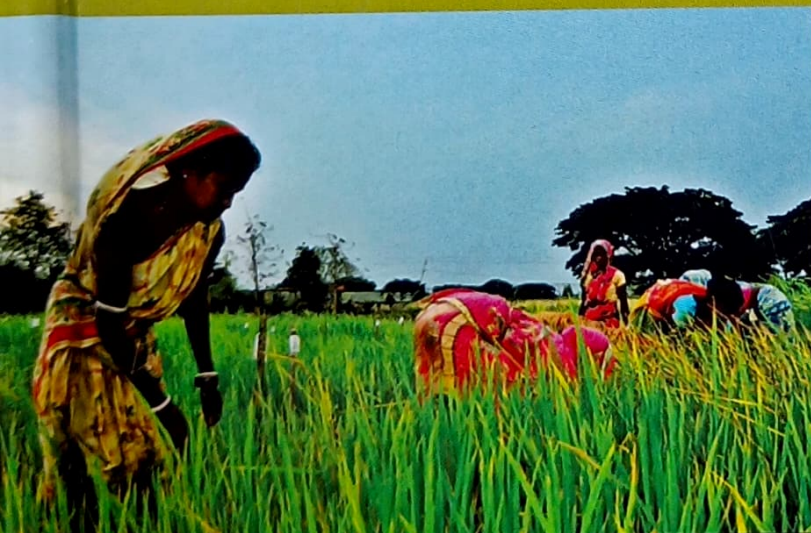


TRIBAL

DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Challenges and
Opportunities



Edited by
Dr. Rajkumar Nagwanshee

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Development of Scheduled Tribes In India

DR. VEERENDRA SINGH MATSENIYA

Introduction

A specific sector of Backward Classes was included from the First Plan to cater to the special needs of Scheduled Tribes. It was visualised that the general development programmes should be so designed as to take care of the needs of Backward Classes as well and the special provisions in the Backward Classes Sector would be additive, 'to be used, as far as possible, for meeting the special developmental needs of these groups. Unfortunately, this expectation was belied in most cases and the Backward Classes Sector provisions, instead of supplementing the general sectors of development, tended to supplant the general sector provisions.

Objectives

1. To find out the progress of scheduled tribes of India.
2. To study the current situation of scheduled tribes in India.
3. To study the role played by the government welfare schemes and programme in India.

In the Seventh Plan, Special Component Plans for Scheduled Tribes and specific schemes for the welfare of the scheduled tribes were implemented. At the end of the Plan, the Tribal Sub-Plan strategy was being implemented through 191 Integrated Tribal Development Projects, 268 pockets of tribal concentration (Modified Area Development Approach - MADA), 74 clusters and 74 primitive tribal group projects. There was substantial increase in the flow of funds for the development of scheduled tribes, resulting in expansion of infrastructural facilities and enlargement of their coverage. There was limited involvement of scheduled tribes in the formulation and execution of programmes resulting in non-adaptability of schemes/policies to cater to their specific needs.

Emphasis was laid in the Seventh Plan on the educational development of the scheduled tribes. Pre-matric stipends and scholarships were given by the State Governments to 190 lakhs scheduled caste/scheduled tribe/other backward class students. Other educational incentives included free supply of uniform, stationery and textbooks to about 100 lakh students. Post-matric scholarships were given to about 15 lakh scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students in 1991-92 as against 9.75 lakh scholarships in 1985-86 and only 1.56 lakh scholarships in 1968-69. These scholarships were given for study of post-matriculation/ post-secondary courses of study in arts, science, commerce, as well as professional and technical degree/diploma and certificate courses on the basis of a graded means test. For scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students studying in medical and engineering colleges, a scheme of book banks was started in 1978-79, which benefited about 21,000 students in 1990-91. Hostel facilities for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students were considerably expanded.

For the economic development of scheduled tribes, two national level institutions were set up: (i) Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation in 1987 as an apex body for State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations; and (ii) National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, primarily to act as catalytic agent in developing schemes for employment generation and financing pilot projects. The Scheduled Tribe Development Corporation in the States continued to provide economic assistance for self-employment projects. Economic assistance was given to 52.76 lakh scheduled tribe families under various programmes, including IRDP.

Special consideration was accorded to scheduled tribe families in the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), the most important poverty alleviation programme in the country. The target of coverage of scheduled caste/tribe beneficiaries in the Seventh Plan was 30 per cent of the total number of beneficiaries. However, the actual coverage was 13.04 per cent in the case of scheduled tribe beneficiaries. A target of 50 per cent has been fixed for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe beneficiaries with effect from April 1990. Since 1990-91, scheduled caste beneficiaries are being treated at par with scheduled tribe beneficiaries for subsidy purposes, both getting 50 per cent subsidy subject up to a ceiling of Rs. 5000. Prior to 1990-91, the subsidy admissible to scheduled caste families was only 33 1/3 per cent. Editor pl check this figure???. In the wage employment programme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, preference is given to scheduled tribes and freed bonded labourers. It has also been provided that at the village panchayat level, 15 per cent of the annual allocation must be spent on items of work which directly benefit the scheduled tribes. Diversion of funds meant for scheduled tribes is not permitted.

The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 are the two important legislations to deal with untouchability offences and check commission of crimes on scheduled tribes. Fifty seven special courts for trial of offences under the Protection of Civil Rights Act have been set up in eight states. Similarly, for implementation of the Scheduled Tribes

(Prevention of Atrocities) Act, state governments and Union Territory administrations have specified existing District and Session's Courts as special courts for trial of offences under this Act. Exclusive special courts have also been set up in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. Monetary relief and rehabilitation assistance were given to the victims of atrocities. Schemes to encourage inter-caste marriages and legal aid were implemented. Programmes were developed through the media, both formal and non-formal, against the evil practice of untouchability.

Table 1: Percentage of Scheduled Tribe Representation in Central Government Services

Category	Scheduled Tribes	
	1.1.1971	1.1.1991
Class I	0.41	2.53
Class II	0.43	2.35
Class III	1.70	4.98
Class IV (excluding Sweepers)	3.65	6.82

Table 2: Percentage of Undertaking Scheduled Tribe Representation in Public Sector Undertakings

Category	Scheduled Tribes	
	1971	1989
Class I		
Class II	0.17	1.29
All categories	0.16	2.31
	2.24	9.68

Details of outlays and expenditure for Special Component Plan Tribal Sub-plan sector during the Seventh Plan.

**Table 3: All India Literacy Rates of Scheduled Tribes
(Percentage)**

Year	Scheduled Tribes
1961	8.53
1971	11.30
1981	16.35

Educational Development of Scheduled Tribes

For the educational development of scheduled tribes, existing programmes for pre-matric and post-matric education of scheduled tribes will be continued. Residential schools, including ashram schools, will be expanded. As envisaged in the National Policy on Education, 1986, priority will be accorded to the opening of primary schools in tribal areas. The socio-cultural milieu of the scheduled tribes will be taken into consideration in developing the curricula and devising the instructional materials in tribal languages at the initial stages with arrangements for switching over to the regional language. Anganwadis, non-formal and adult education centres will be established in tribal areas on a priority basis. Further, the curriculum at all stages of education will be so designed as to create an awareness of the rich cultural identity of the tribal people as also of their enormous creative talent.

Economic Development of Scheduled Tribes

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation through the State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations would organise collection and marketing of minor forest produce in such a way as to ensure reasonable returns to tribals. A new policy on Minor Forest Produce in relation to the scheduled tribes will be formulated. The cooperative structure in the field for this purpose will be suitably reoriented and restructured.

The functioning of cooperative institutions, including Large Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS), in tribal areas will be reviewed with a view to meeting the genuine needs of tribal people in forests, credit, marketing of minor forest produce and supply of essential commodities. In addition, cooperatives for different occupational groups amongst the scheduled tribes will be formed. Essential productive and managerial skills would be developed in them through training and entrepreneurial development programmes so that they may seek self-employment. Measures aimed at greater participation of tribal people in conservation and development of forests and preservation of ecology, in a manner that their traditional rights relating to forest produce are not adversely affected, would be undertaken. Also, rights and concessions of the tribals in forests would need to be codified to ensure unhindered access to minor forest produce and use of forest resources by the tribals. Limited access to credit for consumption and production purposes has resulted in increased dependence of scheduled tribes on money lenders/traders leading to: (a) siphoning of developmental benefits in order to discharge loan liabilities to money lenders and traders; and (b) loss of resource base in the form of land or other assets. An important objective during the Eighth Plan was, therefore, to provide increased access to credit from banks and cooperative institutions.

For the primitive tribal groups, detailed plans will be prepared for their economic development, as far as possible, with the family as the unit. Infrastructure and other developmental needs will be specifically identified so that an integrated plan is developed. Schemes will be developed which take into account the social and economic organisation of life of these communities, their interests, aptitudes and abilities.

During the Eighth Plan, an attempt was made to reach developmental benefits of forest villages in a manner suited to the situation. Arrangements for review, on a regular basis, of the functioning of development schemes in forest villages for their all-round development keeping in tune with environmental requirements, were made.

Strategy for Tribal Populations

The Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP), covering all states in India, seeks to assist the central and state governments to shift from a centrally driven, vertically organized disease surveillance system to one which is coordinated by the centre and implemented by the states, districts and communities. Since the tribal population constitutes the poorest and the most vulnerable of the social groups in the Project, a Tribal Development Plan is proposed as an integral part of IDSP. World Bank's Operational Directive 4.20 related to Indigenous People is triggered in IDSP. There are 635 tribes in India located in five major tribal belts across the country. Based on 1991 Census data, tribals account for 8.08 per cent of the country's population (68 million out of 846 million). Seven Indian states account for more than 75 per cent of the tribal population. The main concentration of tribal people is the central tribal belt in the middle part of India and the north-eastern states. However, they have their presence in all states and Union Territories, except Haryana, Punjab, Delhi and Chandigarh. The predominant tribal populated states of the country (tribal population more than 50 per cent of the total population) are: Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Union Territories of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep.

Tribals in IDSP

Widespread poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition, lack of personal hygiene, absence of drinking water, sanitary living conditions and health education, poor maternal and child health services, and ineffective coverage by national health and nutritional services have been identified as conditions responsible for poor health status of the poor. Tribal settlements tend to be small and isolated and difficult to reach with facilities and services. Even when rural tribal people live in larger villages, they may be separated in hamlets. However, there are some tribal people who are relatively well integrated into the communities and access and utilize facilities as other, sub-groups do. Some tribal groups are nomadic and undertake seasonal migration

in response to the need for livelihood or employment. In addition, economic development is forcing out-migration from traditionally tribal areas into cities, and often to the margins of such agglomerations.

Fifth Schedule

The approach/policy towards tribal areas is reflected in the provisions of the Fifth and Sixth Schedules. While the Sixth Schedule is primarily concerned with the north-eastern states, the main CTB States of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and areas of Himachal Pradesh are governed by the Fifth Schedule.

As per Article 244(1) of the Constitution, the provisions of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas or scheduled tribes in any of the states (except the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram). In this Schedule, the President (in effect the Union Government) has been given the power to declare the Scheduled Areas. These areas can be modified, altered or increased in consultation with the concerned states. So far the Scheduled Areas have been declared in the 8 states of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh.

There is no criteria laid down in the Constitution about the principles on the basis of which areas are to be included in the Schedule. What has been followed is a now commonly accepted principle of preponderance of tribal population, reasonable size of the area, underdeveloped nature of the area and marked disparity in the economic standards of the people.

The main provisions of the Fifth Schedule are:

- (1) The Governor of the State, which has a Scheduled Area, is required to send an annual report to the President on the administration of the Scheduled Areas.
- (2) The executive power of the Union extends to giving directions to the State as to the administration of the said areas.

- (3) A Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) shall be established in each of the Scheduled Area States (as also in states having scheduled tribes but no scheduled areas, if so directed by the President). The TAC shall not have more than 20 members of whom at least three-fourth shall be scheduled tribes representatives in the State legislature. The TAC is to advise the Governor on matters regarding welfare and advancement of the scheduled tribes as referred to them by the Governor (needless to say that the Governor does not act in his individual capacity but through the Chief Minister, Council of Ministers and the executive).
- (4) The Governor (acting as above) has been given wide powers and responsibilities as per this Schedule. He has the power to:
 - (a) direct that any Act of Parliament or the State legislature shall not apply or apply with certain modifications, exceptions in the scheduled areas.
 - (b) Make regulations for the peace and good governance of the scheduled area including prohibition and, restrictions on land transfers, land allotment to scheduled tribes and carrying on the money lending business.

However, the Governor is required to consult the TAC before making the regulations and they have to be assented to by the President before coming into effect.

It is thus clear that the Governor (in effect the State Government) and the President (in effect the Union Government) have special responsibilities in the scheduled areas and even have powers to modify the Central and State Acts.

The Sixth Schedule

The Sixth Schedule contains provisions relating to the administration of the Tribal Areas in the states of Assam (North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong District), Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura (Autonomous Hill District). There are Autonomous District Councils and Autonomous Regional Councils in the areas which have a long tradition of self-

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management systems. These Autonomous Councils not only administer the various departments and development programmes, but they also have powers to make laws on a variety of subjects, e.g., land, forest, shifting cultivation, village or town administration, including village or town police and public health, inheritance or property, marriage and divorce and social customs.

Empowerment through Panchayati Raj Institutions

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment marks a watershed in local self-government, in the sense that for the first time it gives Constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Panchayati Raj is the system of local self-government and democratic decentralisation with elected bodies at the district, village and intermediate levels. Most of the states, including the central tribal states, had their Panchayati Raj Acts and laws before, which by and large came into place after the Balwant Rai Committee (set up in 1957) recommended a three-tier structure. Rajasthan was the first state to set up such a structure on 12 October 1959, closely followed by Andhra Pradesh.

The Panchayati Raj set-up was essentially devised to ensure participation of the people in the development programmes, as also to implement the ideal enshrined in Article 40 of making the panchayats effective units of self-government.

The tribal communities have always had a strong tradition of self-management, not only as far as social customs and traditions are concerned, but even for control and use of common resources including land, forest, water, etc. However, most of the Panchayati Raj (PR) Acts, apart from providing for co-option or reservation for SCs and STs, did not give any special privileges or powers to the Panchayati Raj set-up in tribal areas or the Fifth Schedule areas.

The 73rd Amendment of 1992, which came into effect from April 1993, provided for reservations for SCs and STs in proportion to their population at all levels of elected bodies for members and chairpersons. However, under Article 243 M, it also stated that the entire amendment would not *suo moto* apply to the Fifth Schedule

Areas unless the Parliament extended these provisions by law, with any exceptions and modifications as may be specified. It is, therefore, ironical that most of the states of the Fifth Schedule areas drafted new laws based on the 73rd Amendment, without exempting the Scheduled Areas. As a result, in spite of a constitutional provision, the Scheduled Tribal Areas continued to have a common PR set-up. Later, the Government of India set up a committee under the chairmanship of Bhuria to examine in what ways the PR set-up could be modified for the Fifth Scheduled Areas in pursuance of Article 243 M. On the recommendations of this committee, the Provisions of Panchayati Raj (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (hereinafter referred to as the Extension Act) was passed by the Parliament. The main features of the Extension Act are:

- (a) Giving more powers to Gram Sabha in both matters relating to protection of tribal customs and development work.
- (b) Reserving all seats of chairpersons of panchayats at all levels for schedule tribes and at least half the seats of members going to the tribals.
- (c) Nomination of certain schedule tribes who do not have representatives at intermediate or district level panchayats.
- (d) Specific provisions for gram sabha or panchayats for development and regulation of mining of minor minerals, water bodies, prohibition, minor forest produce, land alienation, money lending, etc.

A reading of the discussions held as reported in the minutes of the meeting of Ministers of Panchayati Raj and Tribal Development of these states held in September 1997 (quoted in *Ministers Muddle as People Assert*, Sharma, 1997), show that most of the states were reluctant to have a separate PR set-up for Fifth Schedule areas. Many doubts were raised about giving the Gram Sabha and the panchayats powers regarding protection of customs and traditions and those regarding management of natural resources and land acquisition, etc.

The Tribal Problem

The tribal problem is really the problem of bridging up the gulf of centuries of cultural development and of skipping over a number of stages of cultural evolution. The problem has become much more complicated on account of the big number of tribes that we have in the country, the variety of their social and other structures of living and also the different stages at which we find them. Even so, we have been trying to tackle this problem and I think time alone would be able to show as to how far we have advanced successfully.

Some of us seem to think that all that has to be done is to present the tribals with what may be said to be the modern pattern of living and the task is done. In fact, it is not so simple. The tribes have had their own way of life and traditions which have a momentum and rhythm of their own. Not all the tribes nor all even in a single tribe are willing to accept the gospel of the new way of life as something sacred and immediately acceptable. We have to remember that these tribes have persisted and lived all this time in spite of being exposed to varied influences and they have retained their vitality in many of the forms and patterns of behaviour which they have traditionally inherited and followed. We should also remember that what the tribal life stands for is not so bad or even such as can be immediately rejected or thrown away. Even the strongest protagonists of modern way of life will have to admit that we have in our pattern of life certain things which may do more harm than good to the tribes.

Seen in this perspective, the problem boils down to this viz., (a) We have to study the tribal patterns of life as they are and see what is worth preserving from the point of view of a vital progressive life which would bring out the best in each tribe. (b) We have to study the stage in which each tribe today carries on its activities. Then we have to think in terms of the introduction of only such of the modern patterns of the life which would suit them and would not impair their vitality and their urge to progress. Thus both a synthetic and analytical view of their present day life has to be taken and attempts have to be made to see that they progress towards a free and more cultured life.

Development is a composite term, which includes various aspects of human activities such as economic, social, political, or technical point of view. The definitions given by anthropologists like Belshaw, Lucy Mair, and Vidyarthi clearly show that development is a holistic phenomenon. Generally, anthropologists strongly believe that socio-cultural factors are integral part of the dynamics of growth and change. United Nations Development Programme measures human development by combining indicators of gross domestic product per capita, adjusted for local purchasing power; life expectancy at birth; adult literacy and the number of persons enrolled in educational institutions. Anthropologists do not accept just economic approach to development.

Suggestions

As per 2011 census, 30 per cent of tribal people migrate in search of livelihood in the urban areas. The children also migrate along with their parents, the migration has its own merits and demerits, the state government should strive to make migration not only for economic security but also initiate the social development through various proactive steps like providing residential educational and hostels facilities at native places to prevent the migration of children

The state should also promote and motivate tribal people to take up the entrepreneurship and provide assistance. The educated youth should be capacitated in agro-based industrial and forest-based resource for entrepreneurship among the schedule tribe people.

The taluka and district headquarters of the schedule areas should be provided with sewerage and sanitation facility to prevent water-borne diseases. The state government should allocate more funds for providing these services to sanitation level as per the other urban centres.

The social welfare schemes play very vital role in reducing the economic stress of the tribal people and also help in reducing the

poverty. The state government should allocate more money for innovative schemes for removal of poverty of the schedule tribe people.

The state government should speed up the process of verification of land right claims and complete the issuing the land entitlement to the legitimate forest land cultivator as per the rules of FRA. The process of implementation of forest rights act should be followed from Gram Sabha level as per the provision of the Act. The process should be simplified.

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