

**TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN TAMIL NADU WITH REGARD TO THE ECONOMY,  
POPULATION, OCCUPATION, PANCHAYATI RAJ, AND NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATIONS -AN ASSESSMENT**

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**Abstract**

The population of tribal people has been recognized as the country's original inhabitants. They have created cultural patterns that are hospitable to their physical and social circumstances by living a modest life based on the natural environment for ages. Development is typically understood in economic jargon to refer to a progression towards higher consumption levels and a higher quality of life. All disparities should vanish because social justice-focused growth has been recognized as the nation's ultimate ideal stage. Tribal societies are frequently associated with poverty in the literature on economic development. Whenever discussing circumstances when even the most basic requirements for physical endurance are not met, poverty is a completely different idea and solely has an impact on tribal perspectives. The advancement process's foundation in individual achievement and competition is its first notable feature. The entire tribal concept as it exists today is merely passing through a minor stage.

In the process of transition, this phase may be typical. There is no adequate tool for the tribal sub-plan approach to capture this tendency. The socioeconomic circumstances of indigenous tribes vary greatly even within the same region and are quite difficult across the nation. Tribal development cannot be achieved by creating a position formula due to the frequently changing circumstances. One of the errors made in the early attempts to expand tribal tribes in India was this. In this case, this research focuses primarily on the economic dimensions of the tribal development process in Tamil Nadu. This makes the paper's title appropriate, socially significant, and necessary.

**Key Words:** Tribal Population, Aboriginal People, Natural Environment, Consumption Levels, National Goal, Economic Development, Tribal Society and Poverty.

**Theme of the article**

A tribe is described as a collection of native people with a brief history, a common name, a common language, endogamy, unique customs, rituals, and beliefs, a straightforward social hierarchy and political structure, and shared ownership of resources and technological advancements. The typical habitat of tribal societies is remote terrain like a jungle or mountain. Within their tribes, tribal people coexist like extended families. They collaborate as a whole. They resemble hunters and gatherers in many ways. They are closely connected to one another. Tribal residents share a specific topography as a common area with all other tribal members that live in that area. Endogamous groups, shared dialects, blood ties, protection awareness, distinct political organizations, and shared cultures all contribute to a sense of unity. Both of the governments in India implemented a number of welfare initiatives for the advancement of tribes.

The most crucial of these is the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP). It serves as a plan for the quick socioeconomic advancement of tribal people. It is an element of the State/UT's Annual Plan. The advantages provided by the TSP to a State's or UT's tribal members and areas are in addition to those that naturally flow from the State's or UT's overall plan. The article provides an overview of tribal development as well as laws and policies pertaining to the welfare of India's Scheduled Tribes. This subject deals with Indian tribes and their wellbeing. A tribe is a hypothetical form of human social organization in anthropology that is made up of a number of smaller groups (known as bands), with temporary or permanent political integration, and that is characterized by customs of shared ancestry, language, culture, and philosophy.

A very valuable part of the great Indian tradition is the convenience and variety of tribal living. The little customs of our tribal societies are the only places where life is fully unplanned and dramatic. The country's length and breadth are covered by the more than 250 communities designated as scheduled tribes, excluding sub-groups. They include both large groups (a few lakhs) and small groups (a few hundred). Regardless of size, each of these groups is a proud community that participates in national life while maintaining its unique identity. Tribal populations are largely concentrated in West Bengal, Orissa, and Maharashtra.

Tribal individuals make up roughly 3% of the population of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the south, compared to 8% in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Since independence, however, the unique advantages provided to Scheduled Tribes have persuaded many groups including Hindus and Muslims that they will benefit more from such designation. The schedule provides incentives for tribe members to preserve their identity. A number of groups whose "tribal" status in terms of culture are also included in the schedule; in some districts, these groups include Muslims and a collection of Hindu castes, whose main claim to fame appears to be their capacity to cast votes for the party that arranged their inclusion.

Several characteristics have traditionally been viewed as establishing tribal identity rather than caste identity. These include self-identification, language, social structure, religious affiliation, economic trends, and location. Recognized tribes typically reside in steep areas some distance from caste communities and use a tribal language. The majority of tribes are made up of seminary lineages, whose extended families serve as the foundation for social order and power.

### **Methodology of the article**

The present research is a pinpointing and descriptive analysis based on secondary data that is gathered from books about tribal development, journals, academic articles, government publications, printed reference papers, and websites that are relevant to the topic. There are many ways to carry out research. For theoretical study, the descriptive approach of analysis is the most crucial. Particularly over the past ten years, tribal societies in India have witnessed a variety of stunning and significant transformations.

Every five year plan has included a variety of initiatives for the development of the Tribes. Despite all of these efforts and substantial input, the outcomes fell short of expectations because they only received minimal benefits. The tribes still struggle with many issues and have not fully transitioned into society, as has been previously mentioned. Therefore, it is believed that it is important to comprehend both their issues and the full extent of benefits received through the various schemes of the Central and State Governments. The purpose of this study is to explore the issues from a social work perspective.

Sources of information and pertinent statistical data include annual reports of the department of tribal affairs, tribal sub plans, statistics handbooks, and tribal welfare departments, among others. In order to get a study conclusion while keeping the study's aims in mind, the researcher utilized secondary data and resources. Where appropriate, statistical tools such as percentages, graphs, and diagrams are used. Through the lens of economics, this study aims to reveal the issues.

### **Significance of the article**

Despite the efforts made by both the national and state governments to support productive and developmental programs for tribal people in accordance with constitutional requirements, the issue of tribal welfare and development has not yet been fully resolved. This made it clear to the researcher that a scientific investigation was required to comprehend the current tribal dilemma with development.

### **Selection of the Topics**

There are various provisions for the preservation and advancement of tribal people in the Indian Constitution. The administration and execution of tribal development programs by authorities skirts the fundamental problems associated with tribal exploitation and frequently traps tribes in a cycle of dependence. Deeply troubling issues like malnutrition, low literacy, migration, displacement, and rights to the forest and natural resources have been sidelined in the process. Based on this information, the researcher wrote a study article titled "Tribal Development in Tamil Nadu - An Economic Analysis".

### **Objectives of the article**

The overall objective of this paper is to analyze Tamil Nadu's tribal development in term of its economics, population, occupations, panchayati raj system, and nonprofit organizations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The tribal population is one of the underserved groups in our society and is currently having development issues. Nearly all tribal groups face the same issues, despite variations in the unique political and historical circumstances surrounding the non-dominant native population. Environmental deterioration, deforestation, tourism, militarization, cultural breakdown, colonialism, invasion, mining ventures, and a host of other maladies are frequent issues affecting tribes' misery. In Tamil Nadu, many tribal communities continue to be classified as having low levels of technological and economic literacy, as well as illiteracy, ignorance, debt, poverty, landlessness, and morbid health conditions. In the context of Tamil Nadu's indigenous populations, the economic issues require special consideration.

Research papers that are now available emphasize the unique health of the indigenous community. Undernourishment and infectious diseases, together with unhygienic surroundings and ignorance, continue to be "diseases of the poor" that affect the ST community. They are subject to the mainstream's dominance, exploitation, and control. The tribes in the Kalrayan Hills have poor infrastructure, issues with social, economic, educational, health, and religious matters, as well as issues with law and order, a tendency toward self-centeredness, and other issues. Despite these issues, they only received meager government assistance because government programs are typically created for the average district or village, which is not the case when it comes to tribes.

### **Review of Literature**

**Remeshpanwan (2011)**, in order to improve the quality of life for tribal people, they must have access to some essential services such clean drinking water, shelter, food, and rural roads. Due to the abolition, there is a severe drinking water shortage in tribal communities. Drinking water is a serious problem in tribal regions, and some villages experience contaminated water supplies. Because of these limitations in the tribal communities, sanitation and hygiene suffer greatly. Therefore, aside from providing safe drinking water, this should be given top priority.

**Jadhav K. et. al. (2012)**, in order to accomplish the shared goal of tribal development, the government should coordinate all tribal development programs, strengthen LAMPS, coordinate NGO's, and diversify their responsibilities. It is also necessary to execute land reforms to turn tribal lands into valuable assets.

**Purshottamlal (2013)**, tribal cultures provide loans to buy transportation and repay fuel costs, teaching people to be disciplined and live in peace with the environment.

**ABhubaneswar Sabar (2010)**, policymakers must take a cue from tribal agriculture in order to combat conventional agricultural production, alleviate food poverty, and promote sustainable development. Kurumbars, who make up the second-highest proportion of India's tribal people, are the most at risk.

**Archana, V., et al. (2023)**, action must be made to boost socioeconomic activity and solve issues including unemployment, bad infrastructure, debt, ignorance, and unfavorable development policies.

**Sajith Kumar, T. P. (2020)**, the study used analytical and descriptive techniques to investigate the relationship between the Paniya tribe's way of life and their pursuit of health.

**Uday Mohapatra et al., (2021)**, the purpose of the study is to determine how effective and reliable VOs are at enhancing program implementation and service delivery at the local level. It analyzes and interprets data using exploratory and descriptive study designs, quantitative and qualitative methods, and methodological theories.

#### **Plan for Tribal Sub-Plans in Tamil Nadu**

From Plan to Plan, the tribal development initiatives were closely monitored and underwent constant revisions, fine-tuning, and reorientation. Tribal Sub-Plan was a concept that was put into practice during the Fifth Plan period. A Task Force on Tribal Areas led by Prof. L.P. Vidyarthi and an Expert Committee chaired by Dr. S.C. Dube had both reviewed the tribal situation prior to the implementation of this plan.

Individualized development approaches and schematic block development approaches, according to the former, are inappropriate for these places. The entire tribal region should be subject to integrated development. States where indigenous people make up a majority will have a different difficulty than states where they make up a minority. The compact and successful States in the North East with a tribal majority have plans that are essentially plans for tribal development. There is no need for distinct area development plans for tribal residents in these States.

#### **Tribal Development in Implementation in Tamil Nadu**

In general, the tribal tribes depend on an agricultural or forestry economy, with a variety of ancillary occupations like wage work, crafts, etc. that qualify for a multidimensional occupational pattern designation. Animal husbandry and traditional crafts are also important sources of income. On the economic front, enormous changes have occurred and are still taking place. No matter how far away geographically the tribal parts of Tamil Nadu are from the center of civilization, neither the forest economy nor the agricultural economy of today can exist in isolation. The freedom to use forest products will need to be restricted as government management and control over the woods expands. The expenditure patterns of the tribal people and their trade and commercial contacts have changed as a result of the invasion of contractors, traders, etc. into these areas with various types of lifestyle habits.

#### **Tribal Development in Indian Economy**

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs released updated policies for the distribution and application of Special Central Assistance (SCA) for Tribal Sub-Plan in May 2003. Through a focus on bringing their socioeconomic position up to par with the rest of the population in the Blocks/District/State, SCA-financed initiatives should only target the tribal population that is below the poverty line. Priority should be given to the development of the most underserved tribal groups residing in the Forest Villages while developing SCA-funded TSP activities. Long-term Area-specific micro-planning should be undertaken under SCA to TSP, taking into account ITDPs/ITDAs and the blocks/clusters therein as geographical units. The State Government/UT administration shall disclose the Department/Scheme-wise details of operations funded out of the Annual State Plan because SCA to TSP is additive to the State Plan.

Initiatives and plans created to address challenges impacting indigenous women should take center stage, and it is important to guarantee their involvement from the planning stage through project implementation. It is a requirement to design particular programs or plans that directly affect tribal economic development and are appropriate for their social, economic, and ecological circumstances before the SCA to TSP can be approved. The Ministry should receive the schemes/programs thus created in advance as proposals for review, discussion, and approval. The SCA funds specifically intended for reducing poverty should unavoidably support such creative income-generating and employment activities/programs with long-term relevance/utility for the tribal beneficiaries in light of the diverse and varied physical and socioeconomic conditions of the tribals. In order to ensure that the TSP, including the SCA funds, is planned and implemented in accordance

with the letter and spirit of the Panchayati Raj Act of 1992 and the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996.

In order to provide incentives to States for effective TSP implementation, 10% of the overall SCA allocation for a financial year will be used for this purpose. This 10% will be released in accordance with the established criteria. The task of tribal development has been described as the social and economic development of the tribal people through integrated area development and other programs that are suitable for their intelligence and economic situation, ensuring the gradual abolition of all forms of exploitation and guaranteeing advancement toward this end point.

### **Tribal Population**

According to the 2011 census, there were 104 million tribal people living in India, an 8.6 percent increase from the 1991 census' 68 million tribal population. The number of indigenous people living here is the highest in the entire world.

### **Tribal Occupation**

The tribal people are those who reside in localized areas and have a specific occupation. The tribal people have a variety of occupations, including clubman, fisherman, gatherer, hunter, priest, shaman, and spearman. Indian tribal economies derive from a variety of sources in comparison to other tribal economies. They carry out their agricultural independently and rely primarily on nature. The Indian tribal population survives off of settled agriculture. A tribe is described as a collection of native people with a brief history, a common name, a common language, endogamy, unique customs, rituals, and beliefs, a straightforward social hierarchy and political structure, and shared ownership of resources and technological advancements. Forests offer more than just habitat for animals and means of subsistence for people. They also protect watersheds, stop soil erosion, and lessen the effects of climate change. Some tribes are totally dependent on the jungle since it provides them with all they require to survive.

### **Minor Forest Produce**

The main objective of the Tribal Sub-Plan is to promote the overall development of Tamil Nadu's Scheduled Tribes in the Plain Districts. Priority is given to promoting self-employment through family-oriented income generating schemes, especially for those who are below the poverty line as part of a program to combat poverty, while also taking into account the demands of the nation and the state. The creation of self-employment opportunities is prioritized more in industries like agriculture, dairy development, veterinary care, sericulture, handloom and textiles, small, village, and cottage industries, fisheries, etc. Banks and other financial institutions are involved in the implementation of income-generating plans that are focused on families.

### **Rural Development Sector**

In Assam, the sector for rural development is responsible for implementing programs to reduce poverty. Every program or initiative is backed by the government. 75:25 is the funding split between the federal government and state governments. The current programs or strategies are as follows. Prior to 1999–2000, all self-employment programs were carried out under the IRDP and linked program names. The Government of India, however, changed the name of this initiative to Swranajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) with effect from 1.4.1999. This initiative is helping a lot of identified rural Scheduled Tribe (Plains) people who are living in poverty by giving them government subsidies and bank loans so they can start their own businesses. Of the total funds allotted, 50% are going to SC and ST individuals.

### **Panchayati Raj and Tribal Development**

Assam and Tamil Nadu States do not have any Scheduled Areas, hence the provisions of the Panchayati (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 (PESA) do not apply to these States. However, these States are subject to the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act of 1992, which also applies to the members of Scheduled Tribes. As a result, in the framework of the tribal sub-plan and poverty reduction strategies, some of the more crucial requirements, particularly those connected to planning, would need to be emphasized.



### **Role of Voluntary Organizations in Tribal Development**

Several non-profit groups in Tamil Nadu work to improve the lives of tribal people. Three residential schools for tribes are run by Sri Sarguru Samarasa Sanmarga Sangam, two in the Nilgiri area and one in the Coimbatore district. Additionally, they manage a tribal clinic in the Coimbatore district. The Adivasi Welfare Sangam of the Nilgiris district runs three dispensaries and a mobile medical unit in the region. The groups listed below contribute significantly by giving the government's efforts genuine support. Their activities' specifics are not immediately known. In the district of Madurai, the Palanimalai Adivasi Welfare Sangam runs a dormitory for tribal people. It is called Akkal Adivasi Seva Sangam. The Nilgiris branch of Action for Community Organization, Rehabilitation, and Development (ACCORD). Tribal Bhav Tiruvannamalai of the Society for Rural Development (SFRD). Dindugal's Karunya Trust Center for Social Action. Dharmapuri's Rural Integrated Development Organization (RIDO). Kotagiri, Nilgiris-based Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association operates a mobile hospital and dispensary.

### **Educational Level of the Households**

The majorities of tribal people in Tamil Nadu were either literate without any form of schooling or had only received a rudimentary education. Additionally, a respectable number had methodological training and at least a secondary education. The percentage of literates in the Dharmapuri district who have not completed elementary school was 64.52 percent. In addition, 15 people had procedural qualification, and 61 people had secondary and above status. In a nutshell, it may be claimed that Salem and Dharmapuri do not appear to be educationally behind many other tribal places. The Educational statuses of tribal in Tamil Nadu are presented in table-1.

**Table-1**  
**Educational Level of the Family Members**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Educational Categories</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1.	Illiterate	34.06
2.	Literate without educational level	28.17
3.	Primary	20.56
4.	Middle	09.67
5.	Secondary and above	07.04
6.	Other technical qualification	0.50
Total		100.00

*Source: Compiled and calculated from Various reports of Adi-Dravida and Tribal Welfare department,*

*Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai – 09.*

### **Poverty Mitigation Programme**

The majority of households in Salem, Tamil Nadu, reported receiving support through a program to combat poverty. The type of support, however, was stated as free 30 kg of rice per family each month and, in a few instances, some assistance for housing facilities. The survey was unable to locate any family receiving IRDP assistance to build assets to assure ongoing income from self-employment ventures.

### **Cooperative Societies**

Surprisingly, 92.50 percent of the homes polled in Kalrayan Hills stated that they did not belong to any cooperative association. This appears to be a significant obstacle to providing worthy families with development help. For potential corrective actions, this element needs to be validated.

In the Setteri Hills neighborhood of Dharmapuri, 51.96% of the houses were members, which mean that nearly 50% of the families are outside the cooperative fold. LAMPS play a crucial role in the overall TSP strategy in Tamil Nadu, and membership in cooperative societies is a necessary condition for receiving TSP support. An immediate effort for member recruitment and sensitization

will need to be undertaken in light of the low participation in cooperative societies in this part of the country.

### **Share of the Country's Population**

In as many as 13 of the 22 States and UTs where castes and tribes have been scheduled, the scheduled tribe's percentage of the population is larger than its percentage of the nation's total population. Madhya Pradesh, where almost one-fourth (23.73%) of the nation's scheduled tribe population resides, has a significant gap between its scheduled tribe population share and that of the total population. In the same 1991 census, the state reported 8.11% of the total population, 7.05% of the scheduled caste population, and 6.68% of the non-scheduled caste/non-scheduled tribe population.

It is noteworthy that this State, which once had the highest percentage of scheduled tribes in the nation (this ranking has since changed as a result of the creation of three new States, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Uttaranchal), only has 6.69 percent of the total non-scheduled caste and non-scheduled tribe population of the nation but can boast of having 23.73 percent of all scheduled tribes in the nation. It can also be referred to as a major tribal state because it has the highest concentration of scheduled tribe residents and the lowest percentage of non-scheduled caste/non-scheduled tribe residents of the entire nation.

### **Conclusion**

The indigenous community has relied on the forest for nourishment and survival since the beginning of time. According to historical writings, the forest was luxuriant during the Pre-British era. Agriculture also prospered without significantly affecting the forest. Despite the numerous positive steps the government has taken through various development initiatives, the economic situation of the tribal people in the mountainous regions is still dire. There are numerous reasons for this awful circumstance. One of them is the vast influx of individuals who have moved from the densely inhabited plains to this sparsely populated mountain side.

Large-scale deforestation was the direct result of this movement. Following that, various land use activities that were very dissimilar from the region's customary patterns of land use were introduced. The tribal people ultimately lost their land. Nilgiri's population structure altered, cropping patterns were varied, conventional production methods were abandoned, new crops and cultivation methods were introduced, and the entire cost and return structure of production underwent a significant transformation. Only indigenous people lived in the region up until the second quarter of the 19th century.

Nevertheless, a significant population shift from the plains occurred since then, altering the entire demographic makeup of the area. The entire demographic makeup of the Nilgiris has changed as a result of unchecked deforestation, excessive cattle grazing, and the adoption of agricultural practices that are unsuited to the local ecology and agro climate. Those most impacted by the process of transition are tribal women. Tribal people have lost their homes, lands, and woods, which provided much of their sustenance, due to displacement for development projects. To gather food and fodder today, they must travel farther than in the past. The socioeconomic and cultural lives of the indigenous women have undergone a profound change as a result of development initiatives.

Private land ownership and acknowledgement of the husband as the family's leader. Enhanced development amenities, such as those for transportation and health. Women are still not able to access housing or technology. Women continued to put forth more effort and were unable to take advantage of development's benefits. The tribal civilization used to be independent. Up until the point when outside involvement by the settlers and the government started, they had a community-based, environmentally friendly, and self-governing political life. Women in traditional tribal societies had a lot of freedom and equality with men. The Kurumba tribal group was one of the first indigenous groups in Nilgiri. The religious, cultural, political, social, and economic life of the

various villages varied. Their culture served as both a source of inspiration and a source of authority. The importance of religion has decreased as ceremonies and rituals are now carried out mechanically without the customary enthusiasm and joy. Apathy for traditional songs, dances, and ornamentation has led to the disintegration of distinct significant qualities.

The primary health centers do not have enough medications, which paints a very frightening image of the health of tribal women. The sub centers' conditions are equally appalling. The indigenous mothers are not healthy enough to give birth to healthy babies, whether the deliveries take place at home or in a hospital. They are almost all horribly anemic. Education is essential for development because it equips a person with the necessary skills to engage in a variety of economic activities. Education gives people the ability to put their knowledge into practice and to comprehend the relationships between the external, observable things around them.

The solutions to the aforementioned tribal issues each have advantages and disadvantages. They must not be forced to adopt modern culture. Only those aspects of the new culture that can help them advance economically should be infused into them. Tribal issues are straightforward yet extremely delicate to resolve. Before gaining the trust of the tribals, no solution can be tried. It is crucial to create a good balance between the tribal way of life and the development of culture's material aspects. It takes time for tribal society to fully integrate into Indian society, and this process needs to be supported while preserving the positive aspects of tribal culture. Tribal people have a diverse range of cultural practices, and they are by no means primitive in any manner.

Eventually but surely, the situation around tribal development is improving. However, there is still a need to update the development plans and how government funds are distributed. Only if there is transparency will the execution and implementation process be improved. These development initiatives, which are intended to improve the socioeconomic well-being of the populace, are useless unless they are fully understood by them. Their involvement in the planning, creation, and execution processes will provide better outcomes and will help them integrate into the development process. With the aid of these development initiatives and opportunities made available to them by the Constitution, tribes should work to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

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