

## Tribal Upliftment: Role of Government after Independence

Mohd Zia-Ul-Haq Rafaqi

Research scholar department of education, A.M.U Aligarh

mzrafiqi@gmail.com

### Abstract

The tribal and indigenous peoples of India constitute an important segment of the Indian population. They are duly listed in the Constitution, which also accords them special rights and privileges. Both the Government and the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have been engaged in their socio-economic development ever since Independence. This paper provides the brief introduction of the various schemes and policies introduced by the government of India after independence, and their benefits for the tribal population of the country as a whole.

**Keywords:** Primitive Tribal Groups, Tribal Research Institutes, (TRIFED)

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian constitution has bestowed upon the State responsibility of undertaking tribal welfare programmes in the country. Article 275 of the constitution focuses on the tribal areas and their development, while Article 244 and Fifth Schedule encompass administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas (Shibani 2009, GOI 1990). Special Central Assistance is given to States/UTs to supplement their efforts in tribal development through Tribal Sub-Plan. This assistance is basically meant for family-oriented income-generating schemes in the sectors of agriculture, horticulture, minor irrigation, soil conservation, animal husbandry, forests, education, cooperatives, fisheries, village and small scale industries and for minimum needs programme. Grants are also given to States/UTs, under the first proviso to article 275(1) of the Constitution to meet the costs of projects for tribal development and for raising the level of administration of Scheduled Area therein on par with the rest of the State/UT (Walter, GOI 2001). Tribal development in Indian is based on twin approach namely protection of their interests through legislative and administrative support and promotion of developmental efforts through plan schemes.

India being a multiracial country with 573 scheduled tribes living in different parts of India speaking more than 270 languages and maintaining exclusive identities. The 67.7 million people belonging to 'Schedule Tribes' in India are generally considered to be 'Adivasi' literally meaning Indigenous people or original inhabitants, or 'primitives' though the term schedule coterminous with the term Adivasi (Pathak 2001). It was DR B.R. Ambedkar, the chairman of the drafting committee of the constitution, who preferred the concept of Scheduled Tribe to "Adivasis" for it enumerates the tribes and hence has a specific meaning (Rao 2012). Scheduled tribe is an administrative term used for the purpose of administering certain specific constitutional privileges, protection and benefits for specific section of peoples historically considered disadvantaged and backward.

According to 2001 census ST's accounted for 84.32 million equivalent to 8.2 percent of the country's total population. Majority of the ST Population live in rural areas and their population is 10.4 percent of the total population of the total population of the country. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, west Bengal and Karnataka are the states having the largest number of scheduled tribes. Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal, Dadra and Nagar Haveli are predominantly tribal states/ UTs. Here STs constitute more than 60 percent of their total population. No STs constitute more than 60 percent of their total population. No STs are notified in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondichereey (GOI 1990). Talking village wise, one lakh five thousand two hundred and ninety five villages have more than 50 percent ST population in the country while 3.23 lakh do not have any ST population. When India was counted as one of the developing nations, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam dreamt of making India a super power. But for making India a super power, a level of intellectual maturity should be reached amongst Indian citizens (Shinde 2012). For creating this level of maturity, every community should get the exposure of education, as perceived a stronger tool for social change, and mightier than sword.

### Tribal Developmental Schemes

The greatest challenge that the Government of India has been facing since independence is the proper provision of social justice to the scheduled tribe people, by ameliorating their socio-economic conditions. Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and denotified tribes constitute the weakest section of India's population, from the ecological, economic and educational angles. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. Though the tribals are the sons of the same soil and the citizens of the same country, they born and grow as the children of the nature. From the historical point of view, they have been subjected to the worst type of exploitation social (kulamni 2005). They are practically deprived of many civic facilities and isolated from modern and civilized

way of living since so many centuries. The British rulers really did something in providing certain facilities in villages and towns such as, education, transport, communication, medical etc. though inadequate and mainly with self-interest. But it did nothing for ameliorating the socio-economic conditions of tribal people, except to the people in North-East region of the country, because of certain reasons. Firstly, the British administrators thought it expedient generally to leave the tribals alone, as 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 world. 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 1984 had therefore 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 new policy of tribal development and integration was initiated. The Constitution of India has made definite provisions for the welfare and uplift of the tribal people throughout the country (Louis 2003).

Special programmes for their welfare include support of educational and economic interests and protection from injustice and all forms of exploitation (Pathak 2001, Sanders 1993, and Walter 1993). The various programmes and schemes adopted by the government for their welfare can be categorised as: Socio-cultural and political aspect, housing and communication, health and sanitation, education and economic development. At state level, special tribal development blocks have been created by the government to supervise tribal programmes and policies. A special minister is also made responsible for implementing different special schemes for tribal areas (Ekka 2002). At present the government is supporting ample schemes both at centre and state level. The present article will notify the central government schemes/ policies for the tribal development.

#### **SCHEME OF DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMITIVE TRIBAL GROUPS (PTGs)**

Based on pre-agricultural level of technology, low level of literacy, declining or stagnant populations, 75 tribal communities in 17 States and 1 Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Island, have been identified and categorized as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). Considering the vulnerability of these groups, a Central Sector Scheme was introduced in the year 1998-99 for the all round development of PTGs. The scheme is very flexible, and covers housing, infrastructure development, education, health, land distribution/development, agriculture development, cattle development, social security, insurance, etc. During 2007-08, comprehensive long term plans "Conservation-cum-Development (CCD) Plans" for PTGs have been formulated for Eleventh Plan period through baseline surveys conducted by respective State Governments/Union territory. These Plans envisage a synergy between efforts of State Governments and nongovernmental organizations

#### **TRIBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTES**

Fourteen Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) have been set up by Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura. These Institutes are engaged in providing planning inputs to the State Governments, conducting research and evaluation studies, collection of data, codification of customary law and conduct of training, seminars and workshops. Some of these Institutes are also having museums exhibiting tribal artifacts.

#### **GIRLS / BOYS HOSTELS FOR STs**

Girls' hostels scheme was started in Third Five-Year Plan with the aim of providing residential facilities to tribal girls in pursuit of education. Central assistance of 50 per cent cost of construction to the States, cent percent to the Union Territories is provided under the scheme. During 1999-2000 funds were released to the States/UTs for construction of 29 Girls' Hostels and 11 Girls Hostels during 2000-2001. Boys' hostels scheme was started in 1989-90 under the same pattern as the Girls' Hostels. During 2000-2001, funds were released for construction of 15 boys' hostels.

**ASHRAM SCHOOLS IN TSP AREA** This Centrally-sponsored scheme was started in 1990-91 to provide Central assistance to the States and Union Territories on 50 per cent and 100 per cent basis, respectively. During 1999- 2000 were released for construction of 36 Ashram schools.

#### **VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES IN TRIBAL AREAS**

The scheme aims at upgrading the skills of the tribal youths in various traditional/modern vocation depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential, which would enable them to gain suitable employment or enable them to become self employed. The scheme provides 100% grant, and is implemented through State Governments, UT Administration and NGOs. The scheme prescribes fixed financial norms. No construction cost is provided. The proposals by NGOs are required to be routed through State Government and the recommendation of the "State Committee for Supporting Voluntary Efforts" constituted under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary/Secretary, Tribal Welfare/Development Department of the

State/UT are mandatory. The recommendation of State Committee is valid for that financial year in which it is made

### **STRENGTHENING EDUCATION AMONG SCHEDULED TRIBE GIRLS IN LOW LITERACY DISTRICT**

It is a gender scheme of the Ministry. The scheme aims to bridge the gap in literacy levels between the general female population and tribal women, through facilitating 100% enrolment of tribal girls in the identified Districts or Blocks, more particularly in naxal affected areas and in areas inhabited by Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs), and reducing drop-outs at the elementary level by creating the required ambience for education. The scheme recognises the fact that improvement of the literacy rate of tribal girls is essential to enable them to participate effectively in and benefit from, socio-economic development. The scheme covers 54 identified districts in 12 States and 1 Union Territory where the ST population is 25% or more, and ST female literacy rate is below 35% or its fractions, as per 2001 census. In addition, any other tribal block in a district, other than aforesaid 54 identified districts, which has scheduled tribal populations 25% or above, and tribal female literacy rate below 35% or its fractions, as per 2001 census, are also covered. The scheme also covers PTG areas and gives priority to areas affected by naxalism. The scheme is implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and autonomous societies of the State Governments/Union Territory. The scheme primarily envisages the running and maintenance of hostels linked with schools running under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or other schemes of Education Department. Where such schooling facilities are not available, the scheme has provision for establishing a complete educational complex with residential and schooling facility. The scheme has provision for tuitions, incentives and periodical awards to encourage the ST girls. The scheme does not provide and construction cost. The scheme prescribes fixed financial norms. The scheme also envisages the establishment of District Education Support Agency (DESA), which would be a non-government organization or a federation of non-governmental organizations, for varied functions like ensuring 100% enrolment, reducing drops outs, arrangement of preventive health education, monitoring the performance of NGOs, etc. The proposals by NGOs are required to be routed through State Government and the recommendation of the "State Committee for Supporting Voluntary Efforts" constituted under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary/Secretary, Tribal Welfare/Development department of the State/UT are mandatory. The recommendation of State Committee is valid for that financial year in which it is made.

### **TRIBAL COOPERATIVE MARKETING DEVELOPMENT FEDERATION OF INDIA LIMITED (TRIFED)**

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) was set up by the Government of India in 1987, with the prime objective of providing marketing assistance and remunerative prices to ST communities for their minor forest produce and surplus agricultural produce and to wean them away from exploitative private traders and middlemen. The federation is a National level Cooperative apex body functioning under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984. The authorized share capital of TRIFED is Rs. 100 crore and the paid up capital is Rs. 99.98 The Government of India's contribution is Rs. 99.75 crore and the balance of Rs. 0.23 crore has been contributed by other shareholders.

### **COACHING FOR SCHEDULED TRIBES**

The scheduled tribe candidates coming from deprived families and disadvantaged environment find it difficult to compete with those coming from a socially and economically advantageous background. To promote a more level playing field, and give ST candidates a better chance to succeed in competitive examinations, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs supports a scheme for coaching for disadvantaged ST candidates in quality coaching institutions to enable them to successfully compete in examinations for jobs/admission to professional courses. The scheme supports free coaching to scheduled tribe students for various competitive examinations viz. Civil Services/State Civil Services/Other Exams conducted by UPSE like CDS, NDA, etc./professional courses like Medical, Engg., Business Administration/Banking/Staff selection Commission/Railway Recruitment Boards/insurance companies, etc. The financial norms of the scheme have been revised during 2007-08. The scheme covers coaching fees, monthly stipend @ Rs.1000/- per ST student per month and boarding/lodging charges for outstation students @ Rs.2000/- per ST student per month for the period of coaching.

### **GRANT-IN-AID TO VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS WORKING FOR WELFARE OF SCHEDULED TRIBES**

The prime objective of the scheme is to enhance the reach of welfare schemes of Government and fill the gaps in service deficient tribal areas, in the sectors such as education, health, drinking water, agro-horticultural productivity, social security net etc. through the efforts of voluntary organizations (VOs)/non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and to provide an environment for socio-economic upliftment and overall development of

the Scheduled Tribes (STs). Any other innovative activity having direct impact on the socio-economic development or livelihood generation of STs may also be considered through voluntary efforts. Under this scheme 90% grant is provided by the ministry and 10% cost is required to be borne by the non-governmental organizations from their own resources, except in Scheduled Areas where the Government bears 100% cost. The scheme provides a list of categories of projects viz. residential school, non-residential schools, 10 or more bedded hospitals, mobile dispensaries, computer training centers, etc., which could be covered under the scheme, and also prescribes fixed financial norms. The scheme does not provide any construction cost. The Proposals by NGOs are required to be routed through State Government and the recommendation of the "State Committee for Supporting Voluntary Efforts" constituted under the chairmanship of principal Secretary/Secretary, Tribal Welfare/Development Department of the State/UT are mandatory. The recommendation of State Committee is valid for that financial year in which it is made.

**1. a.) Post-Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Tribes Students** The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to students belonging to Scheduled Tribes pursuing Post-Matriculation recognized courses in recognized institutions. The scheme covers professional, technical as well as non-professional and non-technical courses at various levels and the scheme also includes correspondence courses including distance and continuing education. The scheme is implemented by the State Government and UT Administrations, which receive 100% Central Assistance over and above the committed liability which is required to be borne by them from their own budgetary provisions. The committed liability is equal to the expenditure reached in the last year of the Plan period. Accordingly, the expenditure incurred in the last year of the Xth plan period, i.e. 2006-2007, has become the committed liability of State/UTs, which is required to be borne by them during each year of the 11th Five Year Plan period. The requirement of committed liability of North Eastern State has been dispensed with from 1997-98. The Scheme is in operation since 1944-45. The value of the existing scholarship includes maintenance allowance, reader charges of blind students, study tour charges, thesis typing/printing charges, book allowance to students pursuing correspondence course and compulsory non-refundable fees charges by the educational institutions. The maintenance allowance for hostlers is between Rs. 235/- p.m. to 740/- and for day scholars from Rs. 140/- p.m. to Rs. 330/- p.m., depending upon the level of courses. The prescribed annual income ceiling of both the parents/guardians, under the scheme is up to Rs. 1,08,000/-, as applicable w.e.f. 1-4-2007. The income ceiling has been linked with the consumer price index for industrial workers.

**1. b.) Upgradation of Merit of ST Students**

The objective of the scheme is to upgrade the merit of ST students by providing them remedial and special coaching in classes IX to XII. While remedial coaching aims at removing deficiencies in various subjects, special coaching is provided with a view to prepare the students for competitive examinations for seeking entry into professional courses like Engineering and Medical disciplines. The scheme provides for 100% central assistance to the States/UT's. A package grant of Rs. 15,000/- per student per year is provided and the State/UTs are not required to bear any financial burden. Besides the amount of scholarship, students with disabilities are also eligible for the following assistance:

- a. Reader Allowance of Rs. 100 per month for blind students in classes IX to XII.
- b. Transport allowance of Rs. 50 per month for the disabled student if such a student does not reside in the hostel, which is within the premises of educational institution. The disability as per the said Act is defined as blindness, low-vision, leprosy-cured, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation and mental illness.
- c. Special pay of Rs. 100 per month is admissible to any employee of the hostel willing to extend help to a severely orthopedically handicapped student residing in a hostel managed by the educational or by the State Govt./Union Territory Admn. who may need the assistance of a helper.
- d. Escort allowance of Rs. 50 per month for severely handicapped day scholar students with lower extremity disability.
- e. Allowance of Rs. 100 per month towards extra coaching to mentally retarded and mentally ill students in classes IX to XII.

The provisions proposed in (a) to (e) above, also apply to leprosy cured students.

**a.) Girls' Hostels for Scheduled Tribes**

The scheme of Girls' Hostels, which started in the Third Plan, is a useful instrument of spreading education among ST Girls, whose literacy still stands at 34.76% as per 2001 census as against the general female literacy of 54.28%. Under the scheme, Central assistance is given to States/UTs for construction of new hostel buildings and/or extension of existing hostels. In this scheme the cost of the construction of the hostel building is equally shared between the Centre and the State in ratio of 50:50. In case of UTs, the Central Government bears the entire cost of the building. The cost of construction is based on the State PWD schedule of rates or local CPWD schedule of rates, whichever is lower. Maintenance of the hostel is the responsibility of the concerned States/UTs. The number of seats in a hostel is up to 100. The hostels are for ST girls primary, middle, secondary, college and university.

### **b.) Boys' Hostel for Scheduled Tribes**

The objectives, terms and conditions as well as the pattern of assistance of this Scheme are same as that of the scheme for Girls' Hostels. The scheme is in operation since 1989-90. The scheme of Boys' hostels has been merged with scheme of girls' hostels in the Xth plan.

### **3 ) RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP SCHEME (RGNF)**

This Scheme was introduced in the year 2005-06. Under the Scheme, fellowship is provided to ST students for pursuing higher studies such as M.Phil. and Ph. D. The maximum duration of a fellowship is 5 years. Every year 667 fellowships are to be provided to ST students. The scheme is being implemented by University Grant Commission (UGC) on behalf of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Any ST student who has passed post-graduation from a UGC recognized University can apply under the scheme.

### **Conclusion**

India being a largest democratic country in the world after independence has done a lot for the upliftment of the destitute sections of the society and a lot is to be done in this regard (Panini 2000). The Nehru era laid the foundation of the tribal policy which was pivoted around the Panchsheel that emerged as the guiding principle of tribal policy towards the close of the 1950s (Rao 2012). Remembering the last punch of Panchsheel "we should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by quality of human character that is evolved" (Behera 1999). Keeping in view the essence of panchsheel the govt should make ameliorative steps for the welfare of tribals. As the countries development lies in the wholesome development of its members, communities, class. Effective steps should be taken to address the tribal specific issues viz., health and nutritional deficiencies, illiteracy, lack of income generation opportunities, lack of amenities like housing, sanitation, drinking water, land alienation, indebtedness, social exploitation, displacement etc.

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