

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A DEVELOPMENTAL AGENDA FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN INDIA

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Abstract

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 globally accepted goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are applicable to all countries, including those with significant populations of tribal and indigenous people. This study focuses on sustainability development among tribal people in India based on secondary data drawn from the official website of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and other published sources of various survey agencies, journals, books, and other periodicals. Census survey 2011 and its reported information were analyzed to understand the development of tribal people from the perspective of sustainability factors. This study found that, the ST population was not evenly distributed among the states, despite the general increase in ST literacy levels; government efforts to bring them up to mainstream literacy did not achieve the targets. This study suggests a multifaceted approach that recognizes the complexity of these challenges and involves the active participation and leadership of tribal communities.

Key words:- Scheduled Tribes, Sustainability, Community Development, Welfare Measures, Quality of Life.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 globally accepted goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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are applicable to all countries, including those with significant populations of tribal and indigenous peoples. This study focuses on the physical, social and cultural development of the tribal population in India. There are several hindrances to the development of tribal groups in India. Lack of education, many tribal communities have low levels of education and limited access to educational opportunities, which undermines their ability to participate in the broader development process.

Poverty is a major challenge for tribal communities in India, with high levels of unemployment and limited access to basic services, such as healthcare, clean water, and sanitation. Tribal communities in India face threats to their land rights, including the loss of traditional land to large-scale development projects and the displacement of communities without adequate compensation or alternatives. Tribal communities are often underrepresented in political and decision-making processes and their voices are often excluded from discussions and decisions that affect their lives and well-being. Tribal communities in India often face significant health disparities, including high rates of malnutrition, infectious diseases, and other health problems.

Most of the communities among tribes live in forest hills and isolated regions, but few of them migrated to cities due to the search for work and developmental project implementation in their area, and they are forced to shift from their places to modern cultured people. However, the government looks at it from the angle of or trying to bring them into the spheres of inclusive

development. In the walk of acclimatization, it is evident that these poor people were also cheated by the so-called civilized society, who took hold of their land. To a great extent, the tribal people protected and retained their traditional customs and cultures as socially typical communities in disparity with their counterparts. However, in the name of modernization and advanced development of the nation, they are badly exploited from all corners of society. It is an accepted truth that the tribal community has a special close interaction and local knowledge about the nature and physical environment that shows cultural adaptation through eco-friendliness and sustainability by following their traditional agricultural activities. Even though they are forced to accept input incentives for agriculture, the state, departments, and authorities support the cultivation of crops organically. It is evidenced that the commonly named deprived people was in the way of sustainably balanced with their earlier life but after the contact with civilized, modern people in the urban area dropped them in to the condition of no sustainability by adopting the practice of capital intensive agriculture and it dragged them in to the problem of indebtedness.

Significance of the Study

Tribal groups are important to the development of any country because tribal communities often have unique cultures, traditions, and ways of life that contribute to the cultural diversity of a country. Preserving and promoting cultural diversity helps strengthen the cultural fabric of a country and deepen its sense of national identity. Tribal communities often have valuable knowledge of local

resources such as forests, wildlife, and minerals, which can contribute to the development of sustainable economic activities. This can help to diversify local economies and provide opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. Tribal communities are often closely connected to their local environments and have traditional practices that help to protect and preserve ecosystems. Their involvement in conservation and sustainable development initiatives can help to ensure that these ecosystems are protected and managed sustainably. The development of tribal communities is an important aspect of promoting social justice and addressing historical inequality. It can help empower marginalized communities and reduce poverty, thereby contributing to the overall well-being of a country.

Scope of the Study

Tackling the problems of tribes in an absolute manner requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that addresses the root causes of the challenges faced by these communities. Empowering tribal communities through education, skill development, and political representation can help build their capacity and increase their participation in the development process. Recognizing and protecting the land rights of tribal communities are essential for ensuring sustainable development. This requires ensuring that they are compensated fairly for the loss of their lands and that they have a secure tenure over their lands. Improving access to health and nutrition services, including safe drinking water, sanitation, and healthcare, is essential to ensure the well-being of tribal communities. Supporting sustainable livelihoods through income-

generating activities and access to credit can help reduce poverty and increase economic stability among the tribal communities. Protecting and promoting the cultural heritage and traditions of tribal communities are important for preserving their unique cultural identities and ensuring their well-being.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Tribes in India.
2. To study the complexity of challenges faced by Scheduled Tribes in India.
3. To study the role of SDGs for the Sustainable development of Scheduled Tribes in India.

Methodology adopted for the Study

Methodology adopted for this study is an empirical study based on secondary data, focuses on sustainability development among tribal people in India based on data drawn from the official website of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and other published sources of various survey agencies, journals, books, and other periodicals. Census survey 2011 and its reported information were analyzed to understand the development of tribal people from the perspective of sustainability factors.

Literature Review and Background of the study

Before moving further, it is worthwhile to examine previous studies on related topics to determine whether the desired development has been attained by the focus group and to what extent. Martinez Rodrigues et al. (2020)

contradiction of the developmental model of the state of Kerala: The tribal population, the researchers commented that even though Kerala is celebrating the status of worldwide recognition in the area of human development indicators, it failed to manage the same impact among its tribal population. An in-depth analysis of the developmental model revealed that the state completely failed to maintain sustainable development among the tribal people in terms of literacy, health standards, access to drinking water, infant mortality rate, and poverty rate. Haseena V.A (2020) Overview of Goals of Sustainable Development on basic issues of Tribals in Attappady Tribal Block in Kerala: This study described the basic developmental issues among tribal people in Kerala state and detailed the main factors that cause marginalized people to keep them isolated and underdeveloped among the whole community in the state. The study inferred that the complete development of tribes is a comprehensive strategy with a well-designed vision, and proper implementation plans should be designed to ensure a minimum level of sustainable development among them.

Sajan Choudhuri (2019): Research on sustainable development in India: The researcher argues that there are only a few studies in the field of sustainability development initiatives in India. This research concludes by identifying and describing the SDGs of gender equality, reduction in inequality, peace and justice, and responsible production and consumption as the most promising aspects for future research. Subhasree Pal and Dr. Primal Sarkar (2022) Quality

Education & Tribes: New approach to attain Sustainable development goals. SGD4 was described in a detailed manner and clearly explained the route through which it can be achieved by imparting proper education to tribal students. Quality education with practical experience in soft computing, ICT education, technical, management skills, etc. are to be transacted to the targeted promising generation and are to be part of nation building. Dr. K. Govindaray and Dr. Sridhar (2019) Sustainable Development of Tribes in Nilgiris: Special Reference to Todas. This paper is descriptive and qualitative in nature and focuses on the sustainable development of a particular group (Todas) of tribes in Tamil Nadu. The study also hints at various schemes and programs to support the efforts of authorities to reach the target.

Tools for Analysis

Analysis and interpretation of the results were performed using simple statistical tools such as averages, percentages, graphs, and diagrams. Due to the unavailability of the latest census survey report (yet to do and publish), shortage of time, and population spread all over the country, it is very difficult to present an up-to-date study by following secondary data. To get a clear idea about the status of tribal people in the nation, it is necessary to analyze both the financial and non-financial assistance made by the authorities and the progress achieved among them. To this end, the allocation of funds by various ministerial departments of central and state governments and support from non-government organizations are considered.

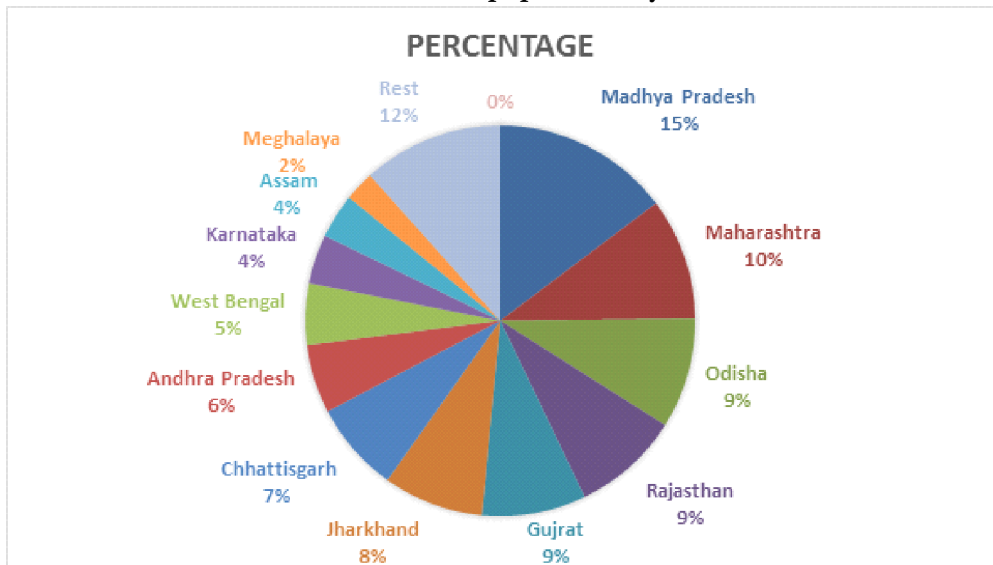
The development of tribal people can be seen from achievements or from meeting sustainable development factors such as education, employment status, health status, and infrastructural facilities such as drinking water, transportation, banking facilities, housing, and land possession.

Tribal Population

According to Article 366(25) of the Constitution, Scheduled Tribes are those communities scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution. There are as many as 705 ethnic groups identified as Scheduled Tribes in India. Census 2011 revealed that the total tribal population in our country is 8.6 per cent, and it is around 104 million in size. Tribal communities are spread across various states in India, with the highest concentration in the central and eastern regions of the country.

India has over 700 tribes, and the population density of these tribes varies across different regions. Some tribes have a high population density, whereas others have a very low population density. According to the 2011 Census of India, the total population of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India was 104.3 million, which is approximately 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country. The density of the tribal population in India is approximately 98 persons per square kilometer, which is lower than the overall population density of the country. The density of the tribal population in India is not evenly distributed across different states. States such as Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha have a high population density of tribes, whereas states such as Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland have a low population density of tribes. It is

Figure - 1
Distribution of scheduled tribe population by states-2011 census.



Source: Annual Report-Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

important to note that the population density of tribes is not a homogeneous concept because different tribes have different population densities.

Literacy and Development of Tribal

Literacy and education play a critical role in the development of tribes as they provide individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to participate in the modern economy and society. Some of the ways in which literacy and education contribute to the development of tribes are as follows. Education can provide individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to access better-paying jobs and increase their income earning potential, contributing to the economic development of their communities. An individual’s knowledge of health and nutrition can lead to improved health outcomes and a reduction in preventable diseases. Education can empower individuals, especially women and girls, by increasing their knowledge and skills, and by providing them with a voice in their communities and society at large, and help preserve the cultural heritage and traditions of tribal communities.

To ensure the development of tribal communities through literacy, it is essential to provide access to quality education including primary, secondary, and higher education. Additionally, education policies and programs should be designed in a culturally appropriate manner, considering the unique needs and traditions of different tribal communities. Moreover, education must be made accessible to all members of the community, including women, children, and marginalized groups. Programs should also focus on creating awareness among the community regarding the importance of education and promoting a culture of reading and learning. The education system in many tribal communities faces significant challenges, including lack of access to quality education, limited resources, and lack of cultural sensitivity in the educational curriculum. Addressing these challenges and improving access to quality education are critical for ensuring the sustainable development of tribal communities. The literacy rates of the total population as well as the ST population have increased over the census period

Table 1
Progress of Literacy Rate over the Census periods (in percentage)

Year	Total Population			Scheduled Tribes		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	8.53	13.83	3.16
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	11.30	17.63	4.85
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	16.35	24.52	8.04
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	29.60	40.65	18.19
2001	64.84	75.26	53.67	47.10	59.17	34.76
2011	73.00	80.90	64.60	59.00	68.50	49.40

Source: Annual Report-Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

from 1961 to 2011. However, the proportion of the ST population was far below the national standards.

Health

Health is a critical factor in the development of tribes as it affects individuals' ability to participate in the economy and society and contributes to their overall well-being.

The report reveals that, as per the Rural Health Statistics 2019-20, there were 29745 Sub Centres, 4203 Primary Health Centres and 1035 Community Health Centers in the Tribal Area when the financial year ended 2020. Compared to earlier statistical data, the number of these institutional setups has obviously increased. However, at the all-India level, there is a shortfall of 6602 SCs, 1317 PHSCs, and 375 CHCs in tribal areas as of 31 march 2020 as compared to the requirements. The state-wise figures show that there is a huge shortage of sub-centers in Madhya Pradesh (2408), Karnataka (862), and Maharashtra (586). Furthermore, there was a shortage of PHCs in Madhya Pradesh (491), Rajasthan (292), and Jharkhand (269). In case of CHCs also there is a short fall of 11657 and 54 for Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan Maharashtra respectively. (Stat/UT-wise details are given in Annexure-4F with the annual report of the Ministry of tribal Affairs 2021-22.

Poverty Estimate

Reducing poverty and increasing economic opportunities for tribal communities are critical for ensuring sustainable development. This can be achieved through a combination of

policies and programs aimed at improving access to quality education, healthcare, and employment as well as through initiatives that promote economic growth and development. Poverty is a major hindrance to the development of tribal communities as it limits individuals' ability to participate in the economy and society and reduces their overall well-being. Some of the ways in which poverty impacts the development of tribes include. The dissatisfactory economic condition of tribal people is a serious issue facing governmental authorities. A large proportion of tribal families belonged to the lower end of the BPL category. This is a consequential problem because economic status has a direct influence on educational level, social status, acceptance, and so on.

The table 3 shows that over the last decade there has been considerable decrease in the size of ST population living under the BPL. As per the tribal department's Annual Report shows the that ST people living below the poverty line in 2011-12 were 45.3 per cent in the rural area and 24.1 per cent in the urban area, as compared to 2009-10 it was 47.4 per cent and 30.4 per cent respectively. Over the last decade, there has been a considerable decrease in the size of the ST population living under BPL. However, it remains in the range of 3 per cent to 44.5 per cent, which is a hindrance to sustainable development.

Employment

Tribal communities face significant challenges in accessing quality employment, including limited access to quality education and training, workplace

Table 2

Rural Health Infrastructure-Norms and Level of Achievements (All India)

Types	No of people served by one centre			
	Population Norms		Status (2020)	
	Plain Area	Hilly/ Tribal/ Difficult Area	Plain Area	Hilly/ Tribal/ Difficult Area
Health sub centre	5,000	3,000	5729	3381
Primary Health Centre	30,000	20,000	35730	23930
Community Health Centre	1,20,000	80,000	171779	97178

Source: Annual Report-Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

discrimination, and a lack of job opportunities in their communities. Addressing these challenges and improving access to quality employment are critical for ensuring the sustainable development of tribal communities. This can be achieved through initiatives that promote economic growth and development as well as through policies and programs aimed at improving access to quality education and training.

Based on the latest available data from the National Sample Survey (NSS) conducted in 2017-18, Labor force participation rate of STs: 42.7 per cent, Workers’ population ratio of STs: 39.1 per cent and unemployment rate of STs: 6.2 per cent. There may be significant regional and gender-based variations in these indicators in tribal communities in India. The labor force participation rate (LFPR), worker population ratio (WPR), and Unemployment Rate are important indicators of the economic and social well-being of a population, including tribal groups.

Banking services and financial inclusion

Scheduled tribes in India have access to various banking services provided by

both public and private sector banks. The service like opening and operating of saving bank account fixed deposit option and availing of various types of loans including special scheme loans, micro finance support for small business and entrepreneurial ventures, various government schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and also have the opportunity to access multiple number of insurance policies. Along with the general population, there is a wide range of accessibility for tribal people to ensure financial inclusion.

Banking services and financial inclusion are crucial to the development of tribal groups in India. Banking services provide access to credit facilities, which can help tribal groups start and expand their businesses, purchase land or livestock, and invest in education or healthcare. Financial inclusion can help tribal communities access formal credit facilities, which are much cheaper and more reliable than informal sources of credit. They can save money securely, earn interest in their savings, and invest in financial products that provide higher returns. Financial inclusion can help tribal communities access savings accounts,

Table 3
Size of Tribal Population Living below Poverty Line (in percentage)

Sl.No.	State	Rural		Urban	
		2009-10	2011-12	2009-10	2011-12
1	Andhra Pradesh	40.2	24.1	21.2	12.1
2	Assam	32.0	33.4	29.2	15.6
3	Bihar	64.4	59.3	16.5	10.3
4	Chhattisgarh	66.8	52.6	28.6	35.2
5	Gujarat	48.6	36.5	32.2	30.1
6	Himachal Pradesh	22.0	9.5	19.6	4.0
7	Jammu& Kashmir	3.1	16.3	15.0	3.0
8	Jharkhand	51.5	51.6	49.5	28.7
9	Karnataka	21.3	30.8	35.6	33.7
10	Kerala	24.4	41.0	5.0	13.6
11	Madhya Pradesh	61.9	55.3	41.6	32.3
12	Maharashtra	51.7	61.6	32.4	23.3
13	Odisha	66.0	63.5	34.1	39.7
14	Rajasthan	36.9	41.4	28.9	21.7
15	Tamil Nadu	11.5	36.8	17.6	2.8
16	Uttar Pradesh	49.8	27.0	20.2	16.3
17	Uttarakhand	20.0	11.9	0	25.7
18	West Bengal	32.9	50.1	20.6	44.5
	All India	47.4	45.3	30.4	24.1

Source: Annual Report-Ministry of Tribal Affairs 2021-22.

Table 4
Labour Force Participation Rate, Workers Population Ratio, and Unemployment Rate for STs, and All during 2020-21 (in percentage)

Social Groups	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Labour Force Participation Rate				
Scheduled Tribes	57.4	38.0	56.3	25.6
All	56.3	24.7	57.8	18.5
Workers Population Ratio				
Scheduled Tribes	55.2	37.3	52.3	23.6
All	53.8	24	54.1	16.8
Unemployment Rate				
Scheduled Tribes	3.7	1.8	7.1	8
All	4.5	2.6	6.4	8.9

Source: Annual Report-Ministry of Tribal Affairs 2021-22.

Table 5**Percentage of households' avail banking services-2011 census.**

Category	Rural	Urban
Scheduled caste	39.5	63.9
Scheduled Tribes	33.5	52.5
General	46.9	73

Source: Annual Report-Ministry of Tribal Affairs 2021-22.

insurance products, and other financial services to build a financial safety net and plan for their future.

Findings of the Study

The study shows that the government has been giving prime attention to the development of tribes by allocating and budgeting huge amounts every year, but the distribution and its proper utilization are dissatisfying.

1. There is a wide difference in the proportion of the ST population in various states of India. The ST population was not evenly distributed among the states.
2. Despite the general increase in ST literacy levels, government efforts to bring them up to mainstream literacy did not achieve the targets.
3. The absence of sufficient health infrastructure adversely affects the well-being of the tribal population.
4. A large number of ST populations live below the poverty line across the Indian States, with a high degree of variation among states.
5. In terms of employment, a large proportion of scheduled tribes are engaged in informal, low-paying

jobs, and their labor force participation rate is lower than that of the general population.

6. The Government of India has launched several initiatives to improve financial inclusion and provide banking services to marginalized communities, including SCs and STs.

Conclusion

To achieve full sustainability and development in the country, it is necessary to increase job opportunities, production, savings, and education; at the same time, there should be a decrease in the rate of poverty, environmental pollution, and so on. While framing such sustainable developmental programs at the national level, attention should be paid to dominant aspects such as health, environment, economic prosperity, equity, conservation of nature, population stabilization, and education. Scheduled Tribes are disproportionately affected by issues such as illiteracy, economic status, poor health outcomes, and inadequate access to basic services such as water and sanitation, and the responsible authorities and program implementers should keep in mind, while executing such highlighted developmental plans, the economic and balanced

development of our nation can be possible only when providing equitable opportunities for satisfying livelihood and a safe, protected health

and standard quality of life for the current and next generation people, especially for marginalized communities.

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