Initiatives for upliftment of weaker sections of the society

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As India aspires to be a developed nation by 2047 at centenary year of independence it has to take all its people along to the path of development. The social inequality has led to unequal opportunity to participate in the development process which the governments in succession has been trying to bridge by making enabling policies.

Development of Scheduled Caste population

In 1974-75 during the Fifth Five Year Plan, the Government of India introduced the policy of the Tribal Sub-Plan to fulfil the Constitutional obligation under 'Article 339' regarding administration of the Scheduled Areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the States. Following the experience of the TSP, the Special Component plan (SCP) was started in in 1979-80 in the Sixth Five Year Plan period for upliftment of Scheduled Caste population in the country. The SCP was later renamed as Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) in 2006 and further again renamed as Allocation for the Welfare of Scheduled Caste (AWSC) in 2017 (NITI Aayog. 2013; GoI, 2006, 2019). The government has been providing Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Special Component Plan (i.e. SCSP) and TSP under the budgetary provisions.

In 2021-22, Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhuyday Yojana (PM- AJAY) was launched which merged the three Centrally Sponsored Scheme namely Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY), Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP) and Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana(BJRCY) (PIB, 2023) with an aim to reduce poverty of the SC communities by generation of additional employment opportunities through Skill development, income generating schemes and other initiatives and to improve socio-economic developmental indicators by ensuring adequate infrastructure and requisite services in the SC dominated villages.

The Grants-in-aid under PM-AJAY for District/State-level Projects for Socio-Economic betterment of Scheduled Caste population support various typed of projects which include: a) Comprehensive Livelihood Projects (CLP), and b) other infrastructure projects. The CLP focuses on skill development of SCs and also supporting institutions for skill development. Besides, it also provides grants for creation/acquisition of assets for beneficiaries/ households with a financial assistance towards loans taken by the beneficiary for such acquisition/creation of assets up to Rs.50,000 or 50% of the asset cost, whichever is less, per beneficiary/household. Infrastructure development under CLP support infrastructure development including Hostels and residential schools. The PM-AJAY also supports infrastructure development projects in SC majority villages.

The special Provision under PM-AJAY requires that a) up to 15% of the total Grant should be for income generating schemes/programme for SC women, b) at least 10% for skill development and c) projects promoting SC Women Cooperatives engaged in production and marketing of consumer goods and services should be included. Guidelines for implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Pradhan Mantri - Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY) has been revised in 2023 (PM-AJAY, 2023).

The SCSP scheme is being implemented in 712 districts in 28 States/UTs. During 2021-22, Rs. 139956 crore was allocated (RE) to various Ministries/Department under Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) (PIB, 2022a). The five Ministries/ Department directly involved in agriculture and allied sector received Rs.20379 crore (14.6% of total SCAP allocation) (Table 1).

Table 1. Fund allocation to various Ministries/Department under SCSP

sl	Ministry/Department Name	Revised Allocation (Cr.), 2021-22
1	Department of Agricultural Research and Education	195
2	Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare	19475
3	Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying	409
4	Department of Fisheries	202
5	Ministry of Food Processing Industries	99
	Total	20379

Development of Scheduled Tribe population

There are over 730 Scheduled Tribes (STs) notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India, spread over different States and Union Territories (UTs) of the Country (PIB, 2022b) whose development needs is looked after by Ministry of Tribal Affairs set up in 1999 after the bifurcation of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

The earliest effort to address the problems of tribal people started with creation of 43 Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Projects (MTDPs) in the First Five Year Plan (1954), moving on to identifying Tribal Development Blocks (TDBs) in the third Plan and fourth Plan. In the Fifth Five Year Plan, Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) strategy was initially developed which has been implemented (1977-78) for upliftment of tribal people. The TSP strategy has been in operation in 22 States and 2 UTs and it does not include the tribal majority States of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland (NCST, 2024). The funds for tribal development programmes under TSP are sourced from a) State Plans, b) Special Central Assistance (SCA) to TSP, c) Grant under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution d) sectoral programmes of various Ministries/Departments etc.

In 2017, Special Central Assistance (SCA) to TSP became SCA to Tribal Sub Scheme (TSS) and funds were provided to the State Governments for various projects in sectors like education, health, agriculture, skill development, employment-cum-income generation, etc. The SCA to TSS was further revamped into 'Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY)' for integrated development of villages in an outcome-oriented and time- bound manner during the years 2021-22 to 2025-26. Under this Scheme, 36,428 villages been identified having at least 50% tribal population and 500 STs across States / UTs with notified STs have for integrated socio-economic development of selected villages (36428 in 28 States) through convergence approach (GOI, 2022; PIB, 2023).

The development needs of Tribal population are taken care of by a number of schemes which include, a) Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Youjana (PMAAGY), b) Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribes (PVTGs), c) Support to Tribal Research Institute (TRI), d) Pre-Matric Scholarship, e) Post Matric Scholarship, f) Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), g) Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM), h) Grants under Proviso to Article 275(1) of the Constitution, besides Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST) (PIB, 2023). Among Scheduled Tribes, there are 75 communities located in 18 States and the Union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal groups (PVTGs) because of their extreme backwardness. There about 7 lakh PVTG families residing in 22000 habitations and 200 districts (MoTA, 2024) for whom PM- Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) to was launched in 2023 to address their development challenges.

State wise population of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and their share in total population has been given in Tables 2 (MoHA, 2024). The 708 districts of the country have been classified into groups with varying level of percent population of SC and ST and presented in Tables 3 and 4. District wise distribution of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe across India have been depicted in Figure 1. The above Tables and figures clearly indicate the regional concentration of SC and ST across the country.

Table 2. State/UT wise population- total, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and their share

		Population (,000)*			Percent		
Slno	State/UT	Total	SC	ST	SC	ST	SC+ST
1	Andhra Pradesh	49387	8445	2631	17.1	5.3	22.4
2	Arunachal Pradesh	1384		952		68.8	68.8
3	Assam	31206	2231	3884	7.2	12.4	19.6
4	Bihar	104100	16567	1337	15.9	1.3	17.2
5	Chhattisgarh	25545	3274	7823	12.8	30.6	43.4
6	Goa	1459	25	149	1.7	10.2	12
7	Gujarat	60440	4074	8917	6.7	14.8	21.5
8	Haryana	25351	5114		20.2		20.2
9	Himachal Pradesh	6865	1729	392	25.2	5.7	30.9
10	Jharkhand	32988	3986	8645	12.1	26.2	38.3
11	Karnataka	61095	10475	4249	17.1	7	24.1
12	Kerala	33406	3040	485	9.1	1.5	10.6
13	Madhya Pradesh	72627	11342	15317	15.6	21.1	36.7
14	Maharashtra	112400	13276	10510	11.8	9.4	21.2
15	Manipur	2722	97	1167	3.6	42.9	46.5
16	Meghalaya	2967	17	2556	0.6	86.1	86.7
17	Mizoram	1097	1	1036	0.1	94.4	94.5
18	Nagaland	1979		1711		86.5	86.5
19	Odisha	41974	7188	9591	17.1	22.8	40
20	Punjab	27743	8860		31.9		31.9
21	Rajasthan	68548	12222	9239	17.8	13.5	31.3
22	Sikkim	611	28	206	4.6	33.8	38.4
23	Tamil Nadu	72147	14438	795	20	1.1	21.1
24	Telangana	35194	5433	3287	15.4	9.3	24.8
25	Tripura	3674	655	1167	17.8	31.8	49.6
26	Uttar Pradesh	199800	41358	1134	20.7	0.6	21.3
27	Uttarakhand	10086	1893	292	18.8	2.9	21.7
28	West Bengal	91276	21463	5297	23.5	5.8	29.3
30	Andaman & Nicobar Island	381		29		7.5	7.5
31	Chandigarh	1055	199		18.9		18.9
32	Dadra & NH and DDU	587	12	194	2.1	33.0	35.1
33	Jammu & Kashmir	12267	924	1275	7.5	10.4	17.9
34	Ladakh	274	1	218	0.2	79.5	79.7
35	Lakshadweep	64		61		94.8	94.8
36	NCT of Delhi	16788	2812		16.8		16.8
37	Puducherry	1248	196		15.7		15.7
	India	1210735	201378	104546	16.6	8.6	25.3

*Census 2011; Dadra & NH and DDU: Dadra & Nager Haveli and Daman & Diu

Table 3. Distribution of districts according to share of Scheduled Caste in total population

Sl. No	State/UT	Number of districts					
		Percent Scheduled Caste population					Total
		`0-10	`10-20	`20-30	30-40	>40	
1	Andhra Pradesh	2	8	3			13
2	Arunachal Pradesh	20					20
3	Assam	28	5				33
4	Bihar	2	28	7	1		38
5	Chhattisgarh	13	11	3			27
6	Goa	2					2
7	Gujarat	29	4				33
8	Haryana	1	8	12	1		22
9	Himachal Pradesh	1	1	9	1		12
10	Jharkhand	13	7	3	1		24
11	Karnataka	4	13	12	1		30
12	Kerala	8	6				14
13	Madhya Pradesh	12	26	13			51
14	Maharashtra	11	24	1			36
15	Manipur	9					9
16	Meghalaya	11					11
17	Mizoram	8					8
18	Nagaland	11					11
19	Odisha	3	18	9			30
20	Punjab			7	11	4	22
21	Rajasthan	4	17	11	1		33
22	Sikkim	4					4
23	Tamil Nadu	1	15	12	4		32
24	Telangana	1	30				31
25	Tripura		8				8
26	Uttar Pradesh		34	36	5		75
27	Uttarakhand		6	7			13
28	West Bengal	1	8	9	4	1	23
30	Andaman & Nicobar Island	3					3
31	Chandigarh		1				1
32	Dadra & NH and DDU	3					3
33	Jammu & Kashmir	14	2	4			20
34	Ladakh	2					2
35	Lakshadweep	1					1
36	NCT of Delhi		7	2			9
37	Puducherry	1	3				4
	India	223	290	160	30	5	708

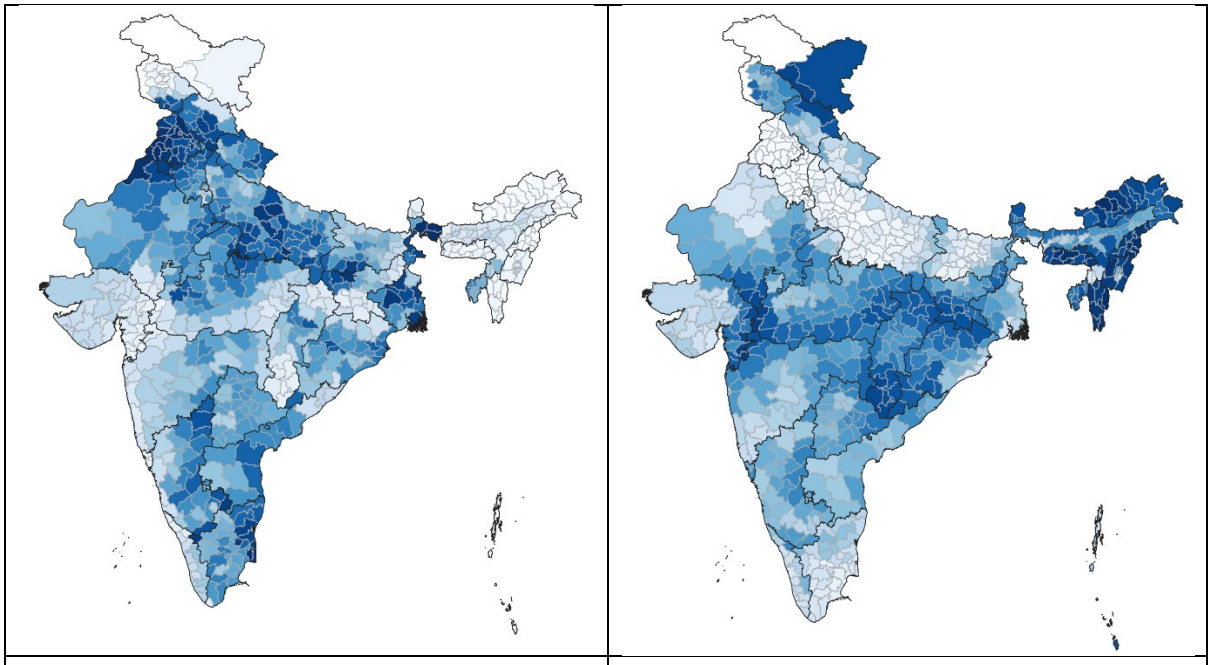
*Districts carved out after 2011 take the percent SC population of the parent district

Table 4. Distribution of districts according to share of Scheduled Tribe in total population

Sl. No	State/UT	Number of districts					
		Percent Scheduled Tribe population					
		`0-10	`10-25	`25-50	`50-75	>75	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	11	2				13
2	Arunachal Pradesh			4	6	10	20
3	Assam	16	9	5	3		33
4	Bihar	38					38
5	Chhattisgarh		10	6	7	4	27
6	Goa	1	1				2
7	Gujarat	19	3	6	2	3	33
8	Haryana	22					22
9	Himachal Pradesh	9		1	1	1	12
10	Jharkhand	6	5	8	5		24
11	Karnataka	19	11				30
12	Kerala	13	1				14
13	Madhya Pradesh	17	15	13	4	2	51
14	Maharashtra	23	9	3	1		36
15	Manipur	4				5	9
16	Meghalaya				2	9	11
17	Mizoram					8	8
18	Nagaland				1	10	11
19	Odisha	10	6	6	8		30
20	Punjab	22					22
21	Rajasthan	19	8	3	2	1	33
22	Sikkim			3	1		4
23	Tamil Nadu	32					32
24	Telangana	17	12	2			31
25	Tripura			7	1		8
26	Uttar Pradesh	74	1				75
27	Uttarakhand	13					13
28	West Bengal	14	9				23
30	Andaman & Nicobar Island	2			1		3
31	Chandigarh	1					1
32	Dadra & NH and DDU	2			1		3
33	Jammu & Kashmir	11	6	3			20
34	Ladakh				1	1	2
35	Lakshadweep					1	1
36	NCT of Delhi	9					9
37	Puducherry	4					4
	India	428	108	70	47	55	708

*Districts carved out after 2011 take the percent ST population of the parent district

Figure 1. Distribution of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population in India (% of total; range 0 to 50.17%)



Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe