

# Government Policies and Programs for Tribes: A Historical Analysis

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## Abstract

*It is an attempt is made to examine the various special provisions incorporated in the Constitution and also the legislative measures taken for the protection and promotion of tribal interests. It also focuses on the development programmes launched during the planning era for tribal development in the country. The paper is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to an in-depth analysis of the different aspects of tribal development in India, and the second section is about the implementation of the government policies and programs for the advancement of Tribes guaranteed in the Constitution.*

**Keywords:** Constitutional Safeguards, Five-Year Plans, Tribal Development, De-notified Tribes, Development policies and programs

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Date of Submission: 01-01-2025

Date of acceptance: 15-01-2025

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## I. Introduction

The present paper is based on the existing tribal literature at the national and state levels is used for a historical examination of the policies and prospects of tribal development. There is not much literature published on the government policies and programs that are meant for tribes in India in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular. Though the Indian Constitution guaranteed safeguards for the Tribals in India, the consecutive governments of independent India have not taken seriously in framing the policies and programs for the advancement of these sections. It is during the late 1970s and early 1980s, policies and programs were designed for the growth and development of the tribal communities in India and Andhra Pradesh. In the proposed paper a historical overview of the Constitutional safeguards for the development of Tribes are examined critically to assess them in the process of the development framework.

## The Constitutional Safeguards for Tribals

After being appointed as an independent, the Constituent Assembly subcommittee under the chairmanship of A.V.Thakkar<sup>1</sup> was appointed to deal with tribal problems. The recommendations of this subcommittee were accepted by the Constituent Assembly. Consequently, adequate provisions were made in the Constitution for the Scheduled Tribes (STs) to provide them special safeguards for advancement and protection from exploitation by advanced or more developed non-tribal sections. Apart from the Directive Principles of the State Policy, which put a moral responsibility on the State to promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, there are several provisions in the Constitution which ensure equality to tribals and protect them from exploitation. Thus, the Constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Tribes, along with other backward groups, may be described as protective safeguards, political safeguards, and safeguards for promoting educational and economic interests. These safeguards include some Fundamental Rights which are as follows

Article 15 prohibits discrimination; Article 16 ensures equality of opportunity in matters of public employment; Article 17 abolishes untouchability; Article 19 protects the tribals by restricting the movement and residence and settlement of non-tribals in some tribal areas; Article 23 deals with the prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour like beggars; Article 25 details freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion; Article 29 entails freedom to people to conserve their language, script or culture and ensures the equality to all citizens of India to get admission in educational institutions maintained by

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<sup>1</sup> Tewari S. Framing the Fifth Schedule: Tribal agency and the making of the Indian Constitution (1937–1950). *Modern Asian Studies*. 2022;56(5):1556-1594. doi:10.1017/S0026749X21000779

the State or receiving aids out of State funds; and Article 35 provides Constitutional Remedies, to give effect to the provisions of Part III of the Constitution.

Further, Article 164 deals with the appointment of minister-in-charge of tribal welfare in some States; Article 244 pertains to the administration of Scheduled and Tribal Areas; Article 275 under Finance, deals with grants from the Union to certain States as it may be necessary to enable the State to meet the cost of such schemes of development as may be undertaken by the State with the approval of Government of India to promote the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or raise the level of administration of Scheduled Areas; and Article 320 details functions of Public Service Commissions for ensuring equal treatment to all citizens of India.

Moreover, Article 330 makes special provisions for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the matter of appointment to services; Article 332 makes a reservation of seats in the Legislative Assemblies; Article 334 specifies the tenure of reservation of seats and special representation; and Article 335 deals with their claims to services and posts and indicate that their claims shall be taken into consideration, consistently, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

Article 338 of the Constitution makes provision for the appointment of a Special Officer for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and specifies his duty as to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for them under the Constitution of India. Further, Article 339 outlines the control of the Union over the administration of Scheduled Areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the above special provisions for the Scheduled Tribes, efforts were also made for the upliftment of tribal communities through certain Acts and Orders which are protective, ameliorative, and concessional. The State Governments also enacted legislative and administrative regulations and measures in the areas of land tenure; land alienation; distribution of waste land; local self-government institutions; forest rights; money lending business; public distribution of consumption goods; marketing of agricultural and forest produce; development of small scale and cottage industries; allotment of house sites; education including special schools, scholarships and hostel facilities; loans and subsidies from financial institutions and margin money and so on for socio-economic development of tribal people.

### **Tribal Development During the Planning Era**

With the advent of planning, serious efforts were made for the development of tribals living in different parts of the Nation. The Five-Year Plans launched by the Government included several types of special programmes for the development of these people aimed at removing different handicaps and disabilities imposed by the colonial government. The development under Five Year Plans aimed at the replacement of traditional system of agriculture by effecting modifications to the existing institutions, promotion of secondary and tertiary sectors to increase income and employment potential and provision of adequate social facilities like education, health, housing, communication, etc., to bring about an all-round improvement in their living conditions. The special efforts made in the successive Five-Year Plans for achieving these objectives are to be considered in the context of the evolving scenario of the tribal situation as well as in the context of changes in the focus of development of the Nation as a whole in the post-Independence period.

In this matter, four phases can be identified. At the first phase of planning, the emphasis was on providing immediate relief to the general mass of population who were denied amenities of life during the colonial rule, and at the same time to build up the productive infrastructure for future growth. In the second phase, the emphasis was on resource mobilisation and provision of social service infrastructure in the countryside. In the third phase, the emphasis shifted to the reduction of disparity and growth with justice, simultaneously stepping up the process of commercialisation of resources. Now, participatory development with a focus on self-management, harnessing the productive forces for meeting the basic needs as well as for contributing to the national objective of self-reliant growth, is gaining momentum.<sup>3</sup> The specific efforts made for tribal development during the successive Five-Year Plans are detailed here.

### **The First Five-Year Plan**

The First Five-Year Plan commenced in the year 1951 with the prime objective of raising the standard of living of people and to open to them opportunities for a richer and varied life.<sup>4</sup> At the commencement of this Plan, the conditions of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were described by the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as follows: "The Scheduled Tribes have suffered from various disabilities. Like all

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<sup>2</sup> Ghurye, Govind Sadashiv. *The scheduled tribes of India*. Transaction Publishers, 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Burman, BK Roy. "Indigenous and tribal peoples in world system perspective." *Studies of tribes and tribals* 1, no. 1 (2003): 7-27.

<sup>4</sup> Government of India, 1952, P.11.

other sections of Indian society, the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes also derive benefits from the various schemes taken up during the Five-Year Plans under the general development programmes. But due to their relative backwardness on the social, economic, and educational front, they could not possibly catch up with the other advanced communities of India. Hence, special provision has been made in the Plan to secure their advancement in such a way as to bring them to the level of the rest of the community.”<sup>5</sup>

As envisaged in the Plan, special provision was made for the setting up of cooperative societies to assist the tribals in the marketing of minor forest produce and agricultural produce. Further, the cooperative credit system was strengthened in the tribal areas to meet the credit needs of these people. The provision of health facilities in tribal and Scheduled Areas was also undertaken during this Plan period. Medical aid was given to the tribal people in the shape of the establishment of primary health centres, distribution of medicines, and so on. During the First Five-Year Plan, Rs. 12 crores were provided by the Central Government with the main objective of developing the economy in tribal areas, and Rs. 11 crores were set apart in the State sector for the development of tribal areas. Besides, Rs. 3 crores were provided for the development of the North East Frontier agency, where a large section of tribals reside.

During this Plan, more emphasis was given to categories and areas to bring overall changes through the instrumentality of outside agencies, i.e., the Community Development Programme (CDP) launched in 1952, which tried to induce the visualized process of change in most backward, isolated, and inaccessible tribal areas.<sup>6</sup> Since the tribal areas were beset with peculiar problems and needs, a different administrative system was required to cater to the peculiar conditions of these areas. Accordingly, Special Multi-Purpose Tribal (SMPT) Development Blocks were started in some selected tribal areas in the country in 1954 to supplement the general development programmes. These blocks were intended to evolve a satisfying concept of development to be made applicable to the tribal areas in the country.<sup>7</sup> Since water supply is a crucial problem in most of the tribal concentrated areas, provision was also made in the Plan for water and irrigation.<sup>8</sup> But, as the CDP was multi-sectoral, it suffered significant failure as far as the tribals are concerned.

### **The Second Five-Year Plan**

In the Second Five-Year Plan, which commenced in the year 1956, a provision of 29.44 crores was made in the State sector and Rs. 29.09 crores in the central sector for the welfare of tribals. Special attention was given on the settlement of tribals practising shifting cultivation in agricultural colonies which were to be like multi-purpose projects. Several important development programmes taken up in the Second Plan which deserve special mention are : (i) Schemes for eradicating disease, the incidence of which is particularly high, such as malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy and yaws, for making available medical and public health facilities and for supply of pure drinking water; (ii) Development of communication in inaccessible areas especially the provision of improved village roads, hill and forest paths, minor bridges, etc; and (iii) other schemes which will secure speedy improvement in economic conditions<sup>9</sup> (GOI, 1956:165). During the Second Five-Year Plan, the Ministry of Home Affairs provided funds to the Ministry of Community Development to open SMPT Development Blocks in areas with a predominantly tribal population. The budget allocated for each SMPT development block during the Plan period was Rs. 27.

lakhs, of which Rs. 15 lakhs were from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rs. 12 lakhs from the Ministry of Community Development.<sup>10</sup> During the Second Five-Year Plan, 43 SMPT Development Blocks were formed all over the country.<sup>11</sup> To bring about rapid improvement in the economic and social conditions of the Scheduled Tribes by concentrating specially on underdeveloped but compact areas for multi-sided development.

### **The Third Five-Year Plan**

The Third Five-Year Plan (1961-66) was directed to strengthen the agricultural economy, develop industry, power, and transport, and hasten the process of industrial and technological change, achieving marked progress towards equality of opportunity and a socialist pattern of society and employing the entire addition to the labour force.<sup>12</sup>

The main programmes undertaken during the Third Five Year Plan for the welfare of the Tribals were in respect of land improvement, land reclamation and soil conservation, minor irrigation, supply of improved seeds,

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<sup>5</sup> Government of India, 1960, P.62.

<sup>6</sup> Bhowmick, Pradip Kumar. *Rural and tribal development practices in India*. MD Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Government of India, 1956, 163

<sup>8</sup> Government of India, 1952, 636

<sup>9</sup> Government of India 1956:165

<sup>10</sup> Government of India, 1956: 593

<sup>11</sup> Government of India, 1956:590

<sup>12</sup> Government of India, 1961:49

manures, implements and bullocks, provision of facilities for training, demonstration of improved practices, development of cattle, fisheries, poultry, piggery and sheep breeding, organisation of training-cum-production centres and financial assistance and advice to village artisans engaged in cottage industries.<sup>13</sup>

The scheme of Multi-Purpose Tribal Blocks has been made flexible by extending it not only to Scheduled Areas but also to those blocks in which the tribal population constitutes the predominant section of the population. This Plan provided for the creation of 300 Tribal Development Blocks as per the recommendation of the Elwin Committee. A sum of Rs. 53,64 crores was allocated for Tribal Welfare during the Plan period. Even though the Tribal Development Block strategy was an improvement over the general community development approach, it did not serve as an effective instrument of tribal development because the administrative and protective aspects of the tribal economy remained largely unattended. Elwin (1961)<sup>14</sup> pointed out that there was no proper involvement of tribals in the management of development programmes. Dhebar Commission (1961)<sup>15</sup> also noted that the protective measures were sporadic and inadequate, and that the process of development in tribal areas was very slow because of meagre financial investments.

#### **The Fourth Five-Year Plan**

At the time of the commencement of the Fourth Five-Year Plan, the Shilu Ao Committee (1969) viewed that Tribal Development. The block was too small to function effectively as a basic unit for planning and implementation. The Committee identified the high incidence of indebtedness, land alienation, educational backwardness, and inadequate communication facilities as major constraints. The Expert Committee in 1972 also expressed similar views. Hence, in the Fourth Five-Year Plan, the Tribal Development Agency (TDA) strategy was introduced as an additive programme focusing on specific target groups/areas in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh. Even this strategy was only a partial success as these agencies concentrated on some economic programmes like agricultural development and higher investment in arterial roads only. By the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan, 504 Tribal Development Blocks were established in the country (Ministry of Home Affairs, 1975). Programmes of land allotment, grant of subsidies for purchase of ploughs and bullocks and improved seeds for development of agriculture and animal husbandry, schemes of soil conservation, land colonisation, minor irrigation and organisation and development of cooperatives were some of the programmes implemented for the economic upliftment of tribals during this plan period. Besides, importance was given to the modernisation and diversification of the occupational pattern for the landless labourers. Assistance for the promotion of cottage industries, technical guidance for the setting up of production and training centres were also included.<sup>16</sup>

On the 504 Tribal Development Blocks, the Union Government had spent Rs. 15.83 crores and Rs. 20.04 crores in the Third Plan and the three Annual Plans, i.e., 1966-69, respectively. The Fourth Plan outlay showed a steep rise in the expenditure to the extent of Rs. 32.50 crores. In addition, Rs. 44 crores were allotted to Tribal Development Agency projects in the Fourth Five-Year Plan.<sup>17</sup>

#### **The Fifth Five-Year Plan**

A comprehensive view of the tribal problem was taken up on the eve of the Fifth Five-Year Plan, by launching the Sub-Plan strategy in tribal areas. The emphasis was on developmental as well as protective aspects, with the focus not only on the area concept but also on the tribal population. From the point of view of tribal development, three distinct categories were identified: (i) those residing in areas of tribal concentration, (2) dispersed tribals residing in plain areas, and (3) primitive tribal groups. While the area development approach was followed for the first category, the family-oriented approach was adopted for the second group, and special projects were taken up for the third category. The objectives of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) strategy were: (a) to bring about socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes; and (b) to ensure protection of tribals against exploitation. The basic approach towards tribal development adopted in the Fifth Five-Year Plan was to denotify larger areas of concentration with separate sub-plans under the State plans. However, the States with a predominant tribal population, like Nagaland, Meghalaya, etc., were not required to draw up separate sub-plans as their state plans are basically for the welfare of the tribals. In the case of States with a low concentration of tribal population, the norms were relaxed to cover a reasonable proportion of ST population; a minimum ST population of about 20,000 was adopted in demarcating sub-plan areas in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Assam. In the case of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the norms were further reduced to the ST population of about

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<sup>13</sup> Government of India, 1961: 705

<sup>14</sup> Misra, Bhabagrahi. "Verrier Elwin's Field Methods and Fieldwork in India: An Appraisal." *Asian Folklore Studies* (1971): 97-132.

<sup>15</sup> [Dhebar-Commission-Report-02.pdf](#)

<sup>16</sup> Government of India, 1969:419.

<sup>17</sup> Government of India, 1969:418,

10,000. In Tripura and West Bengal, the groups of villages with more than 50 per cent tribal concentration were included. In Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, where the tribal population is small and dispersed, a family-based approach was adopted. Thus, the TSP approach was evolved and implemented in 18 States/Union Territories (GOI, 1980). The Tribal Sub-Plan was envisaged as representing total development effort in the identified areas with the aid of resources pooled from (i) outlays from State Plans, (ii) investment by central Ministries, (iii) Special Central Assistance of the Ministry of Home Affairs, and (iv) institutional finance.

For the Implementation of the Sub-Plan strategy, the Integrated Tribal Development Projects/Agencies (ITDPs/ITDAs) were conceived. The project report for each ITDP/ITDA was to reflect balanced inter-sectoral programmes relative to the natural resource endowment, the skills, and aptitude of the people. The Tribal Sub-Plan for a State should represent an aggregate of the various project reports, articulating in sum the priorities, needs, and aspirations of the tribal areas in the State, duly matched to the financial resources available. The revised outlay in the Fifth Plan for the Centre and States was raised to Rs. 119 crores and Rs. 208 crores respectively. The Working Group appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1978 observed that administrative unpreparedness appeared to be a major constraint in purposive utilisation of resources, the establishment of a single line command, organic integration of programmes in the field and absence of effective delegation of powers to the authorities (GOI, 1978),

### **The Sixth Five-Year Plan**

The Sub-Plan approach for Tribal Development was continued during the Sixth Plan period. Poverty alleviation was the main objective of the Sixth Plan period (1980-85). The main thrust of the policy for development of the STs during the Sixth Plan was four-fold, viz., (a) integration of services, at the delivery point to the beneficiaries to develop self-reliance in them; (b) development of services from the bottom-upwards instead of top-downwards; (c) development of skills to diversify the occupations; and (d) introduction of latest technology based on local materials and local skills to reduce the stigma attached to their present profession. Several developmental programmes like IRDP, NREP,<sup>18</sup> RLEGP,<sup>19</sup> DWCR,<sup>20</sup> etc., were implemented for the generation of additional income and employment, and thereby for increasing the purchasing power of the tribals. Besides, the basic needs of these communities were met from the Minimum Needs Programme.<sup>21</sup>

During the Sixth Five-Year Plan, the Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) was launched for intensive, integrated development of tribals by covering smaller areas of tribal concentration having a population of 10,000, and of which the tribal population constituted not less than 50 per cent. This approach was to cover an ST population of 45.82 lakhs in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh, accounting for 8.95 per cent of the tribal population in the country. The programmes drawn up were to cover the entire community based on family orientation.<sup>22</sup>

Primitive tribal communities live more or less in isolation with a very simple lifestyle. Most of these communities are small in size, and their growth rate is slow. They have been referred to as constituting the 'lowest layer' among the ST communities by the Dhebar Commission (1961). They are at the pre-agricultural level of technology and an extremely low level of literacy. As many as 74 ST communities have been identified as 'primitive', and separate micro projects have been formulated for each of them. In the Fifth Five-Year Plan, 52 micro projects commenced in 14 States and one Union Territory. During the Sixth Five-Year Plan period, 22 projects were launched. Thus, a total of 14 lakh tribal population was covered under this programme.

The Government of India funded all the micro projects in the form of Special Central Assistance (SCA) on cent percent basis through various State Governments since 1975-76. These projects aimed at the conservation and reorganisation of the traditional skills of the groups and the sectoral programmes to be taken up, keeping in view the main characteristics of the ecosystem for their development.

Nevertheless, the impact of tribal development programmes appears to be limited. The studies conducted by the Planning Commission (1985) on ITDPs in several States revealed that there was no well-established and effective line of command and that the integration of various sectoral programmes was only notional. Further, no significant dent was made on illiteracy, increasing indebtedness, an insignificant role of cooperatives, and a high incidence of land alienation.

### **The Seventh Five-Year Plan**

The Seventh Plan (1985-90) emphasized improving the socio-economic conditions of the tribals and strengthening infrastructure in tribal areas. Special attention was given to beneficiary-oriented programmes.

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<sup>18</sup> National Rural Employment Program

<sup>19</sup> Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme

<sup>20</sup> Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas

<sup>21</sup> Government of India, 1980.

<sup>22</sup> Government of India, 1980.



Special economic development schemes for ST women were taken up to remove their backwardness and to improve their position (GOI, 1986).

There has been no change in the strategy during the Seventh Five-Year Plan. The efforts have all along been to consolidate the gains under the strategy and to orient them to the targeted groups, viz., the STs. For this purpose, guidelines were issued during the Seventh Five-Year Plan laying down principles which should be adopted for the quantification of funds under the capital-intensive projects. Instructions were issued to the State Governments to utilise SCA for the family-oriented schemes, and for this purpose, a set of illustrative schemes was also sent to them to serve as a model. ITDPs and MADA covered only 75 per cent of the total tribal population in the country. To cover the remaining 25 per cent of the tribal population, the cluster approach was advocated for small areas with a total population of 5,000 and with more than 50 per cent ST population during the Seventh Five-Year Plan. The strategy was further refined by a decision to cover all the tribals in the country, including dispersed tribals, and the Central Government decided to allow SCA to give assistance to dispersed tribal groups for beneficiary-oriented schemes. During the Seventh Five-Year Plan, Rs. 756 crores were earmarked under the SCA for the TSP strategy.

The progress made under ITDAs appears to be satisfactory. The Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1986), which examined the working of ITDPs in Bihar and Rajasthan, pointed out that there was no proper coordination among the technical experts at ITDP and that the fund mobilisation efforts were not proper. Further, there was no proper follow-up of the development programmes. In another report (1987), the Commissioner observed that absence of regular elections to gram panchayats became a hindrance for the promotion of tribal leadership which might have led to improper planning and implementation of different programmes.

### **The Eighth Five-Year Plan**

The Working Group for the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-97) commented, inter alia, that the sectoral allocations under the TSP strategy had not reflected the felt needs of the tribals and hence could not create the desired impact. The role of the project officer of ITDP/ITDA has been reduced to that of a coordinator, and hence, he has not been effective. Protective laws formulated to protect from exploitation by non-tribals are not properly implemented. Further, Large-sized Adivasi Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS) have failed to become as viable credit agencies and substitutes for moneylenders.

The views expressed by the official agencies are supported by the findings of studies conducted by independent agencies. For instance, the evaluation study conducted by the Indian Institute of Public Administration observed that several dysfunctionalities have crept into the system largely due to structural deficiencies. Lack of appropriate indicators in planning made it impossible for the different development departments to formulate programmes and schemes suitable to the requirements of tribal areas. A bigger flaw refers to the absence of any arrangement to decide the felt needs of the tribals. There are several studies that subscribe to this viewpoint.<sup>23</sup>

In the light of these comments, an intensification of efforts to improve the levels of living of STs has been made in the Eighth Five-Year Plan so that by the turn of the century, these disadvantaged sections of the population are brought on par with the rest of the society in all spheres of national endeavour. Emphasis has been laid on the identification and removal of problems of access for STs to programmes and services. Elimination of exploitation of STs and removal of all forms of oppression has been accorded high priority. Problems of STs have been sought to be tackled by suitable streamlining of the mechanism of planning and implementation of programmes of Tribal Sub-Plan.

For the educational development of STs, existing programmes for pre-metric education of STs have been continued. Residential schools, including Ashram schools, have been expanded. As envisaged in the National Policy on Education, 1986, priority was given to the opening of primary schools in tribal areas. The socio-cultural milieu was taken into consideration in developing the curriculum 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, were established in tribal areas on a priority basis. Further, the curriculum at all stages of education was designed to create an awareness of the rich cultural identity of the tribal people, as well as of their enormous creative talent.

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED), through the State Tribal Development Cooperative Finance Corporations, organised the 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 STs was formulated. The cooperative structure in the field for this purpose was suitably reoriented and restructured. During the Eighth Five-Year Plan period, the functioning of cooperative institutions, including the LAMPS in tribal areas, was reviewed to meet the genuine needs of tribal people in matters of credit, marketing of minor

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<sup>23</sup> Bapuji, M. "Tribal Development-Strategies an Overview." *Indian J Admin Sci*, III (1992).

forest produce, and supply of essential commodities. An important objective of the Eighth Five-Year Plan was to provide increased access to credit from banks and cooperative institutions.

For the primitive tribal groups, detailed plans were prepared for their economic development, as far as possible, with the family as the unit. Infrastructure and other development needs were specifically identified for the evolution of an integrated plan. Schemes were prepared taking into account the social and economic organization of the life of these communities, their interests, aptitudes, and abilities.

During the Eighth Five-Year Plan, schemes on a watershed basis in which sectoral programmes like agriculture, forestry, horticulture, infrastructural and social services facilities were interwoven in an integrated and viable manner were formulated to enable the shifting cultivators to take to settled cultivation. Further, an attempt was made to reach the development benefits to forest villages in a manner suited to the situation for the all-around development of the tribes residing there. Moreover, legal and administrative measures and programmes aimed at the elimination of exploitation in matters relating to land, forest, money lending, trade, and labour received priority attention. Besides, efforts were made to critically examine the ongoing schemes and modify them to more effectively cater to the needs of different groups amongst these communities. A provision of Rs. 1250 crores has been made for Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan.<sup>24</sup>

### Strategy in the Ninth Five-Year Plan

The Approach Paper to the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) envisages the following for comprehensively achieving tribal development:

1. to protect the tribal economy and their ownership/patent rights for forest produce/medicinal plants as per the provisions of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).
2. to prepare an Action Plan for food and nutrition security, health coverage, education facilities, etc., for primitive tribal groups against the backdrop of their socio-cultural conditions and with an in-built flexibility to cater to the specific needs of each such tribe and its environment.
3. To formulate a National Policy on Tribal Development.

### Tribal Development Under Five-Year Plans: An Overview

Table 2.1 shows the allocations for the tribal development programme in India under the Five-Year Plans. It may be noted from Table 2.1 that the allocations for tribal development increased from 19.93 crores in the First Five-Year Plan to Rs. 8,311 crores in the Eighth Five-Year Plan. However, in terms of percentage of the total outlay, the allocation for tribal development declined from 1.00 per cent in the First Five-Year Plan to 0.50 per cent in the Fourth Five-Year Plan.

It increased to 3.01 per cent in the Fifth Five-Year Plan, perhaps due to the implementation of the Tribal Sub-Plan. It may also be observed that during the Sixth Five-Year Plan, it further increased to 5.0 per cent, but it again declined to 3.88 per cent and 2.30 per cent respectively in the Seventh Five-Year Plan and Eighth Five-Year Plan. It may be mentioned here that the sudden spurt in the budget for tribal development from the Fourth Five-Year Plan to the Fifth Five-Year Plan and the subsequent plan periods could not be construed as a positive indicator for tribal development.

Table 2.1  
OUTLAYS FOR TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA DURING THE PLANNING ERA

(Rs. in crores)				
Plan Wise	Plan Phase	Total Plan outlay	Outlay for Tribal Development	Percentage
I	Five-Year Plan	1,960	19.93	1.00
II	II- Five-Year Plan	4,672	42.92	0.90
III	III-Five-Year Plan	8,577	50.53	0.60
IV	IV- Five-Year Plan	6,756	32.32	0.60
V	V-Five-Year Plan	15,902	75.00	0.50
VI	VI-Five-Year Plan	39,322	1,102.00	3.01
VII	VII-Five-Year Plan	97,500	5,535.00	5.00
VIII	VII- Five-Year Plan	1,80,000	7,000.00	3.88
IX	IX-Five-Year Plan	3,61,000	8,311.00	2.30

Source: Reports of the Working Groups on Tribal Development VII & VIII Five Year Plans, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, 1984 and 1992.

<sup>24</sup> Government of India, 1992

It was pointed out that as separate budget heads or sub-heads in respect of expenditure in tribal areas by different Ministries and Departments were not available earlier to the Fifth Five-Year Plan, the figures relating to the Fourth Five-Year Plan and the Tribal Welfare Ministries and Departments only. The Fifth Five-Year Plan included not only expenditures by the same Ministries and Departments, but also identifiable expenditures by others. In the Sixth Five-Year Plan, expenditures on account of several indivisible items, such as those on industrial and hydel projects, were also shown to have been for tribal development.<sup>25</sup> Thus, figures ascribed to tribal development for different plan periods are not strictly comparable. Such a comparison might lead to erroneous conclusions on the efficacy of planned expenditure. Furthermore, there is a growing feeling that some of the expenses included under the tribal sub-plan had a negative impact on the economic and social life of the tribals, particularly with reference to major irrigation projects. These projects led to the displacement of tribals from their habitats. The displaced tribals were not paid adequate compensation since systems of communal access to resources prevailed in many places, and persons not having privatised lands were not paid any compensation. Even the rehabilitation has been thought of in terms of an aggregate of individuals and not in terms of the needs of historically evolving social transformations. Similar dispossession of a large number of tribals from traditional resources through unbalanced commercialisation of products without securing the subsistence base can be found in otherwise commendable programmes like forestry, horticulture, sericulture, and so on.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, it appears that a hardening of mood, casting the question of land and forest resources and waterways, is taking place among the tribals. Besides, there are no committed efforts in the process of implementation of the various development schemes for the tribals. The funds earmarked for tribals had been diverted for the benefit of non-tribals in tribal development blocks since no device had evolved to secure them specifically for tribals' interests. Minimum wages are not being given to the tribal labourers by the contractors. The situation is still worse in the case of tribal migrants to other states, who go along with the contractors and will be exploited freely. There is also a feeling among the tribals that the State policy is more anti-tribal and exploitative than the non-tribal merchants. Further, the educated and Christian converted tribals in middle India feel that they may slowly lose their language, culture, and their total identity in the name of the policy of integration.

As such, discontent among them is increasing day- day. From the time of the British till today, the tribals in many areas of the country have rebelled several times (there are as many as 70 recorded tribal insurgency cases so far), but without any result. The tribal areas in the country have become sanctuaries for Naxalites and extremists. The fight of the tribal communities in India today appears to be not for the acquisition of higher skills but for their physical and cultural survival<sup>27</sup>. Further, there are apprehensions about the consequences of new economic policies for tribal areas and tribal people. It is felt that the tribals would become aliens in their land and be reduced to the status of wage-slaves.<sup>28</sup> Hence, there is an urgent need to initiate corrective measures to ensure tribal development in a smooth manner.

Since the tribal communities are at different stages of development in the country, their development problems should be investigated in a comprehensive manner. However, some basic issues in tribal development could be identified:

- i) How to ensure the command of their resources, which the tribal communities used to enjoy?
- ii) What sort of development strategy should be used to improve their living standards effectively?

## **II. Conclusion**

At the outset, it is necessary to ensure that the process does not result in their deprivation. Further, development should be considered as a building-up process concerned not merely with economic progress but with their psychological orientation so that they could adopt new skills, attitudes, and lifestyles. Against this backdrop, it appears that the development programmes implemented so far have achieved only limited success in improving the quality of life of the tribals. Hence, there is a need for qualitative change in the approach towards tribal development to promote their integration into the national mainstream positively. It has been rightly pointed out that tribal development should be endogamous and from within the system rather than imposed from the exterior.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, only a strategy based on the understanding of the tribal traditional value system could provide a vantage point from which to evolve an approach to break the present impasse in respect of tribal development.<sup>30</sup> In this context, various issues pertaining to human resources development of tribal communities

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<sup>25</sup>K. Roy Burman. "Problems and Prospects of Tribal Development in North-East India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 24, no. 13 (1989): 693–97. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4394606>.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid*, 14.

<sup>27</sup> Maharatna, Arup. *Demographic perspectives on India's tribes*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Sharma, Madhu. "A Study ON MALNUTRITION AND POVERTY IN SCHEDULED TRIBES OF INDIA."

<sup>29</sup> Mathur, Hari Mohan. "Tribal land issues in India: Communal management, rights, and displacement." *Land and cultural survival: The communal rights of indigenous peoples in Asia* (2009): 163-192.

<sup>30</sup> Bapuji, M. "Tribal Development-Strategies an Overview." *Indian J Admin Sci*, III (1992).



need to be researched further for chalking out appropriate programmes for different groups based on their active participation.

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