Chapter II

Trends in Tribal Development
The Scheduled Tribes in India constitute about eight per cent of the total population of the country, according to the 1991 census. Most of these groups live in hills and jungles and other relatively inaccessible areas. For this reason, for several generations they lived in partially isolated places. As a result they lagged behind the rest of India's population in technology and civilised ways of life.

These groups are in various stages of cultural development. The tribal people of India do not present a homogeneous ethnic stock. The Interior tribes are of the Pro-Australoid racial type, the tribes of North-East are of Mongoloid, and some tribes of Deccan have a Negrito admixture. However, the bulk of these groups belong to the Pro-Australoid ethnic stock. D.N. Mazumdar preferred to call them Indo-Australoid type. Linguistically, the Indian tribes speak languages of different families like Austric, Dravidian or Tibeto-Burman. Culturally these tribes show different patterns of life as they live in different parts of the country. For instance the Khasis and Garos of Meghalaya are matriarchal and the remaining tribal groups are patriarchal.

The tribal groups do not have the same type of food economy. On this basis, they may be divided into four different classes namely, food gatherers, pastorals, shifting cultivators and settled agriculturists. The food gatherers mainly live by hunting, fishing and gathering of roots, fruits, etc. They roam about from place to place according to the availability of food. The Birhors of Chota Nagpur, the Juangs of Orissa, the Korwas of Madhya Pradesh, the Kodass of Travancore lead this way of life. Some of them such as the Birhors, are fully nomadic. Others
are semi-nomadic, such as the Katkaris, who live in one place throughout the rainy season but move about in other seasons. Some of the Kuki tribes of Assam change their village sites after every three or four years. Normally, the nomadic and semi-nomadic people live in the midst of dense forests. The pastoral tribes, who live on the products of domestic animals also, move about according to the occurrence of good pastures. The Todas of Nilgiris lead this type of life. Shifting cultivators form a very important section of the tribal population. They are mainly cultivators of hill slopes and build their villages on hilltops. The tribals of Assam lead this way of life. The last group of tribals, who are permanent agriculturists, are settled people and mostly attached to the soil. They follow a crude method of cultivation and grow fewer varieties of crops. Their agricultural practices are primitive.

Tribal India can be divided broadly into four regions: 1. Himalayan region (North and North-Eastern regions). 2. Western region. 3. Central region. 4. Southern region. The North-West Himalayan region begins from the Upper Nepal in the East to the Pamir-Knot in North-west. The Central Himalayan region begins from the river Jamuna in the West to the Tista in Sikkim. The North-east Himalayan region includes the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura, and the Union territories of Mizoram and Arunachal Parades. The Major tribes in this region are the Nagas such as the Angami, the Sema, the Ao, the Lotha, the Kuki etc., and the Khasis, the Garos, the Bhotias, the Khasas, the Lushais and the Lepchas, etc.
The Central Zone of India is the second largest belt of tribal concentration in India. This belt extends from the Southern margin of the Gangetic Plains in the north of the 16° latitude to the south and from Gangetic delta in the East to the Aravalli hills in the West. Some of the important tribes in this region are the Gonds in Madhya Pradesh, the Korwa in Uttar Pradesh, the Santhals, the Bhils, the Oraons, the Munda, the Khonds and the Hos. The Western tribal belt in India includes the pockets of tribal concentration in Rajasthan, Gujarat and the Western portion of Maharashtra. Some of the important tribes in this belt are the Bhils, the Banjaras, the Kalkaris, the Kolam, the Pradhan etc.

Guha in his classification of the tribal belts of India demarcates the Southern tribal belt below 16° N latitude. The Southern belt begins in the Nallamalai Hills across the Krishna in the North, which provides the habitat for the Chenchus. In the Western Ghats from the Koranga of South Kanara to the lower slopes of the Coorg hills lies the belt of the Yaruvas. The Kadans inhabit the forest areas of Travancore of Cochin. The States of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and part of Andhra Pradesh are included in this belt. Some important Tribes of this region are the Chenchus, the Koyas, the Savaras, the Hill Reddis, the Kurumba, the Toda etc.

The tribal groups get divided into clans, which are exogamous. Each clan has a totem. Anything connected with the totem is taboo to that particular clan. Because of the closely-knit family and community life of the tribals, kinship plays a very important role in their life. Festivals are a very important component of
tribal life. They have a rich comprehensive nature that combines intense worship, dance and feasting with the most dramatic scenes of solemnity. The festivals largely revolve around agricultural operations, natural phenomena and important events of life i.e., birth, marriage and death. Dance is a very pervasive element in tribal life. The tribals have their own distinctive crafts, which show not only imagination but also deep concentration. Tribal religion is mostly animistic in nature. But recently due to contact with the outside world, many tribal groups have adopted major religions like Hinduism, Christianity. However, most of the tribal groups still retain their identity in their religion and in their habits, though elements of other religions can be noticed in them.

Problems of Tribes

The tribals in general face many problems in day-to-day living. Those groups who are living in unhealthy regions of the country suffer from a variety of diseases. Malaria and black fever etc. are common in tribal areas. They also suffer from a various skin diseases which are often due to their incinerate habits. Verrier Elwin\textsuperscript{5} says that the belief in the "happy, care-free, noble savage is a myth". He reported that in the NEFA, people had not enough food, they suffered from abdominal diseases, they died young, they were heavily burdened with anxiety, their life was distracted by war, kidnapping, slavery and cruel punishment. They were not even free. Weaker tribes had to pay tributes to the strong, rich and powerful chief who grew richer on the labour of serfs. Freedom of
movement was severely restricted by inter-village conflict. Their problems have increased with non-tribal contact. Taking their illiteracy, ignorance and guilelessness as an advantage, the non-tribals have been exploiting them. Moneylenders, sahukars, and petty traders and petty officials have been playing havoc in the tribal areas. Land alienation and indebtedness have increased in tribal areas due to these people.

The tribal problems have increased with the introduction of modern law, national forest policy and forest laws. Marriage by capture, a tribal practice, has been treated as an offence under the Indian Penal Code. It is generally reported that in order to avoid payment of heavy bride price, this substitute method was adopted and it had worked smoothly. Late marriage is customary among the tribal people, and there are a large number of men and women in every tribe who cannot afford to marry under normal conditions. The consequences of the situation created by the intrusion of the Indian Penal Code in this aspect of tribal life have seriously undermined social solidarity in tribal societies. For since a long time, most of the tribal people in India, practiced a crude type of cultivation, known as "shifting cultivation". Since it amounts to deforestation, this was prohibited in most areas and as a result these people were forced to take to another kind of agriculture which was unsuited, sophisticated and moreover new to them. The excise laws hit them hard. The tribals depended on the forests for collection of edible roots, fruits, and they freely hunted the game. In actuality, their economy was forest based, but under the Indian Forest Act of 1927, the forests were
classified as preserve forests, protected forests and village forests. Hunting was prohibited in preserve forests. In many of the forest regions, the inhabitants are mainly tribals and the implementation of the national forest policy and forest laws, therefore, has totally affected their living conditions. Even they are deprived of their ritual hunt in reserve forests. Though some privileges are supposed to be given to the tribals, in actual practice, the tribals are ignorant of them. Therefore they are as good as non-existent.

During the times of the British, not much was done for the welfare of the tribals. Owing to the difficulty in administration of these inaccessible areas, where the tribals’ lives, the British followed the policy of “Leave them alone”. For more than 100 years these areas were under the control of Local Zamindars, Muttadars and Mokhasadar, who used to collect rent from the tribes and pay a lump sum amount to the Government. Soon after Independence, the policy makers realised the grave situation in tribal areas and India being a welfare State could not afford to keep this particular section of its population, in a primitive stage. Hence the policy makers directed their attention to their welfare. The tribals were given certain constitutional privileges and these groups were incorporated in the V Schedule of the Indian Constitution, and called the Scheduled Tribes.

India has been a melting pot with varied cultural and ethnic factors. In spite of the assimilation and integration of certain groups with other groups and communities, there are still some distinct pockets wherein reside people with peculiar customs and almost a distinct way of life. They are the several tribes. The
pressure of traditional forces, as also the relative isolation of many communities have enabled them to retain their an old socio-cultural heritage. Such Communities with more or less distinct characteristics are met with in different parts of the country. Apart from the caste Hindus and other communities, the tribal population of India keeps on perpetuating certain specifically distinguishable cultural traits.

Under its new policy purview, independent India could not afford the 'isolationist' policy of the British towards the Tribes. Therefore a number of special provisions for the progress of tribal people and safeguards for their interests were included in the Indian Constitution. And to carry them out at the practical level, massive programmes of tribal development have been launched since then. In spite of all this, tribal India continues to have a large number of problems, which persist. Efforts to bring about a change for the better in the life of tribals may prove more fruitful in the genuine identification of their problems and requirements.

The problems of Tribal development can broadly be classified into two categories: one, which the tribals face, and the other, which the functionaries working in a tribal society come across. Attention however, has been focussed on the former. Further, there are problems, which are more or less common for the Indian tribal population as a whole, and there are still others that are tribe-specific. For instance, the Khasis of Meghalaya belong to a matriarchal society and it is mostly the females who play a dominant role in the life and culture of the community. The society of the Jaunsar Bawar is partly polyandrous and a female
is permitted to have more than one husband, mainly brothers. This fraternal type of polyandry, among other reasons, can be attributed to the scarcity of females and economic pressures. The rights and privileges of the eldest brother, in a common wedlock are more in comparison to those of the younger ones. Thus, the structure and role of the family are quite different from others found in a non-polyandrous society. Similarly, among the Bhils, where polygynous marriages are preferred, the role of the female in economic activities is more dominant than that of the male. At the social plane, the status of a man gets elevated with the increase in the number of wives. In patrilineal tribal communities like those of the Gonds, the Oraons, the Santals, the Minas, etc., the role and status of the male is higher. He not only inherits property but also acts as the head of the family. Thus, when the organisational and functional perspective of the tribes are widely different, they are bound to pose different types of problems. Some of these may not be important but need to be thoroughly analysed and understood.

**Indebtedness, Exploitation and Poverty**

Before the penetration of moneylenders into their world, the tribals, by and large, exchanged various commodities on the occasion of weekly markets and fairs. Their needs were limited. For centuries they had been leading this kind of life. A high sense of community life prevailed among them, and the feelings of rich and poor, superordinate and supraordinate did not develop. Over the recent years, the continuity of such a life has been greatly impaired. The influx of others
in tribal habitations has made them money-minded. Moneylenders lend money to the tribals who, in due course, fall victims to them and can never come out of their clutches. The family debts have piled up. Now the amount of debt, among the tribal families, varies from less than a hundred rupees to a few thousands. It is more in the case of highly exposed tribes.

Indebtedness and exploitation grow faster in an atmosphere of ignorance prevailing in the tribal communities. Even the bride price, which the tribals previously paid in kind, is now decided through cash payments. In certain tribal communities the value of bride price has gone as high as rupees two thousand. For a tribal family, in general, it is extremely difficult to muster this price from one’s own resources. The same is true in the case of expenses on a funeral feast. Most of them approach moneylenders and incur debt for such purposes. There are many other rituals and ceremonies connected with birth, death and house construction. Their performance requires money, which a large number of people are unable to manage by themselves. It is not only compulsions of various needs but also the convenience which makes a tribal go to the nearest financing agency, that is, the local moneylender. In most of the areas the tribals have been badly over-powered economically, politically and socially by the local moneylenders. The tribals have, at number of places, been reduced to the position of bonded labourers and serfs. A severe form of exploitation has grown under the system of bondage.
The practice of bonded labour is known by different names in different regions. In Rajasthan it is called Sagri; in Andhra Vetti; in Orissa, Gothi; in Karnataka Jetha, and in Madhya Pradesh Naukri Nama. A man pledges his person and sometimes his family against a loan. The Dhebar Commission and the Verrier Elwin Committee reports, prepared on the basis of study in different special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks and Tribal Development Blocks particularly point out that there is extreme poverty among the tribes. Other factors apart, moneylenders are chiefly responsible for the misery of the tribals. Over the years they have grabbed a large part of their cultivable land. Traders, shopkeepers and wine-sellers having entered tribal villages with a small capital, in no time have become the biggest landlords of the area, at the cost of the tribals who are deprived of even the small resources they had.

Thousands of tribal families have been reduced to extreme poverty. Making it almost impossible for them to grow from that state. The opening of credit and multipurpose societies, the Grain Golas and consumers' stores in some tribal areas has not been helpful to the tribals to the extent that they can free themselves from the clutches of moneylenders. Such institutions have hardly made any significant contribution. Unless a viable alternative is provided as soon as possible to meet the immediate social and economic needs of the tribal people, and unless their economic resources are regenerated, the state of indebtedness and poverty may lead to the creation of new problems, both socio-psychological and economic.
Shifting Cultivation and Primitive Technology

The average cultivable land holding among the tribals has drastically decreased partly because some of their land has been grabbed by the non-tribals and partly because of the increasing pressure of population. Over 2.6 million tribals in the North-East and Central Zone depend on shifting cultivation which is known by different names: Jhum in Assam and Tripura; Bewar or Dahiya in Madhya Pradesh; Podu in Andhra Pradesh; Komam or Bringu in North Orissa and Gudia in South Orissa. For this form of cultivation the trees and bushes are first cut and dried. They are then burnt before the start of the rains. This is followed by the sowing of seeds, which germinate and grow when it rains. The site of cultivation is shifted every two to three years. This type of cultivation was popular in the absence of advanced techniques of farming. Certain superstitious beliefs and ecological conditions also have a hand in the matter. Experts feel that shifting cultivation is quite an uneconomic enterprise as it leads to deforestation and soil erosion. In certain forests the shifting cultivation is banned.

As suggested by many, the forest cooperative societies can, to some extent, come to the rescue of the tribal population. But in many places where the non-tribals have interfered in managerial and other capacities, the tribals have largely failed to get the benefit out of the forest cooperative societies. Settled agriculturists, among the tribals, suffer at numerous fronts. A vast acreage remains unirrigated and the cultivators grow only one crop, which is rain-fed. Such tribals are doomed in case there is drought or erratic rainfall. In smaller and
unviable land-holdings the produce is small: The primitive state of tools and
technology used by the tribals is another handicap in agriculture production. They
have little or no knowledge of the use of chemical fertilisers, improved
implements, seeds and technical know-how. In case the cultivators are motivated
to go in for, say, high yielding varieties, the necessary perquisites are not
available. For various reasons, social and economic, the majority of farmers
continue to remain outside the fold of agriculture innovations.

Socio-Religious Problems

Isolation has its own problems; it hinders cultural growth and causes
stagnation in community ventures. But culture contact also poses many problems,
specially in the context of adjustment of the communities influenced. Before the
Tribal Development Programmes were implemented, many people entered tribal
areas with certain specific motives, either economic or religious conversion. As
has already been mentioned, traders and moneylenders exploited the illiterate,
simple and straightforward tribals. Even some of the Government officials,
directly in touch with the tribals and contractors took undue advantage of the
situation. The Christian missionaries though have been helping the tribals to lead
a better life, have been there to proselytise; they have also created some social
problems. Many outsiders, including officials and non-officials are not
sympathetic to tribal life and culture. Contractors give the tribals lower wages

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than what is prescribed; the forest officials charge, in many cases, for headlands of wood which the tribals are legally entitled to free of cost.

Some outsiders have also introduced moral corruption among the tribals. Youth dormitories, where tribal boys and girls have been enjoying a free life, and which once formed an important part of their social organisation and community life have already started disappearing. At many places outsiders attempt to share sex with the tribals. As a consequence the latter have already started doing away with dormitories.

Tribal society continues to be superstition-ridden. Superstitious beliefs have not been shaken, even under the changing conditions in certain other fields. Blind Dependence on the supernatural impedes the development of various faculties, and hence in resolving many other problems. Ill-luck, in general, is attributed to the annoyance of supernatural elements. Such an attitude is unhealthy. In the tribal world a large number of diseases and cares are connected with the supernatural. Tribal villages have religious specialists who treat and guide the destiny of a sick person. They do it with the help of supernatural power, which he or she is believed to be in possession of. By and large, it is these experts who are contacted first in the event of a sickness. Connected to these are the problems of ignorance and illiteracy. Ignorance, backed by illiteracy, is so strong that it has terribly suppressed the growth of rationality. A very large majority among the tribals are illiterate, exception being the members of a few tribes in whose case contact with other cultures is well established. The level of literacy
among the females is worse. In spite of setting up a wide network of schools, education has not yet caught the imagination of the average tribal. Under such a trend the persistence of ignorance cannot be checked. Further, some of the tribals are relatively more cut off in matters of communication. In many areas, which have thick forests and high hills, transport facilities either hardly exist or are extremely meager. Obviously the tribal inhabitants of such places are not benefited as much as they should from the programmes of planned change. The problem of physical isolation debars them from certain advantages.

Transfer and Alienation of Tribal Lands

There is a growing feeling among the tribal communities that the process of development frequently leads to a progressive erosion of their traditional rights over their land resources including forests, while generally the passing of lands from the ownership and control of the tribals into others’ hands is ascribed to the lacunae in the law, faulty implementation, rapacious exploitation by unscrupulous traders, moneylenders, etc. Sometimes the tribals are overwhelmed by a sense of alienation from the new socio-political system itself, which they think is responsible for their massive dispossession. The root cause of many of the tribal upheavals or other manifestations of unrest in tribal areas lies in this sense of alienation. The problem is neither merely economic nor merely political. It is much more basic, where economic, political and considerations are combined with
psychological and cultural factors, which are equally important, if not more, in their case.

The Indian tribal society, which is considered as a pre-literate society, cannot be characterised as pre-logical and superstitious. These simple societies have richly contributed to the growth of indigenous great traditions of India. The contributions of the so-called primitive societies are conspicuous in the fields of linguistics, mythology, legends, religious belief systems, medicine (Herbal Pharmacopoeia), magic and music. Even in the fields of forestry, horticulture, agriculture etc their contribution is significant. It is aptly stated that tribals "exist in complete harmony with Indian tradition and however mysterious the Adivasis may appear today, these are the people who gave India her first civilizations".

The tribal communities have been passing through various stages of economic evolution/development, starting with hunting, gathering to settled cultivation and market economy. They have developed ingenious methods of exploitation of natural resources for their survival, but simultaneously ensuring the sustainability of these resources. The subsistence systems depend usually upon the nature of habitat, accessibility of natural resources, degree of attainment of knowledge and technology for exploitation of available resources.

**Occupational Pattern**

Out of the total tribal population of 67.75 millions in the country, Andhra Pradesh has 4.2 millions, constituting 6.2 per cent of the tribal. As per the 1991
census reports the occupational pattern of the tribes of Andhra Pradesh reveal that 41.2 per cent are cultivators, 46.6 per cent are agriculture labourers, 2.6 per cent only are pursuing household industry and the rest forming 9.6 per cent are eking out their livelihood by means of other occupations. The percentage of cultivators and agricultural labourers among STs are more than the percentage of cultivators and agricultural labourers in the general population at the State and National levels. It is significant to note that the percentage of cultivators among the STs was 43.2 per cent in the 1981 census where as it was reduced to 41.2 per cent in the 1991 census period indicating, a reduction of cultivators. But there is a corresponding increase of agricultural labourers from 43.72 per cent to 46.6 per cent from the 1981 census to the 1991 census reports respectively. This trend also indicates that more tribals are losing their lands in their own habitat inspite of implementation of the Land Alienation Regulation. The occupation pattern of the tribals varies not only from tribe to tribe but also from district to district. Cultivators are less among hunters and gatherers. Among the Chenchus and Yanadis, cultivators constitute only 14 per cent and 6 per cent respectively as per the 1981 census reports.

Hunting

The Chenchus of Nallamalai hills are the only tribe subsisting largely on hunting and gathering, out of the total 33 recognised Scheduled Tribes in the state. These hunter-gatherers require vast geographical areas for their survival, and the tools and implements devised by them are very simple and primitive. The various
food getting devices like bows, varieties of arrows, traps, snares etc. indicate that
the primitive tribes are not certainly wanting in ingenuity and skill. Their
knowledge of the flora and fauna of the area in which they inhabit is extraordinary
and they have devised several techniques for their exploitation in a sustainable
way. The tribal groups never kill an animal, bird or cut a tree or plant with which
they claim totemic affiliation. They have developed a harmonious social
relationship with nature and the eco-system unlike the so-called "civilised people".
It is significant to note that the social relationship of tribals not only extends to
fellow human beings (kith and Kin) but also to certain living species found in
nature with which they claim sacred mythical affinity. In the exploitation of
various items of forest species, the tribals exhibit good traditional wisdom. Even
the food gathering Chenchus while digging various edible tubers, roots etc leave a
part of the root, tuber inside the ground so that it can sprout again and come to
their rescue in scarcity times. The food gatherers and Minor Forest Produce
(MFP) collectors divide the traditional areas of collection of minor forest produce
on the basis of the needs of each household and their ability of collection. The
village community takes proper care of destitute, widows, physically handicapped
persons while allotting the M.F.P. yielding trees and plants. These laudable
traditional methods of distribution indicate that the Chenchus are an egalitarian
community.
The Ministry of Welfare was constituted on 25th September, 1985 by integrating the following subjects:

(i) Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

(ii) Welfare of Disabled and Programmes of Social Defence relating to the victims of alcoholism, drug addiction, Juvenile Social Maladjustment, welfare of prisoners, Children in need of care and protection, welfare of aged.

(iii) Matters relating to the Administration of Wakf.

The work of animal welfare has also been transferred to this Ministry from the Ministry of Environment and Forest since 08-09-1998.

With a vision to empower the downtrodden sections of the society, symbolically the Ministry has been renamed as Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment since 25-5-1998.

Constitutional Provisions

The Constitution of India has laid responsibility on the shoulders of both State Governments and Central Government, for the development of the STs. Article 46 states that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all other forms of exploitation. Article 16 (4) and 16 (4A) empower the state to make provision
for reservation in the appointment for posts in favour of the Scheduled Tribes along with other categories both in direct recruitments and in promotions. Article 164 (1) provides that in the States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa there shall be a Minister in charge of Tribal Affairs who may in addition be in charge of the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes or any other work. Article 244 (1) provides that the provisions of the fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration and control of the scheduled areas and Scheduled Tribes. Article 275 (1) provides that grant-in-aid should be provided out of the consolidated fund of India to the States to meet the cost of such schemes of development as may be undertaken by them with the approval of Government of India for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes or raising the level of the Scheduled areas. Article 330 and 332 provide reservation for the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. Under Article 338 a National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been constituted which acts as a watchdog for safeguarding their interests.

Tribal Sub-plan Strategy

The Tribal sub-plan strategy has been in operation since the Fifth Five Year Plan for ensuring socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes and their protection against exploitation. The strategy has the twin objectives of (1) accelerating the pace of socio-economic development of the STs, and bringing
them on par with other sections of the society and (ii) of protecting them from exploitation by various vested interest groups. With these objectives in view, a number of developmental schemes have been evolved over the years to place the Scheduled Tribes upon the ladder of development. One of the corner stones of the strategy has been the attempt to earmark funds for the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in the State/UT, which is at least equal in proportion to the ST population in the State/UTs.

The TSP strategy is in operation in 18 states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and 2 Union Territories, namely Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Daman & Diu.

In order to fulfil the above objective, 194 Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs) have been set up in blocks or groups of blocks where the ST Population is more than 50% of the total population. Modified Area Development Approach (MADP) pockets have been formed in-groups of villages having a population of 10,000 or more with 50% or more tribal population. 252 MADA pockets have been created. In addition, 79 clusters have also been formed for groups of villages having a population of 5,000 or more where the STs constitute more than 50% of the population. 75 Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) have been identified in 15 States/UTs on the basis of their pre-agricultural level of
technology and extremely low levels of literacy. The development of the PTGs is undertaken through micro projects for these tribes.

**Special Central Assistance (SCA) for Tribal Sub-Plan**

Special Central Assistance is given by the Ministry of Welfare to the Tribal Sub-Plan State Governments/UT Administrator to fill in the gaps in their financial outlays. The SCA is to be utilised in conjunction with the TSP flow with a view to meeting the gaps, which are not otherwise taken care of by the State Plan. It is basically meant for family-oriented income generated schemes in sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, minor irrigation, soil-conservation, animal husbandry, forest, education, cooperatives, fisheries, villages and small industries and minimum needs programme.

The criteria for the allocation of Special Central Assistance have been fixed on the basis of certain norms for the ITDP, MADA Pockets, Clusters, Primitive Tribal Groups and Dispersed Tribal Groups. The allocation and expenditure for the years from 1992-93 to 1998-1999 is as follows:

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<th>Year</th>
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Tribal Sub-plan of Central Ministries

The Constitution places special responsibility on the Union Government for the Welfare of Scheduled Tribes. As per Article 339 (2) of the Constitution "the executive power of the union shall extend to the giving of directions to a State as to the drawing up and execution of schemes specified in the direction to be essential for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the State". Hence, the Annual Plans of the Central Ministries also play a vital role in tribal development. Under the TSP the Ministries/Departments of Government of India are required to ensure separate quantification of funds and devise appropriate programmes suited to the needs of the tribals and tribal areas. The Planning Commission and the Ministry of Welfare, which is the nodal ministry for planning and policy formulation for tribal development, have been regularly issuing suitable guidelines for effective implementation of the TSP Programmes.

In IX Plan formulation also, the Planning Commission states that as per the decision arrived at in the Conference of Chief Ministers of all states, the Centrally Sponsored Schemes relating to the 7 basic minimum services like drinking water, primary health services, primary education, housing to the shelterless, mid-day meals in primary schools, connectivity of villages and the Public Distribution System should be focussed in order to ensure that the quality of life of our people is enhanced. In addition to these Centrally sponsored schemes, the Welfare of SCs/STs has also been placed as an area of high priority with adequate earmarking of funds for the SCP and the TSP.
The Ministry of Welfare, as per the guidelines of the Planning Commission, has been issuing suitable directions to the Central Ministries/Departments concerned to quantify funds as per the percentage of the Scheduled Tribes population in the Country. Since the Scheduled Tribes constitute about 8.08% of the total country's population, the flow of funds under the TSP from each of the Ministries/Departments of Government of India should at least be 8-9 per cent of their total annual plan outlay.

Since mere quantification of funds may not serve the purpose, the following steps have been suggested so that the STs catch up with the rest of the population:

(i) While earmarking funds for Tribal Sub-plan notional quantification of funds should be avoided as the same leaves scope for exaggeration in figures of earmarked funds.

(ii) Ongoing programmes/schemes may be modified, if necessary, and adequate outlay made to meet the needs of the tribals.

(iii) New Programmes, specifically to meet the needs of the tribals, may be formulated.

(iv) Certain sectors like education, health, minor irrigation, soil conservation, land development, dairy and animal husbandry, horticulture, sericulture and village industries should rank high in priority in the development of the STs. Adequate funds may be allocated for these sectors.
Effective implementation of land reforms laws, distribution of surplus land and detection of cases of illegal alienation of lands from tribals to non-tribals and their restoration should also form part of the plan exercise.

The vital interests of the tribals in forests have to be protected. Their requirements for fodder, fuel and timber and other domestic purposes should be met. Regeneration of forests and afforestation of degraded forests with the active participation of the tribals through the Joint Forest Management Committee should be encouraged.

The financial outlays and physical targets for the STs under each scheme should be highlighted.

**Grants under First Proviso to Article 275 (1) of the Constitution**

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment gives grants to 18 Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) and 4 Tribal Majority States under First Proviso to Article 275 (1) of the Constitution to meet the cost of such projects for Tribal Development as may be undertaken by a State Government for raising the level of administration of the Scheduled areas therein to that of the rest of the State.

In the case of the funds provided to the States/UTs under the SCA and first provision to Article 275 (1) the Ministry has devised a mechanism of monitoring under which quarterly reports are obtained from the States/UTs on the utilisation
of funds for various activities and the physical achievements in terms of beneficiaries assisted for their socio-economic development.

**Tribes Advisory Council**

An important mechanism for tribal development and welfare is the Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) under para 4 of the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. Eight States having Scheduled areas namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan and two non-scheduled area states namely Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have constituted Tribes Advisory Councils.

The TAC consists of not more than twenty members of whom as many as three-fourth shall be the representatives of the Scheduled Tribes in the legislative assembly of the states.

As per the guidelines issued by the MSJ & E, the Tribes Advisory Council should meet at least twice a year with adequate preparation to make them effective. It is only then that the TACs can become a meaningful and important forum representing tribal interest.

**Point II (B) of 20 point programme - Justice to Scheduled Tribes**

The Scheduled Tribes lag behind the rest of the population and face handicaps on account of isolation. A large number of them are still living below the poverty line. The main thrust of Point II (B) of the 20 point programme, is that economic assistance is to be provided to the Scheduled Tribe families to enable
them to rise above the poverty line. The Scheduled Tribe families are assisted through various schemes like Agriculture, Rural Development, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sericulture, Forestry, Small & Cottage Industries, Small Business etc., funded from Central, Centrally Sponsored and State Government Committees on Tribal Development

Keeping in view the plight of the tribes in their living conditions the Government of India have taken lot of efforts and measures to identify the basic problems and surmount them by official means. The Government has been appointing various committees in order to probe into the various issues affecting the tribals and taking measures for improving their living conditions. A brief account of the various committees appointed in this regard is presented below.

1. Verrier Elwin Committee (March 30, 1960) which was constituted to probe on the issues of Special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks with the following objectives:

- To Study the working of the Special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks and
- To advise the Government of India on how to implement the intensive development programme of the Blocks more effectively and give the programme a proper tribal bias.

2. Dhebar Commission (October 14, 1961) was set up which aims at

- to study the functioning of the Tribes Advisory Councils
- the administration of the Scheduled areas under the fifth schedule of the Constitution
- to examine the laws applicable to the schedule areas and the exercise by the Governors concerned of powers under paragraph 5 of the V Schedule.

3. Bhargava Committee (September 15, 1962) which was a Special Working Group on Cooperation for backward classes recommended that -

- The pace of economic rehabilitation of backward classes could be made more rapid and sustained through cooperatives.

4. P. Shilu Ao Committee (September, 19, 1967) which was a Study Team constituted on Tribal Development Programmes. This committee formulate schemes -

- to enable the tribal communities to secure an adequate share in the benefits of general development programmes and speed up economic and social advance.

5. Vidyarthi Committee (April 5, 1972) which was a task force on the Development of Tribal Areas. It was set up -

- to review the nature and level of development, identify the present bottlenecks and weakness in policies and programmes and suggest corrective measures.

6. S.C. Dube Committee (October 10, 1972) was set up to review the extent of Tribal Development with a specific following objectives.
- for advising of formulation of the new strategy for tribal development during V year plan,

- for strengthening and streamlining administration in Tribal Areas, and

- Outlining an integrated programme of development indicating overall priorities.

7. Maheshwar Prasad Committee (October 17, 1978) was set up to report on Administrative Arrangements and Personnel Policies in Tribal Areas, covering:

- Administrative arrangements at the Centre and in the States for implementation of tribal development programmes

- Improvement in the administrative structure, personal policies, and

- Placement Policies in tribal areas.

8. B. Sivaraman Committee (June, 1981), which was a National Committee on the Development of Backward Areas. This committee has given appropriate recommendations and suggestions for the overall development of the tribals in backward areas, which in fact has made a laudable contribution for the development of tribals.

9. B.K. Roy Burman Committee (September, 1982) was set up to make an attempt to:

- appraise the nature of the rights of the tribals in respect of land and forest,

- to review integrated forestry development programmes with special reference to social forestry.
10. C.L. Bhatia Committee (1984) was set up to review on various Forestry Programmes for Alleviation of Poverty. It aims at -

- to suggest the introduction of family beneficiary schemes in the forestry sector to create an economic impact of the order which would enable the schedule tribe families to cross the poverty line.

Role of Voluntary Organisations in Tribal Development

Along with the government, many voluntary organisations such as the Servants of India, Thakkar Baba, the Ramakrishna Mission, Christian Missionaries and others have been working in tribal areas for the last several years for the upliftment of tribal communities. Owing to the extensive work done in promoting literacy by the Christian Missionaries, the tribal communities in the northeastern states such as Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya have high incidence of literacy. The presence of Christian Missionaries is also felt in the Chotanagpur region of Bihar whose efforts have made the tribals move far ahead of other tribal communities in their education. But the conditions of majority of other tribal communities, who come under the Fifth Schedule, continue to be very deplorable.

The need of voluntarism on promoting tribal welfare was felt inevitable even in the First five-year plan. Therefore, the Government of India made even then provisions for voluntary organisations to work in tribal areas. Workers of voluntary organisations can adopt innovative methods to rouse the interest of tribal communities to better themselves. With their pragmatic approach, they can break
the ice and make penetrate and probe into their problem situations. They can inculcate leadership qualities among the tribals by making them aware of their potentialities and persuade them to exert themselves to improve their lot by their own effort. The basic philosophy behind voluntary effort is to make the people aware of themselves and their problems, and encourage them to solve these through self-reliance. Since government programmes are time-bound and goal-oriented, the government functionaries are unable to establish adequate rapport with the tribal people in the process of their interaction with them.

Voluntary organisations too have some limitations like financial resource crunch and lack of sufficient manpower. They can concentrate only on a limited number of clientele and in selected pockets. They cannot compete with the government in the coverage of tribal population and its levels of investment pattern. What makes the situation discouraging is that there is no proper understanding between the government and voluntary organisations about their respective roles and their participation. Instead of treating a voluntary worker as an intruder in their area, the government officials should take into their confidence the NGOs and their volunteers and be prepared to assign responsible roles to themselves as well as the NGOs that both the government and voluntary agencies can work together to make tribal development easier and speedy.

In the decades of development in the country, at one point of time the voluntary agencies saw their role as that of mere welfare agencies. Their role was limited to providing succor to various tribal communities. The bureaucratized and
unwieldy government machinery could not develop any contact with the grassroots, and therefore were thus unable to provide effective advice to the state. Therefore, a large number of voluntary groups sprang up all over the country working at the grassroots level in the development of the tribals outside the ambit of state activities. Many of these organisations showed excellent results. As a result, due recognition was given to them by the government. Therefore their effort was perceived as contributing to development rather than mere welfare. At that stage, it was felt that those voluntary organisations whichever had high morale, commitment and dedication, and which had established their credibility with a clean record of service in tribal areas, were to be drawn into tribal development. It was also conceived then that a special cadre of personnel were to be posted to work in tribal areas, as these areas had inbuilt inadequacies in regard to infrastructural facilities, and therefore required special attention.

While the good work done by certain voluntary organisations deserves all commendation, unfortunately there is an unhealthy competition among the voluntary organisations for supremacy and some of them have gone to the extent of maneuvering tactics to get things done in their favour, particularly with regards to obtaining funds from funding agencies. They seek all possible means to make easy money by hook or crook leaving aside the ideology of service. In the process, the credibility of the NGOs in general has became suspect. Misuse of funds by many of them has become common phenomenon. Just as the local elite exercise their influence on government agencies to get their own vested interests
served, they also influence the government with the help of their connections with powerful politicians for getting financial help from the government. In turn, politicians also associate themselves with the voluntary organisations to benefit themselves. It is also noticed that enormous amounts of money are flowing from foreign countries to voluntary organisations ostensibly to be utilized for the development of weaker sections. There is no suitable mechanism evolved to examine whether the money thus received is properly utilised or not. It is obligatory for the government that it should take all measures to nip such malpractices in the bud. Any organisation that is found to be at fault must be taken to task uncompromisingly so that other organisations take a warning from it. The present experiences reflect that the development process in tribal areas has not been on par with the ideology enunciated by late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.

Since time immemorial, forests have been the homes of tribals. They are totally dependent on forests for their livelihood. Their way of life is inextricably, interwoven with forests. The tribals’ practice of slash and burn cultivation has been causing damage to forest growth. Apart from this, large-scale destruction of forests has become the usual practice to meet the requirements of rapid industrialisation and modernisation in the country.

Efforts have been on by the government as well as voluntary organisations to wean the tribals away from the primitive way of agriculture to settled cultivation. The tribal practices of shifting cultivation (slash and burn cultivation) were self-sufficient and never harmed ecology for a long time. But it became
harmful because of the decrease in the years of cycle of shifting cultivation and increasing tribal population, which mounted heavy pressure on their scant resources. In other words, man-land ratio has come down disproportionately over the years. The process, which was basically supporting the subsistence economy of the tribals now, led to the degradation of forests. In the process of weaning the tribals away from shifting cultivation to settled cultivation, countrywide attempts in tribal areas are on. To improve their living conditions they are being persuaded to raise fruit plantations of low gestation period along with timber and other economic plants to generate forest growth and thus conserve forest fertility by following the norms of watershed approach.

The watershed approach to the development of tribal areas including rural areas has become a potential strategy to sustain the resource base in the country. It has already proved its efficacy and relevance in the development of hilly areas, drought-affected and desert-prone areas. Although, this approach is not new to the country's development history, much weightage is given now as the whole concept aims at developing the village as a whole in all spheres. In other words, its major accent is on regeneration of natural resources by involving people as stakeholders for sustainable development.

**Tribal Development Programmes in India**

Tribals in India, geographically and culturally, are at widely different stages of social and economic development and their problems differ from area to area.
and within individual groups. An essential virtue of tribal life is that in a tribe man does not live for himself alone. He views himself as an integral part of the community to which he belongs. This identity of interest between the individual and the community, which is almost absent in non-tribal societies, is real and has a profound bearing on tribal attitudes. It makes for the emergence on every individual of essentially human qualities like camaraderie, fellow feeling, and social awareness. Because of these reasons, perhaps the British adopted the policy of ‘isolation’ and tried to keep the tribals away from the mainstream of Indian life. It is only after independence that the policy of assimilation was pursued with the intention of bringing them into the main stream. The fundamental principles laid down by Late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in this regard became the guiding force:

These Principles were- \(^{10}\)

(i) Tribal people should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.

(ii) Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected

(iii) We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will, no doubt, be needed especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.
(iv) We should not ever-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry with their own social and cultural institutions.

During the initial days, the British administrators thought it expedient generally to leave the tribals alone, because the task of administration in the hill areas was difficult and costly. Secondly, it was considered desirable to keep away the tribals from possible political influence from the world outside. Thirdly, some of the British officers genuinely felt that left to themselves the tribal people would remain a happier lot. The Scheduled District Act of 1874 had kept most of these areas administratively separate. The same situation was allowed to continue under the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935. However, after independence this policy was abandoned and a new policy of tribal development and integration was initiated. As noted already, the Constitution of India made definite provisions for the welfare and uplift of the tribal people throughout the country. A number of commissions and committees were appointed to look into the problems of development in the tribal areas in the country. These commission and Committees recommended a number of measures to remove the socio-economic imbalances between the tribals and non-tribals and also to break down the old psychological barrier existed in the tribal areas. The Dhebar Commission (1961) recommended an integrated approach based on minimum essential items like food, drinking water, employment, education, health and village roads. The task force on Development of Tribal Areas constituted in 1972 suggested that the ecological,
occupational and social parameters of the tribal population should be properly assessed for the formulation of a policy and its implementation so that a steady flow of benefits could be assured to the tribal people. The Dube Committee in 1972 tried to define a new strategy for tribal development and suggested that the problem of tribal development should be defined at the national level and national efforts required for tackling it, worked out. It also suggested an integrated area development in consonance with the genius and aspirations of the tribal people.

A strategy of Tribal development of the tribal people has to be evolved through fast and time-bound integrated area development and other programmes quoted to the genius of the people. It should ensure progressive elimination of all forms of exploitation of the tribals and ensure a move towards the goal of equality and justice. In short, tribal development should be treated as an integral part of social and economic development for which purposive leadership should come from above, at the national level. Hence one of the long-term objectives of Tribal development programme has been stated as improvement of the quality of life in tribal areas. In this respect the National Sixth Plan document outlined the following broad objectives:

1. Enabling 50 per cent of the Scheduled Tribes families to cross the poverty line in the sixth plan period.
2. Enforcing stringently laws to prevent alienation of land belonging to tribals, and those regulating money-lending.
3. Payments of compensations to the scheduled families before acquiring their land and rehabilitation of families displaced from their land on account of establishment of irrigation, industrial and other development projects;

4. Settling shifting cultivators on permanent cultivation;

5. Development of horticulture;

6. Provision of drinking water source in every tribal village and hamlet and

7. Providing educational facilities so that the percentage of enrolment in tribal areas rises to at least that of non-tribal areas. In this context it is proposed to establish residential schools, hostels and provision of incentives for reducing dropouts.

The National Sixth Plan document also observes that the development programmes in the earlier plans for the scheduled tribes tended to be formulated in an ad-hoc manner without any perspective and were more in the nature of welfare schemes. Only after the introduction of the tribal sub-plan strategy in the beginning of the Fifth Plan period, it was made obligatory to earmark funds from the various general state plan sectors for tribal areas identified in states on the basis of preponderance of the scheduled tribe population in an administrative unit.

In addition, the Integrated Development Plans must keep the development of tribal people as their central point of attention. It will be necessary to determine carefully priorities in adopting various programmes. All programmes, which help
in minimizing the incidence of exploitation, such as those in the field of marketing, credit, supply of consumer goods and even informal rationing ensuring commodities at reasonable prices should have the highest priority. The second priority should be given to those programmes, which help in building inner strength in the local communities, such as education and health. The Integrated Development Projects should be started as far as possible, in the first instance in those areas, which are at the lowest rung of the economic ladder. Hence, economic programmes, which extend benefits to all and are quick yielding, should get priority over programmes for individual tribals only.

Though the concept of tribal development was initiated in the Fifth Plan period, itself, its progress even in the Sixth Plan period could hardly deemed to be satisfactory. Regarding State-wise quantification of centrally sponsored schemes, only six states viz., Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu were able to effect quantification of the total order of Rs. 197.49 crores during 1980-85. Considering the total quantum of Rs. 47.25 crores of Central plan schemes, its percentage of 0.42 is hardly significant. This does not, however, imply that the centrally sponsored and central schemes have not been or are not operative in tribal areas. Possibly, they are. But the extent of their utility is not possible to judge in the absence of quantified data from the states. Pressure on the states will have to be kept up for clear quantification of resources from the centrally sponsored and central schemes, so that this exercise becomes a part of the total exercise of the tribal sub-plan. Again the success of these family-
benefiting programmes implemented in the tribal sub-plan areas is vitally dependent on the support and supplementation of some infrastructure and some human resources development sectors. Finally, balanced planning, formulations of family-development, human resources development and infrastructure development sectors are called for in each state, depending on the parameters of the situation there. In the tribal sub-plan areas, where a major part of the scheduled tribe population lives, the need is for a simple unified administrative structure easily comprehensible and accessible to the common tribal. Wherever possible the development and regulatory stands should be inter-woven with it. The Integrated Tribal Development project should become the nerve centre of planning, implementation and monitoring impulses. To improve the quality of implementation the right type of personnel policies have to be followed and competent and dedicated officials should be posted to these areas and adequate incentives offered to them so that there is no developmental lag.

As a part of Tribal Development the Government of India established Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) in 1987 to look after the marketing problems of the tribals. The tribals are totally depending on forest based produce for their livelihood. But the marketing of forest produce by them has become a major problem for them as middlemen exploit the situation depriving the tribals of the benefits. The TRIFED is expected to safeguard the interest of the tribals and save them from the clutches of middlemen, and moneylenders.
One of the important elements in the policy of the Government to bring about a multi-dimensional transformation of the tribal society is establishing proper channels of marketing tribal produce. As the collection of forest produce is the main occupation of the tribals and source of income for them, the establishment of TRIFED assumes great importance. It gives particular attention to the marketing requirements of tribal forest and agricultural produce. As an organisation it is committed to serve the needs of the tribals and contribute to the development of their living standards in various tribal belts. The TRIFED has undertaken the procurement and marketing of over 80 items of tribal produce, which are environmentally friendly, fresh and pure in nature. Its main objectives are:

1. To secure higher earnings and generation of employment opportunities for the tribals,

2. To create awareness of the interplay of market forces among the tribals in order to enable them to optimise their income,

3. To provide guaranteed markets with remunerative prices for the tribal produce and to give price support operations wherever required,

4. To provide support in marketing and financial areas to state level tribal and forest organisations engaged in collection and marketing of tribal produce.
5. To upgrade quality with a view to maximising unit value realisation of tribal products,

6. To promote the export of tribal products,

7. To provide full range of services in organisation, collection of forest produce, scientific exploitation of forest products, storage, transportation, marketing and exports.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India launched in 1996-97 a new scheme for the establishment of grain banks in tribal villages. It was started initially in 12 states identified by the Central Planning Committee on Preventive Measures to check the death of children due to starvation, malnutrition etc. in remote and backward tribal areas. The Ministry released Rs. 149.76 lakhs for implementation of the scheme for the establishment of 234-grain banks in 12 states. During the year 1997-98 the Ministry released Rs. 180 lakhs for the establishment of 281 grain banks in 13 states including Andhra Pradesh. The TRIFED succeeded in its efforts to strengthen the marketing base by giving supportive price for the tribals. It was able to achieve a target of Rs. 1854 million in 1997-98. In the process it has succeeded in assuring remunerative price to tribal products and also expansion to the end. It also has been able to ensure higher earnings and employment opportunities for the tribal people.

The TRIFED has also successfully put India on the Export Map by getting an International Market for several items of tribal produce. It exports Gum, Karaya, Niger Seed, Lac, Spices, De-oiled cake of Sal, Mango Kernel, Soya, Rape
Seed and several other items in a big way to various countries across the globe. It is also making a breakthrough in the procurement and marketing of rare medicine products and herbs. During the year 1997-98 it had an exports of 132.10 millions and it had a target of Rs. 150 million from direct exports and Rs. 160 million through associates.  

Girijan Cooperative Corporation Limited, Andhra Pradesh

A unique feature in the history of tribal development is the starting of Girijan Cooperative Corporation Limited in Andhra Pradesh, to promote tribal development in the State. The Government of Andhra Pradesh established the Corporation in 1956 to achieve the socio-economic upliftment of the tribals. It is on the lines of—

1. Procurement of Minor Forest Produce and Agricultural Produce from the Tribals and Marketing them at the best price to the tribals
2. Supply of Essential commodities under the Public Distribution System and other domestic requirements at fair price to the tribals
3. Provision of credit to the tribals for their agricultural operations

It has been functioning very successfully for the last 45 years for the welfare of the tribals in the state. A detailed analysis of the performance of the corporation and its contribution to tribal development is presented in the next chapter.
References:


3. Ibid, p.10

4. Ibid


