

# An Assessment and Analysis of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in Kerala

Jos Chathukulam  
M. Gopinath Reddy  
Palla Trinadha Rao



**RULNR**

RESEARCH UNIT FOR LIVELIHOODS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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## Foreword

The Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) was established in 1980 to undertake research in the field of economic and social development in India. The Centre recognizes that a comprehensive study of economic and social development issues requires an interdisciplinary approach and tries to involve researchers from various disciplines. The Centre's focus has been on policy relevant research through empirical investigation with sound methodology. Being a Hyderabad based think tank, it has focused on, among other things, several distinctive features of the development process of Andhra Pradesh, though its sphere of research activities has expanded to other states as well as to issues at the nation level.

The Research Unit for Livelihoods and Natural Resources (RULNR) was established in the CESS in the year 2008 with financial support of Jamsetji Tata Trust. The core objectives of the RULNR are to conduct theoretical and applied research on policy relevant issues on human livelihoods and natural resource management, especially in areas related to river basins, forest and dryland ecosystems and to provide an effective platform for debates on policy relevant aspects for academicians, policy makers, civil society organizations and development practitioners. RULNR intends to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach drawing on various disciplines such as ecology, economics, political science, and social anthropology.

The present monograph titled "An Assessment and Analysis of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) in Kerala" by Jos Chathukulam, M. Gopinath Reddy and Palla Trinadha Rao undertaken under RULNR-CESS Research Programme attempts to assess the distributive pattern of grant-in-aid under the TSP heads and to measure the rate of participation of scheduled tribes in the identification of the schemes, formulation of plan projects and in its implementation and monitoring processes in Kerala. The study points out that formulation and implementation of TSP are carried out under the Peoples Plan Campaign which initiated several institutional mechanisms at the gram panchayats. On the whole, TSP has positive impact in the decentralized framework adopted by Kerala. The participation of the tribals in these initiatives has, however, been weak and voluntary activists have been common players. Project proposals lack in study of the income

generation modules properly. Some schemes such as construction of houses are found to have put the beneficiaries in debt crisis. The authors make a number of suggestions for improvement in policy.

I hope that this monograph would contribute to the ongoing attempts to redesign the TSP strategy so that it helps in improving the livelihood of the tribal population.

**Manoj Panda**  
Director, CESS

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADS	:	Area Development Society
AIIMS	:	All India Institute of Medical Science
BPL	:	Below Poverty Line
EDC	:	Eco Development Committee
GDI	:	Gender Development Index
HDI	:	Human Development Index
HHI	:	Household Industry
ITDP	:	Integrated Tribal Development Projects
KFD	:	Kerala Forest Department
LSG	:	Local Self-Government
MNREGS	:	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MPCE	:	Monthly Per Capita Expenditure
NHG	:	Neighbourhood Group
PFM	:	Participatory Forest Management
PRI	:	Panchayati Raj Institution
SC	:	Scheduled Caste
ST	:	Scheduled Tribe
SLI	:	Standard Living Index
TSP	:	Tribal Sub-Plan
VSS	:	Vana Samrakshana Samithis
WPR	:	Work Participation Rate

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# CHAPTER - I

## Introduction and Research Methodology

### Introduction

Constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has enunciated the way for participatory development. Within the state, the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act of 1994 edified three tiers of PRIs: at the district level, at the block level, and at the gram panchayat level. Through its 14 District Panchayats, 152 Block Panchayats, and 978 Gram Panchayats, the Government of Kerala has decided to earmark around 40 percent of its plan share. For mobilising the rural poor and for ensuring their participation in the various development programmes of the panchayat, a massive 'Peoples' Plan Campaign' was introduced. The campaign was officially launched on 17 August 1996. The democratic decentralisation has also reshaped the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP). As the gram panchayat is the grass-root level political institution, the major share of the funds allotted for the TSP came under their dispensation.

The present study attempts to make an assessment of the TSP under the decentralised planning process, and how the grant-in-aid demarcated for the TSP was utilised for implementing a number of welfare-oriented projects for the overall socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes.

### Research Methodology

The study focused on the 'process' and 'result' (outcome) of the development-oriented projects carried out under the TSP heads of six gram panchayats of Wayanad and Idukki Districts of Kerala, two backward regions in Kerala selected for the study. The study area has a high concentration of ST population.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the distributive pattern of the grant-in-aid under the TSP heads and to compare it with that of the general category aid distribution.
2. To measure the rate of participation of the Scheduled Tribes in the identification

of the schemes, formulation of plan projects, and in the implementation and monitoring of the processes.

3. To assess the extent to which the schemes and programmes have been successful in bringing about the development of the Scheduled Tribes.
4. To suggest policy interventions in the areas of the TSP.
5. To study how far:
  - a) the target of the TSP has been achieved.
  - b) the programmes succeeded in incorporating the felt needs of the ST population.
  - c) the ST population benefited from the TSP projects.

### **Sampling Technique**

The study followed the purposive sampling technique. Under this sampling technique, various development projects were selected, including productive, service and infrastructure projects that are likely to produce the most valuable information required for the analysis.

### **Data Collection**

Data from both primary and secondary sources were collected. Gram panchayat offices became the major sources of secondary data. The primary data were collected using various methods such as:

- a) Direct interview
- b) Participatory observation
- c) Formal and informal discussions
- d) Focus group discussions

*Direct Interview:* Beneficiaries of selected projects were interviewed using schedules. Interviews along with field visits especially of certain infrastructure projects were very useful in collecting the required information.

*Participatory Observation:* Gram sabhas were the places where participatory observation was fruitfully made. The field investigators attended a sample of 15 gram sabhas in various wards of the six gram panchayats.



*Formal and Informal Discussions:* Discussions were carried out with the implementing officers of the TSP projects, social activists, Scheduled Tribe ward members of the panchayat, and the heads of community associations. These discussions became useful in understanding the dynamics of the implementing process of the TSP projects.

*Focus Group Discussions:* This tool was applied mainly for collecting information from the targeted women beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. These discussions revealed the participants' opinion on the selection of beneficiaries for various projects and the implementation and monitoring aspects. Seven focus group discussions were conducted throughout the study region.

### **Limitations of the Study**

1. The major limitation of the study was with respect to the collection of secondary data from the panchayat. In all the panchayats, access to data became possible only after four to five consecutive visits; and in one case, though the officials initially gave permission to write down the required data, access to the required information was later denied.
2. The improper way of file keeping and the 'indifferent attitude' of the officials made data collection very difficult in two of the panchayats.
3. The work load of the panchayat officials was felt to be yet another problem in their providing the required information. Preparing the reports for the Finance Commission, Government auditing, preparing assessment reports for the block-level conference, and disbursement of money for the various development programmes and social welfare schemes were the usual business of the panchayat officials, irrespective of the panchayat.

### **Scheme of Study**

After presenting the research methodology in the introduction part, chapter two recaps the evolution and status of the TSP. Chapter three demonstrates a profile of the Scheduled Tribe population in Kerala as also in the two districts under study. Chapter four deals with the panchayat-wise analysis of TSP; implementation procedures of TSP projects are critically assessed in this chapter. The major findings from the study are given in chapter five, and the concluding remarks and policy suggestions are given in chapter six.

## CHAPTER - 2

### Evolution of Tribal Sub-plan

This chapter gives a brief account of the Tribal Sub-Plan. The Special Central Assistance for TSP, the allocation and expenditure of TSP and the grant-in-aid given to the decentralised administrative bodies are sketched in the section. The evolution of TSP is also briefly given in this chapter.

#### **Tribal Sub-plan (TSP)**

During the First Five Year Plan period, the felt needs of the Scheduled Tribe population were met through 'general development activities'. Special Multi-Purpose Tribal Development Blocks were formulated in the tribal regions during the Second Five Year Plan. The Tribal Blocks were ordered to be formulated even outside the Scheduled Areas, if 66 percent of the total population belonged to Scheduled Tribes. The idea of a special sub-plan, viz. the Tribal Sub-Plan, became a reality during the Fifth Five Year Plan period.

Apart from giving stress to the scheme component under the Special Component Plan for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes were cared through a sub-plan approach. This was mainly due to the typical settlement pattern, and the cultural and traditional peculiarities of the tribal population that mainly lives in a cluster pattern, and is concentrated in the forest region. The strategy of the TSP is two-fold: (1) protection of the tribal people; and (2) tribal development. In the first instance, rules and regulations were enacted or amended to safeguard the interests of the tribal people. This includes protection of their rights upon their land and forest, and safeguarding against the exploitation of middlemen. The gist of the tribal development policy is to co-ordinate resources available from various sources and to implement plans for the overall development of the tribal region. The major sources of revenue for the TSP are that of the share from the state's Five Year Plans, funds from centrally sponsored schemes, special assistance from the Central Government, and aid from financial institutions. Thus the sub-plan, which makes use of the resources, has four strategies such as:



1. *Regional Development Approach* for the Scheduled Tribes in places where they form majority of the population.
2. *Modified Area Development Approach*, which is implemented in areas where the Scheduled Tribes reside in groups (of above 10,000) but in isolated regions.
3. *Cluster Approach* in which large clusters of Scheduled Tribes shall be addressed.
4. Programmes for the socially depressed tribal groups.

These strategies were introduced in Kerala from the Fifth Five Year Plan onwards, as a part of which the Scheduled Tribe Welfare Department was started in July 1975. The State Government took the initiative to identify five TSP regions and started the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP). The TSP regions were Wayanad, Nilampur, Attapady, Idukki and Punaloor. However, the implementation procedures were to some extent flawed, mainly due to the improper definition of tribal regions. The regions were selected on the basis of tribal settlements and the boundary of the region was identified on the basis of forest division. Such a division contradicted with the usual administrative division of the selected regions and raised several practical problems in the administration of the TSP regions; only around 40 percent of the total tribal populations were included in the ITDP.

In this context, it would be worthwhile to examine whether 'administrative division approach' would have been a better approach for the development of the tribal community. The settlement pattern of the tribes in the regions under study includes exclusive clustered hamlets having their own political mechanism and their own system of territorial demarcation. As a result, it appears that even at the panchayat level, participatory approach is not the trend.

### **Special Central Assistance for TSP**

Special assistance from the Central Government was given since the inception of the sub-plan in 1974-75. This means that in case of inadequate funds for the TSP, the Central Government will render assistance. The fund is allocated mainly for the programmes intended to raise the economic standards of the tribal people. For the development of the related infrastructure facilities, the guidelines suggest to spend 25 percent of the total assistance. During the period from 1974-75 to 1996-97, the Central Government gave assistance worth Rs.2104.93 lakhs of which Rs.2099.40 lakhs (99.73 percent) were spent.

During 1983-84, the TSP was decentralised at the district level - district level working groups were formed with the District Collector as its Chairman and District Planning Officer as its Secretary. The committee consisted of all the district level officials responsible for implementing the TSP. All the projects included in the TSP were to be approved by the District Collector only after a detailed discussion with the working group members, regarding each project.

### **TSP Aid to Decentralised Administrative Bodies**

The local self-governing bodies are entrusted with the task of preparing and implementing their own programmes and projects utilising the Fifth Five Year Plan fund. Around 40 percent of the plan fund is channeled through the Five Year Plan accounts of the decentralised bodies. The case of Kerala has an added advantage of having an institution named 'Peoples' Plan Campaign', which stressed on the importance of incorporating the rural masses in the various stages of the development activities.

The Special Component Plan and the TSP claim importance in the decentralised planning scenario - the decentralisation of the TSP was expected to improve their efficacy, and the new system guaranteed peoples' participation and transparency for the planning deeds. There was a shift from a centralised planning process to a people-centered and local government-oriented process. Out of the 35-40 percent of the demarcated funds for the decentralised planning bodies, a major share was given as a grant-in-aid. During the year 2010-2011, a total of Rs.2049.98 crores was given to the local governments as a plan grant. In 2009-2010 this was Rs.1863 crores. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show details of category-wise allocation of plan funds during 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. It is observed that there is about ten percent increase over the years.

**Table 2.1: Category-wise Allocation of Grant-in-Aid to LSGs during 2010-2011**

*(Rs. in crores)*

Local Body	No. of Local Bodies	General	TSP	SCP	Total
Gram Panchayat	978	797.31	43.75	313.10	1154.16
Block Panchayat	152	170.69	17.48	104.36	292.53
District Panchayat	14	170.69	26.24	104.36	301.29
Municipality	60	130.15	0.98	36.56	167.69
Corporation	5	103.20	0.00	31.11	134.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>1209</b>	<b>1372.04</b>	<b>88.45</b>	<b>589.46</b>	<b>2049.98</b>

*Source:* Economic Review 2011, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram.

**Table 2.2: Category-wise Allocation of Grant-in-Aid to LSGs during 2009-10**  
(Rs. in crores)

Local Body	No. of Local Bodies	General	TSP	SCP	Total
Gram Panchayat	978	724.21	39.80	284.66	1048.67
Block Panchayat	152	155.19	15.92	94.89	266.00
District Panchayat	14	155.19	23.88	94.89	273.96
Municipality	60	118.07	0.91	33.26	152.24
Corporation	5	93.84	0.00	28.30	122.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1209</b>	<b>1246.49</b>	<b>80.51</b>	<b>535.99</b>	<b>1863.00</b>

*Source:* Economic Review 2010, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram.

From the above tables, it may be concluded that the Special Component Plan and the Tribal Sub-Plan, which were initiated during the Fifth Five Year Plan period have undergone several structural changes. The most prominent of such changes has been the switch over to the decentralised planning measures. Though the guidelines issued by the Central Government in 2011 are still relevant, the operational lacunae of the TSP are expected to be cleared under the decentralised plan scenario in Kerala. The consequent disbursement of the TSP fund through the decentralised local governing bodies 'guarantees' peoples' participation as well as transparency. Hence, the extent of peoples' involvement in the implementation and use of the TSP funds is a matter to be explored.

## CHAPTER - 3

### Scheduled Tribe Population

The socio-economic profile of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) people of Kerala is presented in the first section of this chapter. The status of the ST population in the two districts is pictured in the second section; this has been done mainly by analysing the development reports of the six panchayats in the region.

#### A. PROFILE OF ST POPULATION IN KERALA

##### Comparative Status

In Kerala the status of Scheduled Tribes is slightly better than their counterparts at the national level; this is evident from a number of indicators: at the national level, nearly half the tribal population lives below poverty line whereas in Kerala the corresponding figure is only less than one-fourth. Literacy among the tribal population in Kerala is high both in the case of general (64.35 percent) and female (58.11 percent) population when compared to their counterparts at the national level. The sex ratio of the tribal communities is also favorable for women in Kerala whereas that is not the case at the national level. The percentage of tribal population living in slums is negligible in Kerala, whereas 2.4 percent of the the total tribal population lives in slums at the national level. The comparative status of the tribal population in Kerala is clearly evident from Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Status of STs in India and Kerala**

Sl. No.	Items	India	Kerala
1	Population (in lakhs)	836	3.64
2	Percentage of total population	8.15	1.14
3	Decadal growth rate (%)	23.30	13.75
4	Child population to the total population	18.43	13.70
5	Sex ratio	948	1027
6	Literacy rate (general)	47.08	64.35
7	Literacy rate (female)	34.75	58.11
8	Poverty as per (55th round)	45.80	24.20
9	Percentage of population living in slums	2.40	0.20

*Source:* Census 2011.

### Demographic Profile (Population Size and Distribution)

In Kerala the tribal population is 364189 as per the 2011 Census, which works out to 1.14 percent of the total population in the state. The decadal growth of ST population has been 13.75 percent. This can be attributed to a number of factors such as demographic phenomenon, cultural dimension, and inclusion of a few communities in the Scheduled Tribe list. It is argued that the inclusion of new communities in the list may be the major factor for the high tribal population growth rate in the state. It is also important to note that population growth rate also varies among the tribal communities: as per the analysis of the 2001 Census, there is some difference between the age structure of the tribal population and that of the general population. According to Zachariah and Rajan (2004) the general population in Kerala has reached the last stage of demographic transition, and it resembles that of developed countries; whereas the tribal population structure resembles that of developing countries with large dependent population. It is observed that relatively, younger population is predominantly higher among the tribal communities. As per the population pyramids constructed for the major tribal communities in Kerala by *Rajaseenan et al.* (2009), younger population is higher among backward tribal communities of *Muthuvan*, *Paniyan* and *Kattunaikans*. This is because of lesser life expectancies among the tribal communities in general and backward communities in particular. The state has a total of 35 Scheduled Tribes and all have been enumerated in the 2001 Census. Out of these, five are primitive tribes, namely *Koraga*, *Kattunaikan*, *Cholanaickan*, *Kadar* and *Kurumbas*. The tribes are mostly concentrated in the hilly regions of Wayanad, Palakkad, Idukki, Kottayam and Thiruvananthapuram districts. The Scheduled Tribes in Kerala are overwhelmingly rural and geographically scattered. The three districts of Kerala (Wayanad, Idukki and Palakkad) account for over 60 percent of the STs in the state. The highest concentration is found in Wayanad (17.4 percent), followed by Idukki (14 percent) and Palakkad (10.89 percent). In general, it appears that tribes are in minority and are largely confined to small pockets. In 10 districts, the ST population is less than one percent of the total population of the districts (refer Table 3.2). Alappuzha has the lowest concentration at 0.15 percent, preceded by Thrissur, Kollam and Kozhikode districts (0.2 percent each).

Most of the tribes speak a local variant of Malayalam. As many as 17156 tribal families are spread over 671 settlements in the forest. Out of the 35 Scheduled Tribes notified in the state, *Paniyan* is the most populous tribe with a population of 81940, which is 22.5 percent of the total tribal population in the state. Kurichiyan is the second largest tribe having a population of 32746, constituting nine percent of the total ST population. Six

other STs, namely, *Muthuvan*, *Kanikaran*, *Irular*, *Kuruman*, *Marati* and *Malai Arayan*, having a population ranging from 21000 to 32000, along with *Paniyan* and *Kurichiyar*, constitute 73.6 percent of the total tribal population. Seven tribes, including Malayan, *Malai Vedan*, *Mannan*, etc., having a population of about 5000-16000, account for another 20 percent, and the remaining 20 tribes along with the generic tribes constitute the residual 6.4 percent of the state's tribal population. Tribes having less than 500 population level are 11 in number. Out of these, *Kota*, *Kammara*, *Kochu Velan* and *Konda Kapus* are the smallest groups each having less than a population of 50.

Table 3.2: Population Details of Scheduled Tribes among the Districts

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Percentage Distribution among the District	Percentage of Total Population
1	Kasargode	8.33	2.52
2	Kannur	5.48	0.83
3	Wayanad	37.36	17.43
4	Kozhikode	1.63	0.21
5	Malappuram	3.36	0.34
6	Palakkad	10.89	1.52
7	Thrissur	1.33	0.16
8	Ernakulam	2.76	0.32
9	Idukki	14.00	4.51
10	Kottayam	5.04	0.94
11	Allappuzha	0.86	0.15
12	Pathanamthitta	1.80	0.53
13	Kollam	1.43	0.20
14	Thiruvananthapuram	5.74	0.65
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.14</b>

Source: Human Development Report 2005, State Planning Board, Govt. of Kerala.

### Literacy and Education Level

Kerala ranks first among the Indian States in respect of both male and female literacy among the STs. The overall literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribes has increased from 57.2 percent in the 1991 Census to 64.4 percent in the 2001 Census. This is higher than the national average of 47 percent. Male literacy has increased from 63.4 percent to 70.8 percent, while female literacy has gone up from 51 percent to 58.1 percent

during 1991-2001, showing significant improvement. Among the numerically larger tribes, *Malai Arayan* have the highest percentage of literates (94.5 percent) followed by *Kanikaran*, *Kurichiyar* and *Kurumans* (71.4 percent). *Kurumans*, *Kurichiyar*, *Kanikaran* and *Malai Arayan* have shown higher female literacy ranging from 60-93 percent, whereas *Muthuvan*, *Paniyan* and *Irular* have shown lower female literacy in the range of 31-43 percent. Therefore, targeted interventions of literacy and post-literacy campaigns are needed among the tribal settlements considering the variations of literacy rate among the tribal population.

As far as the levels of education are concerned, as many as 33.5 percent of the tribal literates are either without any educational level or have attained education below primary level. The proportion of literates who have attained education up to primary and middle level are 29.3 percent and 22.9 percent respectively. Persons educated up to matric / secondary / higher secondary etc. have a share of only 12.4 percent in the total literate population among the tribal community. Graduates and higher qualified are 1.2 percent, while non-technical and technical diploma holders are almost negligible (0.8 percent).

The proportion of the ST students in the lower primary and upper primary schools during 2010-2011 is relatively higher than their population percentage. In high schools, the proportion is same as their population percentage.

**Table 3.3: Enrolment of ST Students at School Level as in 2010**

Sl. No.	Section	Total No. of Students	No. of ST Students	% of ST Students
1	LP	1665993	33781	2.02
2	UP	1452540	24449	1.68
3	HS	1427293	15882	1.11
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4545826</b>	<b>74112</b>	<b>1.63</b>

*Source:* Directorate of Public Instruction.

It is observed from Table 3.3 that ST students constituted 1.63 percent of the total enrolment in the schools during 2010-2011. The percentage of ST students in government schools, private schools, and private un-aided schools was 3.28 percent, 1.30 percent, and 0.36 percent respectively in 2010-2011.

Dropout ratio among the ST students was found to be higher than that among the other communities and castes including Scheduled Castes (SCs) - it is four times that

of SCs and even greater compared to the general category. This is another area of major concern. The dropout rate is also observed to vary among districts: Idukki has the least number of dropouts among the tribal-concentrated districts in Kerala. Palakkad has the highest dropout rate at high school level compared to Idukki and Wayanad. The total dropout rate among the ST students is 3.54 percent, and the section-wise breakup shows that in lower primary, upper primary, and high schools it is 2.28 percent, 3.29 percent, and 6.59 percent respectively (Table 3.4). It is argued that the official statistics on dropouts is based on under-reporting and does not reflect ground reality. The school management and the teaching community generally maintain the names of tribal students in the school records even after they dropped out, for many reasons including rent seeking.

The general dropout ratio in lower primary, upper primary, and high schools are 0.42 percent, 0.40 percent, and 1.20 percent respectively. The separate dropout ratio among the SCs in lower primary, upper primary, and high schools are 0.37 percent, 0.49 percent, and 1.44 percent respectively.

**Table 3.4: Dropouts among ST Students**

Sl. No.	Section	ST Students (No.)	Dropouts (No.)	Percentage
1	LP	33781	773	2.28
2	UP	24449	806	3.29
3	HS	15882	1047	6.59
	<b>Total</b>	<b>74112</b>	<b>2626</b>	<b>3.54</b>

*Source:* Directorate of Public Instruction, Govt. of Kerala.

It is noticed that 44.65 percent of the ST students choose private-aided schools, whereas remaining students are studying in government schools. The intake of ST students in private unaided schools is relatively very low (Table 3.5). This is another indication of the poor economic profile of ST parents.

**Table 3.5: Details of Students in Govt., Private Aided, and Unaided Schools**

Standard	Govt. Schools	Private Aided Schools	Private Unaided Schools
I	4392	3846	103
II	4478	3935	110
III	4571	3955	113
IV	4399	3792	87
V	4556	4089	162
VI	4285	3728	154
VII	3938	3385	152
VIII	3691	2421	140
IX	3022	2280	109
X	2439	1666	114
<b>Total</b>	<b>39771</b>	<b>33097</b>	<b>1244</b>

*Source:* Directorate of Public Instruction, Govt. of Kerala.

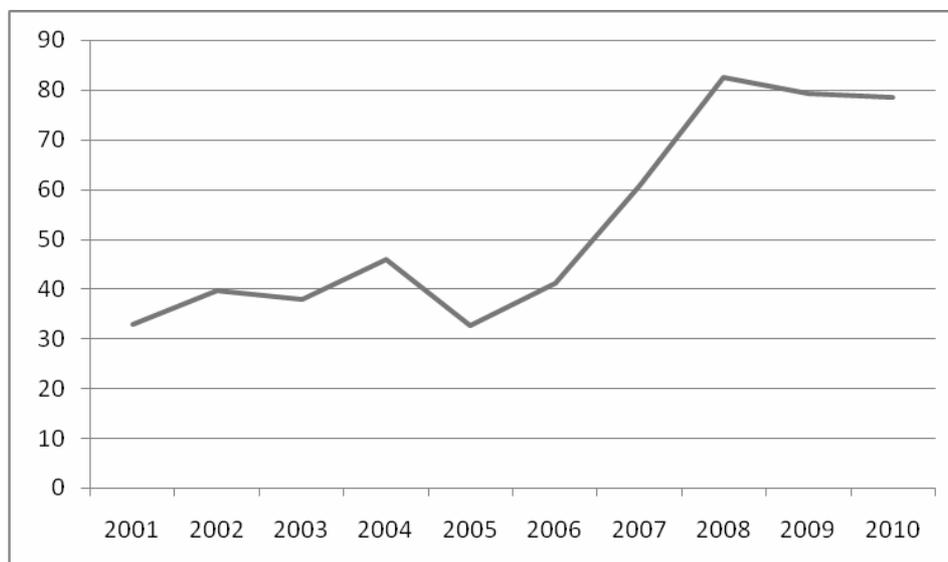
Performance of ST students in SSLC examination is another indicator of educational development among the different social groups. In the regular SSLC examination of 2010, the percentage of passed ST students was 78.39 percent, which is below the overall state percentage of 90.76 (Table 3.6). The table shows that though there is an improvement in their performance in the SSLC examination, the students are far behind the others (Diagram 3.1).

**Table 3.6: Performance of ST Students in SSLC Examination (Percentage)**

Year	Total Students	Scheduled Tribe Students
2001	56.22	32.85
2002	60.62	39.69
2003	64.85	37.72
2004	70.06	45.95
2005	58.61	32.55
2006	69.33	41.18
2007	82.23	60.67
2008	92.08	82.46
2009	91.89	79.21
2010	90.76	78.39

*Source:* Commissioner for Govt. Examinations, Govt. of Kerala

Diagram 3.1: Performance of Students in SSLC Examination



Source: Table 3.6.

Table 3.7: Performance of Students in Higher Secondary Examination (2009-10)

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Students Appeared	No. of Students Passed	Percentage
1	Total	323846	272342	84.09
2	SC	30182	15744	52.16
3	ST	3926	1740	44.32

Source: Directorate of Public Instruction, Govt. of Kerala.

The performance of students in higher secondary examination also reveals that the pass rate of the ST students is lower than that of the other social groups including the SCs (Table 3.7). The details of ST students in Arts and Science Colleges during 2010-11 are given in Table 3.8. It is seen that the enrolment of ST students in Arts and Science Colleges is lower than their counterparts from other communities, while their enrolment in professional education is negligible.

Table 3.8: Details of ST Students in the Arts and Science Colleges

Sl. No	Name of Course	Number of Students			
		Scheduled Tribe		Total	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1	Ph D	1	0	109	133
2	M Phil	0	0	7	54
3	MBA	3	1	57	61
4	M A Music	0	0	5	37
5	M A	62	95	1259	4790
6	M Sc	56	70	1267	5855
7	M Com	25	29	558	1514
8	M S W	1	0	29	85
9	M C J	0	0	5	16
10	M T A	2	2	29	32
11	M M H	0	0	28	16
12	B P E Certificate Course	1	0	42	10
13	B P Ed One Year Degree Course	9	10	14	20
14	B B A	36	32	1288	1517
15	B C A	12	6	438	700
16	B Li Sc	0	0	0	16
17	B V M C	0	0	68	61
18	B A	550	917	21243	49645
19	B A Music	2	0	32	168
20	B A Dance	0	0	0	20
21	B Sc	244	379	18374	46845
22	B Com	206	216	10252	15236
23	O R & C A	0	0	3	6
24	F S M D	0	0	0	17
25	B T & S P	0	0	39	12
26	C M & Electronics	0	0	68	24
27	P G D A H S	0	0	10	1
28	M H R M	0	0	5	28
29	Music B A ( Music Colleges)	0	0	204	314
30	Music M A ( Music Colleges)	0	0	29	87
31	B F A ( Music Colleges)	0	0	116	29
32	M F A ( Music Colleges)	0	0	39	13
33	B Ed (Training Colleges)	5	35	346	3002
34	M Ed (Training Colleges)	0	0	38	157
35	P G Diploma in Home Science	0	0	0	15
36	P G Diploma in Therapeutic Counseling	0	0	2	4
37	Preliminary-Afsal-Ul-Ulama in Arabic	0	0	251	578
38	B A Afsal-Ul-Ulama in Arabic	1	0	242	462
39	M A Afsal-Ul-Ulama in Arabic	0	0	39	106
		1216	1792	56535	131686

Source: Directorate of Collegiate Education, Govt. of Kerala.

### Employment/Category of Workers

In Kerala the participation of ST population in agriculture is much higher than that of the general population. The highest proportion of tribal workers in the state is that of 'agricultural labourers' (47.1 percent) as against the national average of 36.4 percent; 'other workers' form 38.6 percent, and this proportion is also significantly higher than that recorded among the total STs at the national level (16.3 percent). Persons working as 'agricultural laborers' and 'other workers', together constitute 85.7 percent of the total working population. 'Cultivators' constitute 11.2 percent, which is considerably lower than the national average of 44.7 percent. Workers in Household Industry (HHI) constitute 3.1 percent, which is comparable with that of all STs at the national level (2.1 per cent). Among the major tribes, *Paniyan* constitutes one-third of the total workers engaged as 'agricultural labourers', followed by *Irular* and *Kuruman*, while among *Malai Arayan* and *Kanikaran* comprise 70 percent of the workers belong to 'other category' workers. The district with a large concentration of STs (Wayanad) is the least urbanized and has shown practically no growth in urban economy. Kannan and Hari (2002) argue that the lower economic diversification among the tribals, which has impact on the level of wages earned in agriculture, gets translated into poorer material conditions of life and in turn, constrained access to basic social amenities, be it housing, electrification, good sanitation, or drinking water.

### Occupational Pattern

According to the 2001 Census, 25.87 percent of the total population was under the category of 'main workers' (Table 3.9). The respective figure for SCs is 29.75 percent, while in the case of STs, the corresponding figure is much higher at 30.17 percent. This gives an impression that a moderately higher proportion of STs, male as well as female, are under the category of 'main workers'; however, the percentage of females in the category of 'main workers' among STs is almost 20 percent, while it is only 11 percent among the total population. During one decade, the decline of 'main workers' among the total population was only 2.66 percent, whereas among the STs it was 10.11 percent, which is substantial. In other words, the decline of 'main workers', both male and female from 1991 to 2001 is substantial among the STs, which is an indication of growing unemployment, underemployment and deprivation among the ST communities

There is an excessive dependence of STs on agriculture for their livelihood. It is revealed that 54.79 percent of the ST population depends on agriculture whereas in the case of general population, the corresponding figure was only 19.52 percent. Majority of the general population (77.13 percent) depends on 'other services', while only 42.65 percent



of STs depend on the same sector. Hence, it is observed that the ST population lags far behind in the changing occupational structure of the Kerala economy.

Again in Kerala, as per Rule 14(a) of the Kerala State Subordinate Service Rules 1958, two percent reservation in public service is provided to the STs, but this has not yet been achieved. However, as regards the STs, the number of Government employees in gazetted posts, non-gazetted posts and last grades is more than their population percentage. The exact total representation of ST employees in Government services at present is 1.78 percent (Table 3.10).

**Table 3.9 Distribution of Workers (in percentage)**

Sl. No.	Category	Total		Scheduled Tribes	
		1991	2001	1991	2001
1	Main Workers	28.53	25.87	40.28	30.17
2	Male Main Workers	44.82	41.77	51.11	40.66
3	Female Main Workers	12.81	10.85	29.42	19.90
4	Percentage of Cultivators to Main Workers	12.24	7.12	16.66	13.67
5	Percentage of Agricultural Labourers	25.54	12.40	55.47	41.12
6	Percentage of Main Workers engaged in Household Industry	2.58	3.35	0.47	2.57
7	Percentage of Main Workers Engaged in Other Services	15.17	77.13	5.28	42.65
8	Marginal Workers	2.90	6.43	5.76	16.18
9	Work Participation Rate	31.43	32.30	46.04	46.35

*Source:* Scheduled Tribe Atlas of India.

Table No. 3.10. Details of Scheduled Tribe Employees in Government Service

Sl. No.	Category	2007 (83 Depts.)		2008 (81/83 Depts.)		2009 (75/83 Depts.)		2010 (45/83 Depts.)	
		Total	ST	Total	ST	Total	ST	Total	ST
1	Gazetted	33272	322	33636	364	23996	329	10420	140
2	Non-Gazetted (Excluding Last Grade)	247026	3783	237351	3837	173062	3048	57302	1609
3	Last Grades	38722	721	39574	979	29471	663	12390	280
<b>Total</b>		<b>319020</b>	<b>4826</b>	<b>310561</b>	<b>5180</b>	<b>226529</b>	<b>4040</b>	<b>80112</b>	<b>2029</b>

*Source:* General Administration (Employment Cell-A) Department, Govt. of Kerala.

### Landholdings

As per official data, the average size of landholding among the STs is 0.68 acres. Nair and Menon (2007) argue that though the average size of land ownership is higher among the STs, and given the historical experiences of land encroachment, acquisition of forest land by the Government and tribal displacement, the STs remain vulnerable – the proportion of households holding more than one hectare of land has been declining over time; the field situation gives an impression that landlessness is higher among the STs. Though various efforts have been made to protect and promote the land rights of the ST population through affirmative action, the outcome is far from satisfactory, considering their major dependence on land and agrarian economy. In Kerala as per the record under the Land Reforms Legislation, only 1.35 lakh acres of land has been declared as surplus. Out of this, 47 percent was distributed among the vulnerable sections as on March 1996, which has benefited about five percent of the ST population. In this context Ravi Raman (2003, 2005) also argues that tribal population has not benefited from the land reforms initiated by the Government of Kerala. The average size of land made available to the STs was 71 cents. As per the national guidelines, 50 percent of the surplus land declared is to be distributed among the SCs and STs. However, Kerala did not meet this stipulation and lags behind with only 47 percent.

### Work Participation Rate

The Work Participation Rate (WPR) among the tribals is relatively high when compared to the general WPR of Kerala, which is 32.3 percent. However, the WPR of the ST population is 46.3 percent which is lower than that of all STs at the national level (49.1 percent). The WPR of males (57.5 percent) is higher than their female counterparts

(35.4 percent) – there has been an increase in male WPR from 55.1 to 57.5 percent, whereas female WPR has decreased by 1.5 percent points during 1991-2001. Among the total workers, 65.1 percent are main workers and this proportion is lower than that of all the STs at the national level (68.9 percent). Among the major tribal groups, *Irular, Muthuvan, Paniyan and Marati* have higher WPR than the state average and the average ST population.

### Sex Ratio

In a society, sex ratio can be considered as one of the indicators for analyzing the social status and the degree of discrimination. This is also applicable to the tribal society. The ST sex ratio is favorable, as is the overall sex ratio in Kerala. The sex ratio of tribes is 1027, whereas for the general population it is 1058 (Table 3.11). The sex ratio has increased since 1971. The decadal increase in the sex ratio among the tribals is a debating issue. Further probing is essential to see whether it is a reflection of migration of males or not. It is observed that in three districts of Kerala (Idukki, Ernakulam and Palakkad), the sex ratio is not favourable to ST women (Table 3.12).

There is a significant variation in the sex ratio among the tribal communities. Among some of the backward tribal communities the sex ratio is not in favour of women. This is the case with *Irular, Muthuvan* and *Kattunaikan*. The sex ratio of these tribal communities is 993, 975 and 981 respectively. The unfavourable sex ratio among these communities may be the manifestation of increased maternal mortality, high morbidity among women, and poor access to health facilities.

**Table 3.11: Sex Ratio of General Population & Scheduled Tribes in Kerala (1971-2001)**

Census Year	General Population	Scheduled Tribe Population
1971	1016	995
1981	1032	992
1991	1036	996
2001	1058	1027

*Source:* Census of India 1971- 2001.

Table 3.12: District-wise Sex Ratio of Scheduled Tribes

Name of District	Sex Ratio of Scheduled Tribes
Thiruvananthapuram	1113
Kollam	1121
Pathanamthitta	1057
Alappuzha	1001
Kottayam	1044
Idukki	998
Ernakulam	978
Thrissur	1105
Palakkad	984
Malappuram	1046
Kozhikode	1031
Wayanad	1019
Kannur	1039
Kasargode	1005

Source: Census of India 2001.

### Marital Status

Marital status shows that the number of 'never married' (unmarried) persons with a proportion of 47.2 percent exceeds the number of 'married' persons (46.1 per cent) as per the 2001 Census. 'Widowed' persons form 5.4 per cent while only one percent is 'divorced and separated'. Marriage of girls and boys below the legal age of 18 years and 21 years respectively is not common among the tribals of Kerala – the data shows that married girls below 18 years as well as married boys below 21 years each constitute only 1.4 percent. These proportions are significantly lower than those at the national level (2.1 percent and 2.8 percent respectively). The mean number of children ever born per ever married ST woman (age group 45-49 years) is three, which is less than that of all the STs at the national level (4).

### Poverty Ratio

In Kerala poverty is more concentrated in certain segments of the population mainly belonging to the Scheduled Tribes and other marginal communities. In respect of the rural ST population, Kerala has succeeded in reducing the level of poverty from 37

percent to 24 percent between 1993-94 and 1999-2000 (Table 3.13). Increase in wages of rural labourers, a range of anti-poverty measures undertaken by the Central, State and Local Governments, and the growth of the general economy are the major factors that brought about a decline in poverty among the tribal population. However, rural poverty among the STs remains more than two and a half times that of all of Kerala's rural population living below poverty line, which stands at 9.4 percent. The over-representation of STs in the population below poverty line in the state is a matter of serious concern which needs special targeted attention.

**Table 3.13: Percentage of Population Below Poverty Line**

Sl.No.	NSSO Rounds	India		Kerala	
		Total	ST	Total	ST
1	38 <sup>th</sup> Round(1983)	45.6	63.8	39.1	NA
2	50 <sup>th</sup> Round (1993-94)	37.1	52.2	25.5	37.3
3	55 <sup>th</sup> Round (1999-2000)	27.1	45.8	9.4	24.2

*Source:* Economic Review 2010, State Planning Board, Govt. of Kerala.

### **Human Development Index**

The Human Development Index (HDI) reflects the capabilities that people have in removing their unfreedom (lack of freedom) to enjoy a better standard of living. Economic poverty is not the only unfreedom that people have: lack of choices in social, political and cultural factors is also reflected in HDI. Malappuram District ranks least with the 14<sup>th</sup> position, while the ST-concentrated districts of Wayanad, Idukki and Palakkad are also in the same range of backwardness, ranking 13<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respectively. The same is the case with Gender Development Index (GDI): among the districts in Kerala again the ST-concentrated districts are ranked the lowest at 12<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> positions respectively.

### **Deprivation Index**

Deprivation index can be used as a tool to capture the shortfall in the quality of life. UNDP's deprivation index measures the shortfall based on four deprivation criteria in: the quality of housing, access to water, good sanitation, and electrification. Based on these general criteria, the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Thiruvananthapuram, developed a deprivation index based on seven variables including lack of banking facilities and consumer durables. As per the deprivation index based on household items, ST-concentrated districts of Wayanad, Idukki and Palakkad have the highest deprivation

among all the districts in Kerala. The relative asset deprivation is also co-related to the housing conditions and lack of facilities in the households among all districts, though there is a wide disparity in the 'unmet basic needs' across the districts. The CDS study also highlights that household amenities and facilities are relatively poor in the ST-concentrated districts of Kerala. The incidence of deprivation is 29.5 percent in Kerala, whereas the deprivation index with regard to STs is 57.90 percent. Again, ST-concentrated districts of Wayanad (46.3), Idukki (42.7), and Palakkad (40.4) have the highest deprivation index of above 40 percent. In Wayanad, the deprivation index of the ST groups is 66 percent and in the districts of Idukki and Palakkad it is 65.3 percent (Table 3.14).

**Table 3.14: District-wise Deprivation Index of Scheduled Tribes**

Name of District	Deprivation Index of STs		Deprivation Index of All	
	%	Rank	%	Rank
Thiruvananthapuram	60.1	10	39.5	11
Kollam	50.7	5	30.4	8
Pathanamthitta	54.6	7	31.1	9
Alappuzha	40.1	3	29.6	6
Kottayam	43.1	4	25.1	3
Idukki	65.3	13	42.7	13
Ernakulam	37.2	1	15.5	1
Thrissur	37.5	2	24.7	2
Palakkad	65.3	12	40.4	12
Malappuram	56.8	8	28.6	5
Kozhikode	50.9	6	28.3	4
Wayanad	66.0	14	46.3	14
Kannur	57.7	9	29.7	7
Kasargode	61.3	11	37.6	10
<b>Kerala</b>	<b>57.9</b>		<b>29.5</b>	

*Source:* Human Development Report, 2005, State Planning Board, Govt. of Kerala.

### **Tribals under EDC and VSS**

The Kerala Forest Department (KFD) constituted 389 Vana Samrakshana Samithis (VSSs) as a preparatory and pre-conditional step for the implementation of Participatory Forest Management (PFM). It is reported that 13431 tribal families have become

members of different VSSs in the tribal areas. There are in total 11 wild life divisions in the State, and altogether 196 Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) in all the wild life divisions. It is estimated that in the EDCs, around 65 percent of the total families are from tribal communities.

The VSSs and EDCs are the major social organizations of the tribal people in the forest habitations in the fringe areas of the forest. The formation and working of the VSSs and EDCs has opened wide scope for the implementation of forest and eco-development programmes. This gives an impression that the tribals under these organizations which are operating in the forest environmental settings have imbibed the spirit of participatory forest management. However, the level of absorption of funds in different parts of the project areas varies with the depth of dependence on forests. It is noted that the activities undertaken by the tribals in these organizations are moving towards achieving the desired objectives to a certain extent. The scheme governance has transformed the tribal VSSs and EDCs as centres of local development, and has helped in improving their soft skills, associational life, and social capital. More importantly, it has provided additional employment opportunities and food security to several tribal families enabling them to come out of absolute poverty. However, certain aberrations during their governance need to be rectified in the subsequent period in order to accrue their positive benefits to the community and forest wealth, leading to a sustainable development model for the tribal community.

### **Tribal Women under *Kudumbasree***

The tribal special project is an initiative of *Kudumbasree* in collaboration with the Tribal Department to address the special issues among the tribal population of the state in a systematic manner. The project primarily targets the marginalized tribals under the aegis of the *Kudumbasree* network and provides them with facilities, which were otherwise less accessible or denied, as part of its poverty eradication mission. The objectives of the mission are planned to be achieved with the active convergence of various government and non-government agencies as well as departments. It was initiated as a pilot project in select 10 panchayats of four districts namely Idukki, Wayanad, Palakkad and Kasargode in the first phase. In the second phase the project was extended to 10 more panchayats of the remaining districts, excluding Alappuzha owing to lesser tribal inhabitation in the district. In the third phase the project was extended to all panchayats of the four districts in the first phase with tribal inhabitation. The special tribal project facilitates the creation of ST Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) as well as at (ADSs) Area Development Society, if necessary, in areas where there are more than two tribal NHGs.

The project provides a corpus fund of Rs.2500 to all newly formed ST NHGs. Micro-finance and micro-enterprise activities are given special focus among the tribals as part of the project activities. Measures have also been taken to ensure cent percent tribal participation in the MNREGS activities. Formation of special *ashraya* projects, provision of supplementary food for the malnourished aged, infants and adolescent girls, formation of ST *Balasabhas*, etc., are some of the highlights of the project.

## **B. PROBLEMS IN TRIBAL AREAS**

### **Unwed Mothers in Wayanad**

A large number of tribal women face extreme forms of social exclusion and discrimination in the public sphere of life. It is reported that tribal women in Wayanad are victims of sexual exploitation and physical harassment. Their innocence and simplicity is often misused by the mainstream community; most of them have been victims of direct sexual exploitation or false promise of marriage from outsiders, mainly the settlers, owners of tea and coffee estates, fellow workers, and police personnel deployed to check the radical political movement. The tribal area is usually a punishment posting for every Government employee including policemen. This results in a growing number of unwed mothers among the tribals. Most of them are victims of seduction or one-night stands. Hence CK Janu, leader of the tribal coordination committee, says “the settlers have taken over our lands, turned our men folk into drunkards and desecrated tribal women. We have to declare self rule for our self protection to prevent more fatherless children from being born. An adivasi colony is not a brothel for outsiders to come and go”. The epicenter of this phenomenon of unwed mothers is Thirunelli of Wayanad District. A rough estimation shows that there are more than 500 unwed tribal mothers in this area alone. The same phenomenon also prevails in other tribal areas of Attappady of Palakkad District where it is estimated that there are over 300 unwed mothers; some of them are less than 20 years of age.

The Kerala Women’s Commission, which has been tracking down unwed mothers over the years and fighting for their cause, has made some headway. A committee from the Kerala Legislative Assembly also studied the problem and submitted a report to the Government recommending various steps; however no proper action was taken. K Panur, a social critic who made rich contribution to tribal studies, says “it is a shame for a high literacy state like Kerala that these unwed tribal women continue to live in a state of penury and neglect, years after their problems came into public attention. A disturbing fact is that their number continues to rise and they became more vulnerable to further exploitation”.



The case of unwed mothers is not an old story but continues, in terms of number and extension to new areas. A report in *The Hindu* daily on 24 April 2011 says, “The Anti-Human Trafficking Cell under the state government has filed 21 First Information Reports (FIRs) on charge of rape against non-tribals on complaints from unwed tribal mothers at Attappady tribal area”. The major problems of tribal unwed mothers are poverty, unemployment, rejection, isolation, neglect, and lack of shelter, along with different health problems (including sex-related, malnourishment, and psychological problems). In this context, it is worth mentioning that a project sanctioned and funded as the very first installment of the Local Area Development Fund of MP (MPLAD) to rehabilitate the unwed mothers in the area has not yet been completed. It is also reported that there are other schemes for rehabilitation of unwed mothers, which have not been properly implemented in any of the tribal areas in the state.

### **Sickle Cell Anaemia**

Sickle cell anaemia is prevalent among the tribal people in Wayanad particularly the *Paniyans* and the *Kattunaikans*. Sickle cell anaemia is an autosomal recessive genetic blood disorder, with over dominance, characterized by red blood cells that assume an abnormal, rigid, sickle shape. Sickling decreases the cells' flexibility and results in a risk of various complications. The sickling occurs because of a mutation in the hemoglobin gene. Sickle cell anaemia is perceived as a debilitating disease for the individual sufferer, the family, and the community. Life expectancy is shortened, with studies reporting an average life expectancy of 42 in males and 48 in females. The Swami Vivekananda Medical Mission at Wayanad, in collaboration with the Department of Genetics, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, claims to have screened 60980 persons and found 1838 persons affected with anaemia and 8228 persons with the sickle cell trait. Another study by the Health Department as well as AIIMS, New Delhi, shows that nearly 15 percent of the tribal families in Wayanad and Palakkad districts have traits of the genetical problem, i.e., sickle cell anaemia, and it is known as the 'tribal disease'. This is of a very serious concern, as there are only a few agencies offering care for this disease. The Kozhikode Medical College has recently set up a sickle cell anaemia unit. Other programmes for rehabilitating sickle cell anaemia patients are also undertaken in Wayanad District. During 2009-10, Rs.40 lakhs was provided for the extension of vocational-cum-production centers for rehabilitating sickle cell anaemia patients belonging to the ST communities of Wayanad. When we consider the gravity of the problem, the programmes intended to rehabilitate sickle cell anaemia patients are not adequate at all. More medical attention both in terms of prevention and cure of the disease is very much needed.

### Low Monthly per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) among Tribals

Household consumption expenditure has been worked out in a tribal-dominated panchayat (Pulappally of Wayanad District) by K.N. Nair *et al.* (2007), recently. Household consumption expenditure is used as a tool to measure the household welfare and the livelihood outcomes. It is also used as a proxy variable for household income. Three major consumption items, namely (i) food, *pan*, tobacco, intoxicants, fuel and light; (ii) clothing, footwear and the like; and (iii) miscellaneous goods and services and consumer durables, have been considered. The expenditure incurred by a house for a reference period of 30 days is taken as monthly household consumption expenditure. The Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) for a household is calculated by dividing the total monthly household consumer expenditure by the household size. The result shows that the MPCE varies across social groups while Rs.889 is the mean MPCE of the households in the study village. The highest MPCE was found among the Christians (Rs.1407) and Ezhavas (Rs.1340), and the lowest MPCE was found among the tribal communities in the village; and within the tribal communities there are wide variations: Rs.287 was the MPCE of the *Paniyan* tribe whereas Rs.482 was that of *Kattunaikans*. Without any hesitation one can safely assert the major findings of the study and it can be generalized that there is very low MPCE among the tribals in Kerala.

### Disparate Levels of Development among Tribal Communities

The Standard of Living Index (SLI) has been constructed among nine major tribal communities in Kerala by Rajasenan (2009). About 10 different indicators on living standards such as type of housing, availability of toilets, drinking water, possession of different types of durable assets, fuel used for cooking, energy used for lighting, etc., have been developed. Each indicator was given a score on a range of one to three. The minimum value of one is considered as 'low', the maximum value of three as 'high'; and two is considered as 'medium'. Therefore one tribal community can score a maximum value of 30 and a minimum of 10. Finally these tribal communities are classified into three groups (high standard of living index, medium standard of living index, and low standard of living index).

It is found that *Malaya Arayan* tribal community has the highest value and hence can be classified with a high standard of living index. On the other hand, the *Paniyan*, *Adiyan*, *Urali*, *Kattunaikan*, *Muthuvan* and *Irular* tribal communities have secured the lowest value and hence have a low standard of living index. *Kuruma* and *Kurichiyar* tribes have attained values between the highest and lowest, and hence can be classified as having a medium standard of living index. The study gives an overall impression that the different



tribal communities are at different levels of development; thus, a division has emerged among the communities – between backward tribal communities and forward tribal communities. This division is also evident from other social indicators such as the asset position, employment, representation in Government and private sector jobs, level of indebtedness, livelihoods option, health care, food consumption, etc. There is an argument that each tribal community needs to be addressed differently since there are variations at different levels of the development ladder. There is some amount of discomfort in accepting the broad categorization of ‘Scheduled Tribes’ since it does not capture all the ground realities in the tribal settings of Kerala.

### **Impact of Global Financial Crisis and Agrarian Distress on Livelihood Strategies of Tribal Population**

Since the tribal economy has not been much commercialized and modernized, the direct impact of the global financial crisis on the livelihood strategies of the tribals is very limited. However, there are some indirect impacts on the tribals: It is argued that the financial crisis has exposed and widened the growing inequalities among the social groups and marginalized communities due to the absence of inclusive growth wedded to pro-poor development strategies. There were a few cases of suicides reported among the tribals during the period of agrarian distress.

Besides indebtedness, the other reasons reported for suicides are ill health, mental agony, conflicts within families, liquor addiction, and divorce and separation. However, it is observed that these deaths could have been avoided if the tribals had a well developed package for survival strategies. It is also important to know that poverty is one of the common denominators of these deaths. The economic growth and dynamics in the market forces alone will not ensure inclusive growth and governance. Therefore, a paradigm shift is very much needed for addressing the livelihood strategies of the tribal population.

### **Existing Alarming Situations in the Tribal Community**

A quick analysis of the tribal situation by the State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, has identified 17 alarming issues in the tribal community. They are : (i) Extreme levels of poverty, deprivation and vulnerability; (ii) High levels of exclusion both developmental and social; (iii) Extremely low levels of empowerment (political, social and economic); (iv) Rapid marginalization due to unfair, unequal and exploitative relations of production and exchange between tribal communities and others; (v) Low level of access to entitlements; (vi) Practically zero participation in development matters

with no autonomy in any form of decision making; (vii) Abnormally huge siphoning of developmental resources and benefits meant for tribal people by middlemen; (viii) Poor human development with low levels of literacy and access to health care; (ix) Rapid alienation of assets like land; (x) Alarming depletion of social capital especially traditional forms of organization and leadership; (xi) Quick deterioration of traditional knowledge systems and cultural attainments; (xii) Fast increasing tendency to use tribal people as cat's paws in criminal activities such as illicit distillation, cultivation of narcotic plants, stealing of forest wealth, etc.; (xiii) High levels of exploitation of women by outsiders; (xiv) Weak delivery system of public services; (xv) Dependency-inducing developmental programmes relying on distribution of benefits rather than building up capabilities; (xvi) Implementation of ad hoc and stereo-typed developmental programmes in the absence of proper planning; (xvii) Very weak monitoring systems.

### **Untouchability among Tribal Communities**

Baviskar and Mathew (2009) argue that tribal communities do not suffer the stigma of untouchability; it is also generally assumed that tribal communities are outside the caste system. However, some sort of hierarchical structure has been noticed among certain tribal communities in Kerala. The *Kurichiyans* and *Kurumas* – two landed tribals in Wayanad district – claim a different social status in the district. It is reported that they used to practice some kind of 'untouchability' with other tribal communities. Also, the *Adiyans* and *Paniyans* occupy a lower position in the hierarchical structure of the caste system. Rajasenan (2009) also noticed a patron-client relationship within the tribal community: the patron position is with the *Kurichiyans* and *Kuruman* tribes whereas client status is with the *Adiyan* and *Paniyan* tribes.



## CHAPTER - 4

### Panchayat-wise Analysis of TSP

The broad procedures of TSP implementation carried out by the People's Plan Campaign in each panchayat have been assessed and summarised in this chapter. After a brief note on the nature of the sample selected, Section-A gives an account of the socio-economic profile of the targeted beneficiaries surveyed. Section-B contains the panchayat-wise analysis of TSP. The grant-in-aid allotted, the aggregate / sector-wise distribution, and the expenditure of the aid within the general categories of TSP have been looked into in each panchayat for which necessary statistics were available. One of the major thrusts of the present study has been to verify the various components of the TSP projects formulated and implemented during the 2010-2011 annual plan period. Attempts have been made to understand the dynamics of project formulation, the roles played by the gram sabhas and/or panchayats, procedures followed in the selection of beneficiaries, and implementation methods of projects.

The overall performance of these projects has been evaluated and the impact of these projects in the socio-economic standards of beneficiary households was also assessed. Further, case-studies of 40 projects in six panchayats in the two districts were carried out. Out of this, 34 projects belonged to the TSP. The number of projects covered in each panchayat is given in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Number of TSP Projects Studied**

Panchayat	TSP	Total
Panchayat No. 1	3	14
Panchayat No. 2	1	6
Panchayat No. 3	-	3
Panchayat No. 4	-	9
Panchayat No. 5	1	2
Panchayat No. 6	1	6
<b>Total</b>	6	40

*Source: Survey Data.*

A total of 205 individual beneficiaries were surveyed from among the 40 projects. Out of the 205 beneficiaries, 123 are male and 82 are female. Individual beneficiary-oriented projects numbered 36 and 2 are 'group projects' (projects sanctioned to registered Women Self-Help Groups) and two infrastructure projects (see Table 4.2).

Among the 40 projects studied, five projects are designed exclusively for women. The women's projects are respectively 'rad for Scheduled Tribe women, training in handloom weaving, readymade dress unit, training in tailoring, and book-making/binding unit. The project name in each panchayat is shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.2: Number of Beneficiaries Surveyed**

Panchayats	No. of Beneficiaries			No. of Projects		
	Male	Female	Total	Individual Projects	Group/ Infrastructure Projects	Total
Panchayat No. 1	31	26	57	11	3	14
Panchayat No. 2	19	14	33	6	-	6
Panchayat No. 3	16	6	22	3	-	3
Panchayat No. 4	18	13	31	8	1	9
Panchayat No. 5	9	7	16	2	-	2
Panchayat No. 6	30	16	46	6	-	6
<b>Total (Percent)</b>	<b>123 (60)</b>	<b>82 (40)</b>	<b>205 (100)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40</b>

**Table 4.3: Name and Category of Projects**

Sl. No.	Name of the Project	Category (TSP)
<b>I</b>	<b>Panchayat No. 1</b>	
1.	Training in handloom weaving TSP (Women)	
2.	Construction of latrines	TSP
3.	Country boats for grass-cutting labourers	TSP
4.	Rehabilitation of landless households	TSP
5.	Construction of house	TSP
6.	De-mining of land	TSP
7.	Training in driving	TSP
8.	Wiring and electrification of houses	TSP

Contd..

9.	Readymade dress unit TSP (Women)	
10.	Work equipments for Scheduled Tribes	TSP
11.	Rad for Scheduled Tribe women TSP (Women)	
12.	Perumchila settlement colony road	TSP
13.	Thadathil harijan settlement colony road	TSP
<b>II</b>	<b>Panchayat No. 2</b>	
1.	Oar manufacturing	TSP
2.	Training in tailoring TSP (Women)	
3.	Assistance for buying land for the landless	TSP
4.	Training in carpentry	TSP
5.	Free tuition for SC students	TSP
6.	Modern roof for thatched huts	TSP
<b>III</b>	<b>Panchayat No. 3</b>	
1.	Maintenance works for houses	TSP
2.	Electrification of houses	TSP
3.	Construction of latrines	TSP
<b>IV</b>	<b>Panchayat No. 4</b>	
1.	Buying cultivable land	TSP
2.	Maintenance works for houses	TSP
3.	Roofing for houses	TSP
4.	Training in cookery	TSP
5.	Country boats for grass-cutting labourers	TSP
6.	Wiring and electrification of houses	TSP
7.	Training in driving	TSP
8.	Construction of houses	TSP
9.	Working capital for book-making unit	TSP
<b>V</b>	<b>Panchayat No. 5</b>	
1.	Construction of houses for the landless-homeless	TSP
2.	Construction of house (ST)	TSP
<b>VI</b>	<b>Panchayat No. 6</b>	
1.	Training in driving	TSP
2.	Computer training	TSP
3.	Construction of houses	TSP
4.	Rehabilitation of the landless-homeless	TSP
5.	Construction of latrines	TSP
6.	Assistance for self-employment	TSP

### A. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SURVEYED BENEFICIARIES

This section briefly presents the socio-economic status of the beneficiaries surveyed. The selection procedures followed by the panchayat is appreciative in the sense that all the beneficiaries except one belong to the ST community (see Table 4.4). Out of the 205 surveyed beneficiaries, 166 (80.98 percent) belong to the *Paniyan* community which is a Scheduled Tribe. The second largest concentration is that of *Muthuvan* community, also a Scheduled Tribe – 8.78 percent of the beneficiaries belong to this group. Altogether 16 beneficiaries belonging to *Kattunaikan* community (Scheduled Tribe) have been surveyed. They are part of the TSP projects implemented by the panchayat; and persons belonging to the *Kadar* and *Kurumba* communities which are Scheduled Tribes also got representation.

Table 4.4: Tribe-wise Distribution of the Sample

Panchayat	Tribe (No. of Beneficiaries)						Total
	Kattu-naikan	Paniyan	Muthuvan	Kurumba	Kadar	Malabandaram	
Panchayat No. 1	13	41	1	2	-	-	57
Panchayat No. 2	1	26	5	-	1	-	33
Panchayat No. 3	-	18	3	-	-	1	22
Panchayat No. 4	-	27	4	-	-	-	31
Panchayat No. 5	1	14	-	1	-	-	16
Panchayat No. 6	1	40	5	-	-	-	46
<b>Total</b> <b>(Percent)</b>	<b>16</b> <b>(7.80)</b>	<b>166</b> <b>(80.98)</b>	<b>18</b> <b>(8.78)</b>	<b>3</b> <b>(1.46)</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(0.49)</b>	<b>1</b> <b>(0.49)</b>	<b>205</b> <b>(100)</b>

Source: Survey Data.

### Age-wise Distribution of Beneficiaries

The various projects formulated at the panchayat level, on an average, have given adequate 'opportunities' for people belonging to different age groups. Out of the 205 surveyed beneficiaries, 47 (22.93 percent) have a mean age of 40.5; around 21 percent are in the age group of 26-35; and 18 percent are having a mean age of 20. Oldage persons are also given assistance – around 10 percent of the total beneficiaries are more than 65 years old (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Age-wise Distribution of Beneficiaries

Panchayat	Age Group							Total
	15-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	>76	
Panchayat No. 1	6	15	14	12	3	4	3	57
Panchayat No. 2	13	7	5	2	3	1	2	33
Panchayat No. 3	-	1	8	7	3	3	-	22
Panchayat No. 4	5	3	5	8	7	3	-	31
Panchayat No. 5	2	8	6	-	-	-	-	16
Panchayat No. 6	10	9	9	10	5	1	2	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>(Percent)</b>	<b>(17.56)</b>	<b>(20.98)</b>	<b>(22.93)</b>	<b>(19.02)</b>	<b>(10.24)</b>	<b>(5.85)</b>	<b>(3.41)</b>	<b>(100)</b>

Source: Survey Data.

### Beneficiaries by Standards of Education

An analysis of the educational background of the beneficiaries shows that around 11 percent of them are illiterates. The educational status of the beneficiaries is given in Table 4.6. Majority of the surveyed beneficiaries (69 out of 205) have high school level education; around 8 percent have higher-secondary level education; and 4 have graduate level education (among this group, one beneficiary in one panchayat has a post-graduate degree). Those who possess higher degrees in education are selected for projects such as computer training, training in driving (pass of tenth standard is necessary), etc. A total number of 50 (24 percent) and 37 (18 percent) respectively have lower primary and upper primary levels of education.

Table 4.6: Educational Status

Panchayat	Standard							Total
	Illiterate	Literate	1-4	5-7	8-10	PDC	>PDC	
Panchayat No. 1	6	4	15	10	17	4	1	57
Panchayat No. 2	3	-	5	4	19	2	-	33
Panchayat No. 3	6	2	2	7	5	-	-	22
Panchayat No. 4	2	-	11	5	10	3	-	31
Panchayat No. 5	-	-	3	6	6	1	-	16
Panchayat No. 6	2	-	14	5	12	6	3	46
<b>Total (Percent)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>205</b>
	<b>(11.22)</b>	<b>(2.93)</b>	<b>(24.39)</b>	<b>(18.05)</b>	<b>(33.66)</b>	<b>(7.80)</b>	<b>(1.95)</b>	<b>(100)</b>

Source: Survey Data.

### Beneficiaries by Occupation

Majority of the surveyed beneficiaries are wage-labourers. Wage-labour includes mainly construction works and to a limited extent seasonal works at the agriculture fields. Around 28 percent of the beneficiaries are unemployed and are either age-old or students. About 8 percent of the total beneficiaries are engaged in mat/coir weaving (see Table 4.7). The second largest percentage of beneficiaries is seasonally employed (categorised as 'others'). Almost all the beneficiaries have only marginal returns from their labour.

Table 4.7: Occupational Status of the Sample

Panchayat	Occupation						Total
	Mat/Coir Weaving	Carpentry	Fishing	Wage-Labourer	Others	Unemp-loyed	
Panchayat No. 1	12	4	5	20	6	10	57
Panchayat No. 2	-	1	2	8	4	18	33
Panchayat No. 3	-	-	1	10	3	8	22
Panchayat No. 4	1	-	-	14	6	10	31
Panchayat No. 5	4	-	-	10	2	-	16
Panchayat No. 6	-	-	1	30	4	11	46
<b>Total</b> (Percent)	17 (8.29)	5 (2.44)	9 (4.39)	92 (44.88)	25 (12.20)	57 (27.80)	205 (100)

Source: Survey Data.

### Landholding of Beneficiaries

Out of the 205 beneficiaries surveyed, 119 (58 percent) are having, on an average, 3 cents of land. All the panchayats are displaying a similar pattern of distribution. The next highest group of beneficiaries (27 percent) has, on an average, 8 cents of land. Around 5 percent possesses more than 26 cents of land. Among the surveyed beneficiaries, only one person is 'landless' (see Table 4.8). Even more individuals would have been in the list of 'landless' if we consider the situation prior to the People's Plan Campaign, during which the panchayats introduced projects for buying land and constructing houses for the landless and homeless beneficiaries.

Table 4.8: Landholdings of Sample Beneficiaries

Panchayat	Category (Cents)							Total
	Landless	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	>26	
Panchayat No. 1	-	30	21	4	1	-	1	57
Panchayat No. 2	1	24	5	2	-	-	1	33
Panchayat No. 3	-	11	8	-	3	-	-	22
Panchayat No. 4	-	19	7	1	3	-	1	31
Panchayat No. 5	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	16
Panchayat No. 6	-	19	14	1	3	1	8	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>(Percent)</b>	<b>(0.49)</b>	<b>(58.04)</b>	<b>(26.83)</b>	<b>(3.90)</b>	<b>(4.88)</b>	<b>(0.49)</b>	<b>(5.37)</b>	<b>(100)</b>

Source: Survey Data.

## B. PANCHAYAT-WISE ANALYSIS OF TSP

As mentioned in the introduction, apart from examining the expenditure pattern of the grant-in-aid, the study also probed into the various aspects of TSP projects. With respect to project analysis, documents like 'project details' and 'beneficiary list' of various projects, obtained from the panchayats, have been utilised for the survey and the present analysis. A description of the concepts used in the analysis of projects is as follows:

**Project Summary** – this has been an executive brief of the 'project details' (project proposal) obtained from the panchayat. Usually, the panchayats prepare the project details by following the 'eight-point' direction given by the State Planning Board. The project-details should contain an *Introduction* (an overall picture, the relevance, and background of the project), immediate *objectives* of the project, the category of *beneficiaries*, a detailed account of the *project activities*, the procedures of *organisation*, expected *outcome*, *financial details*, and *monitoring* aspects of the project.

**Survey Details** – this gives a detailed description of the status of the project. This has been accounted from the survey conducted, field observation of the project, and also from structured and unstructured interview of targeted beneficiaries.

**Points of Deviation** – those aspects of the proposed projects which were not followed or attained even after the completion or disbursement of the full amount of money by the panchayat have been indicated under this concept.

**Comments** – this is a general explanatory note (remarks) proceeded from the case study of each project.

## CHAPTER - 5

### Major Findings of the Study

- Gram Panchayats in Kerala have been utilising the TSP funds for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes. No cases of misallocation or transfer of funds to other categories of projects (other than TSP) has been found.
- The proposed benefits of TSP projects have reached or have been sure of getting the benefit for the targeted beneficiaries, though the pace with which they trickle down has not coped with the proposed time period. Hindrances, of course, are found to be significant while implementing the project mainly due to the influence of exogenous variables.
- In the initial year of the Peoples' Plan Campaign, the Panchayati Raj functionaries properly followed the 'guidelines' of the campaign in identifying and formulating TSP projects. However, in the later years, this was not properly followed for a significant number of projects. Identification of projects and utilisation of the grant-in-aid were increasingly decided upon by the Panchayati Raj functionaries who excluded people's involvement to a large extent.
- Participation of the rural poor in gram sabhas and *Ooru Kootoms*, especially Scheduled Tribes has shown increasing trends, but the 'rate' and 'intensity' of participation as such is not significant.
- A significant number of gram sabhas in the panchayats have been reduced to a meeting place where beneficiary lists of various development-oriented projects and social-welfare schemes are being prepared. Though the allocation-expenditure documents have been produced before the gram sabha, the participants are not interested in verifying these documents.
- The administration, in a broad sense, is observed to be inadequate to manage the projects (the number of projects ranging between 100 and 250 for a period of one year) which is observed to be one of the reasons for the occurrence of numerous



spill over projects (unspent grant-in-aid) in each annual plan period of the Five Year Plans.

- The involvement of community associations, private enterprises, and voluntary agencies are found to be 'user-induced' and not on the basis of the incentives from within the institution itself. Hence, user-induced involvement of these institutions was proved to be unsustainable.
- A total number of 40 TSP projects in six panchayats were selected for the study and 205 beneficiary households were surveyed.
- The selection of beneficiaries by the panchayats has been appreciated in the sense that all the surveyed beneficiaries of the TSP projects under the People's Planning, belongs to the Scheduled Tribes. The sample study also shows that women beneficiaries have received due representation; 40 percent of the surveyed beneficiaries are females.
- Age-wise distribution of the beneficiaries reveals that significant representation has been given to beneficiaries belonging to different age groups ranging from 15 to 75 years of age.
- The occupational status and pattern of landholdings of the surveyed beneficiaries indicate that they have a very low economic status.
- In panchayats, the aggregate utilisation rate of TSP funds (three-year average) has shown a decreasing trend. More than 90 percent of the funds during 2010-2011 (Fourth year of the Eleventh Five Year Plan) was 'disbursed' from the component of the grant-in-aid. During 2010-2011 (fourth year), the utilisation rate stood at 47, 86 and 45 percentages respectively for three gram panchayats.
- The aggregate utilisation rate of TSP funds in one panchayat was 100 and 115 percentages respectively during 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, which is the highest among the panchayats for which the grant-in-aid data became available.
- The aggregate utilisation rate of the TSP segment of the grant-in-aid (three-year average) of four panchayats was 100 percent in the first three years of the Eleventh Five Year Plan. During 2010-2011 another gram panchayat disbursed around 89 percent of the TSP aid.

- The sector-wise allocation figures of the TSP funds (three-year average) in four gram panchayats display that the major share was allocated to service sector projects – 46, 77, 66 and 81 percentages respectively in the four panchayats. All these panchayats except in the case of one gram panchayat allocated more than half of their total TSP aid to the service sector. One gram panchayat allocated cent percent of the TSP funds in infrastructure projects.
- Case studies of TSP projects in six panchayats reveal that the ST population was not acquainted with the new institutional arrangements such as gram sabhas, *Ooru Kootoms*, self-help groups, neighbourhood groups, task force, or organisation/ implementation / monitoring committees in their true sense.
- The ‘mark-system’ followed by the respective panchayats for the selection of beneficiaries into various projects has not ensured social justice. The characteristics of the population chosen and the *weights* given to these features were purely ‘based’ on peripheral justifications of the responsible authorities. The method has failed in ensuring equal opportunities for the poor households among the Scheduled Tribes.
- A significant number of income-generating and service sector projects under the TSP have not attained the desired objective of improving the general well-being of ST beneficiaries on sustainable criteria. Projects such as ‘construction of houses’, ‘construction of latrines’, ‘oar manufacturing for Scheduled Tribes’, and ‘work equipments for Scheduled Tribes’ have had to put up with the lack of proper financial management.



## CHAPTER - 6

### Summary and Concluding Remarks

The study on the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) under decentralised planning process has referred the cases of six panchayats in two districts of Kerala. The overall administration of the TSP and its impact on the targeted group of STs has been analysed. It was observed that the TSP funds which are now under the dispensation of the gram panchayats, have altogether acclaimed an 'innovative approach' of People's Plan Campaign in Kerala. A number of development-oriented projects have been identified, formulated and implemented by the people and for the people. For an assessment of the TSP projects, a sample of 205 beneficiaries from 40 different projects was surveyed from the six panchayats in two districts of Kerala. The reference period was 2010-2011 and the field work was carried out from December 2010 to March 2011. The inferences drawn from the study could be summarised as follows:

#### **Adaptability of the ST Population to the New Institutional Arrangements**

The People's Plan Campaign initiated a number of institutions for the advantage of decentralised planning and rural development. Gram sabhas, development seminars, self-help groups, neighbourhood groups, sector-wise task forces, organisation/ implementation / monitoring committees of various projects; all these institutional arrangements were found to exist in the two districts of Kerala. However, it was generally observed that the ST population in the six panchayats was not much adapted to the fresh institutions – the targeted population did not corroborate much with the pragmatic dimension of the recently grown institutions. Voluntary activists and social workers among the Scheduled Tribes, who are already in the field have still been the common 'players' of various institutions such as ST welfare task force, and the various committees at the TSP project level. Yet another institution of beneficiary committees, which replaced the contractors, also worked with the active or hidden involvement of the said common players. A large core of the STs though participating in the development processes is thus less adapted to the changed situations.

### **Project Formulation and Implementation**

All the six panchayats have given due consideration to the felt needs of the ST population while formulating most of the projects under the TSP head during the initial years of people's planning. However, during the later years, the system of consulting the rural mass in the formulation of projects has not been strictly followed. In panchayats, the project on 'training in handloom weaving' was formulated with the full and sole initiative of its ST members of the panchayat. This has also been the case of 'oar manufacturing' in panchayats. The concerned panchayat, first of all, prepared a proposal and then presented it in a meeting of the Scheduled Tribes of the region. It should also be noted that the stakeholders are also not in a position to formulate or even make a worthy suggestion regarding what they need. Hence, necessary steps must be taken to empower such groups and to make them aware of the structural changes that have taken place at the grass-root level. The projects on 'construction of houses' in panchayat (2010-2011) was implemented with the support of the *Maithri Scheme* of the Kerala State Housing Board. The formulation of these Maithri-cum-panchayat projects was done by the panchayat alone, without consulting the gram sabha. Moreover, people have not questioned its feasibility, since the panchayat has over-emphasised the 'subsidy element' of the scheme. However, after the first stage of constructing the foundation, the roles and responsibilities of the panchayat end.

It is further observed that a significant number of projects have not attained the desired objective due to the huge number of development projects formulated each year. These are observed to be beyond the 'capacity' of the present Panchayat Raj Institutions, especially in an environment in which several potential variables of the institution are underemployed.

The felt needs raised in the gram sabha have conflicting ends. The panchayats have failed in fixing priority to certain projects from the list of numerous projects. This has resulted in the co-existence of projects such as 'electrification of houses' and 'maintenances of houses' with that of an uncompleted and *emergency* project of 'roofing of thatched huts', a case of gram panchayat. The project on 'de-mining of land' and 'electrification of houses' in a place where projects such as 'training in handloom weaving' and 'rehabilitation of landless' have either not been completed due to lack of funds, or a very limited number of beneficiaries are targeted; the case of gram panchayat.



### **Identification and Selection of Beneficiaries**

The panchayats followed a 'mark system' for identifying and selecting the beneficiaries for the TSP projects. A 10-point system of criteria was adopted to trace out the people belonging to the lower strata. The subjective approach gives preference to those lower class beneficiaries on the basis of the marital status (if she is a widow/ unmarried mother / inter-caste marriage, she shall get 10 marks), if there are female members in the family who are above 18 years of age (5 marks each and at most 10 marks), the number of handicapped and mentally retarded persons in the family (5 marks), and family landholding status (4 marks), in addition to five marks for those applicants who have not obtained any aid from any of the three-tier panchayats. However, the system of making certain characteristics of the population does not ensure social justice. It is observed that in all the panchayats a good number of beneficiary families have received assistance of more than one type. This is due to the fact that the weightage given to each criterion and the selection of the characteristics are misleading. In a panchayat, the responsibility of marking applicants has been handed over to the neighbourhood groups, and they prepared the beneficiary list. Later the implementing officer of the panchayat reconsidered all the applications 'marked' by the neighbourhood groups on grounds of inclusion of unqualified beneficiaries. General complaints have been obtained from the *fields* in all the panchayats regarding the false pattern of marking system. The beneficiary selection for the projects under TSP has not followed any mark system, succumbing to the pressure from the leaders of that community. The leaders had 'foreseen' a competition between the members of the same community; as a consequence their leadership would be questioned and so they avoided the mark system.

### **Financial Viability of TSP Projects**

The financial viability of the projects as envisaged in the project proposal in the panchayats was in danger of not mobilising the necessary beneficiary contribution in terms of money and labour. Projects such as 'training in driving' and 'country boats' in panchayat, 'free tuition for ST students', and 'modern roof for thatched huts' in panchayat have had the same situation. While preparing the project proposals, the authorities did not make a sincere effort to study the field; the exact financial requirements of the project, and the pattern of income-generation modules in case of productive sector projects; and the beneficiary-wise cost-differences of a project (for instance, transportation costs of construction materials varied widely in the case of house-construction projects). Similarly, projects in panchayat such as 'construction of houses', 'construction of latrines', 'oar manufacturing', and 'work equipments for Scheduled Tribes', have only increased

the adversity of the beneficiaries due to the financial mismanagement; and for projects in panchayat such as 'construction of latrines' and 'maintenance of houses', the concerned panchayat has forwarded the entire responsibility to the beneficiaries, who mismanaged the project; the result was over-expenditure. Lack of monitoring in the latter cases activated the troubles.

### **Follow-up Activities of the Project at the Panchayat Level**

The panchayats did not take up any follow-up activity after the completion of the project, or in cases of irregular functioning of the project. The institutions completely failed to trace out the forward and backward linkages of the projects. The responsibility of the panchayat was observed to end with the disbursal of the 'last instalment' of the aid amount. Since then, the panchayats would not hear any complaints (if any) from the beneficiaries, and instead suggested that they should tackle the 'issues' on their own. For instance, the project on 'training in cookery' the panchayat arranged a training programme for a period of three months. It was only up to the time of the beginning of the training course that the panchayat maintained contact with the training institute. Later, the panchayat did not take up any initiative in finding a job for them, though it has been a proposed objective of the project. Another case of a project on 'electrification of houses' also proceeded from panchayat but suffered due to the lack of follow-up activities on the part of the panchayat. On the one side, the panchayat did not succeed in providing power-supply though it completed the 'wiring of houses', and on the other, the panchayat did not go for any alternate arrangement when majority of the beneficiaries were reluctant to accept the conditions of the project. Though the sustainability of projects such as 'readymade dress unit', 'training in handloom weaving', 'rad for Scheduled Tribe women' in panchayat have been in peril, no necessary action was taken to correct the anomalies.

### **Projects and the Economic Development of ST Beneficiaries**

Since the panchayats have covered only three years of people's planning, the attempts to analyse the economic development accrued to the targeted beneficiaries in such a short period of time was not suitable. This has been applicable mainly to productive sector projects in which a perennial income-generating component is impregnated. In the case of service sector projects such as construction of houses, latrines, rehabilitation of landless, electrification of houses, etc., it could be inferred that the overall well-being of the beneficiaries has progressed much. However, there also exist some cases in which the beneficiaries continued to be in a stage of backwardness. For example, projects such



as construction of houses, construction of latrines, and maintenance works of houses at the gram panchayat have put many of the beneficiaries into a debt crisis.

A productive sector project in panchayat, the rad for Scheduled Tribe women has in effect made no economic impact at all among the targeted beneficiaries. Here also it should be noted that irregularity occurred from the lack of 'genuine participation' of rural people, especially for the targeted beneficiaries. Moreover, the stakeholders were observed to have no control over the programme policy and management.

### **Participation of the ST Population in Gram Sabhas**

The beneficiaries were selected through the gram sabhas in all the panchayats under study. Gram sabhas are conducted on ward basis in each panchayat. The first ever gram sabha conducted since the inception of the People's Planning mainly identified the felt needs of the rural people. Two gram sabhas were held in a year. One was for identifying the felt needs and proposing/preparing workable projects aimed to satisfy the felt needs. The second gram sabha in the year functioned as a stage for the implementation of identified and approved projects. The implementation gram sabha, in principle, performed several functions such as nominating selected participants to form Monitoring Committees or Implementation Committees for the progress of various projects. However, in practice, the said functions of the gram sabha have not been consistent. All the gram sabhas conducted after the first year of the People's Plan period (2010-2011) mainly dealt with issues of selecting beneficiaries for the various projects. Approving the below-poverty list prepared by the panchayat, publishing the beneficiary list of the people for different social welfare schemes of the panchayat, and discussing the 'priority preference' of the selected beneficiaries were the major schema of the gram sabhas in two districts of Kerala.

The average participation of the rural people including ST people in the two districts of Kerala shows that the total number of people participating in the gram sabhas is less. On an average, 102 people participated in the first year of the gram sabha. Though the total participation normally maintained the same number in the next two years, the fourth year witnessed a lower participation of only 72 total participants. The participation of the rural people in the implementation gram sabha has been even much lower in all the three years of planning – 70 to 80 people participated altogether.

Similarly, ST participation in the gram sabhas has been even lower. Around 40 people participated in the gram sabha for the preliminary planning exercises, while in the

implementation gram sabha, less than 20 ST households participated during each of the annual plan periods on a ward basis of estimation. The low rate of gram sabha participation has been attributed to the people's attitudes towards this institution. They have a general feeling that gram sabhas are places where beneficiary selection takes place. So if there is no possibility of getting the benefit of any project, such applicants may not attend it; even those who are cent percent sure of receiving the benefit are also found to be participating less in the gram sabhas.

### **Involvement of People's Representatives, Voluntary Personnel, and Administrative Staff**

The ward members of the panchayat are still the dominant links between the beneficiaries and the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Majority of the surveyed beneficiaries were found to have a proximate relationship with the concerned ward members. It is not necessary that an ST beneficiary keeps contact with an ST member more often than with a general ward-member. It is generally observed that the ST member of the panchayat, along with the task force committee holds the responsibility for identifying and formulating TSP projects to a large extent. These task forces also have area-wise representation.

The task forces, in most cases, are formed comprising of a group of voluntary social activists existing in the field from earlier periods. Among the voluntary social activists, there are people who received formal training from the State Planning Board or from trained Resource Persons. However, the knowledge acquired by such people has not been effectively utilised for empowering the laymen, especially those belonging to Scheduled Tribes. This lacuna is obvious in panchayats. Here, the people's representatives or the voluntary personnel do not have significant 'command' over the administrative staff of the respective panchayats, as the staff members of these panchayats have 'their own' way of doing things.

### **Suggestions for Policy Intervention**

- ❖ The number of projects initiated each year in the panchayat should be reduced to a manageable minimum so that their effectiveness is ensured. The panchayats should go for self-evaluation of their performance. This shall enable them in assessing their own managerial capability with respect to the implementation of various development projects.
- ❖ The panchayats should intensify a field based study (such as for collecting information regarding the production possibilities, market potential, labour



opportunities, etc.) necessary for the preparation of projects in the productive sector, so that the economic sustainability of the projects could be guaranteed.

- ❖ Necessary steps should be taken to avoid the practise of appointing persons to monitoring committees of the project, just for the sake of forming a committee. It should also be considered that one appointee should not be allowed to take responsibility of more than two projects.
- ❖ If the monitoring of projects is made strict, the step-by-step activities of the projects would be completed within the proposed period, provided the necessary funds for disbursal are readily available with the panchayat.
- ❖ A mechanism should be evolved to 'recognise' the actions taken by the monitoring committee. Accountability to monitoring committees' reports should be ensured by the active involvement of the gram sabha or panchayat committee.
- ❖ The year ending rush towards disbursing the prescribed percentage of project fund and busy procedures of preparing a project for the proceeding year should be controlled. A systematic work plan should be formulated and strictly followed by the panchayat.
- ❖ The targeted beneficiaries of the projects must be empowered so as to manage the projects profitably. Though the panchayat ensures transparency with respect to the projects, the manner in which it is being practised is not appreciative. Majority of the beneficiaries are not aware of the details of the proposed projects.
- ❖ Change of projects, once approved, though are permissible depending upon the availability of funds, are often not documented properly. In a sense, this affects the transparency of the projects. This should be corrected by rendering fruitful directions to the respective task forces.
- ❖ The administrative staff of the panchayats (especially lower division clerks) should be given training in accounting, file keeping, as well as maintaining transparency. The administrative staff and the people's representatives should move in the same 'direction' and 'pace' towards attaining the common objective of the socio-economic development of the targeted beneficiaries.

- ❖ The training suggested to be given for the administrative staff, in essence, should be designed to ensure participatory bureaucratic mechanism.
- ❖ A comprehensive 'project appraisal' module should be developed at the panchayat level. The projects suggested by the panchayat and prepared by the concerned task forces or voluntary activists are being directly sent to the District Planning Committee for their recommendation. The financial and material viabilities of these projects are often ambiguous, yet they are recommended for approval.

The 'genuine decentralisation system' activated in the state has evolved very essential and positive impact on the targeted group of the rural poor. However, the functional lacunae could be affected through proper legislation. Devolution of 'functions, powers and responsibilities' to the unblemished institutional arrangements (gram sabha, implementation / organisation / monitoring committees of projects, District Planning Committees, etc.), which animate the social entity of gram panchayats, is yet to be defined by law. Hence, dependable is the case of the Tribal Sub-Plan for which the major shares of funds are now under the dispensation of the gram panchayats.



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## About the Authors

**Jos Chathukulam** is the Director of the Centre for Rural Management (CRM), Kottayam, Kerala, India. Dr. Chathukulam has evaluated 75 major development projects in India which is administered by different national and international agencies including Government of India. He has been a consultant of State Planning Board, Government of Kerala and Vice Chairman of the District Planning Committee for the District (DPC) of Kottayam during the Ninth Five Year Plan. He is a national level consultant of rural development, panchayat raj and decentralised planning. His areas of interest include decentralization, development administration, employment, rural development, democratic participatory planning and new social movements.

**M. Gopinath Reddy** is a Political Scientist and Public Administration Specialist, M. Gopinath Reddy is Professor and Principal Coordinator, Research Unit for Livelihoods and Natural Resources (RULNR) at the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad. He specializes in decentralized governance, tribal livelihoods, poverty analysis and institutional approaches to natural resource management. He has to his credit more than 40 publications in international and national journals and is author of two books.

**Palla Trinadha Rao** is a practicing advocate based in Rajahmundry, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. He has been involved in addressing tribals land, forest rights and Governance issues in the tribal regions of Andhra Pradesh for last 25 years. He is a Legal Retainer to a Non Government Organisation, Laya, based in Viskahpatnam. He is a Legal Resource person on Local Governance, Land and Forest subjects in Scheduled Areas, for the ITDAs, Director of Tribal Welfare Department (Govt.). He is author of a number of articles in national, international journals and couple of books on tribals issues in Telugu and English. He is an independent and collaborative researcher. Presently he is involved in a Research Study on "Development Induced Displacement in Andhra Pradesh for the periods 1947-50 and 1996-2010" and "Assessment of Implementation of PESA in Schedule V Areas: A study of Six States".