



Schedule Tribes Development Policy And Schemes In India

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DOI - 10.5281/zenodo.17663938

Abstract:

The Providing social justice to scheduled tribe members by improving their socioeconomic circumstances has been the biggest task facing the Indian government since independence. From an ecological, economic, and educational perspective, the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and Denitrified Tribes make up the weakest segment of India's population. They are the foundation of poverty in India. Despite being citizens of the same nation and sons of the same soil, the tribal people are born and raised as natural children. From a historical perspective, they have experienced the most severe form of societal exploitation. For many centuries, they have been cut off from contemporary, civilized life and essentially denied access to many civic amenities. Though insufficient and primarily motivated by self-interest, the British rulers did make some progress in providing basic amenities in towns and villages, such as communication, education, transportation, and medical care. However, for a variety of reasons, it accomplished nothing to improve the socioeconomic circumstances of tribal people, with the exception of those in the country's northeast. First of all, because it was difficult and expensive to administer the hill regions, the British authorities typically believed it was best to leave the indigenous people alone. Second, it was thought to be preferable to shield the tribe from potential outside political influence. Thirdly, some of the British officers sincerely believed that the tribal people would continue to be a happier group if they were allowed to live their own way. As a result, the Scheduled District Act of 1984 maintained. The Constitution of India has made definite provisions for the welfare and uplift of the tribal people throughout the country.

Keywords: Tribal, Tribal Development. Planning Policy.

Introduction:

The tribal are believed to be the original inhabitants of India. Due to series of invasions by alien communities and relentless pressure from more powerful neighbouring communities, they were driven to forests, hills and other inhospitable regions. In their isolated existence, these communities developed their own distinct culture, traditions, languages and administrative structure. While some of them are settled cultivators, many others continued

to depend on shifting cultivation, hunting, food gathering, etc. In Government of India Act of 1935, most of the areas inhabited by the tribal were declared as Excluded or Partially Excluded Areas. After independence, such areas were renamed as Scheduled Areas and were included in Schedule V and Schedule VI. The essential characteristics for recognition as a Scheduled Tribe are primitive traits, geographical isolation, distinctive culture, shyness of contact with outsiders and

economic backwardness. The tribal population in India represents a unique form of society, which is distinct in several respects from the general population. The Scheduled Tribes numbering 51.63 million (excluding Assam) today constitute 7.76 per cent of the total population of the country. Barring Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry, the Scheduled Tribes comprising about 260 communities are found in all States and Union Territories. They are, however, unevenly distributed in terms of sheer numbers. Madhya Pradesh, with more than 11 million, accounts for the largest concentration of Scheduled Tribes in India. In regard to their proportion to the total population, their percentage is very high in Nagaland, Lakshadweep and Orissa. While some tribal communities like the Bhil, the Munda and the Santal are found in more than one State, a few like the Kannaurs of Himachal Pradesh or the Siddis of Gujarat reside in specific areas.

Introduction There are approximately two hundred million tribal people in the entire globe, which means, about 4% of the global population. They are found in many regions of the world and majority of them are the poorest amongst poor. According to 1981 census, the population of Scheduled Tribes in the country was 5.16 cores, consisting about 7.76% of total Indian population, which means one tribesman for every 13 Indians. Among tribes, there are so many communities. The major identified tribes in the country number about the 428 scheduled tribes in India though the total number of tribal communities are reported to be 642 and several of them have become extinct or merged with other communities as the tendency for fusion and fission among tribal population is a continuous process. Thus, if the sub-tribes and state tribes will be taken into consideration, the number will be many more.

These 428 communities speaking 106 different languages. Despite the difficulties, which stood in the way of identification of tribes as Scheduled Tribes, there has been complete awareness about the extreme social, educational and economic backwardness of the tribal communities among the policy makers, planners and administrators of the country. But before introducing protective and ameliorator measures, there was a need to draw a list of such tribal communities as required care and protection for their growth and development. The first list in this regard was drawn in the year 1931 under the name "Primitive Tribes". Subsequently, under the Government of India Act, 1935, a list of "Backward Tribes" was specified for the provinces of India. In fact, the list of tribes specified under the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 was drawn by making additions to the list of "Backward Tribes" under the Government of India Act, 1935.

Concept of Tribe:

A Tribe is an anthropological concept. It is referred to by certain authors as 'Animistic' or 'Aboriginal'. The term 'Adivasi' has gained popularity while referring to the tribe in recent years. Tribals are thought of as semi-civilised people residing in hills, forests or considered as special groups of agriculturists. A tribe is generally defined as a social group usually living in a definite area, having a dialect, cultural homogeneity and unified social organisation. Tribe is also defined as a 'social group' usually comprising a number of sibs, bands, villages or other special groups and is normally characterised by the possession of a definite territory, a distinctive dialect, a homogeneous and distinctive culture; it is either a unified political organisation or, at least, has some sense of common solidarity vis-a-vis outsiders.

Thus, a tribe is a territorial group with its own language, religion, culture and unified social organisation.

Scheduled Tribe – A Constitutional Concept:

A 'Scheduled Tribe', on the contrary, is primarily an administrative and constitutional concept. It refers to a tribal community, which is enlisted under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution. According to the Indian Constitution, a tribe alone can be specified as Scheduled Tribe. But at the same time, the word tribe is nowhere defined in the Constitution. Furthermore, the Constitution is also silent about the principles or policies to be adopted for specifying a "tribe" as a scheduled tribe. According to Article 342 of the Constitution, "The President may, with respect to any State or Union Territory and where it is a state, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities, which shall, for the purpose of this Constitution, be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory, as the case may be." Thus, Article 342 only clarifies that for any ethnic group to become eligible to be specified as a Scheduled Tribe, it should necessarily be a tribe in the first place. In other words, non-tribal castes or communities are not eligible to be specified as Scheduled Tribes. There are some 573 communities recognized by the government as Scheduled Tribes and, therefore, eligible to receive special benefits and to compete for reserved seats in legislatures and schools. They range in size from the Gonds (roughly 7.4 million) and the Santals (approximately 4.2 million) to only eighteen Chaimals in the Andaman Islands. Central Indian states have the country's largest tribes, and, taken as a

whole, roughly 75 per cent of the total tribal population live there.

Role of the Government in the Development of Scheduled Tribes:

The Constitution was written by the founding fathers who were very conscious of the real state of the country – they were aware of the people who form Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Backward Classes and the social problems associated with them. That is why they included special provisions for the rights of these groups. We have to consider the Constitution, the UN Human Rights Declaration, IRO Commission 106, 169, and other relevant statutes to understand the situation in India. The Constitution also laid down guidelines, which the State must follow in regard to these backward groups. In Article 46, the Constitution has said that the State shall protect SCs, STs and provide means for their development and has laid down means for doing so. Development was meant to touch various aspects of the life of the people agriculture, animal husbandry, infrastructure, such as road building, dams, mining, industries, social issues, such as health, etc. To implement these development tasks, blocks of 100 villages were created. Involvement of people was sought for various committees. This has been going on for decades. Even in the initial stages, it was found that those, who were the members of these committees, were those who were from the powerful and affluent sections of society, the upper castes mostly. They could "channelize" development for themselves. In the 70s, it was thought that the generalized direction prevalent for development projects was not good, and focus was necessary. The Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi era, the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendments changed the

government tier from central-state-district-block (at the lowest tier the block was simply an appendage of the state govt. with no real power) to bring about a radical change by having Panchayats at three levels: village purported to have elected representatives. In some states they have come into being, but in some other states they have not. In the following section, we will discuss various developmental efforts which have been made, particularly after independence, for the upliftment of Scheduled Tribes in India.

Constitutional Provisions and Safeguards for Schedule Tribes:

The provisions in the Constitution make it incumbent on the State to “take care” of STs. In articles 15 and 16 (which refer to fundamental rights of citizens) exceptions are made to ensure that what is needed to be done for STs is done. For example, though equality of opportunity is the policy of the State, an exception is made for reservations. Article 244 enables the State to make special arrangements for the development of STs. Article 275-1 enables the State (the Central government particularly) to set aside financial provisions to be used for tribal development. If there are any schemes from the State government and the Central government approves it, then the Central government is bound to finance the scheme. So, we get all ingredients for the State in terms of the legality and financial arrangements. The State cannot have any excuse that they are not empowered enough. The Vth Schedule is a unique aspect of the Constitution – it empowers the Governor of a State to suspend any act of Parliament or State legislature if he thinks that it is not in the interest of the STs. This, he can do even with retrospective effect. A similar aspect is not found anywhere else in the Constitution. The VIth Schedule enables an autonomous district

level body to be formed where there is a large percentage of tribal groups. This has been formulated especially for North eastern region, which is unique in many respects. Districts in the Northeast can be mini-States they have a lot of financial, legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The Constitution of India provides for a number of safeguards for the Scheduled Tribes mainly to facilitate the implementation of the ‘Directive Principle’ contained in Article 46 of the Constitution, which reads as follows:

- **Article 46** empowers the State and Union Territory Government to frame necessary rules that are required to promote the educational interest of Scheduled Tribes including reservation of seats in professional colleges.
- **Article 164** provides for a Ministry of Tribal Welfare in each of the State of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa which have large concentration of Scheduled Tribes population. These Ministries are required to look after the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in their respective States.
- **Article 244** provides for the inclusion of a Fifth Schedule in the Constitution for incorporating provisions for the administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribes of the States which have sizeable tribal population (other than those of Assam).
- **Article 275** provides for the grant of special funds by the Union Government to State Government for promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes and providing them with a better administration. In pursuance of Article 338 of the Constitution

Policy of Five Year Plan for Schedule Tribes:

Since Independence, the country has achieved considerable progress and prosperity through planned development. The First Five Year Plan was launched in 1952. Since most of the population of India has been living in villages, special emphasis was laid on rural reconstruction in each Five Year Plan. This was however, sought to be achieved initially through Community Development Programs. To achieve this objective 52 Projects were started in 1952 in the First Five Year Plan. But the developmental inputs included under the Community Development Programs were of intensive nature. It was soon realised that it would not be possible to bring the entire rural areas under the ambit of these projects within a reasonably short period. It was, therefore, decided to adopt a comparatively less intensive and modest model of Community Development Blocks for the rapid development of rural areas.

The First Five Year Plan:

First Five Year Plan- First Five Year Plan did not play any specific and special attention towards the development of tribal areas, because only certain piecemeal attempts such as educational schemes, welfare schemes etc. were introduced. These schemes left the concrete impact on tribal community in the country.

Second Five Year Plan -During the second Five Years Plan, recognizing the Socio-economic conditions, prevailing in the tribal areas, concrete developmental schemes were planned. A novel administration system was introduced, with creation of "Multi-purpose Tribal Projects in certain selected Tribal Areas".

Third Five Year Plan- On the recommendation of the Verrier Elevation Committee, Tribal Development Block System

had been implemented under Third Five Year Plan. This system was evolved not only to improve the conditions in the tribal areas, but also to involve the tribal "people in the process of development with the aid of Panchayat Institutions. These schemes and sector plans, which were adopted as the institutions of planned development, resulting in tanning up of tribal economy and improvement of social-service to a certain extent, but it was found that certain regions and groups in tribal areas still remained very backward while others recorded a slow rate of progress.

Fourth Five Year Plan- On the eve of the commencement of Fourth Five Year Plan 489 Tribal Development Blocks had come in to existence for the economic betterment of the scheduled tribes and intensive development areas with large concentration of tribal populations. In this connection the fourth plan envisaged extension of these blocks from 10 to 15 Years and introduction of stage III with an allotment of Rs.10 lakhs per Blocks for Five Year period. About Rs.75 cores were spent by the Union Govt. for the implementation of Tribal Development programmes during the fourth Five Year Plan period. A number of new programmes were also introduced, besides intensifying programmes, which were already popular. Land colonization schemes were started and several Tribal colonies were established. Cooperative. Farming Societies had been introduced and a number of concessions were offered to the tribal people by Forest excises

Fifth Five Year Plan -In view of the weaknesses of the earlier area based programme viz. Tribal development Blocks and Tribal Development Agencies a new strategy was evolved in the fifth five year plan for the foundation of sub plan for the areas of tribal concentration. This is intended to achieve an intensity of attention to the tribal

areas and devise measures to suite their local ethos. About 2/3 of tribal population in the country is estimated to be covered by the sub plans as were in operation in the Fifth plan.

The Sixth Plan (1980-85) sought to ensure a higher degree of devolution of funds, so that at least 50 per cent of the tribal families could be provided assistance to cross the poverty line.

Seventh Plan (1985-90), -there was substantial increase in the flow of funds for the development of STs, resulting in the expansion of infrastructural facilities and enlargement of coverage. Emphasis was laid on the educational development of STs. For the economic development of STs, two national level institutions were set up, viz. (1) Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) in 1987 as an apex body for State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations, and (ii) National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) in 1989. The former was assigned to provide remunerative prices for the forest and agriculture produce of tribal, while the latter was intended to provide credit support for employment generation.

Eighth year Plan (1992-97), - efforts were intensified to bridge the gap between the levels of development of STs and the other sections of the society. The Plan not only emphasised elimination of exploitation, but also paid attention to the special problems of suppression of rights, land alienation, non-payment of minimum wages and restrictions on the right to collect minor forest produces, etc. However, attention on priority basis was continued to be paid on the socio-economic upliftment of STs.

The Ninth five year Plan (1997-2002) aimed to empower STs by creating an enabling environment conducive for them to exercise their rights freely, enjoy their privileges and

lead a life of self confidence and dignity, at par with the rest the of society. This process essentially encompassed three vital components, viz. (I) Social Empowerment; (ii) Economic Empowerment; and (iii) Social Justice.

Community Development Blocks:

While ST-related Ministries and Departments implement general development policies and programmes, the nodal Ministry of Tribal Affairs implements certain ST-Specific innovative programmes, It was envisaged that the Community Development Blocks would create a new thrust for development and self-sustained growth in rural areas. Therefore, every aspect of community life was brought under the purview of this programme. The Community Development Blocks initiated a wide spectrum of services for the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, education, health, communication, cottage industries, etc. in rural areas. But at the same time, all the geographical areas, which were brought under the purview of Community Development Blocks, had not yet reached the same level of development. Therefore, for each Block, such development plans had to be drawn as matched with the specific needs and economic potential of the Block. To give proper directions to the Blocks for drawing and implementation of different schemes, and to ensure involvement and participation of people in the process of development, District Advisory Committees were formed. The primary objective of the Community Development Programme was to achieve rural development. This was envisaged by making available the required services at the doors of the people. But remote areas were inaccessible and there was almost total absence of additional infrastructural facilities. Therefore, special efforts and greater

financial investment were required to extend the services available under the Community Development Programme to tribal areas. In keeping with this view, it was decided in 1954 to extend the programme of Community Development Blocks to tribal areas. Initially 43 such Blocks were elected for this purpose.

Conclusion:

While there have been positive steps towards tribal development in India, the journey is far from complete. Addressing the underlying issues of land rights, education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and social integration is essential for sustainable development and improving the quality of life for tribal communities. Although an important loophole in the form of land leases was left open, tribes made some gains in the mid-twentieth century. Despite considerable obstruction by local police and land officials, who were slow to delineate tribal holdings and slower still to offer police protection, some land was returned to more focused and coordinated efforts, along with community involvement and empowerment, are necessary to achieve meaningful and lasting changes.

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