



Assessment of Implementation of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) Act, 2013 in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh States

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Introduction

The socio economic condition of the tribals in the country, despite numerous initiatives launched for their betterment since the last four to five decades, is still alarming - be it their poverty situation or human development indices. The situation is still problematic, when it comes to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in various states. Various Commissions and Committees have gone deep into the reasons that made these unfortunate people still live in miserable conditions and offered a number of recommendations to the Central and State Governments to improve their socio economic position. The fact of the matter is, despite some efforts, the tribals' socio economic position is far from satisfactory and they still live in penury. To address the appalling tribal socio-economic situation, Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) with budgetary allocations proportionate to their population has been put in motion during the last four decades both by Central and State Governments. The position of the tribals has not improved much despite these policy initiatives as TSP funds utilization has not been effectively utilised by various governments and money allotted was mostly diverted for other development purposes not meant for the tribals.

Context

It is in this context, recently the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh Government has brought out TSP Act (AP Scheduled Caste Sub Plan & Tribal Sub Plan [Planning, Allocation & Utilisation of Financial Resources] Act, 2013) to effectively utilize the funds without diversion and misuse. The present study aims to study the basic parameters of the TSP Act 2013 in AP (in Telangana and AP) and also look at its implementation on the ground taking a district each in Telangana (Adilabad) and AP (East Godavari) and also to assess the likely impact of the TSP activities on the tribal communities.

The Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) has been formulated primarily to protect the tribes from exploitation by outsiders and as well as to improve their socio-economic opportunities. It also aimed at addressing the livelihood issues of the tribes and the tribal concentrated localities with a view that there is a need for focused programs to address the livelihood issues of the tribes. However, in practice, it has been found that the specific approaches and plans have been not been very successful, as expected.

In this backdrop, the first in its kind in the country, the Government of Andhra Pradesh enacted "Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan (Planning, Allocation and Utilization of Financial Resources) Act.No1 of 2013 to ensure, accelerated development and promoting equity among the communities by earmarking a portion, in proportion to the population of SC&STs in the state, of the total plan outlay.

The Act envisages that schemes included in SCSP/TSP should secure direct and quantifiable benefits to Scheduled Tribe households or Scheduled Tribe habitations and should bridge the gaps in development indicators between SCs/STs, when compared to state averages. The Act also ensures effective institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP)/Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP). The Government constituted the State Council for Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Minister to exercise



conferred powers and to perform functions for matters relating to Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan.

The present study has tried to look into the TSP plan components, its trends and its success in realizing inclusion (social and economic) from the commencement of the Act. The research also tried to look into the institutional mechanisms and its role in realization of objectives of the law. The research study came forward to provide policy and legal directions to make TSP law better instrument to address the issues of tribals mainstreaming and their inclusion.

Key Issues

The following are some of the specific research issues the study attempted to address;

- 1) Whether the activities under the tribal sub plan competent enough to address the livelihood and development gaps in all the tribal localities? Are these plans with in the present context competent enough to enhance various development choices for the tribes, especially with regard to their health and education?
- 2) Are the local self-governments in tribal areas adequately competent enough to effectively implement the Tribal Sub Plan Act?
- 3) Does the various activities under the plan successful in building the core tribal economic competencies, like natural resource base of the tribal economy, a very important livelihood base of various tribes? Is it competent to address the broader socio economic inclusion issues of the all the tribes while maintaining the cultural distinctness?
- 4) Whether the legal frame is effectively providing the objectives envisaged in the TSP Act.

To pursue the aforementioned observations, both Primary and Secondary data was collected. The methods of data collection include Interviews; Questionnaire Survey for Sample Households; Reviewing the registers of the Local Governments; Panchayat meeting registers and other documents; PRA with local Government Leaderships and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in all the three states.

The other sources of evidences include the following;

- i) Economic Review, State Council for development of Tribes. (Governments of Andhra Pradesh); ii) District Planning Offices (DPO); iii) Departments of Scheduled Tribes (Government); iv) Local Self Governments (LSGs); v) Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Plans and Programmes.

Two districts namely Adilabad District in Telangana Region and East Godavari District in Andhra Region were studied. Stratified sampling methodology is used for selecting sample respondents. The selection of samples was based on the concentration of tribal population. From the two districts, few mandals (intermediate tier) were selected and subsequently considerable number of villages from these mandals were chosen for intensive field work. A total 317 beneficiaries (156 in Adilabad and 161 in East Godavari) were contacted.

Major Findings

The salient features of the TSP Act are tri fold. The Act prescribes a procedure for the *planning, allocation* of tribal sub plan budgets and its *utilization*. However, there are few inconsistencies and ambiguity in the law in the context of tribals and the Schedule V Areas of the States of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Thus, the present law is not a complete code to address the systematic and tribal empowerment issues. It suffers from various weaknesses. It is observed that the Act is silent about the elimination of exploitation of tribal people. The Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) were ignored while framing the TSP Act. In fact, harmonization of all the policies and programs and laws concerning the tribal peoples should have been the vantage point for Tribal Sub Plan legislation, which has not been given due space under the provision of this Act.

It is further observed that the provisions under the Sub Plan Law purport to provide monitoring mechanisms for implementation of the law through the institutions at State and District level. Despite the fact that PESA Act provides a self-autonomy to Gram Sabha and other local Panchayat bodies in determining the socio, economic programs concerning Fifth Scheduled Areas and its financial allocations under Tribal Sub-Plan, the power to clear the programs or projects conferred at higher level goes contrary to the decentralized policy envisaged under the PESA Act.

An important feature of this Act is to ensure equity among the various social groups within the Scheduled Tribe communities in the planning, allocation and utilization of financial resources. TSP Rules 2(4) (a) says that in case of TSP, special attention shall be paid to STs residing in the Scheduled Areas. However there is no specific provision to maintain the equity among the tribal groups. All the tribal groups are not in the same plane of development in the State as a whole and also within the boundaries of Scheduled Areas. There are few tribes who are more backward than the other.

The institutional arrangements and functioning of various institutions as per the provision of this Act reveals two different trends in the two states. In fact, it is mentioned in the law itself that Committees should be constituted from Panchayat to the State level to track the flow of TSP funds and monitor the implementation of planned activities. The line departments at district level should make available the budgets for the execution of integrated tribal development plans at ITDAs. The vulnerability of tribal communities among the notified Tribal communities in the state should also be taken into consideration in preparing the budget plan and activities. ITDAs should follow the PESA provisions in clearing the schemes in the Scheduled V Areas. Further, the Governments of both the states are still lagging behind in setting up of required agencies/support units and tracking and monitoring the flow of funds and its utility as per the envisaged provisions of the law. The District Monitoring Committees, District Planning Committees, District level Sub plan Support Units are not in place as required to specifically to deal with the provisions of law. Thus, the functioning of these committees are yet to start to comply with the provisions of law.

Further, the latest report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has found a series of violations with the Tribal Welfare Department in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh with regard to implementation of tribal development schemes during the period from 2009-10 to 2013- 2014. The CAG report highlights the sad state of affairs reflecting lack of responsibility and indifference across the ITDAs in both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh States. It is further observed that the successive governments are failed to ensure mandatory allocation of TSP funds from the total outlay of the State budget in proportion to the ST population in the State. Against mandated 6.60 percent allocation of total plan budget outlay for TSP, allocation was only about 3.97 on an average during the last five years. According to the CAG report there was no improvement in allocation and utilisation of funds under TSP despite enacting of separate legislation in the State. Even out of the funds allocated, Government could spend to the extent of 94 percent in General sector, 36 percent in Social sector and 44 percent in Economic sector respectively.

Budget Allocations in the New State of Telangana under TSP

The allocation of TSP amounts in proportion to the population of tribals in the state from State outlay is a matter of principle. Table shows that there is a little high in allocation of TSP funds during the years 2014-2016 but it is less than the mandatory allocation during the year 2016-2017.

Comparative statement of total allocations under TSP and Tribal Welfare (Rs.in Crs)

S.No.	Component	2014-15	%	2015-16	%	2016-17	%
1.	Total State Plan	48648.46	100	52383.20	100	67630.73	100
2.	TSP	4559.81	9.37	5035.68	9.61	6171.15	9.12
3.	TW in TSP	1237.57	27.14	1142.54	22.68	1881.85	3.49

Comparative statement of Expenditure under State Plan, TSP and TWD (Rs.in Crs)

S. No.	Component	2014-15			2015-16		
		BE	Exp	%	BE	Exp	%
1.	Total State Plan	48648.46	23648.47	48.61	52383.20	33754.56	64.43
2.	TSP	4559.81	1572.68	35.71	5035.68	2913.15	57.85
3.	Tribal Welfare	1237.57	647.86	52.35	1142.54	850.31	74.42

The expenditure of total state plan can be taken as an indicator to assess the status of expenditure under TSP. This is to know whether there is any gap in spending the funds earmarked for the development of tribals. Table shows that over all expenditure percentage was 48.61 in the case of state plan, while 35.71 percent only in the case of TSP during the year 2014-2015, similarly 57.85 percentage against 64.43 percent in the case of State plan. In fact tribal welfare department which is aimed at for the development of tribals could not spend the budgeted amount in full scale.

Total Budget allocations, Releases, Expenditure under TSP during 2014-16 (Telangana)

S.No	Year	BE	BRO	Expenditure	% of BROs on BE.	(Rs. In Crs)	
						% of Expenditure w.r.to	
						BE	Release
1.	2014-15	3167.01	1173.17	964.55	37.04	82.22	30.45
2.	2015-16	3482.30	2070.36	1831.49	59.45	52.59	88.46

Table shows the release was only 37 percent against the budget estimation during the year 2014-2015 and 59.45 percent in the year 2015-2016. However the total expenditure was 82 percent against the budget allocation during the year 2014-15 and 52.59 percent in the year 2015-2016. The data in relation to the percentage of expenditure appears in contradiction with the percentage of releases ordered. The data shows that the expenditure was met even without any order for its releasing.

The main conclusions that emerged from the field in the case of Adilabad district of Telangana State, reflect a varied and mixed picture. While the TSP scheme and the various programmes launched are still

in nascent and evolving stage in the district, however, there are some signals the implementation process has thrown up for necessary corrective measures to be taken in the years to come to have more desirable impact. First and foremost is the identification of the programme beneficiaries has not been taken place predominantly in the gram sabhas (which is mandatory aspect of the TSP guidelines) resulting in the selection of ineligible beneficiaries. Although all the programme benefits have gone to the tribals in the sample region (as no other population other than the tribals live here) the non-identification of the beneficiaries in the gram sabhas gave rise to certain leakages in the sense that the most impoverished and the needy among the tribes were left out in the process. This institution needs to be activated in right earnest. The training aspect to run the scheme is totally missing as majority of the beneficiaries have not got any training which is resulting in either non-sustenance of the assets or non-realization of the potential benefits. The two years experience of the TSP schemes showed mixed results. Although one third of the respondents mentioned that their assets were in 'running' condition, the income accrual from the schemes was not still adequate. There were still loose ends in the programme implementation. Proper supervision and follow-up by the implementers is the key to the effectiveness of the programme. Routine and ad-hoc implementation of TSP is not desired and not helpful to get the proper results. Committed bureaucracy with a clear pro-tribal attitude and behavior is the utmost imperative needed to have desired results. Otherwise, despite the TSP was made the Act, nothing much can be expected.

Way Forward

The results of field data indicate that the beneficiaries from the ST households have accessed various schemes and programmes under TSP in the two sampled districts. Though the schemes and programme have provided economic benefits but there are serious deviations in the process of implementation. This study concludes that the Act has full potential to promote socio-economic development of tribals under the framework of TSP. The schemes and programmes implemented by the various departments under TSP have contributed to the process of tribal development in many ways. Yet, the outcome of the implementation of this Act and administration of TSP as per the provisions of this Act has not addressed the basic needs of the tribals in many cases. It was further observed that more emphasis was given



on infrastructure development in the tribal areas only indirectly benefitting the tribal population rather than directly. Hence the emphasis needs to be placed on the implementation of income generating programmes (IGP) and land/agriculture based programmes which will have direct and positive impact on the tribal communities.

In this context, the study suggests various policy measures for the effective implementation of this Act and administration of TSP as per the provisions of this Act which are listed below.

- There is a need to revisit the provisions of the TSP Act keeping in view of the original intention of the TSP Strategy brought during the Fifth Five Year Plan and limitations.
- It is also pertinent to note that there is no specific emphasis in relation to the tribals living in the Scheduled Areas.
- Amendments need to be brought to suit the strategy to geographical locations and the backwardness of the tribals within the tribal groups.
- Enhancing the levels of awareness about the various aspects of this Act is key to achieve the overall objective.
- Administering Tribal Development under the provision of this Act should not be taken on ad-hoc basis. So, there is a need of institutionalising various institutions and devolving them powers and functions.
- Emphasis need to be placed on direct income generating schemes to the beneficiaries than general infrastructural development schemes.

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