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The role of tribal government in tribal development

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of post-independence developmental policies in India on tribal people in rural and urban areas. The research focuses on the challenges faced by these communities due to geographical, socioeconomic, and cultural factors. The Indian government has implemented various programs to improve the social and economic conditions of indigenous populations, including land rights, education, healthcare, employment, and infrastructure. The study evaluates welfare schemes, such as the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) and the Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP), to assess the development outcomes of tribal people in urban and rural areas. The research uses a mixed-methods approach to examine resource availability, policy efficacy, and socioeconomic results in rural and urban areas. Urban indigenous populations face cultural assimilation and identity issues, while rural indigenous populations face discrimination in land confiscation, poor healthcare, and educational opportunities. The authors suggest closing these gaps by proposing policies tailored to the unique needs of indigenous populations in both urban and rural settings. This research contributes to India's growing understanding of indigenous peoples' rights, social justice, and sustainable development.

Keywords: Tribal problems, tribal welfare, sustainable tribal development

Introduction

Morgan, Tylor, Perry, Rivers, and Lowie are among the earliest anthropologists who provided several definitions for the social group known as tribe. Experts in the field of anthropology have failed to develop a set of accurate criteria to categorize groups as "tribal" or "non-tribal," and these categories are far from comprehensive. Typically, the word is used to describe populations that live in the foothills and woodlands, somewhat isolated from the rest of the world. The word "tribe" has an established meaning and characterized in anthropology on several occasions, but no universally accepted set of criteria has been reached. Many concepts have been used in relation to territory, including economic animism, political autonomy, and race. It would seem that the anthropological literature is littered with dozens of definitions and attributes of "tribe," each reflecting a different field setting.

The Dictionary of Anthropology provides the conventional wisdom that tribes are social groups characterized by shared characteristics such as language, culture, and social structure. It might have many subgroups, such villages or sibs. Both shared ancestry and ruling deities are possible. Economic, social, religious, or familial connections (such as kingship bondage) unite the families or small groups that comprise a tribe. Tribes are groups of people who live in close proximity to one another and who are typically impoverished, uneducated, poorly clothed, dark-skinned, and physically weak. Tribesmen marry only within their own community, and they subsist solely on hunting and gathering for their vegetable and non-vegetable food needs. Tribesmen are often unaware of the country's political and economic situation, and they fiercely oppose any attempts at development. They also have a strong aversion to outsiders and the educated modern community.

Dr. Rivers outlined requirements for a unified government and shared goals like war. Prof. Perry suggested that a tribe should have a shared language and geographical area. Prof. S.C. Dube noted that tribes have a distinct cultural identity due to their cross-disciplinary topics and limited worldview. The Tata Institute of Social Science supports this, stating

that a group of families can be considered a tribe even without a scientifically defined community. A tribe has the power to choose its own purpose and whether its various parts need to be autonomous. "Economically backward" is a relative term. Prof. S.C. Sinha defined a tribe as pre-literate people living in relative seclusion in hilly or forested areas or on the plains bordering these areas. These people are believed to be beyond the "Brabmanic hierarchic civilization" boundary.

Majumdar (1958) defined a tribe based on universal traits, including territorial affiliation, endogamy, lack of functional specialization, leadership by hereditary tribal officers, language unity, awareness of social differences between tribes and castes, adherence to tribal traditions, beliefs, and customs, and awareness of the uniformity of geographical and ethnic integration. These characteristics would characterize a tribe globally.

The term "tribe" in Indian languages is a British colonial relic, referring to people living in remote highlands and woods with dark complexions and outside the Hindu Varna system. This has led to the term having less social or cultural weight in modern India. However, it has become an enduring symbol of political awareness, similar to caste or regional consciousness, representing favored prejudice, nationalism, and, in some regions, a barrier to treatment.

The average indigenous man is unassuming and kind, with deep feelings for his fellow villagers, the monarch, and society. They thrive in the close-knit social milieu of their town and find joy in living a carefree life due to their strong connection to nature. They often see acquaintances and visit their relatives on festive occasions. The term "tribe" was used by the British government in India to describe these individuals for counting and categorizing them. Historians from Europe have traditionally used the term to describe distinct ethnic groups or independent political entities, such as the Anglo-Saxons or Gauls in Europe or the Lichchivi, Mulla, Yaudheya, or Khasa in ancient India. The term has also been used to describe groups with a broad lineage, such as the Israelites or Arabs in Western Asia. In Melanesia, the term was used to describe island nations' inhabitants living in independent political factions at war. British social anthropologists have used the term to describe autonomous political groups with distinct cultures and territories. Seeking shared ground within the Indian setting has been an endeavor.

The percentage of Indians who consider themselves to be tribal is about 8.2%. Most of the tribal population lives in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. These states are home to over 80% of the nation's indigenous peoples. With fourteen-point seven when it comes to the percentage of India's tribal population, Madhya Pradesh is clearly at the top. When it comes to the overall number of indigenous people, Maharashtra and Odisha are ranked second and third, respectively. With a total of 94.8% tribal population, Lakshadweep is the most tribally densely populated union territory in India. The next most densely populated states, with Mizoram accounting for 94.4% and Nagaland for 85.5%. Similarly, scheduled tribal membership is very low in Uttar Pradesh, with only 0.56% of the population compared to 1.1 percent in Bihar and 1.28% in Tamil Nadu. According to the Indian government's ministry of tribal affairs, 705 distinct tribal groupings have been officially recognized. With 62 distinct tribal tribes, Odisha is home to more indigenous peoples than any other Indian state. There are 705 distinct tribal groups spread out over the nation, with 75 of those groupings designated classified as PVTGs, or Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

The term "Tribe" is often understood to refer to the Adivasi people. There are 121,000,000 tribal people in India; 62.1% inhabit urban areas, whereas 71.9% reside in rural regions (2001 census). When it comes to the definition and significance of the word "tribe," several dictionaries have arrived at different conclusions. "A race of people; now applied especially to a primary aggregate of people in a primitive or barbarous condition under a headman or chief" is what the Oxford English Dictionary means when it says "tribe." Typically, members of such a community have a same language, culture, and social structure, as defined by the Indian Dictionary. It might consist of several smaller groupings, such as sibs or villages. Because of their lengthy history of settlement in various parts of the nation, the term "tribe" refers to the indigenous or autochthonous inhabitants of a certain area.

Literature review

Radhika Kapur (2018) [1] Members of Indian society come from a wide variety of socioeconomic classes, racial and ethnic origins, religious persuasions, and family structures. Every person follows their own set of customs, traditions, and cultural tradition. Divided into urban, rural, and tribal regions, Indian society is structured in exactly this way. The diverse population of India is defined by a wide range of ethnic, religious, linguistic, and geographical characteristics. In India, people from all walks of life are brought together by a multitude of cohesive social norms. This paper's overarching goal is to provide light on Indian society by analyzing its structure, the elements that contribute to its unity, and the traits shared by urban, rural, and tribal citizens. The research paper primarily delves into the traditional parts of Indian culture, but it also acknowledges that changes have occurred in the present due to the development of technology and the adoption of creative techniques and procedures.

Santanu Panda (2013) [2] Rural development is a global effort to improve the financial stability and standard of living of individuals in rural areas. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a significant anti-poverty initiative, offering alternative means of subsistence, reducing migration, child labor, and poverty. India's 121 million people, including 83.3 million rural residents, face unique challenges such as mass poverty, low income, unemployment, and unhealthy eating habits. The Indian government's planning commission has launched various initiatives to improve rural citizens' quality of life, aiming to reduce the gap between city and country residents, level the playing field, and accelerate growth. Rural development is crucial for alleviating poverty, improving health, and providing education, ultimately leading to a sustainable and prosperous future for rural communities.

Mofidul Hassan (2016) [3] Many economists have taken an interest in the disparity urban and rural regions with respect to development achievement. Underdeveloped economies

undergo transformation as a result of development; models such as Lewis's, Fei-Ranis', and Harish-Todaro's highlight this rural-urban dichotomy. India was a poor, agricultural country when it gained its freedom in 1947 had been heavily influenced by colonization. As a result of development efforts over the previous seven decades, the nation has climbed great heights and urbanized gradually but surely. As a means of bridging the gap in growth between city and country, the government's policies on rural development underwent continual evolution during this time. This research follows the evolution of rural development strategies in independent India and looks at how they've affected the disparity between city life and more rural parts on many important development metrics. The analysis clearly indicates that the discrepancy has been narrowing over time.

Ayush Yadav *et al*. (2022) [4] India, one of the world's most famous countries, has experienced remarkable growth and improvement. However, the country faces challenges in reconstructing, renovating, and rejuvenating the vast population living in destitute areas. The disadvantaged must adopt a fresh approach based on their own principles, practices, and history. Extreme poverty, poor literacy rates, diseases, and starvation continue to plague the indigenous population. Scheduled Tribes, which have a higher poverty rate than the national average, are often overlooked in development projects. This research analyzes and emphasizes progress among Indian tribal communities from a development project perspective, highlighting the need for a fresh approach to living.

Devath Suresh *et al*. (2014) [5] Planning is widely recognized as an essential tool for emerging nations to advance their economies. The preference for it stems from two sources: first, the state's desire to alleviate human suffering immediately; and second, the fact that poor and traditional societies are unable to mimic or promote development processes. As a result, these countries' development plans regard the state's acceptance of responsibility for development as being paramount. There have been important shifts in the idea and tactics throughout the course of preparation and growth due to new issues that have surfaced and old ones that have taken on new dimensions throughout these nations' development planning processes. Methods of planning have been in use in India for more than 60 years. Native communities face challenges in the areas of politics, culture, and economics. Their social status is low because of this. The Government of India is in charge of implementing the five-year plans and the tribal development plans simultaneous. Yet, there are still certain issues that have not been resolved for Indian tribes. This study is an effort to revisit the topic of five-year plans and unresolved challenges in India after 66 years of independence.

Retrospect of tribal people status in India

Geographically, religiously, ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse India is an anthropological laboratory; the country also boasts the highest number of tribal peoples in the world. Any social group that existed before to or outside of states is considered to be a tribe from a historical or developmental perspective. Anthropologists sometimes use the term "Tribal Society" to describe communities that rely heavily on blood relationships, such as corporate descents societies. An intermediate social stage between bands and governments, according to certain thinkers (Wikipedia, 2010).

The word "Adivasi" describes a diverse collection of tribal and ethnic groups that assert their right to call India home. Article 366(25) of the Indian Constitution specifies that certain indigenous populations are Scheduled Tribes. For the purposes of this process, the specified method for specifying a scheduled tribe is to be followed by tribes within such tribes or tribal groups as are considered scheduled tribes (STs) under Article 342.

Nevertheless, the criteria for designating any community as a scheduled tribe is absent from it. A frequently used criteria is predicated on characteristics like:

1. Their geographical isolation-they inhabit hilly and forested regions that are closed off, exclusive, distant, and hostile.
2. Backwardness- They make a living via subsistence farming, which is a low-value, closed economy characterised by poor health and literacy rates.
3. Distinctive culture, language and religion- groups have established their own unique religious practices, linguistic norms, and cultural practices.
4. Shyness of contacts- Their interaction with people and cultures from other parts of the world is quite limited.

Table 1: Comparing the Literacy Rates of Scheduled Tribes with the General Population from 1991 to 2011

India/State	Literacy Rate-1991		Gap in Literacy Rate	Literacy Rate-2001		Gap in Literacy Rate	Literacy Rate-2011		Gap in Literacy Rate
	Total	ST		Total	ST		Total	ST	
India	52.2	29.6	22.6	64.8	47.1	17.7	73	59	14
AP (Combined)	44.1	17.2	26.9	60.5	37	23.4	67	49.2	17.8
Odisha	-	-	-	-	-	-	67.4	48.8	18.6
West Bengal	-	-	-	-	-	-	66.5	49.5	17.0

Table 2: The 2011 Census found that the literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes varied by state.

State	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
AP (Combined)	49.2	58.3	40.1	46.9	56.1	37.7	66.8	74.7	58.7
West Bengal	49.5	59.5	39.4	47.1	57.2	36.9	69.9	78.1	60.8
Odisha	48.8	56.9	40.9	46.6	54.7	38.6	64	71.3	56.6

Tribal Development: A retrospective scenario

Over the Indian subcontinent live many indigenous peoples. They provide the administrator with both distinctive and enormous issues due to their centuries-long state of near-total isolation. Up until recently, there were only half-hearted efforts to address these issues at the federal and state levels of government, which is concerning. It is necessary to delve into tribal history in order to have a better comprehension of the issues these communities are facing now, since these issues are a reflection of their history. As a result, studying the past of India's indigenous peoples as a facet of Indian culture would serve as both a necessary and appropriate context for the present.

The Ancient Period

Regarding the Indian Tribes' aboriginal status, numerous opinions have been voiced. The indigenous people of India are thought by some academics to have been there before the Aryans. They believed that the indigenous peoples of the Americas are the last of the prehistoric groups that managed to avoid extinction by maintaining their own unique culture while adapting to modern times.

The British Period

The arrival of British control marks the beginning of the modern era. Missionaries' arrival in these regions prompted the government to begin addressing the concerns of the indigenous population. The most crucial conclusion they came to from this shallow meeting was to separate these people from the rest of their compatriots and maintain the Tribal territories outside of the regular government.

Tribal Development: A prospective scenario

Typically, when people think of development, they see a positive, generally anticipated, planned, and administered transformation that is impacted by or supported by government initiatives. This means that development is a three-part concept: a change, a plan or forecast, and the role of government in making that change a reality.

Allowing and supporting individuals to achieve their own goals is also a part of growth. This reform must, therefore, pertain to the overhaul of society as a whole, including administrative measures aimed at achieving a more equitable distribution of power. That is why growth affects every facet of human existence; it is not only a financial phenomenon.

The term "development" is used in the social sciences to describe a society's evolution through several stages. Development may be defined as the process of rescuing a society from its dormant or basic state; this process can take place in many contexts and for many purposes. It may mean either a process or its end results depending on the context. There is always a connection to the whole social process.

Prior to independence, the government's development programs were on par with those of other periods, but it prioritized safeguards to protect indigenous peoples from the exploitation of non-tribal groups. On the other hand, the First Five Year Plan was the first organised attempt at establishing tribes.

Tribal governance and development

When it comes to the care and development of the ST & SC groups, the State's designated agency is the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes Development Department. The Indian government is required by Article 46 of the country's constitution to "promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation One of the department's obligatory functions is to further the causes guaranteed by Article 46 of the Constitution. Someone in the senior cabinet is in charge of the department. This is the Department's Scheduled Tribe Welfare wing's approved Subject List.

At the state level, there is an institutional framework in place to ensure the well-being of Scheduled Tribes. At the district and sub district levels, there is another framework.

Institutional Arrangement at the State Level

The department is responsible for implementing steps to improve the lives of Scheduled Tribes and developing Scheduled Areas. The Secretary of the department, with the help of the Director Tribal Welfare, oversees these efforts. The state's department in charge of ST&SC development, minority affairs, and backward class development reports directly to the Minister.

Tribal Sub-Plan Approach

Plans for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are included in both the Fifth and Sixth Five Year Plans, respectively. The sub-plan idea stipulated that a certain portion of the total plan budget should go to the nation's and state's scheduled tribal population. The strategy also makes sure that the monies set aside for ST development cannot be diverted or laundered. The goal of all programs in the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) area is to improve the quality of life for the tribespeople and bring their area up to par with the rest of the state. This goal is to be achieved through integrated development, meaning that all programs work together regardless of their funding sources. The first plan's focus was on initiatives to help families earn money via farming, gardening, animal husbandry, human resource development, and the eradication of exploitation.

Planning, Institutional Set-up and Coordination

All of the departments that fall under the "minor head of 796" get funding according to the population percentage standard, which accounts for 22.13% of the overall state budget. Each agency has discretion over how to spend the Tribal Development monies. Furthermore, the relevant agencies create project shelves for the tribal territory without consulting the Tribal Development Department as needed. Because of this, the Tribal Development Department is powerless when it comes to the allocation of monies or the execution of tribal development plans by other divisions. Accordingly, there have been reports of the unintended use of TSP money. The use of the sub-plan's allotted finances, however, will be overseen by Monitoring Committees established at the state, district, and block levels.

Table 3: TSP Planning Mechanism

Tribal Sub-Plan Mechanism	
Funds Budgeted to	Tribal Development Department (Proportionate budget allocation (22.13% of the total state budget) is kept under minor head of 796 and channelized to all the departments)
TSP Prepared by	Line Departments (Project shelves for tribal area are prepared by the respective departments without consultation with Tribal Development Department)
Monitoring of TSP	Monitoring Committees have been operating at State, District and Block level for TSP
Schemes Focus	Respective departments prepare schemes at their own discretion

SCA to TSP and Article 275(1)

The State TSP receives additional funding from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in the form of Special Central Assistance (S.C.A.). Agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, and animal husbandry are the main areas where SCA is intended for family-oriented income-generation plans. Development of infrastructure ancillary to such income-generating schemes is allowed to utilise a portion of SCA (not more than 30%), as stated in the previous guideline. Odisha has adhered to the idea, and the ratio was preserved while the yearly plan was being prepared and sent to the executing agencies.

Allocation Norms Under SCA and Article 275(1)

The State receives funding for the Tribal Sub-Plan, which includes Special Central Assistance (SCA), which is distributed according to certain criteria. Starting with the 2014–15 fiscal year, the Indian government's Ministry of Tribal Affairs updated the SCA–TSP distribution criteria in accordance with Article 275(1) of the Indian constitution. The new allocation standard takes relative backwardness in terms of development indicators into account with population share, rather than using the former as an isolated metric. As per the new rule, the following is the updated allocation norm.

Table 4: Grant distribution standards as revised in accordance with SCA-TSP and Article 275(1) of the Constitution

Sr. No	Particulars	Allocation Norm
1	Support Institutions Like ITDA, Micro Project	According to Percentage of Population
2	Support for Education	50% Weight age for population and 50% illiteracy, i.e., gap between literacy of tribals in a state and over all literacy in the country
3	Infrastructure	50% on population 50% on areas

The Ministry distributed funds to the state according to the criteria mentioned before.

Planning for Projects Under SCA to TSP and Article 275(1)

Projects managed by the ST&SC Development Department also begin at the field level, in contrast to TSP planning and its incorporation into the state budget. The first meeting of the fiscal year is when project planning is initiated in accordance with SCA-TSP and Article 275(1) of the constitution. Each of the following organizations-ITDAs, Micro projects, MADA, Cluster Pockets, and OSFDC-proposes to undertake different forms of tribal welfare. The state's ST&SC Development Department is the central repository for all such ideas. At the start of each fiscal year, the Indian government's Ministry of Tribal Affairs notifies the public of the monetary limit imposed by SCA-TSP and Article 275(1).

Services provided by the SCA to the TSP and under Article 275 1.

The State takes up and implements programs under SCA-TSP and Article 275(1) for the socio-economic development of ST families via its field officials. Here is an example of the grant that was received and spent under the SCA-TSP program in the 11th and 12th fiscal years.

Table 5: Year wise Financial Assistance under SCA to TSP

Financial Assistance under SCA-TSP (Amount in Rs Lakh)		
Financial Year	**Received from GoI**	**Amount Spent**
2007-08	8543.41	8543.41
2008-09	10290.50	10290.50
2009-10	8885.55	8885.55
2010-11	12393.00	12393.00
2011-12	14149.15	14149.15
Total	54261.61	54261.61
2012-13	13321.00	13321.00
2013-14	13321.00[&]	13045.81
2014-15	11886.20	8601.85#

The above expenditure pattern depicts that the grant receipt by the department is in an incremental trend over the years. The department has utilized 100% of the grant till the FY 2013-14. For the FY 2014-15, till end of December, it has released 81 crore rupees to the executing agencies.

The Department is implementing various livelihoods development as well as infrastructure development projects in ITDAs, Micro Project Areas, MADA pockets, Cluster pockets and in other parts of the state. Till the Financial Year, 2011-12, the programme planning was done for

different sectors e.g. agriculture, horticulture, livestock development etc. and grant was released to the executing agencies based on the population percentage. It was difficult for to assess the outputs of the intervention, as the planning and allocation was not projectized. From the FY 2012-13, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has strictly instructed to submit proposals for funding under SCA-TSP in project form, so that the outcome of the intervention can be measured. The Department has submitted proposals in the shape of consolidation of project proposals to the ministry and the ministry after appraisal has approved the projects.

It is clearly evident from the figure that Horticulture based activity, Animal Husbandry, skill training and SHG based Micro enterprise promotion is the major thrust under SCA-TSP. Under Creation of Capital Assets incidental to livelihoods, the major focus is laid on creation of irrigation infrastructure, communication facility like road, bridge and CD works, rural godowns, processing units etc.

As per the norms of SCA, the Grant in Aid General component and the Creation of capital Asset component should be maintained at the ratio of 70:30. However, during the FY 2014- 15, 45.27% of the grant under SCA is meant for creation of capital assets. This seems to be a deviation. Although the proposal for setting up of Ashram School and improving its infrastructure was part of the state Govt.'s proposal under the umbrella scheme of the ministry, the Ministry has approved projects worth Rs. 23 Crore for the project under the grant of SCA-TSP. This seems to be a deviation from the guideline.

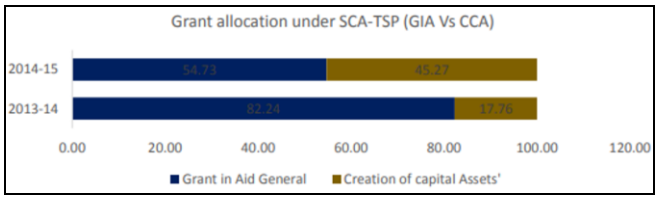

Fig 1: Grant under SCA to TSP

Table 6: Year wise Financial Assistance under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution

Financial Assistance under Art 275(1) of Constitution (Rs. In Lakh)			
Sl. No.	**Year**	**Amount Received**	**Expenditure Incurred**
1	2007-08	4176.84	4176.84
2	2008-09	4129.73	4129.73
3	2009-10	7026.00	7026.00
4	2010-11	9644.33	9644.33
5	2011-12	14449.15	14449.15
	Eleventh Plan Total	39426.05	39426.05
6	2012-13	11284.00	11284.00
7	2013-14	14606.56	13406.56
8	2014-15	12728.22	NA

The Grant under Article 275(1) is spent under the two major heads, i.e., Grant in Aid General and Creation of capital Assets component. As Education is one of the prime focus areas that fosters tribal development, the department is running 1670 number of schools, most of which are residential in nature. Eklavya Model Residential Schools are the quality residential schools managed out of the funding under Article 275(1) of Constitution. Also, implementation of the act Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act2006, commonly known as Forest Rights Act is implemented out of the funding support under Article 275(1) of the Constitution.

Conclusion

The state receives State Contribution Account (SCA) to supplement the tribal sub-plan, primarily for revenue generation. The state's primary purpose is to upgrade the economic and social infrastructure of tribal territories. However, many indigenous families lack modern conveniences like toilets, lower family water usage, and higher illiteracy rates. Despite these challenges, efforts have been made to promote education through residential hostels, scholarships, and free reading materials. Healthcare services have shown promising results, with increasing vaccination coverage and better institutional delivery. However, the STs still face high poverty rates, with the main worker population outnumbering marginal workers in engagement regions. Wage earning and non-timber financial product collection remain major players in the agricultural economy. In Kharif, most tribal households are marginal and small farmers, and FRA grants land to certain landless households.

The accessibility of institutional finance remains unclear, with most people getting loans from trusted sources such as family and friends or local moneylenders. Participation in various IGAs has led to an increase in yearly income, but further funding, training, and market connections are crucial for the long-term viability of IGAs.This research focused on the scheduled tribes of Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool district, examining how development projects affected their way of life. Evidence suggests that development programs aimed at the welfare of tribals facilitate accelerated growth through social and economic interventions, transforming them from folk society to peasant society. The study analyzed the origin growth and constitutional provisions in relation to tribal communities in India, with a special emphasis on chenchu tribes. The results showed that development programs positively impacted the Chenchu people's place in society, economy, politics, and personal growth.

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