

PROBLEMS OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

LAND ALIENATION:

Importance of land:

Tribal communities of India reside in hill areas that are rich in minerals and forest cover. Land is the basis of their socio-cultural and religious identity, livelihood and their very existence. Their lives are closely interlinked with forests for food, fuel, medicine, fodder and livelihood. Their God and guardian spirits reside in hills, forests, groves etc. Traditionally, ownership of land was by the community and economic activity mainly agrarian, including shifting cultivation, which fostered egalitarian values which influenced their power relations and organizational system. Forest and hills are the main source of tribal identity. It is in this context that the devastation of lives of tribal people caused by loss of access to forest and involuntary displacement from their land has to be understood. Dispossession takes place both directly by depriving tribal communities of their land, habitat, livelihood, political system, culture, values and identity and indirectly through denials of benefits of development and of their rights. With their control over resources diminishing, tribal communities remain the most vulnerable and marginalized community in the country.

The **Development model in India** is a carry forward from the pre-independence British period which was **based on exploitation of natural resources** and human capital for extraction and export of surplus for boosting industrial revolution in Britain. In spite of all the promises in the Constitution for protection and special treatment for tribal people and other weaker groups this **colonial emphasis did not change in independent India**. Due attention and importance was not given to social costs consequently a large number of people were displaced for economic development without regard to proper and holistic rehabilitation of displaced tribal communities and other weaker groups.

Mechanism of Land Alienation:

1. **Legal Loopholes Exploited:** Constitutional Provisions Schedule V of the Constitution lays down provisions for protection of land, and welfare and advancement of Scheduled Tribes. Legal protection is provided in Schedule V under which laws are to be framed by State Governments to 'prohibit or restrict the transfer of land by or among members of the Scheduled Tribes' in Scheduled Areas. State Governments did enact legislations, but in connivance with the state machinery, loopholes were exploited for defrauding tribal people of their land and illegal alienation of tribal land by non-tribal people continued as an ongoing process even after independence. This alienation of land has led to decrease in corpus of tribal land and is a contributory factor in 'forced' migration.
2. **Alienation in the name of Public Purposes:** The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution lays down provisions as to the administration of tribal areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. Under these provisions Autonomous Districts and Autonomous Regions have powers to make laws relating to land, for the management of any forest not being a reserved forest, the inheritance of property, use of water course and canal for purpose of agriculture, etc. But there is a proviso to 3 (a) of the Sixth Schedule which reads as follows:

'Provided that nothing in such laws shall prevent the compulsory acquisition of any land, whether occupied or unoccupied, for public purposes in accordance with the law for the time being in force authorizing such acquisition'.

On the basis of this proviso, land and Common Property Resources (CPR) have been acquired and tribal people have been displaced.

3. **Development-induced displacement** by acquisition of land by the State based on principle of 'eminent domain' for 'public purpose' without a 'land for land' provision for rehabilitation.
4. Acquisition by the State for development projects also leads to alienation of land and displacement due to **environmental pollution and damage** to land in the area near projects but tribal people so displaced are not entitled to any compensation.
5. Illegal land alienation takes place due to participation of revenue functionaries and officials, and incorrect interpretation of laws, manipulation of records and permission accorded to alienate land. State Laws are amended to include provisions that facilitate land alienation of tribal communities.
6. Community land of tribal communities is recorded as Government land in survey and settlement operations and most State tenancy laws recognize only individually owned registered land. Such lands have not been fully surveyed and there is no record of user practices, which would be shown as Government land.
7. State action of acquiring tribal lands for settling refugees has resulted in land alienation and displacement. There is also encroachment of tribal land by immigrants.
8. Creation of National Parks have resulted in alienation of rights and consequent displacement and forced migration of tribal people.
9. Conflicts in the Northeast have resulted in tribal people losing everything and being displaced from their home ground.
10. The backward communities incur debt almost entirely for non-productive purposes mostly to meet day-to-day expenditures. Borrowings as the main source of meeting hospital expenditure of high percentage of tribal population. They cite financial incapability as a major hindrance to using health-care facilities. This is so when treatment is free in government hospitals and cultural aspects are found to be not roadblocks in accessing health care. The problem is their inability to meet incidental expenses such as travel, bribes to doctors and boarding and lodging of bystanders associated with treatment. The twin factor responsible for land alienation is:
 - (a) Economic poverty of tribals
 - (b) Simplicity and honesty of tribals
 - (c) Unawareness of forest act, illiteracy, poverty,
 - (d) Absence of banking facilities in tribal areas are the other reasons of land alienation.
11. Kamal K. Mishra's study highlights eight different methods adopted by the land transferees namely by (i) sale, (ii) mortgage, (iii) benami transfer, (iv) forcible occupation, (v) oral transfer of possession, (vi) marital alliance, (vii) in the name of concubines, and (viii) by other fraudulent means. Indebtedness on account of religious and social obligations and expenses on litigation, medical treatment and alcoholism has further accentuated the problem of tribal land alienation.

Magnitude of land alienation:

- Unwarranted transfer of land ownership
- Census 1991 (sharp reduction in tribal cultivators)
- Rural development survey – 1988 (33 to 35% of tribal household affected by land alienation)
- 80% land alienated to non tribals

Mahapatro (1987) conducted an empirical investigation of 373 tribal households in Koraput District of Orissa. In this study reveals that the sources, purposes and extent of indebtedness among the sample households. He conducted that the problem of tribal indebtedness was a product of primitive existence, social extravagance and market inadequacy. In spite of expansion of co-operative, the money lenders constitute an important source of borrowing in the area under study.

Mahabiles Raj (1989) a study on planning for tribal welfare, They opined that there was a greater disparity in the economic standards of tribal's living in the area of there as mainly over the per-capita income, productivity of agriculture, receptivity of modern techniques, size of land holding, etc. In some tribal regions, unemployment was quite serious. The major problems experienced by the tribal's were exploited by middlemen, procurement of minor forest produce by commercial forces, money lending, land alienation, indebtedness bondage and forest policies. These were mainly due to their illiteracy, ignorance and also isolation from the non-tribal.

Shanmugam .P (2011) have analyzed that the land alienation and poverty in Tamilnadu. This study collected primary data from the tribes of eight selected villages in the district of Nilgiris and Salem in the state of Tamilnadu. Tribes income exclusively depends upon the size of the land holding. Hence, any loss of land not only reduce their income but also increase their poverty level. Tribes have lost their land in two ways. The first one is compulsorily or forcibly, due to heavy indebtedness and the second one is voluntary, to occupy better positions elsewhere. However, the forms of land alienation also determine the level of poverty. This analysis revealed that the portion of the households in BPL category was lower than that of the proportion in the APL category.

Saxena (2012) have pointed out that the acquisition of land by Government have lately drawn resistance in many cases due to inadequate compensation for the land and loss of livelihoods of affected people as well as for involuntary displacement without proper rehabilitation. The present land acquisition law has been quite hostile to the interest of the land owners, as it attempts to make land available to industry through Government at a minimal price. The most state Governments has been to coerce people to give up their land by using the legal power of eminent domain and in some cases even through the use of force. Some estimates suggest that at least 60 million people were displaced between 1947 and 2004, amongst whom at least 40 per cent were tribal and 20 per cent schedule castes of those displaced. Less than 18 per cent were resettled. This study found that the thousands of families displaced by various projects are still awaiting compensation payments. The land would be acquired by Government for private companies and PPP projects only when at least 80 per cent of the project affected people have given their written consent.

Consequences of Land Alienation

1. From Self-sufficient Tribal Communities to Marginalization and Impoverishment

The traditional livelihood system was based on customary rights of tribal communities over land and forests, which was also an 'extensive' system of production. The 'common pool' of resources supported customary rights and prevented the intensification of production, in the interest of conserving and sustaining the long-term productivity of livelihood resources.¹⁸⁷ The customary rights of tribal people over livelihood resources and their territorial sovereignty (in so far as land was territory, not property) came in to conflict with the forces of 'modernisation' and the development process in which they were not participants. In keeping with the politico-economic policies of the country, large projects, which came up in tribal areas rich in hydro and mineral resources, encroached on tribal people's ancestral lands and thereby displaced them.

2. Land for tribes is a source of livelihood and source of identity, ethnicity and cultural distinction. Thus, the loss of land plays havoc with the lives of the displaced tribal communities. Under

R&R programmes, land is not replaced and there is no reconstitution of livelihoods. Loss of their cultural space and identity leads to cultural impoverishment, which is not addressed.

3. Dependence on forests for food in the form of shifting cultivation, fruits and flowers, small game, tubers; for medicines, fodder, material for house building; raw material for traditional art and crafts; income by selling firewood, leaf-plates, fruits etc. This loss, due to displacement is not compensated and affects food security
4. **Loss of status of women after displacement** Women in tribal societies, have a relative equal status on par with their men when compared with neighbouring caste societies. Prior to displacement, women belonging to the project-affected villages were actively participating in household work, such as cooking, child rearing and collecting of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) and firewood. However, in resettlement colonies, adverse conditions force adult and young women to go out in search of work with a view to earn and support their families, due to loss of permanent income sources of land and forest.

Parasuraman discusses the impact of displacement on the social and economic condition of women by different development projects, where it was found that loss of access to traditional sources of livelihood, land, forest, river, pasture, cattle, etc. marginalizes women in the labour force. It is only when land and other sources are replaced that women at least partially regain their economic status. Under R&R policies, there is marked gender disparity as women members of the family such as adult unmarried daughters, widows, deserted divorcees have not been considered as a separate family. Women are traumatized due to loss of resources and break up of family and social networks and there is no strategy to address these adverse impact.

5. **Deterioration of health**
Almost all the R&R colonies lack proper public health facilities, protected drinking water, marketing and transportation. Due to unhygienic conditions, health is a major problem of displaced tribal people, who are affected by various diseases such as malaria, typhoid, viral fevers, diarrhoea, cholera, skin diseases and jaundice. In mining projects, resettlement sites are situated close to mining operations, which result in respiratory diseases. Ill-health causes them to spend most of their earnings towards allopathic medical treatment, due to non-availability of herbal medicines.
6. **Decline in Percentage of Tribal Population: Loss of identity**
Development projects, which have displaced tribal people, have opened up tribal areas, leading to influx of people from outside the tribal region seeking employment. In industry, mines, transport, Government service, trade and commerce, etc. This has resulted in increasing urbanization of tribal areas and the large influx of immigrants from outside gathered the benefits from development, while on the other hand, the condition of tribal people became worse. Consequently, the percentage of tribal population in these areas declined. For example, in Bihar, the percentage of tribal population declined from 10.7 percent in 1951 to 7.66 percent in 1981.

Case studies:

1. The situation in Thottipampu is an ideal case to examine the nature of the approach by revenue officials towards the protection of tribal land rights. The Koya Tribes have slowly lost their lands to non-tribal moneylenders and landlords, reducing their status to that of laborers in their own fields.

The tribal inhabitants of Thottipampu have been fighting for the retrieval of their land, nearly 70 acres worth, since 1975 through legal means. Although tribal families could succeed in several rounds of litigation in designated courts, the local Tahsildar never made any attempt to implement the court's orders, the residents of Thottipampu allege.

For instance, Kanithi Venkappa from the village filed an appeal in 2006 before the Additional Agent to Government, (Project Officer, ITDA, Bhadrachalam) challenging an order issued in favor of non-tribals over a land of 6.26 guntas (40 guntas make up an acre).

The ITDA Project Officer accepted his appeal in June 2008, directing the Tahsildar of Dammampeta to hand over the land to a tribal appellant by evicting non-tribal people. The unsuccessful non-tribal person then challenged the order before the Telangana government, which upheld the earlier order that was passed, in March 2014. However, the order was not enforced, resulting in the non-tribal person later approaching the High Court and stalling the proceedings.

2. **Samantha Case (AP) 1997:** Transfer of tribal land to private mining project was stalled by court (Land alienation for development projects)
3. **Korwa tribe of Surguja District:**
this tribe has been the worst victim of moneylending practices in area (Muslims moneylenders locally called Miyan). Moneylenders were ever ready to advance loan only on the condition of mortgage of land. Tribals' addiction to alcohol has been the major reason for cash loan.
4. **Tharus of Terai region of UP** are victims of Punjabi refugee, moneylender, traders.
5. **Sauria Pahari tribe (study by Sachindra Narayan):** He observed that mahajans exploit Paharia. They exploit Sauria by faulty accounting systems as Sauria (majority) are illiterate.
6. **Displacement in Chhattisgarh due to conflict** One of the reasons for displacing tribal people is conflict between the Maoist and Governments (both centre and State) and '**Salwa Judum**', a State sponsored armed campaign that was launched to combat Maoists. Though it is argued that Salwa Judum was a spontaneous reaction of the civilians to the Maoists, there are evidences to show the hand of the State machinery in the whole process. Shri. K. S. Subramanian, a former Director General of Police, was quoted as saying-

"While official sources maintain that the campaign, led by a local legislator, is hugely successful with the tribal people joining it in large numbers, local enquiries revealed a different picture. In the name of Salwa Judum, the tribal people are being forced to join a far from spontaneous mobilization [sic]... Hundreds have been killed on both sides. A large area of land remains uncultivated; tribal people who are meant to work on the land have deserted the villages and are living under open skies and are starving. A vast amount of corruption has crept in as a result of this misconceived campaign with the Ruling party spending huge amounts on it."
7. **Land Alienation in North East:** Development projects are one of the main causes of tribal land alienation, for example the National Highway 37 that changed the scene completely. The land used for the bypass near Guwahati, including the Games Village, was once the basis for tribal livelihood. Several tribes, especially the Karbi, Tiwa and Garo were earlier found in sizeable numbers in these areas. Dubious means were used by the State and contractors to lure the original occupants to part with their land. Karbis in and around Ganeshpur-Dispur area lived off the land that was fertile and yielded abundant fruit. This fertile area today has been privatised and lost forever.

Another example is that of 20,000 MHz Siang Dam in Arunachal Pradesh, which has submerged the habitat of tribal people, affecting their lives adversely. Laws have made Forests State property leading to loss of access to forest on which tribal people depended for livelihood.

8. The resettlement of external refugees has caused many internal refugees. Mizoram had been hosting temporarily, a Burmese population of 70,000 to 1,00,000 people, who had fled political repression and military oppression. By the end of 1957, 53,318 refugee families had settled in Tripura, out of which, 43,322 families settled down in rural areas (Report of the Administration of the Union Territory of Tripura for the year 1957-58). Since a large number of refugee families were settled in agriculture, it put pressure on agricultural land and eventually put pressure on areas reserved for tribals, which were used by them for Jhum cultivation.
9. **Displacement in the Northeast due to conflicts** The Northeastern States have witnessed a series of armed conflict and violence, since India's independence in 1947, which have caused massive internal displacement, of hundreds of thousands of people.

In Manipur, (1992) the conflict between Kukis and Nagas displaced 11,000 population including Kukis and Nagas from their particular places. Mizoram also experienced ethnic violence between Kukis/Paites in 1997 and this led to displacement of 62,880 persons. Bru tribals were displaced for years.

10. **Kamal K. Mishra's 'Study of alienation of tribal lands in Scheduled V Areas (2002) of Andhra Pradesh, undivided M.P. and Odisha** is a comprehensive study of tribal land alienation. The study revealed that 1,396 tribal households out of the 6,358 sample households (21.95 percent) had lost 6185.5 acres of their land constituting 24.69 percent of the total tribal land in villages under study between 1999-2000. Tribal to tribal transfer of land accounted for 14.04 percent, while tribal to non-tribal transfer was 85.95 percent. The study showed that prolonged indebtedness of the tribal households was the main cause of tribal land alienation. This has happened in spite of a slew of pre-independence and post-independence legislative safeguards against tribal land alienation.

There are eight different methods adopted by the land transferees in the study villages, namely by (i) sale, (ii) mortgage, (iii) benami transfer, (iv) forcible occupation, (v) oral transfer of possession, (vi) marital alliance, (vii) in the name of concubines, and (viii) by other fraudulent means. Indebtedness on account of religious and social obligations and expenses on litigation, medical treatment and alcoholism has further accentuated the problem of tribal land alienation.

Legislative Measures

- Assam land revenue regulation act 1964
- MP Scheduled area regulation act 1954
- Maharashtra land revenue act
- Land acquisition, rehabilitation and resettlement act
- provision under 6th and 7th schedule areas
- FRA 2006
- recommendation of SC/ST commission of 1961 (existing legislation were amended to make them sharper and more protective (AP, MP, Orissa, Rajasthan), protection of tribal land , restoration of land already alienated)

Government Measures

- Tribal area : Panchayat raj institution strengthened and Gram Sabha given prime role to handle issue of land alienation and moneylenders (PESA 1996)

- Land record upgradation has been started in many states.
- Banking facilities and provision for loan/ credit to tribal area has been promoted in recent time.
- Awareness and mobilisation of tribals in more affected area have been started
- Improvement in implementation of legal remedies (Moneylender (prohibition) act, FRA 2006)
- Development project: Land is provided as far as possible to most of displaced tribals (on ground many cases lack this implementation)

Recommendations

- Need to strengthen financial inclusion and credit services.
- Essential commodities should be made available to tribals, so they will not go to moneylenders.
- Speedy disposal of cases related to land related to land alienation. ex.. special court mobile court, etc.
- Digitalisation of land record.
- Better compensation provision. ex. AP compensation act.
- Need clear definition of 'public purpose'
- Improve employment opportunities in tribal areas. ex. MGNREGA, TRIFED, LAMPS, Vandhan Scheme
- Strengthen cooperatives , self employment

SC judgements :

- Narmada (Sardar Sarovar) dam case , 2017, apex court has ordered to give land to tribals who were displaced because of the project "No less than land can be given as compensation".
- Samantha judgement (1997), apex court gave order to state government to return the land to tribals. Land was initially allocated to private mining firm (by govt under public property)

XAXA committee recommendations

Serious effort is required by the State to minimize displacement. There should be a rights- based approach to comprehensive rehabilitation.

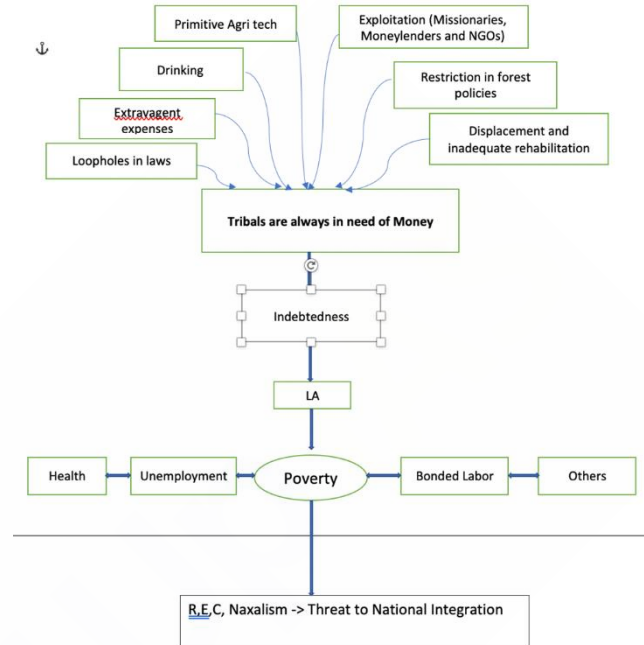
- The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, is progressive in the sense. However, the definition of 'public purpose' in the new law is very wide and will only lead to greater acquisition and displacement in Scheduled Areas.
- Public-Private Partnership mode of acquiring land is simply a backdoor method of alienating land.
- There is plenty of unutilized tribal land available with Central/State/PSUs, and Central/State Governments which is not being used for the purpose for which it was acquired.
- Governments should be legally mandated to return such land to the original landowner/successors or use the same for resettlement of displaced tribals.
- Land and water sources polluted by industrial and mining projects in tribal regions require attention and the onus for taking corrective measures.
- There is considerable emphasis on consultation and consent of Gram Sabhas. It is essential that the State be vigilant through adequate 304 monitoring mechanisms for ensuring that consent is obtained freely.
- Tribal people who have been displaced by conflict in Chhattisgarh and the Northeast should be rehabilitated by the State Government in their villages and provided facilities of housing, safe drinking water, health and education, skill development, electricity supply, irrigation facilities, and agricultural inputs.
- In pursuance of the PESA, 1996, Land Transfer Regulations/Tenancy laws of all Schedule V Areas should be suitably amended to ensure Gram Sabha participation in the identification, investigation and restoration of lands to tribal people

POVERTY AND INDEBTEDNESS

Chronic form of indebtedness has been a major problem for all Indian tribes except few Northeastern tribes, which were isolated from middlemen and contractors during British rule. **Nearly 80% of the tribal population is affected by indebtedness.** Tribal generally borrow money from the unorganized sources mostly from moneylenders and shopkeepers.

Tribals were living in self-sufficient economic condition, forest wealth was at their disposal to sustain them. But unfortunately, when their habitats were thrown open to the outsider's contact, they found themselves completely ill equipped to enjoy their new way of life started due to development projects and contact with outsiders.

The problem of indebtedness among the tribal is not only an indication of their poverty but also reflects the wider economic malaise, i.e., lack of education, low purchasing bargaining power and lack of resources for engaging in gainful activity and meeting emergent expenditure. Therefore, the problem continues to persist with increasing menace as the indebtedness pushes the tribal further into extreme conditions of poverty and forces them to dispense with their meagre resources, including the small bits and pieces of land to pay off the loans at exorbitant rates of interest.



Poverty and exploitation are synonymous with that of the tribal area now. This exploitation with chronic form has been embedded in India's colonial history. Efforts to solve poverty began with rapid industrialisation, green revolution and increase in per capita income through development of service sector. It is however a paradox of our planning that it has failed to improve lives of people and bring out of poverty.

Poverty among tribals

% of tribal population Planning Commission (2004-05). Tendulkar Committee (2009-10)

Rural	47.3%	47.4%
Urban	33.3%	30.4 %

Tribals which are already ill equipped with resources are finding it difficult to come out of poverty cycle. In rural India, in 1993-94 poverty rate was very high, at 50.3 percent at the overall level. Among Scheduled Tribes, it was quite high with 65.9 percent. If we consider the reduction in the poverty levels between 1993-94 and 2004-05, only Scheduled Tribes lagged behind all social groups. It is observed that Scheduled Tribes have poverty rate reduction by only 3.7 percent points, whereas for all groups it was around 8.5 percent. By 2009-10, the reduction rates were substantial across all the groups between 2004-05 and 2009-10; and Scheduled Tribes also recorded a remarkable reduction. But poverty rate among Scheduled Tribes was high with 47.4 percent. Further, between 2009-10 and 2011-12, only Scheduled Tribes had less progress with a reduction of only 2.1 percent points, while all other groups exhibited substantial reductions in poverty rates

Reason for indebtedness

- Problem started when Britishers introduced tribals to monetary economy which replaced barter system present in tribal societies.
- Loopholes in the money lending (prohibition) Act/ laws. This led to the entry of outsiders: moneylenders, merchants into tribal areas.
- Lack of formal financial credit system, faulty land records and addiction led to indebtedness of tribal communities.
- Loss of land rights and forest rights led to borrowing of money for daily expenditures.
- Poor and primitive agriculture resulting into low income from agriculture.
- Outsiders influence: Change in expenditure patterns, marriage ceremonies, rituals, etc. This led to borrowing of money from moneylenders.
- Lack of awareness, illiteracy about laws and banks.
- Adherence to Panchayat decisions regarding fine for fear of excommunicate.
- Dowry or bride wealth money requirements.
- Lack of basic essential commodities in tribal areas (eg. PDS system)
- Ban on shifting cultivation hence livelihood.
- Displacement due to development projects: New place lack land resources, employment, etc.
- Tribal way of life: Extravagance, alcoholism, no habit of saving led to indebtedness.

Causes of poverty

- **Model of planning:** emphasis on industrialisation, manufacturing, etc. (trickle down theory)
- Low agricultural productivity, ban on shifting cultivation.
- Contact with outsiders led to change in expenditure pattern, hence lack of saving and led to indebtedness, which in long run led to poverty.
- Loss of forest rights and land rights due to moneylenders, development projects, forest dept.
- Land alienation to non tribals, hence tribal became landless labourers, daily wagers leading to low income and poverty.
- Displacement due to development projects, where new place lack livelihood opportunities due to land scarcity, low level of skill set, etc.
- **Globalisation:** linking to tribal land to international market, disrupt tribal markets.
- Inadequate state assistance and programme: Financial inclusion, lack of PDS implementation
- Alcoholism, chronic diseases led to huge expenditure.
- Infrastructure lacking for development of tribal economy. Eg. Craft industry has weak marketing linkage with mainstream economy.
- Failure of government programmes and schemes.
- Psychological state of accepting deprivation and lack of aspiration among tribals.
- Illiteracy, lack of skill, led to weak employment opportunity.

Moneylenders Role

- Loopholes in moneylending laws: exploitation of tribals
- Faulty land records, nexus between moneylenders and local revenue officials.
- Land mortgage, failed to repay leading to land grabbing.
- Simple method to give loan: no documentation needed, hence prevalent.
- High interest rate, bonded labor system.

Consequences

- Land alienation and transferring of land to non-tribe
- Bonded labour, chronic diseases, liquor habit.
- Poverty vicious cycle, health and education of family member compromise, loss of freedom

Case Studies

- Korwas of Surguja district
- Sauria paharia study by Sachindra Narayan

- Koltas of Juansar- Bawar (UP) are worst victim of moneylending
- Bonded labour: Rural bengal Duni system of interest. Loan transfer from father to son

Government measures

5th schedule of the Constitution empowers Governor to regulate business of moneylenders, hence many states passed laws: AP scheduled area moneylender regulation Act 1963, Assam moneylender regulation Act 1968, Bihar moneylender (regulation of transaction) Act 1939

- Promotion of settled agriculture in place to shifting agriculture
- Improvement of service delivery in tribal areas for essential commodities (PDS services)
- Laws to prohibit land alienation, moneylending, regulations
- Improvement of infrastructure : connectivity, financial inclusion, health, water and sanitation, education and housing
- Programmes for skill development and training have been started. Eg. Kaushal Vikaas Yojana, Vandhan Yojana
- Self employment and wage employment scheme like MGNREGA.
- TRIFED for marketing forest produce.
- Tribal Haat, e-commerce (Amazon), SHG
- Tribal Sub Plan, Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana
- Along with poverty alienation in the income/per capita income we need to address the issue of MPI (multi- poverty Index), which includes health, education and parameter which will ensure overall development of tribal societies.

However, there are deficiencies in these acts/ laws

- lack of political will and commitment
- weak enforcement of laws
- fines to be considered under laws have not been updated
- Not implemented outside scheduled areas

Remedies

- Planning Commission had identified a two pronged strategy: Long-term credit facility to tribals
- improve repaying capacity of tribals through raising economic condition.
- Effective implementation of the 5th schedule area
- removal of loopholes in existing laws.
- Making availability of essential commodities to tribal at fair price (PDS)
- improve formal credit availability using SHG, PAC, Post office bank, NABARD, LAMPS, use IC.
- Improve financial inclusion along with awareness about moneylender exploitation.
- Lead Bank scheme should keep vigilance on institution.
- Promotion of saving habit through SHG (Vandhan Scheme)
- Training and skill development programme to tribal youth (Gujrat providing driving skill to Kathaiwar region tribal youth)
- Need regulation and inspection of licenses of moneylenders
- Employment opportunities to tribal people through various programs eg. MGNREGA, TRIFED, etc.

XAXA Committee Recommendations

1. There is a dire need to establish agro-based training institutions and related labour-intensive processing industries in tribal regions. Terms and quantum of micro-credit should be made reasonable for individuals, SHGs, cooperative institutions and Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas for the tribes to pursue these occupations.

2. In order to make use of land available with the tribal farmers, they should be motivated to undertake organic farming and eco-forestry. This requires concerted efforts by the Departments of Agriculture and Forest to motivate the tribal farmers to undertake such activities.

3. Although majority of STs have land and cultivation is their main occupation, water for agriculture is the greatest impediment in production. Micro watershed development program with people-centered participatory approach is a good method for poverty reduction through natural resource management in tribal regions. Therefore, micro watershed should be given top-most priority in tribal areas to enhance agricultural productivity.

4. It is imperative to strategize water management in degraded and undulating land, dependent on erratic monsoon. Water conservation through large dams has been proved contrary to the interests of the tribes. Therefore, the best strategy would be to construct water harvesting structures on various small and large water sources. Even on big rivers, small water harvesting structures could be constructed, which would be environment friendly.

5. The deprivation of STs of cultivated land adds to their marginalization and penury. This warrants the prevention of all kinds of tribal land alienation through strict enforcement of laws and restoration of alienated land to the tribal owners as per the provisions of the PESA and the confirmatory Acts by various States. There should be monitoring agencies at the National and State levels to prevent alienation of tribal land and its restoration.

6. Since tribal inhabited regions have good forest cover (with or without trees now), they should be allowed to participate in the protection and management of forests. The newly acquired land under FRA, 2006 could be utilized in ecoforestry rather than for food grain cultivation, which could give more return to the ST farmers, in case they want to opt for it.

7. Credit and marketing facilities need to be extended to the STs. Delivery of social justice must be monitored by the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, both at the national and state levels.

8. There is severe under-representation of STs and pending vacancies in Central Government services. As far as the representation of STs in Public Sector Banks, Financial Institutions and Insurance Companies, STs accounts for 6.55 per cent, which is less than the mandatory 7.5 per cent of ST reservations to be followed by these institutions. Therefore, the Government should follow a transparent policy with regard to jobs for STs in public sector. No ST candidates who fulfill the basic eligibility criteria for a specific post should be rejected on the ground of no suitable candidates found.

9. The discriminatory credit policy of the financial institutions is a major deterrent in the participation of STs in business. Entrepreneurs among STs must be given credit facility on par with other social groups. Further, all steps must be taken by the Government for skill development among the tribal youth to make them employable or self-employed, according to their aspirations.

10. The participation of STs in MGNREGA has been decreasing from its inception in 2006. This trend is very disturbing, which should be investigated and monitored by a special agency under the administrative control of MoTA.

11. Tribals should be encouraged to use their traditional knowledge to meet their needs by recreating their forest ecosystem and forest-based livelihood.

12. The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) among the tribes need special attention due to their vulnerability in the present situation. Their customary right to land, forest and sources of livelihood must be respected and protected. The issue of nomenclature must be addressed by

commissioning a special study. MoTA should ensure that all states having PVTGs should take steps to have micro-projects for individual PVTGs to utilize the grants received under SCA. The Project Offices for PVTGs should be made to report to the MoTA about the development activities undertaken for the PVTGs under their jurisdiction, rather than submitting allocation and expenditure statements.

13. Data on development parameters with respect to STs are not available for the purpose of policy planning and implementation. Therefore, a National Institute of Tribal Development, an autonomous research organization, has to be set up exclusively for undertaking research on STs.

1 Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)

1.1 Since the beginning of the Planning process, efforts have been made to ensure that the tribal people were included in the growth process. However, the strategy changed with each Five Year Plan as new lessons were learnt from various developmental efforts. The first Five Year Plan emphasized the provision of additional financial resources through a community development approach to address the problems of tribal people rather than evolving a clear cut tribal development strategy. Towards the end of the Plan (1954), 43 Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Projects (MTDPs) were created. These MTDPs could not fully serve the interest of the tribal people since the schemes were numerous and of a general nature. This approach continued during the second Five Year Plan. In the third Plan, a different strategy for tribal development was evolved by converting the Community Development Blocks, where the concentration of tribal population was 66 % and above, into Tribal Development Blocks (TDBs). By the end of the fourth Five Year Plan, the number of Tribal Development Blocks in the country rose to 504. The strategy of development through Tribal Development Blocks had its limitations as well, as it failed to address the cause of the tribal population of the country living outside the Tribal Development Blocks, which comprised more than 60% of the total tribal population. During the 5th Five Year Plan period, the exercise of identification of tribal majority blocks was undertaken. These were later constituted into 194 ITDAs/ITDPs in the country.

1.2 The present Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) strategy was initially developed by an Expert Committee set up by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in 1972 under the Chairmanship of Prof. S.C. Dube for the rapid socio-economic development of tribal people and was adopted for the first time in the Fifth Five Year Plan. The TSP strategy, with some modifications, continues till this day and the salient features with respect to TSP for States, are given below:

- i) The funds provided under the Tribal Sub Plan of the State have to be at least equal in proportion to the ST population of each State or UT;
- ii) Tribals and tribal areas of a State or UT are given benefits under the TSP, in addition to what percolates from the overall Plan of a State/UT;
- iii) The Sub-Plan should;
 - a) Identify the problems and need of tribal people and critical gaps in their development.
 - b) Identify all available resources for TSP
 - c) Prepare a broad policy framework for development,
 - d) Prepare a detailed department wise plan
 - e) Define a suitable administrative strategy for its implementation. f) Specify the mechanism for monitoring and evaluation.
- iv) The TSP strategy has been in operation in 22 States and 2 UTs. However, funds meant for UTs are being provided for in the budget of Ministry of Home Affairs since 2003-04 and therefore, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is not concerned in the administration of TSP funds in the UTs.

- v) TSP concept is not applicable to the tribal majority States of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland and in the UTs of Lakshadweep and Dadra & Nagar Haveli where tribals represent more than 60 % of the population, since the Annual Plan in these States/UTs is itself a Tribal Plan.

TSP and Tribal rights:

The late BD Sharma, who was instrumental in shaping government policies for tribals had asserted that “fifth schedule (of the Constitution — which deals with administration of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes) and the tribal sub plan are two co-equal pillars of tribal empowerment.” The TSP was first presented as the magic solution by the UN Dhebar Commission in response to serious challenges faced by the government in managing massive tribal unrest in central eastern India due to land alienation, poverty, indebtedness, and exploitation by non-tribal dominant groups. Apart from these burning issues, one key context which the commission members had to deal with was the growing demand of increasing the peripheries of Scheduled Areas which were originally marked in 1950.

The reason behind such demands by various tribal experts was that there had been significant demographic changes in the tribal population, as result of which several tribal majority areas were not covered under the fifth schedule. Hence, any kind of development intervention was not reaching eligible tribal communities, thereby widening inequality. But there was a resistance to the idea of increasing the coverage of Scheduled Areas by policymakers who favoured the approach of tribal assimilation into mainstream society. Also, the constitutional protection provided to tribal communities in scheduled areas was gradually choked of financial resources due to inadequate funding. All these reasons created an environment of distrust and marginalised large sections of tribal communities. As urgent interventions were called for, the TSP came into existence. The members of the UN Dhebar Commission envisaged the sub-plan approach as a game-changer that could unlock the potential of fifth schedule provisions by strengthening self-governance and the rights of tribal communities over natural resources. At the same time, TSP could also promote tribal development by enhancing their human resources, livelihoods, social security and developing physical infrastructure in their localities.

By its design, what the TSP practically did was to resolve the important demand of increasing the Scheduled Area provisions. Despite strong recommendations by the commission, the government refused to include any additional area within the Scheduled Areas’ list. However, it came to an agreement that the tribal majority areas would subsequently be called sub plan areas and become “coterminous” with the fifth schedule in their legal nature and application of tribal-related laws. The TSP was supposed to be used to extend the provisions fifth schedule areas to the “sub-plan areas”. The twin objectives of protection and development for tribal communities were to be the backbone of the TSP. But unfortunately, at present, it has been reduced to a mere accounting exercise of general schemes, hence robbing tribals of their development rights.

Analysis of TSP

Since its inception, TSP was considered as a vital cog of tribal empowerment. Based on the Nehruvian principle of tribal development, the sub-plan policy for tribals had set up a roadmap by affirming that there is no uniform solution to the variety of problems facing tribal regions and tribal communities. The policy sought to accept the uniqueness of these regions and communities, and formulate policies, programmes and schemes to suit each individual situation, especially for the most vulnerable tribal communities. It was a revolutionary idea for tribal empowerment, but subsequent governments tried to defeat its purpose.

In the past two decades, things had gradually begun to change in a positive way. Important guidelines formulated by Narendra Jadhav were adopted for earmarking funds. Efforts to make TSP

non-lapsable and non-divisible were made. TSP funds were codified in budget books to segregate them from the general schemes. As a result, monitoring of fund-flows for individual schemes became possible. Taking these positive steps forward, state governments of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Uttarakhand gave a legal mandate to TSP.

But with the FY 2017-18, India witnessed radical changes in budgetary formulation. The unique distinction of plan budget and non-plan budget was abolished, and it has totally changed the foundations of the sub-plan policy. Since TSP was calculated and allocated solely on the basis of a planned budget, it has been struggling for justification in its present form. The new guidelines by NITI Aayog have converted TSP into “allocation for welfare of scheduled tribes” which will be now calculated from centrally sponsored schemes and central sector schemes. But in reality, the very basis of TSP has been permanently removed, resulting in overwhelming losses, amounting to thousands of crores worth of development funds, for the tribal community.

At present, five key Union ministries — agriculture, tribal affairs, health and family welfare, rural development and school education — take more than half of the financial resources at the disposal of TSP. However, except for the tribal affairs ministry, none of them have any specific scheme catering to the needs of the tribal communities.

VANBANDHU KALYAN YOJANA

The VKY was broadly a process, aiming at overall development of tribal people with an outcome-based approach, while striking at the critical gaps in the sectors of Housing, Livelihood, Health & Sanitation, Drinking Water, Agriculture & Irrigation, Electricity, Education, Skill development, Sports & Games and Preservation of Cultural Heritage etc. through appropriate convergence of resources and institutional mechanism. It would ensure that all the intended benefits goods and services to the tribal people through various programmes/schemes of Central and State Governments covered under the respective Tribal Sub-Plans reach them by way of appropriate convergence.

Through VKY, it was envisaged to develop the backward blocks in the Schedule V States as Model Blocks with visible infrastructural facilities to further the mission development while ensuring the following:

1. Qualitative and sustainable employment
2. Emphasis on quality education & higher education
3. Accelerated economic development of tribal areas
4. Health for all
5. Housing for all
6. Safe drinking water for all at doorsteps
7. Irrigation facilities suited to the terrain
8. All weather roads with connectivity to the nearby town/cities
9. Universal availability of electricity
10. Urban development
11. Robust institutional mechanism to roll the vehicle of development with sustainability
12. Promotion and conservation of Tribal Cultural Heritage
13. Promotion of Sports in Tribal Areas



EDUCATION AND LITERACY AMONG TRIBALS

The overarching principle of universal free compulsory education is enshrined in Article 45 and Article 46 of the Constitution of India enjoins upon the Indian State the responsibility of taking ‘special care’ of educational interests of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. **At the time of Independence, these governing provisions ensured that the educational needs of the tribals were met with.** Living

in remote terrains and on the periphery of other social groups, the tribals were culturally exclusive. As compared with non-tribal population, tribals were considered most backward sections of the society. Except for a few pockets in the Northeast and central India, tribal societies were hardly influenced by the modern education system. Available statistics of the time show that the tribal participation in formal schooling was marginal. In fact, the **literacy rate of the tribals was only 3.46 per cent in 1951.**

The insignificant presence of tribal people owed to the British colonial educational policy, which did not care for the education of the tribal population. Under the well-known colonial 'filtration' theory, education had to trickle down to the masses through the upper classes, who would be the first to be educated at centrally located model institutions. In certain cases, the Government bypassed the filtration route and opened schools in the interior tribal areas, in order to pacify the tribal population, who were protesting against oppression, by teaching them the colonial idea of rule by law.

The opening of schools in the difficult areas of tribal habitation involved extra investment. It also demanded special effort by committed staff, since the tribal people were not used to any organized system of education and did not appreciate the value of colonial Western education. The colonial government depended upon the Christian missionaries to induce and educate the tribals since 1854. A few government schools and schools run by missionaries, confined to small areas, were all that existed for educating the tribals. Lack of sufficient educational avenues left the tribal people lagging behind other social groups.

Against the background of neglect under British colonialism, the nation's move to reach out to the tribal people educationally through an aggressive program of mass education was a bold move. The epoch was momentous and the spirit came from the urge of democracy and socialism, seeking to empower and shape the backward masses as equal citizens of the country. The mandate of the Constitution captured the nation's resolve. This was clearly visible in the deliberations of the apex national body, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), which devised the National Education Policy. The opening sentence of the Board's blueprint for national education titled Post-War Educational Reconstruction in India – 'upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends' – reflected the importance assigned to education in nation-building.

The national government aimed to achieve universal compulsory education in ten years, by 1960, while CABE drew up a 40-year timeline. The provision under Article 45 of the Constitution binding the state to fulfil the goal of universal compulsory education was not accomplished. Two Commissions of the Government, namely the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission (1960-61), chaired by Shri. U.N. Dhebar, and the Indian Education Commission (1964-66) closely examined the low educational level of the tribals, with a view to address the disparity. **The Dhebar Commission studied the difficulties of and barriers to tribal education in detail. It found that the problem of absenteeism, stagnation and drop-outs among the tribals were far greater than among other social groups.**

Early Educational Planning

During the First Five Year Plan period, the government attended to 'pre-matric' and 'post-matric' educational needs of the tribals. Some 4,000 schools were established in the tribal areas. This included 1,000 Ashrams and Sevashram Schools and 650 Sanskar Kendras, Balwadis and Community Centres in the central tribal belt between Odisha in the east and Rajasthan and Maharashtra in the west. Besides, assistance was given to tribal students by way of scholarships, grants, hostel fees, etc. The Second Five Year Plan carried forward work in similar line.

The Government, in this initial phase, paid special attention to educational grooming of the tribal children in Ashrams, viz. hostels and residential schools, segregating them from their homes and habitats. The consideration occasionally was to bring children to relatively central locality from remote parts where opening school was immediately not possible. **But the guiding principle was that the tribal people were savage and wild, who needed to be civilized by the means of education outside**

the tribal social and cultural life. With this in mind, a step further in the direction of Ashram proposition was **opening of the 'Sanskar Kendras' to re-orient children in upper-caste Hindu cultural norms.** Such importance assigned to residential school concept, led, later on, to the **tendency of Ashramization of the whole program of tribal education.**

The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) estimated that 56 per cent of the tribal children of the country (49 per cent boys and 70 per cent girls) were yet to receive elementary education. After deliberating on the previous challenges, a National Policy on Education was framed in 1986. Recognizing that the situation of stagnancy at primary school level bore upon overall low participation of disadvantaged sections at upper levels, the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) set out to give 'overriding priority' to universalization of elementary education for the children of age-group 6-14 years by 1990.

National Policy on Education, 1986

To realize the universalization of elementary education, the National Policy, 1986, continuing presently, reiterates the earlier resolve to ensure that 'up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality. The education of the tribal masses receives special attention from the government in the policy. By the 1980s, educational planners were clear about the problem of tribals at this stage – poor school facilities, unrelated curriculum, poor methods of teaching and poverty – all of which were discussed at length by the Dhebar Commission. Based on an understanding of these problems, the 1986 Policy recommended a number of measures. Given the fact that ten per cent of rural habitations yet to be covered by primary school within radius of one km were largely tribal habitations in the interior areas, the government prioritized construction of school buildings under schemes like the Jawahar Rojgar Yojna, Tribal Welfare Schemes, etc.

Comparative literacy rate of scheduled tribes and total population(in percent)						
Census	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
All social groups	28.3	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	72.99
STs	8.53	11.30	16.35	29.60	47.10	58.96
Gap	19.77	18.15	19.88	21.61	18.28	14.03

Gross enrollment Ratio		
Class	ST	All Categories
Class - I-V	137	116
Class- VI-VIII	88.9	85.5
Class -IX-X	53.3	65
Class -XI-XII	28.8	39.3

Source Statistic of school education – 2010-2011

Dropout Rates (in percent)

class	ST(boys)	All(boys)	ST(Girls)	ALL(girls)	ST(total)	All(total)	Gap
Class I-V Primary Stage	37.2	28.7	33.9	25.1	35.6	27	8.6
Class V-VIII Middle Stage	54.7	40.3	55.4	41	55	40.6	14.4
Class –I-X Secondary stage	70.6	50.4	71.3	47.9	70.9	49.3	21.6

Source Statistic of school education – 2010-201

Scheme and programme for tribal development

Tribal Panchsheel:

It was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of free India who anticipated the necessity of the development of tribal people and for this sake he laid down five principles of tribal development which is called Tribal Panchsheel. It was ratified by Dhebar commission and enshrined in “A Philosophy for North Eastern Frontier Area” written by Verrier Elwin. These five principles are:

1. People should develop along 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.
2. Tribal rights on land and forests should be respected.
3. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do 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 outsider into tribal territory.
4. We should not over-administer these areas or over-whelm them with multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions.
5. We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

Post- Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Tribe Students:

This scheme was introduced to encourage the ST students pursuing Post–Matriculation, in professional, technical as well as non-professional courses in various recognized institution by providing them financial support. Students having family income not more than Rs.1,0800 per year, are entitled for this scheme. This scheme is in operation since 1944-1945 and implemented by state government and UTs administration with 100% central assistance.

Hostel for ST students’ girls’ and boys’:

A plan for providing hostel accommodation for ST girls“ was started during third five years plan period and for the boys“ this programme was launched in 1989-1990 and both these schemes merged in 10th five-year plan. Aim of this scheme is to facilitate hostel accommodation to the peripheral ST students who are unable to pursue their education due to their financial condition and location of their residence.

Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme (RGNF):

RGNF was introduced in the year 2005-2006 with the objective to encourage the students belonging to ST community to pursue higher education such as M.Phil and Ph.D by providing them financial assistance. University Grant Commission (UGC) took the responsibility to implement this scheme on the behalf of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Vocational Training Center in Tribal Areas:

Aim of this scheme is to develop the skill of ST students depending on their qualification and present market trends. This vocational training would enable them to get suitable employment or enable them to become self-sufficient.

National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for ST:

This scheme provides financial support to those meritorious tribal students who wish to pursue their studies in abroad (Masters, Doctorate, Post-Doctorate) in specified field of Engineering, Technology, and Science.

Scheme of Top-Class Education for ST Students:

A scheme of scholarship was introduced by Ministry of Tribal affairs in 2007-2008 to encourage brilliant students of tribal community for continuing their study at degree or post-degree level. Ashram School in Tribal Sub-Plan Area: This scheme was started in 1990-1991 with a view to provide education with residential facility to ST students.

Tribal Research Institute:

Fourteen Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) have been set up in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura.

Book Bank:

In order to reduce dropout rate among ST students from professional institutes/ universities, funds are allotted for purchase of books under this scheme.

Coaching for ST:

Under this scheme free coaching classes are provided to ST students to enhance their skill and capabilities for various competitive examinations, so that they can compete with main stream students in all competitive examinations.

CHALLENGES:

Despite constitutional provisions and safe guard with various government initiatives and programme, educating tribal children is still a major concern for the government. There are so many socio-cultural, economical, geographical, and administrative obstacle (report Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GOI, 2013) for which literacy rate of tribal people has never been at par with entire population, and gap between them is always high, for example the gap between tribals and whole population in literacy rate was 19.7% in 1961 which increased to 21.6% in 1991 and has declined to 14.3% in 2011

Economic conditions:

Most of the tribal community is economically backward. It is very difficult for them to fulfill their basic needs. Sending their children to school is much like a luxury to them. They prefer to send their children to work to supplement the family income.

Reluctance of parents towards education:

Illiteracy of parents and their attitude towards education is indifferent, as well as their community never encourages the pupils to pursue study. Besides parents are not willing to send their daughters to co-educational institutions.

Infrastructural challenges:

Most of the schools located in tribal areas have minimal infrastructural facilities. These schools are not equipped with teaching learning materials, study materials, even minimum sanitary provisions are not maintained. Lack of communication plays pivotal role in discouraging tribal children to come to school regularly.

Education as a Site of Discrimination

Traditionally, education has been an area of discrimination against dalits and tribals. In case of the tribal children, teaching-learning is not always friendly. The classrooms are not free from the traditional social prejudice against the tribal children. In a recent report, Human Rights Watch records that the Ghasiya tribal children of Sonbhadra District in Uttar Pradesh were made to sit in a single grade irrespective of their ages, that also separately from the other students.

While discussing discrimination at the level of school education, one cannot refrain from pointing out the phenomenon in the area of higher education. The reaching of an insignificant number of tribal students in the portals of higher education is grudged by students from upper castes.

Teachers and Way of Teaching Tribal Children

Along with the shortage of teachers, the quality of teachers and their approach and method of teaching has been a serious issue. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 and Dhebar commission both have underscored the need of familiarity for teachers teaching tribal children with tribal culture and language so that learning is hassle-free. For intimate orientation and training of teachers, the Dhebar Commission even insisted on teacher training centres being located in the tribal areas, and wanted the teachers so trained to serve the tribal area for at least twenty years. Equally important, is the need of production of teaching materials in tribal languages in the interest of a large number of early tribal learners.

Residential Schools and the Tribals

As a way of providing quality education to the tribals in an efficient manner, the Government has been, from the 1950s to the present policy, opening residential schools and hostels for them at central places. Ashram School, Eklavya Model School and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalya are leading schemes under this approach. It is generally found that there is 'cultural discontinuity' between school environment and social life of the children back home. They are often in the news for corruption, bad maintenance of facilities and sexual exploitation of resident girls.

A review of the 'ashramshalas' in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, in the wake of the case of rape and sexual abuse of girls in the Jhaliyamari village of Narharpur Block.

Educational Domain and Knowledge on Tribes

Tribes as a subject figure insignificantly in the school curriculum. There is dearth of textbook materials and of advanced knowledge on the tribes. This makes tribes the most misunderstood social group of the country. Wherever the subject finds some space, the tribals are depicted as quaint and exotic people. Rich cultures, history and dynamics of the tribal society are not touched upon.

Contemporary Concerns in Tribal Education

Incidence of High Dropout Rates

Dropout rates among the tribal students, particularly at the secondary and senior secondary stages, are very high. With dropout rates of 73 per cent at Class X, 84 per cent at Class XI and 86 per cent at Class XII, higher education also suffers.

Shortage of 'Quality' Teachers

In the 1950s and the '60s, Ashram Schools at primary level were introduced in tribal habitations. The number of teachers per school was below the present RTE norms. Paucity of trained teachers, learning achievement levels of tribal students remain low.

Language Barriers for the Tribal Students

Most of the tribal communities in India have their own mother tongue. But in most of the States, official/regional languages are used for classroom teaching and these are not understood by the tribal children at primary level of schooling. In the Vision 2020 document, there was an acknowledgement that Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) was necessary, in view of the low tribal literacy, high rates of dropouts and low learning achievements of the tribal children. The Model of Primers in the Tribal language were first developed in Odisha in 1996. Subsequently, several pilot projects involving material production and training, aimed at promoting multilingualism in the classrooms were launched in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Assam.

Education for Displaced and Dispersed Tribals

Special arrangements for schooling facilities for the children of displaced tribal population residing in urban centres needs to be institutionalized through creation of special tribal agencies in the urban areas

Education of Nomadic Tribes

Nomadic tribes are constantly mobile depending on the climate, occupations and livelihood opportunities. For instance, the Bakkarwals and Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir, move to higher altitudes in summers and return to lower altitudes in winters. While residential schools have been set up for children in lower altitudes, the younger children (Class I to V) travel along with their parents and do not stay in these schools. Therefore, these children miss out on primary level schooling. Hence, this issue must be addressed through a special mass contact program for creating awareness about the need for schooling and long-term benefits.

Recommendations

- The purpose of education anywhere, including in tribal areas, should be to provide children with an understanding of the environment and society in which they live and to endow them with the capability to earn a livelihood in the local society and, for those who have the desire and ability, in the national job market.
- There is a need for greater gender focus and social mobilization to encourage education of girls.
- **The dearth of teachers** fulfilling the eligibility criteria set out under the RTE Act is an impediment to achieving the right to education in tribal areas. For addressing the current crisis of absence of teachers in tribal areas, special efforts need to be made to produce more teachers who have qualified the Teachers Ability Test.
- **The policy of no-detention** needs a review. When the student, teachers, or parents of the student request for retention of a child to enable him/her to acquire skills to move to the next class, he/she should be retained.
- To address the problem of low representation of the tribals in higher education, it is necessary to refurbish primary and secondary school education through special coaching.
- Keeping in view the difficulties of adjusting to a new cultural environment, teachers for schools in the tribal regions should be recruited locally.

- The State Governments should develop a policy for multilingual education, so that early learning is conducted in the local language.
- Inclusion of local culture, folklore and history in the curriculum can help in building confidence of tribal children and enhance the relevance of education in their lives.
- The Government needs to establish well-run residential schools such as **Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas** closer to the habitations (within a radius of ten kilometres) up to Class XII.
- In residential schools, which are often in the news for incidents of sexual abuse of students, strong mechanisms should be put in place to protect the students from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.
- Schemes like **Ashram School, Eklavya Model School** and **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya** should be promoted at large scale.
- **Involvement of community** in educational interventions through the **Panchayati Raj** Institutions needs to be institutionalized. Information on various schemes and benefits to beneficiaries should be provided to the Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats, which would create transparency and increase awareness about their entitlements.
- **The scope of education** needs to be expanded for the purpose of scholarships and should include tribal **painting, art, craft, song, music and dance** etc.
- **Regional Resource Centres** in States with significant tribal populations should be established to provide training, academic and other technical support for development of pedagogic tools and education materials catering to multilingual situation.
- It is recommended that a **Tribal Chair** be established by the UGC in **Universities in every State comprising Fifth Schedule Areas**.

Success Case Studies

- PPP projects used for teacher training (local). Both teachers and students benefiting (Odisha)
- Kerala : 'Gotra Bandhu' in each school, who act as intermediate between tribal children and school (Wayanad district, Kerala)
- OMTES: Odisha model of Tribal education society.

The Odisha Model Tribal Educational Society (OMTES), a registered society supported by the ST & SC Development Department, aims to make positive interventions in the field of Tribal Education. Incepted in March 2001, it has setup 13 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and is managing 19 Educational complexes setup to providing education to students belonging to primitive Tribal Groups in remote areas.

- **Lok Biradari Prakalpa: Lok Biradari Prakalp (LBP)** (Marathi; **Brotherhood of People project**) is a social project of the *Maharogi Sewa Samiti*, Warora involving a hospital, a school and an animal orphanage. It was started on 23 December 1973, by the social worker Baba Amte for integrated development of Madia Gond. It is in Hemalkasa, Bhamragad taluka in Gadchiroli District of Maharashtra, India.
- **Bhartiya Adimjati sevak Sangh:**
Bhartiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh (BAJSS), the name, itself, illuminates the sublime motive, i.e., "All-Inclusive & All-Round uplift of The Tribal Communities of India". Confined to the motive, Late Sh. Thakkar Bapa, an eminent social worker and a close-aid of Mahatma Gandhi, had established the esteemed institution in 1949. Since its inception, serving as a Mother Institution, it had spun out the stronger network of such like-minded institutions and branches across the entire country. Through its set of dedicated institutions, BAJSS is determined to offer the humanitarian services to the tribal communities residing in the deserted faraway vicinities and isolated hamlets, in vital segments such as, Education, Child-care, Eradication of Social Injustice and Woman Empowerment.
- Gram-Mangal School and Balwadi:
Grammangal's Balwadis are located in a predominantly tribal area. To facilitate learning, Grammangal's Balwadi **teachers use language that the children speak in their homes**.

Grammangal's Balwadis are located in Dabhon and Aine villages in Dahanu Taluka (Palghar District, Maharashtra).

- KISS (Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences), Bhubaneswar, Odisha