

Political Economy of Tribal Development: A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The tribal population in the State of Andhra Pradesh, and in the country as a whole, is the most deprived and vulnerable community that faces severe economic exclusion. Although certain constitutional safeguards are provided, no significant economic, social and political mobility has taken place across this community. Contrary to Scheduled Castes and other Backward Castes who witnessed certain degrees of progress because of protective discrimination policies of the government, the Scheduled Tribes remain abysmally backward and socially excluded, still living in harsh environs. Our paper on "Political Economy of Tribal Development: A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh", delineates the situation of the Scheduled Tribes in the background of various policies of the state during the successive plan periods and its impact on their socio-economic mobility. Politically, this community is the most voiceless in the state. Their unsecured livelihood position in terms of lack of legal entitlements of the resources they use, both land and non-timber forest produce, push them into deep economic vulnerability. The paper also discusses the implications of the new act - Forest Right Act, 2006, on the livelihood security of the tribal communities and whether this act will finally lead to the inclusion of these people into the mainstream.

KEYWORDS: political economy, socio-economic conditions, development programmes, tribal development, Andhra Pradesh

I. INTRODUCTION

Development is usually conceived as an aspect of change that is desirable, broadly predicted or planned and administered, or at least influenced, by governmental action. Thus, the concept of development consists of (a) an aspect of change; (b) a plan or prediction; and (c) involvement of the government for the achievement of that planned or predicted goal. The term "development" is also used for the process of allowing and encouraging people to meet their own aspirations. It, therefore, must relate to transforming the entire society enmeshing together its economic, social, political and administrative aspects on all-round balanced upward change (Basu A.R., 1985).

The term "development" involves all aspects of human activity. In still broader context, nations have been defined as developed or developing. But how can one justify that one is more developed than those who are to be developed. These questions have become very sensitive nowadays when one finds underdevelopment in some sphere or the other everywhere. For example, a society or nation may be more developed in the economic front; however, it may be underdeveloped on the social front. So, one cannot define development in some aspects only; rather, it should be viewed multi-dimensionally. The narrow concept of development prevalent in the fifties and early sixties has been seriously questioned and has been widened to include non-economic aspects as well. The negative consequences and social injuries of rapid technological changes witnessed in the form of widespread alienation, increase in divorce rate, crime, social violence, drug addiction, AIDS and other patterns of social pathology, not to speak of pollution and depletion of resources, have brought the narrow economic conceptualizations under critical study. Hence, development is not merely an economic phenomenon; it is rather a societal phenomenon encompassing all aspects of human life.

A number of studies on development of tribal communities have been carried out by researchers from various disciplines. The problems of tribal development have long baffled the policy makers, administrators and social scientists in India, and the debate on the meaning, character and direction of their socio-economic transformation continues. Earlier studies carried out by Anthropologists and other Social Scientists among various tribal communities have constantly pointed out various problems of tribal development and offered suggestions for bringing better results. Based on various committees' reports and studies on tribal development, efforts have been subsequently made to improve the tribal situation by providing various kinds of provisions and schemes. However, unfortunately, the tribals have not been able to derive sufficient benefit from this process of planned development. It is true that tribal development problem in the country cannot be considered as stereotyped phenomenon. It varies from one region to another.

The tribal population in the State of Andhra Pradesh and in the country as a whole is the most deprived and vulnerable community that faces severe economic exclusion. Although certain constitutional safeguards are provided, there has been no economic, social and political mobility across these communities. Contrary to Scheduled Castes and other Backward Castes who witnessed certain degrees of progress because of protective discrimination policies of the government, the Scheduled Tribes remain abysmally backward and socially excluded, still living in harsh environs. The present paper "Political Economy of Tribal Development: A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh", delineates the situation of Scheduled Tribes in the background of various policies of the state during the successive plan periods and its impact on their socio-economic mobility.

Tribal Groups in Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh is home to 35 communities officially designated as Scheduled Tribes (STs). They numbered 50,24,104 in the 2001 Census. Out of the 35 STs, recently two communities, namely, Nakkala/Kurvikaran, Dhulia/Paiko/Putiya (in the districts of Vishakhapatnam and Vizianagaram) have been denotified in the state. Twelve tribes, namely, Bodo Gadaba, Gutob Gadaba, Bondo Poraja, Khond Poroja, Parangiperja, Chenchu, Dongaria Khonds, Kuttiya Khonds, Kolam, Kondareddis, Konda Savaras and Thoti have been recognized as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs).

Except Kondareddis and Thoti, the population statistics of other PTGs are not available separately as these are notified as sub-groups/sections of main communities. The population of KondaReddis and Thoti is 83,096 and 2,074 respectively, as per the 2001 Census.

Population Size and Distribution of Tribes

The STs of Andhra Pradesh constitute 6.75 percent of India's tribal population. Although the state's STs comprise only 6.59 percent of the state's population, they account for the largest tribal concentration in Southern India. The Scheduled Areas of Andhra Pradesh, covered by the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) approach, are spread over 31,485 sq km in 5936 villages (11,855 habitations) in the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam East Godavari, West Godavari, Warangal, Khammam, Adilabad and Kurnool. The 35 reported ST communities are mainly concentrated in nine districts declared as Scheduled Areas by special government order in 1950. Sixty percent of the STs live in forest areas in the Eastern Ghats, on the banks of the river Godavari. Two-thirds of the ST population in the State of Andhra Pradesh live in these areas. This constitutes 11% of the total geographical area of the state. Among the 23 districts, Khammam has the highest ST population (26.47%), followed by Adilabad (16.74%), Visakhapatnam (14.55%), Warangal (14.10%) and Nalgonda (10.55%). This zone forms the traditional habitat of 31 tribal communities in Scheduled Areas (sprawling 30,030 sq km) and the rest outside. The other three tribal groups, i.e., Lambada, Yerukala and Yanadi mostly live outside the Scheduled Areas. Out of the 33 STs, Sugalis are numerically the largest ST with a population of 2,077,947 constituting 41.4 percent of the state's ST population. They are followed by Koya 568,019 (11.3 percent), Yanadis 462,167 (9.2 percent), Yerukulas 437,459 (8.7 percent) and Gonds 252,038 (5 percent). These five ST communities account for 76 percent of the total ST population in the state. Of the total ST population, 92.5 percent live in the rural areas. Among the major STs, Gonds have the highest (97.6 percent) rural population, followed by Koya (95.5 percent), Sugalis (93.7 percent), Yanadis (86.4 percent) and Yerukulas (77.5 percent). District wise distribution of ST population shows that they are mainly concentrated in the districts of Khammam, Visakhapatnam, Warangal, Adilabad and Nalgonda. These five districts constitute 48.9 percent of the total ST population of the state (Office of the Registrar General, India 2001).

In some districts, the tribal population is spread thinly and they live along with nontribal communities. The indigenous tribes are mostly concentrated in contiguous tracts of the above districts that have been designated as Scheduled Areas administered by the Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs). There are around one million ST households in the state and about half of them live in 5,936 villages in the nine ITDA areas. The Scheduled Areas are inhabited by an estimated 2.8 million tribals who are entitled to the benefits of TSP projects and protective legislations. In conformity with the national TSP strategy, Andhra Pradesh tribal population is divided into four categories: (i) those living in tribal concentration areas in the scheduled villages and adjoining areas, i.e., the TSP areas administered by ITDAs. Each of the above nine districts has one ITDA named after the tribal concentration block where it is headquartered; (ii) PTGs, i.e., communities who live in near isolation in inaccessible habitats in and outside the Scheduled Areas who are at the pre-agricultural stage of the economy; (iii) those living in small pockets outside the scheduled areas, i.e., Modified Area Development Agency (MADA) areas and tribal clusters; and (iv) Dispersed Tribal Groups, i.e., those dispersed throughout the state.

Literacy and Educational Level

Literacy and level of education are two basic indicators of the level of development achieved by a group/society. Literacy results in more awareness besides contributing to the overall improvement of health,

hygiene and other social conditions. According to 2001 Census, the percentage of literate persons (those who can read and write with understanding), aged 7 years and above, among ST population of Andhra Pradesh is 37 percent, which is lower than 60.5 percent reported for state population as a whole. The literacy data show that the ST population of the state has made significant improvement in literacy during the decade 1991-2001. The literacy rate, which was 17.1 percent in 1991, has increased by 19.9 percentage points in 2001. But in comparison to other states/UTs, the position of ST population of Andhra Pradesh is not satisfactory. It is just above Uttar Pradesh (35.1 percent) and Bihar (28.2 percent), which are bottom two states in literacy rate for ST population among all states/UTs. At the district level, the highest literacy rate has been recorded in Hyderabad (55.4 percent) and the lowest in Mahabubnagar (25.8 percent). Among the major STs, Yerukulas have reported the highest literacy rate (45.4 percent), followed by Koyas (41.8 percent), Gonds (36.4 percent), Yanadis (35.3 percent) and Sugalis (34.3 percent). Female literacy rate of 26.1 percent among the ST population is a matter of concern as almost a fourth of ST females are illiterate in the state.

Livelihoods of the Tribe

The economy and livelihood practices of the tribals are closely associated with the ecological factors and habitats which they inhabit. Among the plain tribes, the Yerukulas are the traditional basket makers and swine herders. They are known as the ex-criminal tribe of Andhra Pradesh. They live mostly in multi-caste villages, maintaining symbiotic relations with the non-tribals. The Yanadis' habitats are mostly found on the banks of rivers, lakes, tanks and canals. Their main livelihood is fishing. Besides this they also catch the field rats exclusively for their own consumption purpose. The settlements of the Lambadas are found in separate hamlets, locally termed as *Tandas*. Most of their habitats are located nearer to hillocks or in the places with green pastures where they could rear cattle. Earlier, the Lambadas were known to be nomads, but in modern times, they are becoming sedentary cultivators, and rearing of cattle has become their secondary occupation. They are mostly distributed in the Telangana Region and sparsely in Rayalaseema and the coastal areas. The Yerukulas are found throughout the state whereas the Yanadis are mostly concentrated in Nellore District and sparsely distributed in Coastal Andhra Region.

Among the hill tribes, Chenchu, Kolam, Thoti, Kondareddi, Khond, Porja, Savara and Gadaba are classified as primitive tribes. The habitats of the primitive tribes are located on hill tops and slopes where plain landscape is totally absent. These tribes largely depend on shifting cultivation and minor forest produce collection. The Chenchus are considered to be the most primitive and they still largely depend on food gathering. However, some of the Chenchus are presently in the transitional stage - from food gathering to food producing. The traditional habitats of the Chenchus are found in contiguous forest tracts of Nallamalai Hills. Much area of the Nallamala hills through which Krishna River flows is presently declared as the Tiger Project Area.

Most of these communities are found inhabiting the border districts of the state in the north and the northeast. The tribals live in forests and use forest land for cultivation. They collect forest produce which varies from forest to forest to supplement what they grow on land. Land is used for living and livelihood. The lives of the tribals are influenced by their habitat, level of traditional and ancient knowledge, and the skills they possess in using the resources that are available. Land is the main stay of the tribal people. Any discussion on the lives of tribals, irrespective of what aspect is being discussed is incomplete when the issue of land is left out. Not only their economies and livelihoods, but also their social relations, respective role of men and women, nature of struggles, their relationship with the state, with non-tribals, their religious rituals, are all closely related to land issues - particularly the land in and around forests.

Unlike the social structure of caste groups in the state, the tribal social organization is generally based on totemic clans. The various tribal groups claim mythical affinity with certain species of natural phenomenon of specific animate or inanimate objects and they regard these animate or inanimate objects as their ancestors. Such belief system and its associated practices are known as totemism. These totemic objects are considered as sacred and killing or eating of their flesh is a taboo. If their totemic animal dies, the concerned clan members observe all kinds of rituals and ceremonies and bury it as if their own dead kith and kin. The totem clans are found among Jatapus of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts, in all the 15 tribal groups of Visakhapatnam district; among Koyas of Godavari gorges and Gonds, Kolams, Pardhans and Thotis of Adilabad District.

The present economy of the tribals in AP is a consumption-subsistence economy with its main occupations being settled agriculture, *podu* (shifting) cultivation and collection of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), which totally comprise 88% of their occupation status. A vast variety of food grains, millets, pulses like rice, ragi, maize, jowar, legumes, vegetables and fruits are cultivated in the valleys and uplands/hills most of which are consumed domestically. Pulses and spices like chilly are the main source of cash flow from agriculture. In some of the areas closer to plains, the tribals have learnt to cultivate cash crops such as cotton, cashew, *dumpa* (tubers), brinjal, tomato, ginger, turmeric and chilli.

The tribal economy, however, is in a state of transition. The complete isolation of the past has long since passed; interaction with and dependence on the outside is gradually increasing. However, being backward and illiterate, the tribals are ill-prepared to deal with the outer world, and thus fall easy prey to exploitation by the non-tribal traders. Due to low productivity and lack of food security, the tribals have become dependent on the traders. But price manipulation and indiscriminate money lending has led many tribals into a debt trap from which they cannot escape. This has been due to the deterioration in the tribal eco-system which means that the former survival strategies have become less sustainable. Thus, the tribals are in a transition phase from a forest centered lifestyle to a rural, settled cultivation lifestyle, but the production from agriculture is not commensurate with the food requirements, whilst the scope for supplementation by way of intake of natural foods is diminishing due to depletion of the forests. The tribals are caught in a situation where they are on the one hand losing command over the natural resources, and are unable to take command over the new resources at their disposal on the other.

The types of forest-based livelihoods of the poorest sections of communities are: NTFP based (57%), fodder for goats and sheep (26%), fuel wood sale (12%) and wood-based craft making (5%). Among the three regions, households dependent on NTFP collection and sale are more in Telangana (73%) and Coastal (47%) regions, whereas in Rayalaseema Region the forest dependence is more for fodder to feed goats and sheep (51%). Head loading (fuel wood collection and sale) as a livelihood option is more prevalent in the North Coastal Region (20%) than in Telangana (7%) and Rayalaseema (8%) regions where it is a dwindling option due to degradation of forests. About 40 to 70 percent of the income for the tribal and other resource-poor communities is from the collection and sale of NTFPs. There are more than 65 different kinds of NTFPs available in the forests of Andhra Pradesh (D. Suryakumari, K.Bhavana Rao and C.Vasu 2008).

Work Participation Rate (WPR)

The Work Participation Rate (WPR) is the percentage of workers to the total population. The WPR of the ST population is 53.9 percent according to the 2001 Census, which is almost equal to 54.3 percent recorded in 1991. The WPR among males is 55.7 percent and females are 52 percent; more than half of the males/females have been returned workers among ST at 2001 Census. At the individual caste level, by and large, a consistent pattern is noted in the WPR. The highest WPR of 56.5 percent is reported for Yanadis and lowest among Yerukulas (50.5%). The Yerukulas have also recorded the lowest female WPR of 45.2 percent (Office of the Registrar General, India 2001).

Category of Workers

There has been a decline in the main workers from 93.9 percent during the 1991 Census to 79.3 percent during the 2001 Census. This, in turn, has resulted in a corresponding increase in the marginal workers from 6.1 percent in 1991 to 20.7 percent in 2001. Out of the total number of workers, "agricultural labourers" constitute 49.3 percent, which is significantly higher when compared to 36.9 percent recorded for ST population at the national level. "Cultivators" accounting for 34.3 percent and 13.5 percent, have been returned as "other workers". The remaining 3 percent have been workers in "household industry". At the individual caste level among the major STs, the Yanadis have the maximum 76.2 percent of "agricultural labourers" (Office of the Registrar General, India 2001).

Marginalisation of Tribals in the State

During the pre-colonial period, lower population density and low value of timber, led to the gradual process of rolling back forest frontier as there was more demand for agricultural land. Under the Mughals, there was a growing demand for construction timber, and the price of timber began to rise.

During the Pre-British rule, the tribal areas were far from the reach of the administration. However, the extension of centralized British administration over these areas gradually deprived tribals of their autonomy. The British colonial policies exposed the tribals to the pressures of the plains' commercial interests. Outsiders such as traders, moneylenders, followed by settlers successfully acquired large tracts of the aboriginals' land through different clandestine transactions, exploitive practices, land grabbing, etc. However, in the Nizam areas, the policy of the State of Hyderabad itself was the cause of alienation of lands in tribal areas to outsiders. The Nizam invited the outsiders for acquisition of lands and payment of tax to the state. In this process, the outsiders dispossessed the tribal communities and appropriated the land.

The state gradually gained monopoly control over forest areas from the early colonial period, and as forests were Reserved Forests the people's rights were curtailed and they were driven out. The first step in the administrative control of forests in India began in the South. As a result of the report of the Forest Committee set up in 1805, a proclamation was made declaring royalty rights over teak in the south and prohibiting unauthorised felling of the trees. The Indian Forest Act of 1865 was the first attempt at a legislation relating to forests in India by the British. Such steps were envisaged to prevent acts which caused injury or destruction to

the forests. Thus, control over the forests was attained, and restrictions were imposed on usage by communities. This started in the way back in 1805. In Hyderabad State, the forests were considered subservient to the interest of agriculture and were consequently administered by the district officials, and cultivations in the forests were permitted. However, in the year 1893, the government declared vast tracts covered by forest growth as Protected Forests and placed them under the sole charge of the Forest Department, removing the administrative powers of district revenue officials. Further, to have legal control over the forests, a Forest Act was enacted in 1900. The effort of the department was directed mainly towards the survey and reservation of forest areas, the introduction of felling schemes and works of improvement, systematic exploitation of forest produce, etc. So the historic injustice was caused not only during reservation process under the Indian Forest Act 1927 and the subsequent survey and settlement operations in 1979 in Andhra, but even prior to this.

Dispossession of Tribals by Development Projects in the State

At the national level, the tribals constitute at least 55 percent of the persons displaced by development projects such as irrigation systems, hydroelectric projects, mining operations, power-generating units and mineral-based industries (Saxena, 2006). In the name of development, the tribals are displaced from their traditional habitat and are deprived of their livelihoods. The track record of governments on the resettlement and rehabilitation front leaves a lot to be desired. Even according to the official estimates, only 29 percent of the affected have been rehabilitated. In the recent past, some development projects in AP have become highly controversial due to their implications on tribal land and livelihoods. The present Congress Government identified 26 irrigation projects with an estimated cost of Rs.460 billion. Some of these projects, under various stages of implementation, have become more controversial as they will displace tribal villages and submerge forest areas. The Polavaram Project is the most contested of the ongoing projects as far as the tribal livelihoods are concerned. This multipurpose mega project on the Godavari at Polavaram in West Godavari District is expected to irrigate 727,000 acres. The project would displace 276 villages and uproot 44,574 families in three districts; and tribals comprise almost 50 percent of the population of these villages (Laxman Rao S, Priya Deshingkar, John Farrington, 2006).

Tribals and Forest Policy

Right from colonial times, forest laws and forest policies have been anti-tribal. The tribal is perceived as an encroacher and an enemy of the forest, who plunders the forest for his selfish needs. With the Indian Forest Act 1878, Forest Act 1927 and State enactments after independence in India, the state gradually gained monopoly over forests. Forests were declared to be Reserve Forests from where tribals were driven out. Cultivating land, collecting Non-Timber Forest Produce and felling of trees became illegal. Tribals who occupied these forests earlier, lost their habitat, their land, livelihood and all else that they had. No title deeds or any other rights were given in these forests. Over a period of time, the tribals and other poor people's access to forest land and forest produce has been severely curtailed; the tribals were removed from their familiar and settled livelihoods. Large forest areas were either declared as Reserve forests, or as sanctuaries and national parks. Construction of dams, reservoirs and hydro-electrical projects further resulted in huge displacement of tribals on thousands of hectares of forest lands. Many tribal villages were washed out in the process. Compensation and rehabilitation have touched only the fringe of the problem. The price the tribals seem to pay for the so called development appears very high. As the, tribals seem to be struggling for survival (P. Madhavi http://www.rupfor.org/downloadq/casestudy_P_Madhavi.pdf).

Non-forest activities like setting up of industries, mining projects, construction of big reservoirs and other "development" projects led to large-scale and multiple displacement of tribal population who were forced to migrate. They face constant harassment for being "criminals" and are forcefully evicted from lands occupied by them. Their rights and access to forest resources are curtailed by government and local communities who were the earlier settlers. Such problems are highly prevalent in districts like Visakhapatnam where cross-border migration from neighbouring Orissa due to projects like Bailadilla, NALCO, HAL and other Mining projects, DBK railway line, five reservoir projects, tourism industry and government infrastructure have led to severe pressure on land and forests.

Tribal Development Policies and Programmes

The greatest challenge that the Government of India has been facing since independence is the proper provision of social justice to the Scheduled Tribe people, by ameliorating their socio-economic conditions. Scheduled Tribes constitute the weakest section of India's population, from the ecological, economic and educational angles. They constitute the matrix of India's poverty. Though the tribals are the sons of the same soil and the citizens of the same country, they are born and grow as the children of the nature. From the historical point of view, they have been subjected to the worst type of social exploitation. They are practically deprived of many civic facilities and are subjected to isolation from modern and civilized way of living since so many centuries. By British the Scheduled District Act of 1956 had initiated the tribals to keep most of these areas administratively separate; the same situation was allowed to continue under the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935. However, after independence this policy was abandoned and new policy of tribal development and integration was initiated. The Constitution of India made definite provisions for the welfare and upliftment of the tribal people throughout the country. A review of the tribal situation would indicate that the strategy for development would require an intensive approach to the tribal problems in terms of their geographic and demographic concentration, if faster development of the community is to take place. The community development efforts in the tribal areas were therefore, taken up for supplementation by stating a few special multipurpose tribal development projects covering a few blocks in 1954. A number of commissions and committees were appointed in the recent past to look into the problems of developments in the tribal areas in the country and they have recommended a number of measures to remove the socio-economic imbalances and also to break down their old psychological barrier, which existed in the tribal areas. The special programmes for tribal development have been implemented in our country and state to benefit the tribal population under the backward classes sector from First Five Year Plan. Recognizing the special needs and problems of tribals, a special niche was accorded to tribal development in the country and state development agenda from the very beginning of the Plan Era.

In order to focus on tribal development, a Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) strategy was initiated in the state since 1974-75 in the 5th Five Year Plan, having objectives of socio-economic development and protection of STs against exploitation through legal and administrative support for narrowing the gap between their levels of development to that of the general communities. The important aspect of this strategy is to ensure allocation of funds for TSP areas at least in proportion to the ST population of each State/UT. The TSP strategy is now being implemented through 196 Integrated Tribal Development Projects/ Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDPs/ITDAs), 259 Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) pockets, 82 clusters and 75 Primitive Tribal Groups in 23 TSP States/UTs. Over the years, changes have been made in modalities to make the approach more effective and beneficial to the tribals. In the Sixth Plan, MADA was adopted to cover smaller areas of tribal communities having 10,000 population of which 50% or more were tribals. In the Seventh Five Year Plan clusters having a total population of at least 5000 and above with ST concentration of 50% or more outside the TSP were included. Later, the development of the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) has also been included in the strategy. The TSP Programmes are to be financed by the following sources: (a) Tribal Sub Plan funds from State /UT Plans and Central Ministries/ Departments; (b) Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Tribal Sub Plan (TSP); (c) Grants under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution to the States/UTs; (d) Funds through Central Sector Schemes; (e) Funds from Centrally Sponsored Schemes; and (f) Institutional Finance.

The tribal development under TSP envisages: (i) Educational promotion schemes of schools, residential schools, hostels, scholarships, special coaching/training, etc.; (ii) Agriculture and allied activities by providing minor and medium irrigation facilities, animal husbandry, dairying, poultry, etc.; (iii) Improved credit and marketing facilities for agriculture and minor forest products; (iv) Special training programmes to tribal farmers; (v) Irrigation and power facilities to promote agricultural production and small scale industry, etc.; (vi) Provision of basic infrastructure for speeding up the socioeconomic development of the tribal areas through community centres, communication network, schools, health centres, rural electrification, drinking water and other facilities etc. that are to be provided to the tribals; (vii) ITDP, MADA, Cluster and Primitive Tribal Groups special comprehensive developmental projects were to be prepared by the States/UTs; and (viii) Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) were created for the development of tribals in the tribal Schedule Areas. The above-mentioned Central or State schemes are implemented by ITDA. The TSP is funded through earmarked components of: (a) the State Plan (48%); (b) Plans of Central Ministries and Departments, Centrally Sponsored Schemes (38%); (c) Special Central Assistance (7%); and (d) Institutional finance for the credit portion of beneficiary oriented schemes (7%). The State Plan allocation takes the form of a Sub-Plan item in the budgetary allocations of each line department. In Andhra Pradesh, most of the key departments place their Sub-Plan allocations. The government, both at Centre and State, has not only formulated a number of policies to safeguard the interests of the tribals but also has initiated a number of development schemes for the welfare and upliftment of the tribal communities.

Following are some of the important initiatives and programs taken up by the government for the overall socio-economic development of tribal areas and tribal people. These include both economic schemes as well as infrastructural development in tribal areas. Economic schemes are both individual oriented and group-based, and include in most of the cases, subsidy in the range of 50-75%.

The Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) Ltd., established in 1956 by the Government of Andhra Pradesh to achieve socio-economic upliftment of the tribals is actively engaged in the following major activities: (a) Procurement of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) and Agricultural Produce (AP) from the tribals and marketing of the same to the best advantage of the tribals; (b) Supply of essential commodities under Public Distribution System (PDS) and other Domestic Requirements (DRs) to the tribals at fair and reasonable prices; and (c) Provision of credit to the tribals for seasonal agricultural operations. In order to facilitate distribution of domestic requirements (DRs) including essential commodities such as rice, kerosene oil, palm oil, wheat and sugar, to the tribals, the GCC has been operating 839 DR depots as of now. Efforts are made to place all items by the 14th of every month. In addition to this, the GCC also supplies food provisions to all Tribal Welfare hostels.

The Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Tribes Cooperative Finance Corporation Limited, Hyderabad (TRICOR), established in October, 1976, is coordinating various economic support schemes for the economic development of the STs in the State is a major landmark. Primary health care is another area of emphasis by the government. A total of 244 Primary Health Centres (PHCs), 1042 sub-centres, 26 government hospitals, 12 community health centres, 6 area hospitals, 24 mobile units and 20 dispensaries are functioning in the tribal areas. Basically, lack of quantity and quality of drugs, human resource and poor infrastructure are the main causes for poor public health service delivery in the tribal areas.

In order to keep up with the development commitment of the state and as boldly envisaged in Swarnandhra Pradesh "Vision 2015" policy document, the Andhra Pradesh Government has initiated the "Rural Poverty Elimination Programme" under the project "*Velugu*" (literally means "light"), and the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) is an independent, autonomous society registered under the Societies Act to implement this project. The Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiatives Project (APDPIP) is being implemented by SERP in 180 backward mandals in the six districts of Adilabad, Mahbubnagar, Anantapur, Chittoor, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram in the state. The APDPIP is a Rs.600 crore World Bank-supported 5 year (2000-2005) poverty elimination project, with the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh as its chairperson. At the state level, SERP directly coordinates with the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Ministry. After 2004, the project is extended to all the rural mandals of the state in 22 rural districts and the programme is re-christened as "*Indira Kranti Patham*". Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) in Tribal Sub Plan Areas: In order to give greater focus and achieve convergence between the *Indira Kranti Patham* and the Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) in the project districts, under the overall framework, the government has developed a tribal development strategy with exclusive implementation arrangements.

IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development): Government of Andhra Pradesh has started IFAD-assisted programme for the comprehensive development of tribals in the interior agency areas of the state. Under the IFAD programme, apart from taking up schemes like irrigation, horticulture, land development, health and education; a lot of emphasis is being given for beneficiary participation.

For the first time in India and in AP, a land mark decision was taken by the government to implement and monitor all the economic support schemes through Women Self- Help Groups in coordination with *Indira Kranthi Patham*. The groups not only ground the assets but also monitor the scheme and recovery of the amount sanctioned. The SHGs will prepare a micro-credit plan and submit to *Mandal Samakhya* and it will be submitted to Project Officer/District Tribal Welfare Officer for sanctions. The releases will be made directly to *Mandal Samakhya* and thereon to Village Organizations. This will simplify the procedure of grounding the schemes. They are empowered to decide their economic-enhancement activities, including land purchase schemes.

Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana: Upliftment of tribal women has been a prime focus of the NSTFDC. It is felt that tribal women can contribute significantly to the process of economic development of the STs. With this object in view, NSTFDC introduced an exclusive concessional scheme for the economic development of eligible ST women titled "*Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana*".

Janashri Bhima Yojana: The Government of India has introduced a new scheme called "*Janashri Bhima Yojana*" during 2004-05. It is a group insurance scheme to provide life insurance protection to the rural and urban poor persons below poverty and marginally above poverty line, such as workers engaged in forest products and leaf collectors in forest.

Janshala was launched in this state in 1999. It is being implemented through a state-level society which also implements the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA). In convergence with *Janshala*, the ITDA established alternative schools in habitations where there were no schools. These schools are known as *Girijana Vidya Vikas Kendras* (GVVKs). Jawahar Gram Samrudhi Yojana (JGSY), this scheme launched in 1999 aims to enable the village community to strengthen the village

infrastructure through creation of durable assets as per the local needs. Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS): This scheme seeks to provide additional wage employment opportunities in the form of manual work to the rural poor living below the poverty line. Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) Under this scheme, assistance is provided to the poor families living below the poverty line in rural areas for taking up self employment activities, either individually or in groups called the Self-Help Groups.

During 1990s, the Government of India (GOI) issued a circular enabling community participation in Forest Protection and Management. The Government of Andhra Pradesh (GOAP) adopted this in 1992. From then onwards there has been a major shift in Forest Management. The local village communities that depend on the forests for meeting their needs were made partners in Forest Management through the concept of Joint Forest Management (JFM). The experience of JFM in AP has proven to be a success. The forest cover has increased and there is a perceptible improvement in the forestry sector. However, the investments made and initiatives taken need further consolidation for sustaining the impact. With the experience gained from JFM, in order to institutionalize the process, to ensure greater decentralization and devolution of managerial responsibilities and to ensure steady flow of benefits to the communities, during 2002, the Government of Andhra Pradesh launched Community Forest Management (CFM) as an improvement over JFM.

The government's attempts to motivate the people to forest conservation did not succeed sufficiently. The people have remained outsiders to the forests and their management, in spite of JFM and other programmes to involve the people. The alienation that started in the colonial period has continued. Additionally, periodic efforts to evict the people from the forestland inhabited and cultivated by them (what the government called encroachment) have further soured the relationship between the government and the people in some cases, and in consequence, forests have suffered. The FRA emerged due to the underlying extreme injustice in the deprivation of forest rights to forest-using communities.

Andhra Pradesh is one of the first few states to implement the FRA, 2006, that came into force on December 31, 2007. The Government of AP prepared a road map in January 2008 for the implementation of FRA, fixing dates for commencement and completion of grant of title deeds by 31-7-2008. As per the road map, the grant to forest rights title deeds was to be issued to all the beneficiaries by October 30, 2008, but the Chief Minister desired that a major portion of the title deeds be distributed on or around August 15, 2008. The Gram Sabhas were to be convened and the FRCs formed before the 29th of February 2008. The claims were to be received up to 31 May 2008. The aim was to finalise claims by October 31st 2008. According to the various studies Out of an estimated 5,000 tribal villages in the state, organisations have been able to mobilize only 700 to 800 villages. The actual process of FRA implementation on the ground was as undemocratic and non-participatory as possible.

II. CONCLUSION

Since independence, the government has initiated several Five Year Plans, programmes, policies and laws and has made efforts for gradual socio-economic development of Scheduled Tribes, but they still remain the weakest sections of the society. During these various Five Year Plans, there has been a considerable increase in the fund allocation for the tribal areas. But most of the tribals were not able to draw benefits from the facilities provided by government because of large-scale corruption among officials and improper implementation of tribal development schemes. Therefore, the majority of the hill tribes in Andhra Pradesh suffer from the absence of proper infrastructure and communication facilities. Improper management of schemes and inefficient implementation of suitable programmes in the tribal region create a major problem. The majority of the tribal people are not even aware of the development schemes implemented by government agencies. Without creating awareness among the tribal people, it is difficult to achieve better results.

In the state, the existing administrative set up is more or less the same as per the central guidelines. However, the system of decentralised planning, implementation and monitoring is not always adhered to as per guidelines in most of the cases. It is found that though access to primary schools is good, most of the schools lack infrastructure, teaching staff and quality education. In most of the places in the states, the medical facilities available are not up to the mark. The position is very bad due to non-availability of infrastructure facilities, drugs, complementary facilities, sufficient staff and absence of doctors. Land alienation is still a serious problem, though in a number of cases, land had been restored. Land acquisition for development projects and mortgaging for credit from private sources are widely prevalent.

For majority of the tribals, forest resources are the main source of livelihood. However, the forest laws restrict their dependence on the forest. Added to this, many forests were declared as Protected Forests or Sanctuaries, and threatened their eviction from their natural habitat. Even where the evicted tribals are rehabilitated, they are not provided additional means of livelihood, except small piece of land for cultivation. The tribal areas by and large are remote, inaccessible and continue to remain isolated due to poor connectivity and other basic infrastructure.

The review reports of various committees, working groups and research reports on the status of socio-economic variables of literacy, enrolment, educational status, health indicators, per capita income, employment opportunities, access to basic amenities like drinking water, housing, drainage facility, electricity, etc., have shown a little improvement, but wide gaps between the STs and the general population are still seen. The various reviews and reports also brought out the tardy implementation of the development programmes by the state and various departments, lacunae in policy implementation, allocation and utilization of funds, structural inadequacies at the, state, district, block and village levels.

There is a need for periodical status reviews and evaluation of the impact of the schemes and programmes. The ITDP project officers should be assigned a key role in planning, administration and implementation of tribal development programmes and empowered with magisterial powers as recommended. As regards the execution of tribal development schemes, the officers of the line Department should report to the ITDA Officers. Since the socio-economic profiles of the tribals vary across districts, each district must make an assessment of the deprivation of tribals in all the areas of social concern, and adopt an appropriate principle for allocation of TSP funds across various sectors. In order to improve access to public education and medical facilities, the quality of social infrastructure needs drastic improvement. The schools need quality teachers, teaching materials, and health centres should comprise a number of doctors, para-medical staff and other facilities. Sufficient TSP funds need to be allocated for this purpose in almost all the ITDAs. Active participation from the tribals is very essential for the implementation of the tribal development programme effectively. The tribal land problem in AP has assumed new dimensions in relation to the traditional rights over “*podu*” in particular and access to natural resources in general. The debate about shifting cultivation has been revived in the context of externally-funded participatory forest management programmes such as JFM and CFM. Traditional rights and livelihood patterns of the forest-dependent tribals need to be respected while designing and implementing forest management programmes. The Forest Department should not evict people practicing shifting cultivation without creating real alternatives for them. Some criteria regarding the staff strength at the ITDA level need to be evolved keeping in view their key role in the plan, implementation and monitoring. Before the implementation of any act, policy, programmes, and schemes, more time should be spent on creation of awareness so that they reach very remote areas. It is imperative that dedicated officers who are fully trained should be posted in ITDA areas. Moreover, special incentives need to be given to encourage them for working in these areas.

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