Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for ST students
- Scheme of Post-metric, book banks & Up gradation of Merit of ST students
- Girl Hostel & Boys Hostel for STs
- Ashram schools in Tribal sub-plan Areas
- Research, Information & Mass Education, Tribal Festival sand other
- Special Central Assistance (SCA) to TSP
- G.I.A under Article 275 (1) of the constitution
- Establishment of LAMPS
- Job opportunity
- Training-cum-production centers & subsidies
- Concessions

Table – 2:**Plan Outlay for Tribal Development during the Five Year Plans in India****(Rupees in Crore)**

S.No	Plan Period	Total Outlay	Tribal Development Programme	Percentage
1	First plan(1951-56)	1960	19.93	1.00
2	Second plan(1956-61)	4672	42.92	0.90
3	Third plan(1961-66)	8577	50.53	0.60
4	Annual Plans(1966-69)	6756	32.32	0.50
5	Fourth Plan(1969-74)	15902	75.00	0.50
6	Firfth plan(1974-79)	39322	1182.00	3.01
7	Sixth Plan(1980-85)	97500	5535	5.67
8	Seventh plan(1985-90)	110820	7911.50	7.14
9	Eighth plan(1992-97)	384372	22578.49	5.87
10	Ninth plan(1997-2000)	859200	86169.16	10.02

Source: Government of India Five Year plan Documents, I plan to IX plan

For the welfare and development of STs an outlay of Rs. 2,121 crore has been provided in the annual plan for 2008-09, which is 23.33 per cent higher than the outlay of Rs. 1,719.71 crore for the year 2007-08. the outlay of 2008-09 includes Rs. 900 crore provided as special central Assistance (SCT) to tribal –sub plan (TSP) which includes Rs. 150 crore for development of forest villages special Assistance (SAC) to TSP is a 100 per cent grant extended to states as an additional funding to under take a number of developmental schemes, creation of incidental infrastructure, extending financial assistance to SHGs for community –based activities and development of forest villagers.

Economic empowerment of STs continued through extension of financial support through National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC). Financial support is being extended to ST beneficiaries/ entrepreneurs in the form of term loans and micro credit at

concessional rate of interest for income generating activities. Tribal cooperative marketing development federation of India limited (TRIFED) is engaged in marketing development of tribal products and their retail marketing through its sales outlets.

The scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers (Recognition of forest right) Act were notified for operation with effect from December 31, 2007. The responsibility for implementing the Acts vests with the state/UT government. As per information collected from state till March 31, 2009, more than 20.50 lakh claims have been filed. More than 1.52 lakhs titles have been distributed and another 1.93 lakh are ready for distribution. Most of the states hope to complete the process in 2009. There is great emphasis on the education of ST girls, especially in law literacy areas. During 2008-09, funds were released for 126 educational complexes benefiting 26,272 ST girls under the revised scheme of strengthening education among ST girls in low literacy districts.²⁸

To ensure the overall development of tribal society, the Union Budget 2024-25 has allocated Rs. 13,000 crore to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Under the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST), formerly known as the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), 42 Ministries/Departments are committed to earmarking funds for tribal development in sectors like education, health, agriculture, and infrastructure. The DAPST fund allocation has grown 5.8 times since 2013-14, reaching Rs. 1,24,908 crore in 2024-25.

Conclusion:

It is observed that the Government of India spent much capital during five year plans for development of scheduled tribes and economic empowerment of STs continued through extension of financial support through National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC). Financial support is being extended to ST beneficiaries/ entrepreneurs in the form of term loans and micro credit at concession rate of interest for income generating activities. It also observed that Tribal cooperative marketing development federation of India limited (TRIFED) is engaged in marketing development of tribal products and their retail marketing through its sales outlets. Finally it is noted that government India, the overall development of tribal society, the Union Budget 2024-25 has allocated Rs. 13,000 crore to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Under the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST),

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