

Empowering Tribal Society: Initiatives for Socio-Economic Development

Amit Kumar¹, Reena Chand²

¹Research Scholar, University Department of A.T.S.W., T.M.B.U. Bhagalpur, Bihar, India

²Associate Professor, Department of Economics, M.A.M.C. Naugachhiya, Bhagalpur, Bihar, India

ABSTRACT

India's Scheduled Tribe (ST) population, comprising 10.42 million people (8.6% of the total population) across more than 705 distinct groups, often lives in remote areas. To uplift these communities, the government has launched various welfare schemes aimed at socio-economic empowerment, sustainable development and preservation of their rich cultural heritage. These initiatives are designed to improve the living standards of the tribal population, promote education and ensure inclusive growth.

KEYWORDS: Scheduled Tribe, empowerment, development etc

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1. INTRODUCTION

Honouring and Celebrating India's Tribal Communities



As part of its commitment towards tribal empowerment, the government has launched several initiatives. In addition, Tribal Day was started to be celebrated on 15 November to honour the heritage and legacy of tribal communities. This date is the birth anniversary of Lord Birsa Munda, who is revered by tribal communities across the country. Birsa Munda fought courageously against the exploitative British colonial system and led the

movement for independence. From 2021, Tribal Pride Day is celebrated across the country to remember the sacrifices of tribal freedom fighters. This year, on the 150th birth anniversary of Birsa Munda, the Prime Minister will unveil a special commemorative coin and postage stamp, as well as launch development projects worth over Rs 6,640 crore for the upliftment of tribal communities, especially in rural and remote areas.

Budget for Tribal Empowerment and Progress



To ensure holistic development of tribal society, Rs 13,000 crore has been allocated to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in the Union Budget 2024-25. Under the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST), earlier known as Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), 42 ministries/departments are committed to allocate funds for tribal development in sectors such as education, health, agriculture and infrastructure. The DAPST fund allocation has increased 5.8 times since 2013-14, reaching Rs 1,24,908 crore in 2024-25.

2. Schemes for the Welfare of Tribes

In the last few years, several schemes have been launched to support the socio-economic development of tribal communities, with a special focus on the needs of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). These programmes are designed to help improve their living conditions and ensure their inclusion in mainstream society.

Launch of Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan



On October 2, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Dharti Aaba Janjati Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand. This ambitious program with an outlay of over Rs 79,156 crore aims to address critical gaps in social infrastructure, health, education and livelihood development in about 63,843 tribal villages.

Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)

Key Tribal Welfare Schemes and Budgets			
1	PM-JANMAN Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana	Year	2023-24 to 2025-26
		Budget	Rs. 24,104 Crore
2	PMAAGY Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana	Year	2024-25
		Budget	Rs. 1,000 Crore
3	PMJVM Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission	Year	2021-22 to 2025-26
		Budget	Rs. 1,612.27 Crore
4	PMVKY Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana	Year	2021-22 to 2025-26
		Budget	Rs. 26,135.46 Crore

On November 15, 2023, during the Janjati Gaurav Diwas in Khunti, Jharkhand, the Prime Minister launched the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PMJANMAN) for the upliftment of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). PM-JANMAN aims to improve the quality of life of PVTG communities through targeted support in areas such as safe housing, clean drinking water, education, health, road and telecom connectivity, electrification and sustainable livelihoods.

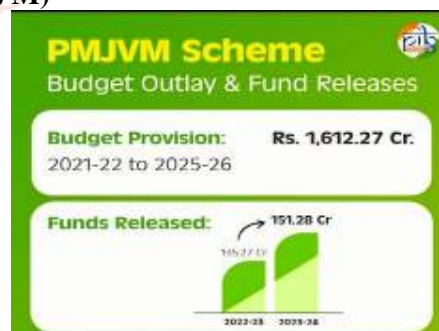
The Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY)

The 'Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS)', launched in 1977-78, was aimed at bridging developmental gaps for tribal welfare. In 2021-22, the scheme was revamped as Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY), with a focus on providing infrastructure in villages with significant tribal population. Under PMAAGY, 36,428 villages with at least 50% tribal population have been identified for development, including aspirational districts.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

The Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) scheme, launched in the year 2018-19, aims to provide quality education to tribal students, with a focus on their academic, cultural and skill development. On October 2, 2024, the Prime Minister inaugurated 40 EMRS and laid the foundation stone for 25 more, which will entail an investment of over Rs 2,800 crore. So far, 728 EMRS have been approved.

Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM)



PMJVM aims to promote tribal entrepreneurship and promote the "Vocal for Local" initiative by tribals. It focuses on helping tribal communities make better use of natural resources including Minor Forest Produce (MFP) and non-MFP by supporting local produce-based businesses.

Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (PMVKY)

Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (PMVKY), launched on 28 October 2014, is a

transformational initiative designed to address the unique challenges faced by India's tribal communities. The scheme aims to empower tribal communities, improve their socio-economic conditions and preserve their cultural heritage.

3. Key Government Scholarships for Tribal Empowerment

Scholarships are also available to assist tribal students, which aim to reduce dropout rates and boost their educational progress. These financial aids ensure that tribal communities have greater access to quality education and a chance to build a better future.

A. Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes

- **Pre-Matric Scholarship:** Financial assistance for ST students in Classes IX and X, promoting the transition to secondary education.

- **Post-Matric Scholarship:** Financial aid for ST students from Class XI to post-graduate courses, supporting higher education.

B. National Overseas Scholarship for ST Students:

This scheme offers meritorious ST students the chance to pursue post-graduate, doctoral, and post-doctoral studies at international universities.

C. National Fellowship for ST Students:

This fellowship scheme supports tribal students pursuing higher education through a fully digital process, ensuring timely financial assistance and grievance redressal via DigiLocker integration.



4. Financial Support and Self-Employment Schemes

The government has launched several schemes to empower tribal communities, with a key focus on income generation and economic development. One such initiative, the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC), provides concessional loans to support self employment and income-generating activities for Scheduled Tribes, such as

- A. **Term Loan Scheme:** This scheme provides loans for income-generating projects costing up to ₹50 lakh per unit.
- B. **Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana (AMSY):** Focused on empowering Scheduled Tribe women, this scheme offers loans for income-generating activities costing up to ₹2 lakh per unit.
- C. **Micro Credit Scheme for Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** Under this scheme, NSTFDC provides loans of up to ₹5 lakh per SHG and ₹50,000 per member.
- D. **Adivasi Shiksha Rin Yojana (Education Loan):** This scheme supports Scheduled Tribe students pursuing professional or technical education in India by providing financial assistance of up to ₹10 lakh.

5. Initiatives for Better Health Outcomes

The government has launched several major health initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of tribal communities. The Sick Cell Anemia Elimination Mission, launched on July 1, 2023, focuses on eliminating sickle cell disease (SCD) through awareness campaigns, universal screening, and affordable care, with a special emphasis on tribal populations in central, western, and southern India. Mission Indradhanush ensures full immunization for children up to 2 years of age and pregnant women, with a focus on tribal communities, and includes free COVID-19 vaccines. The Nikshay Mitra initiative provides clinical, nutritional, and vocational support to tuberculosis (TB) patients, many of whom are from tribal areas, with the aim of improving TB treatment and outcomes.

6. Research and Cultural preservation initiatives

Apart from welfare and development schemes, the government has also launched initiatives focusing on research and preservation of tribal culture. These programmes aim to enhance understanding of the socio-economic challenges of tribal communities, promote their heritage and support research in various fields.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) Development Program

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is implementing the Scheme for Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) to support the socio-economic development and welfare of the most vulnerable tribal communities. It aims to address the gaps for 75 identified PVTG communities. From 2023-24, the scheme has been subsumed under the PM Janman Abhiyan.

Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs)

TRIs play a crucial role in preserving tribal culture and addressing their socio-economic challenges. The Support to TRIsscheme promotes research and documentation on tribal welfare, languages, traditions, and medicinal practices, while also organizing cultural festivals and exchange programs.

Tribal Research Information, Education, communication and Events (TRI-ECE)

Under this scheme the Ministry invites guests for Republic Day celebrations, organises festivals, exhibitions and competitions at the State and/or National level. Funds are also provided for publicity and advertising, including public awareness and media.

Name of the Scheme	BE for 2022-23	BE for 2023-24
Tribal Research Information, Education, communication and Events (TRI-ECE)	15.00 Advertising and Publicity – 1.50 General – 7.00 Other Charges – 6.50	25.00 Advertising and Publicity – 3.00 General – 7.00 Other Charges – 15.00

7. Conclusion

The Government has taken several initiatives to empower the tribal communities, with special emphasis on education, healthcare and socio-economic development. By raising awareness and promoting unity, these efforts help preserve tribal cultures, while also improving their quality of life and integrating them into the broader progress of India. Through these initiatives, tribal communities are not only uplifted but also prepared to play a vital role in the development of the country. This is in line with the vision of “Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas”, which ensures that all communities, including tribal groups, move forward together in the spirit of inclusiveness and development.

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