

EVALUATION REPORT ON INTEGRATED TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

1. The Study

As per 1981 Census, the total population of India was 68.52 crores, out of which 5.16 crores (7.53%) consisted of scheduled tribes. These tribes live mainly in forests and comprise of some 150 different communities of varying sizes, speaking about 105 different languages and dialects and subsidiary dialects. They also vary widely in their level of socio-economic development, cultural background and heritage, traits, psyche, etc. and constitute the least economically developed segments of the country's population. With a view to provide special attention to the problems of development of scheduled tribes, the instrument of tribal sub-plans was devised during the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) and separate tribal sub-plans were formulated for the first time for this purpose for 16 States and 2 Union Territories. Under these plans, about 63% of the total tribal population of the country was covered. For operational purposes, the tribal sub-plan areas were divided into 180 Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs).

Keeping the importance of ITDPs in perspective, the Tribal Development Divisions of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs suggested to the Programme Evaluation Organisation to take up an evaluation study of the Integrated Tribal Development Projects.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the Evaluation study were the following:

- i) to examine the development approach adopted under tribal sub-plans with reference to (a) protective measures, (b) education and health, and (c) economic aspects,
- ii) to examine the effectiveness of financial and monitoring arrangements for the implementation of ITDPs,
- iii) to find out the relevance and priorities of various programmes/schemes being implemented under the ITDPs,
- iv) to assess the impact of selected programmes on the socio-economic conditions of the scheduled tribes,
- v) to find out the role and contribution of voluntary organisations, and

- vi) to identify constraints and to suggest remedial measures to achieve the objectives of tribal sub-plan strategy.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Sample Selection

Ten districts from 3 distinct regions i.e. Central, Eastern and Western were selected as sample. These sample districts consisted of one ITDP accounting for the highest percentage concentration of scheduled tribes population. From each ITDP, 2 blocks were selected which accounted for highest percentage of scheduled tribes population. From each block, three villages were selected i.e. 6 villages from each selected ITDP. The villages were selected on the basis of 2 criteria of accessibility namely i) road accessibility and ii) block accessibility. The selected villages were listed into two categories namely; i) tribal households and ii) non tribal households. From the first category a minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 households were selected whereas from the second category a number of 5 plan households were selected at random. A total of 767 households were selected.

4. Reference Period

The field data for the study was collected in respect of two points of time namely for 1975-76 (or the date of selected ITDP, if this happened to be later) and for 1982-83. The field work was carried out in June 1983.

5. Main Findings

1. Contrary to a wide-spread impression that the land holdings of tribals have been gradually passing over to non-tribals, the data collected for the study revealed that prima facie there was no evidence of any shrinkage in the number of tribal households having agricultural holdings. That the land holdings of the tribals were not being transferred to non-tribals was also shown by the fact that the increase in the land holdings of the non-tribals were not at the cost of the sample tribals.
2. Out of the total area cultivated by the sample tribal households in 1982-83, only about two per cent was under shifting cultivation and the rest of the area i.e. about 98 per cent was devoted to settled permanent cultivation.
3. Only 24.12 percent of the tribal and 33.97 per cent of the non-tribal sample households in 1975-76 and 33.77 per cent of the tribal and 48.80 per cent of non-tribal sample households in 1982-83 had some savings.

4. There was a decline in the proportion of the sample households with no savings between the period 1975-76 and 1982-83 and a corresponding increase in the number of households having some savings which is indicative of an amelioration in the economic condition of sample tribal as well as non-tribal households.
5. Out of 767 sample tribal households studied, 259 or 33.77 per cent were under debt in 1982-83 as compared to 111, or 14.47 per cent in 1975-76. Thus, in the seven year period since the commencement of tribal sub-plans (1975-76 to 1982-83) in the selected ITDPs, the incidence of indebtedness amongst the tribals went up sharply enough. Over the same period the proportion of non-tribal households under debt also went up from 12.44 percent to 28.71 per cent. This indicates that the factor leading to the growth of indebtedness among the tribals and non-tribals were by and large similar.
6. Considering that banks, cooperative societies and government agencies generally lend money for productive purposes only, it could be reasonably concluded that there was a marked shift from borrowings for non-productive purposes to borrowing for productive purposes in the case of both the tribal as well as non-tribal households.
7. Over the seven year period under reference two distinct structural changes were observed : i) a marked decline in the percentage of tribals under short term debt and an increase in the percentage of those under medium and long-term debts and ii) there was also a marked decline in the percentage of tribals under short term debt to money lenders denoting a shift from borrowing from money lenders or individual, to cooperative Societies/banks i.e. to institutional sources. Similar trend was also observed in the case of indebted non-tribal households. The trend of borrowing which was apparently observed was towards a shift from indebtedness due to consumption needs to that due to the requirements for productive purposes. Even for short-term loans the sample tribal respondents depended more on cooperative societies and banks in 1982-83 as compared to 1975-76.
8. Taking all the 10 ITDPs covered under evaluation both the extent of the provision of drinking water facilities as well as the maintenance and upkeep of the facilities provided, came out to be generally satisfactory.
9. Relative to the number of sample tribal and non-tribal households selected, the number of tribal adults who had given up drinking habits since 1975-76 was

significantly higher. On an average, out of every seven tribal households one adult had given up drinking habits.

10. From the sample studied, it appeared that the response of the tribal households to adopt and use of better techniques and inputs of agriculture was at least comparable to that of the sample non-tribal households if not better.
11. In the matter of the coverage of sample tribal households under cooperatives the progress in 1982-83 over 1975-76, was woefully inadequate even in the ITDPs where a sizeable proportion of the sample households were members of a cooperative society. The contact of the Cooperative Inspectors with the tribals was also found to be one of the poorest.
12. As high as 79.8 per cent and 62.5 per cent of selected officials and non-officials, respectively from the 10 ITDPs under study were of the view that the extent of land alienation had gone down in 1982-83 as compared with 1975-76. However, the reported situation varied quite markedly as between the different selected ITDPs.
13. The coverage of individual tribal and non-tribal households under the ITDPs was, disconcertingly inadequate in the seven year period under reference.
14. The need for means of communications, road and transport figured among the first three highest priority felt needs of the tribals as a community. Then as perceived by selected officials and non-officials in eight out of 10 ITDPs studied, drinking water in seven; minor irrigation in five; education/ashram schools in four; medical facilities in two; and the other high priority needs in one ITDP were stated.
15. As to impact of the ITDPs, six out of the ten Project Officers identified improvement in agriculture, adoption of improved methods of cultivation and creation of minor irrigation and educational facilities as the tangible signs; five identified increased medical facilities; four better communication facilities and better levels of living and three availability of safe drinking water facilities. According to the selected Project Officers, the non-tangible signs of the impact on the tribals were the increased social and economic awareness, acceptance of modern technology and approaches to development, going in for jobs and professions totally new to them and also an increased consciousness of their ethnic and cultural position in the society.
16. The multiplicity of schemes and programmes, taken up and operated besides such programmes as NREP and IRDP for the benefit of tribals, were, to an extent also

a factor accounting for some dissipation of effort and confusion both among the officials implementing these programmes and the tribals who were to be the beneficiaries of these programmes.

6. Major Suggestions

1. The Project Officers of the ITDP should be vested with more powers and also given a greater measure of freedom for the exercise of these powers, Simultaneously, suitable norms of accountability should also be evolved and laid down so that the Project Officer is held duly responsible for the progress of the welfare and socio-economic development schemes for tribals in the ITDP within his charge and jurisdiction.
2. Before a BDO (and for that matter all other functionaries at the block level) is posted in a tribal area, he/they should be sent for short-duration orientation training in the tribal development at the Tribal Development Institute in the concerned State.
3. The rights which the tribals are permitted to have in the forests should be clearly defined and codified as an integral part of forests laws and regulations.
4. Since traditionally tribals have been brewing their own liquor for domestic consumption and social functions and have been allowed to do so, the sale of other types of country liquor in tribal areas should be banned in a phased manner.
5. As the tribals living in remote areas of the forests do not have quick means of transport and communications for arranging supplies for the basic necessities of life and basic medical facilities, the following strategy is needed i) bringing all the tribal population under the umbrella of inexpensive preventive medical care through a set of paramedical personnel and services and ii) by setting up, at central places in tribal belts of the selected States, specialised but low cost hospitals suiting the particular needs of the tribal communities.
6. In addition to the para-medical worker, a qualified doctor assisted by a supporting team of analysts, etc. should visit certain specified, important and centrally located tribal villages at least once in a week to assist and advise the para-medical functionary and to examine the cases of patients suffering from different ailments coming to him and require further medical examination and treatment.
7. In any approach for the provision of adequate medical facilities to the tribal population the main focus should be on preventive health care.

8. With a view to encouraging and developing the cooperative infrastructure in tribal areas, the entitlement of certain benefits under the tribal sub-plans should be made contingent upon the beneficiary being a member of a cooperative society.
9. A modus operandi should be found whereby the cooperative societies are able to render a similar service to tribals against the security of standing crops to save them from exploitation by money lending shopkeepers.
10. It should also be possible for the Government to organise more mobile fair price shops in tribal areas. These mobile fair price shops should have a function, not only that of selling essential commodities to the tribals in their villages, but also of buying from them the main items of their produce which could be identified in advance.
11. The overall working of the weekly markets as purchase and sale centres for the tribals should also be improved.
12. The laws enacted by different State Governments to prevent the transfer of cultivatable land from tribals to others should be suitably modified to include transfer of land from resident non-tribals to outsider non-tribals.
13. Adequate care should be taken to ensure that the number of beneficiaries covered and assisted under a particular scheme in a tribal village/area does not exceed the demand for the services and/or products to be supplied by the beneficiaries concerned.
14. The role of the Project Officer should be redefined and made more effective. He should be vested with adequate controlling powers over development officers from different departments working in an ITDP. All BDOs should be placed under his direct control wherever this is not so at present.
15. In an ITDP area, the other main programmes for poverty alleviation e.g. NREP, IRDP, etc. should be treated and operated as an additive part of the ITDP programme itself and not as separate and distinct entities.
16. Development schemes to be taken up in an ITDP should be need-based and worked out keeping in view, inter-alia agro-geographical setting of each ITDP. A uniform and centralised approach to planning in ITDPs should, as far as possible, be eschewed.