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## **Economics of Tribal Education in Kerala: An evaluation of Tribal Sub-Plan**

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**Abstract:**

*Tribes in India are called as 'Adivasis' literally means 'original inhabitants'. Tribal society tends to be egalitarian, with its leadership based on their ties of kinship and personality rather than hereditary status. In Kerala, there are 36 notified tribal communities in the State, numbering 484,839. More than 90 percent of them live in rural areas of the State which are difficult to access by the mainstream population. They lag much behind in educational and health aspects compared to that of other social groups in the study. Considering their backwardness, the Government of India introduced Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in the year 1975-76, a separate budget plan aimed at the enhancement of tribes and tribal areas. Therefore, TSP is considered as a project for the inclusive development of tribes. The present study analyses TSP estimates of Kerala and tries to identify whether it will resolve the existing problems in tribal education.*

**Keywords:** Tribal Sub-Plan, Education, Dropouts, Tribes

### **1. Tribal Sub-Plan in India**

Since the Indian independence, the economy was brought under the concept of planning which was carried out through the implementation of Five-Year Plans (FYP). The First Plan was introduced in the year 1951 and currently the economy is running through Twelfth Plan (2012-2017). The inception of FYP has made significant impact on the development of tribes in India. Since the very First Five-Year Plan onwards the Planning Commission has made allocation of funds for the tribal development. But the proportion funds were inadequate considering their backwardness and their proportionate strength in the total population. Later, from Fifth Plan onwards the government has increased the amount allocated for tribal the development programmes which is which is visible from Table 1.

It is clear from the Table 1 that the proportion of amount allocated for the tribal development as a percentage of total Plan outlay from Fifth Plan to Eighth Plan has shown an increasing trend. Though it showed a decrease during the Ninth Plan, the actual amount allocated for the tribal development showed a tremendous increase compared to that of previous year. For the next subsequent Plans, there was a sharp decrease in the allocation of funds for the tribal development programmes.

<b>Plan Period</b>	<b>Total Fund Allocation (Rs in Crores)</b>	<b>Allocation for Tribal Development Programmes (Rs in Crores)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
First Plan (1951-56)	2069.00	13.93	0.67
Second Plan (1956-57)	4800.00	49.92	1.04
Third Plan (1961-66)	7500.00	50.53	0.67
Annual Plan (1966-67 to 1968-69)	6686.54	32.32	0.48
Fourth Plan (1969-74)	15901.47	79.50	0.50
Fifth Plan (1974-79)	38853.24	1157.67	2.98
Annual Plan (1979-80)	12176.00	855.16	7.02
Sixth Plan (1980-85)	97500.00	3640.25	3.73
Seventh Plan (1985-90)	180000.00	6744.85	3.75
Annual Plan (1990-91 & 1991-92)	139196.70	N.A	N.A
Eighth Plan (1992-97)	434100.00	22409.65	5.16
Ninth Plan (1997-2002)	859200.00	32087.26	3.73
Tenth Plan (2002-07)	1618460.00	1481.00	0.09
Eleventh Plan (2007-2012)	3644718.00	3633.00	0.10

*Table 1: Plan Outlay and Expenditure for Tribal Development Programmes in India  
N.A Not Available; Source: Suresh, Devath (2014)*

The increase in the share of funds for tribal development witnessed soon after the introduction of Tribal Sub-Plan during the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79). This has been implemented across all the States and Union Territories in India. Since the inception of TSP, there has been a tremendous increase in the allocation of funds for the tribal development under various heads such as education, health, housing etc. TSP is being funded from five sources. They are:

- State Plan outlays
- Special Central Assistance (SCA) to TSP
- Grants under Article 275 (1) of the constitution to the States/U.T
- Sectoral programmes of Central Ministries/Departments; and
- Institutional Finance.

Among these sources, Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Tribal Sub-Plan is a Centrally sponsored programme where 100 percent grant is provided by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The ultimate objective of extending SCA to TSP is to boost the demand-based income-generation programmes and thus raise the social and economic status of the tribes. The policy covers income-generation schemes in sectors of agriculture, horticulture, sericulture and animal husbandry. For the year 2013-14, an amount of Rs 549 lakh was allocated for Kerala under this scheme.

## 2. Methodology

The present study uses secondary data and analyses the Tribal Sub-Plan using budget estimates published by Scheduled Tribes Development Department (STDD), Government of Kerala. The period of data is from 2005 to 2012.

### 2.1. Allocation to Educational Sector under TSP

The Tribal Sub-Plan of Kerala was prepared in accordance with the guiding principles of Five-Year Plan and the recommendations of the working group on tribal development. There are six schemes upon which the budget allocation was undertaken. They are:

- Direction and Administration
- Education
- Health
- Housing
- Special Central Assistance
- Other Expenditures

The Tribal Sub-Plan includes State Plan outlay, 50 percent State's share of Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), 100 percent CSS and Special Central Assistance (SCA) to TSP and Grants under Article 275(1) of Indian Constitution. Significant proportion of funds is allocated for education, health, social development and income generating activities. Among this, more funds are allocated for educational projects and also, there are many projects under the head of education compared to that of other sectors. As on 2012-13, the educational budget allocated among 27 projects and a total of Rs 11493.45 lakh is set-aside for these projects under both Plan and Non-Plan provision. This accounts almost 41 percent of the budget estimates of State sector schemes by the Scheduled Tribe Development Department.

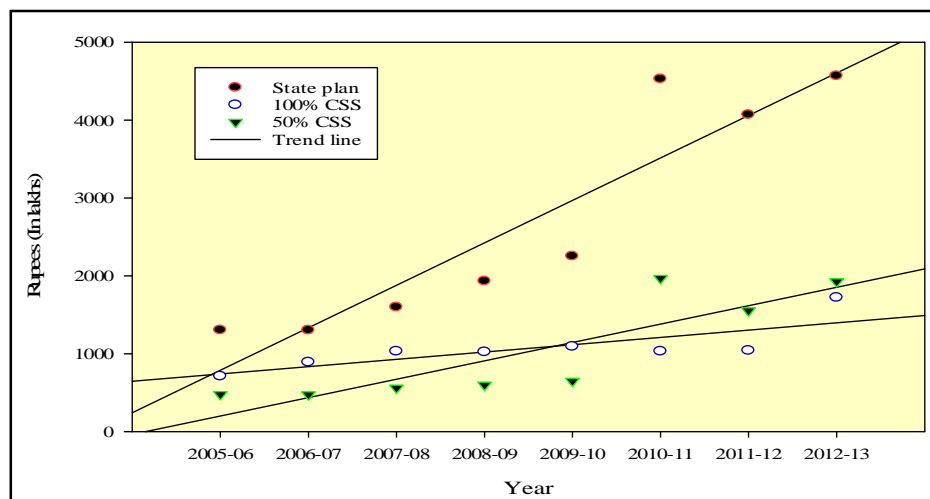


Figure 1: Trends in the Allocation of Tribal Education Budget  
Source: STDD, Various TSP Budget Estimates, (2005-12)

From Figure 1 it is evident that the expenditure under the head of education shows an upward trend from the year 2005-06 to 2012-13. The education expenditure includes three important sources viz. State Plan, 100 percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) and 50 percent CSS. The major proportion of tribal education budget is contributed by the State Plan representing almost 60 percentage of total educational outlay in 2012-13. We can see a tremendous increase in State Plan expenditure on education under TSP over the

years. The central government assistance by way of Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) has also increased during these years especially partially sponsored scheme i.e. 50 percent CSS. For the period up to 2009-10, the increase was only a nominal for both State well as Central Plans but thereafter it recorded a sharp increase in educational allocation of funds especially under the State Plan. Over the years, the government has given due importance to education by allocating considerable amount of funds in various TSPs. For the year 2012-13, government allocated Rs 8220 lakhs towards education under TSP. This include Rs 4570.35 lakhs as State Plan, Rs 1722 as 100 percent Central assistance and Rs 1928.35 as 50 percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The State Plan is included with 50 percent State's share of CSS.

### 2.2. Education Outlay under State-Plan

Education is one of the key components of Tribal Sub-Plan and the government has given importance to this sector by providing significant budget allocation under this head. Figure 2 shows the percentage of educational outlay under the State-Plan for the years starting from 2005-06 to 2012-13. We can see considerable allocation towards educational projects/ schemes over these years. The highest share of educational expenditure to total State-Plan outlay witnessed during 2010-11 in which it had a share of around 40 percent and thereafter, for next two consecutive years, we can see a decline in the share of education as it fell to 24.3 percent during 2011-12 and 22.7 percent during 2012-13. Even though, the share of education decreased during these years, the amount allocated for education almost equalled previous year's budget estimate.

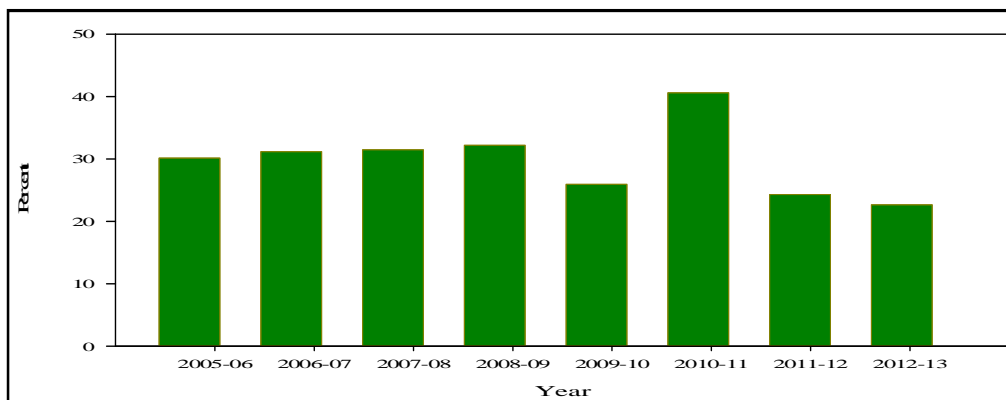


Figure 2: Percent of Education Expenditure under State Plan

Source: Worked Out from Various Tribal Sub-Plan Estimates, STDD, (2005-12)

### 2.3. Allocation of Funds for Reducing Dropouts and Increasing Enrolment at Schools

From the analysis it is clear that the government is considering education as an important sector and allocating a great proportion of TSP funds for improving the worse condition. Funds are allocated for construction of Model Residential Schools (MRS)/Ashram schools<sup>1</sup>, management of MRS/Ashram schools and among other special schemes. Majority of the Central allocation i.e. both 100 percent and 50 percent assistance is given for construction of MRS/Ashram schools. For this purpose, Rs 1928.35 lakhs were allocated as 50 percent Central assistance and Rs 200 lakhs as 100 percent Central assistance during the year 2012-13 which shows much higher allocation compared to that of the previous year. TSP budget estimates shows that a considerable proportion of educational outlay has been set aside for the construction and management of MRS and Ashram school. Figure 3 shows that in all years from starting from 2006-07 to 2012-13, the proportion of MRS Outlays are at higher side. The funds allocated for MRS are for two purposes viz. construction of MRS/Ashram schools and management or running of MRS. Moreover, we can see considerable increase in educational outlay during 2006-07 to 2012-13 which was due to the overall increase in State Plan expenditure under TSP.

During 2012-13, an amount of Rs 79 Crores was allocated for educational expenditure under TSP. Out of the total amount, two-third is allocated for construction and running of MRS school and only Rs 26 Crores was left for other educational projects including construction of pre-matric hostel facilities which are essential for resolving problems related to physical inaccessibility to schools. The total MRS in Kerala can offer education for around 4000 tribal students. Government offers quality of education through MRS or Ashram schools and these schools continues to play an important role in the transformation of tribal education. The fund allocation for MRS shows the importance given by the governments in imparting education for tribal students. But, there are many tribal students whom are studying at government and government aided schools in Kerala. During 2012-13, about 79,900 students are enrolled at different levels of schooling i.e. up to High School level and the educational improvement of these students is also important. Since major proportion of the funds are allocated for MRS, only less amount left for developmental schemes such as grants, scholarships, special schemes and infrastructure development of hostels. The budget allocated for various developmental schemes is depicted in Table 2.

<sup>1</sup> The core objective of Model Residential School (MRS) is to give high quality education to the bright young students belonging to tribal communities. The functioning of the school will be in accordance with the public school which is good indeed for the tribal students who face the problem of great inaccessibility to such a kind of quality education.

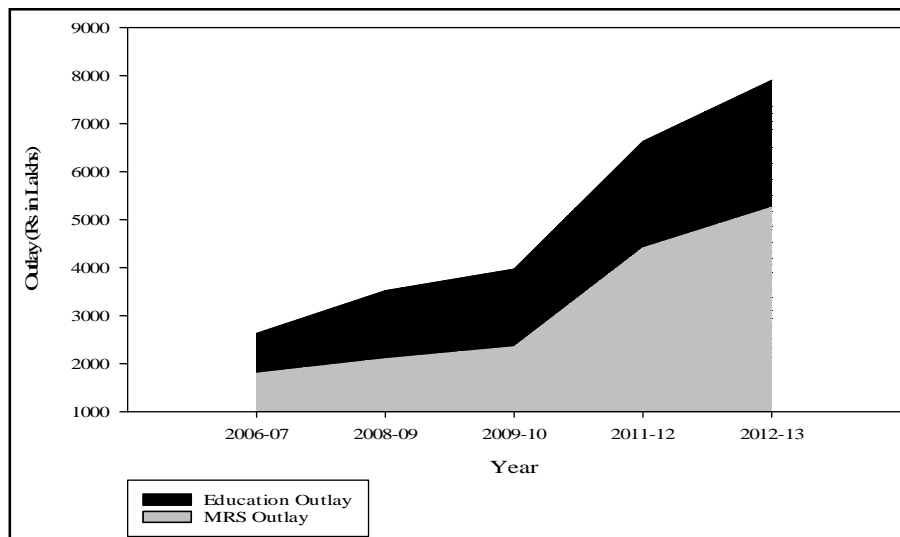


Figure 3: MRS Outlay as a Proportion of Education Outlay  
Source: Worked Out from Various Tribal Sub-Plan Estimates, STDD, (2005-12).

Schemes	Target	Outlay* (Rs in Lakhs)
Ayyankali memorial talented search and development scheme	Brilliant students passed in an intelligence test conducted at the end of IV <sup>th</sup> and VII <sup>th</sup> standard	50
Special incentive to brilliant students	Students from educationally backward community who perform well. Apart from SSLC and Plus-Two students, degree, post graduate and professional courses degree holders are also included under this scheme	60
Tutorial scheme for school going students and failed students	Target students studying at SSLC, Plus-one and Plus-two, and students failed at SSLC and Plus-two	85

Table 2: Schemes to Promote Schooling at UP, HS and Higher Secondary Level  
\*Outlay during 2012-13

Source: Budget Circular and Tribal Sub-Plan Programmes, (2012)

There are three schemes for promoting tribal education at UP and High School levels viz. Ayyankali Memorial Talent Search and Development Scheme, special incentive to brilliant students, and tutorial scheme for school going and failed students. The first two schemes are targeting brilliant tribal students and the third one is targeting tribal students who are weak in learning subjects. Among the two scholarship schemes, only first one is specifically targeting the school students. The special incentive scheme is meant for those students who secure first class in S.S.L.C, Plus-Two, graduation, post graduation and professional courses and for which Rs 60 lakhs has been allocated during 2012-13. The students selected through an intelligence test conducted at the end of standard IV and VII are eligible for Ayyankali Memorial Talent Search and Development Scholarship. An amount of Rs 45 lakhs has been allocated towards this scheme during 2012-13 which covers the cost of books, medical care, hostel facilities, special guidance and counselling of the selected students.

For tutorial facilities, an amount of Rs 85 lakhs is being allocated under the State Plan during the year 2012-13. The scheme is extremely beneficial for tribal students but, the coverage of the scheme is limited to school going students studying at 10<sup>th</sup> level, Plus-one and Plus-two, and also for 10<sup>th</sup> and Plus-two failed students. The dropout rate indicates that irrespective of the levels of schooling there are significant number of students dropping out at each class. The nature of schemes implemented for promoting school education indicates that the authorities have failed to build policies which can improve the enrolment and reduce the school dropout rate of tribal students.

### 3. Conclusion

After the implementation of TSP, we can see that there is tremendous increase in the allocation of funds for the tribal development. It is also seen that the education outlay under TSP for Kerala is increasing over the years. But, the major proportion of these funds is allocated for running, construction and maintenance of Model Residential Schools. This indicates that only less amount is left for implementing other projects. In many cases, the allocated funds are found to be inadequate especially for construction and maintenance of pre-matric and post-matric hostel which are necessary for resolving the physical inaccessibility faced by the tribal students. Considering the important problems in tribal education such as low enrolment and continuing high dropouts at schools, the

authorities have failed to frame new policies to resolve such serious problems. In this context, there is a need for increasing the existing budget allocation under TSP for education and the government should come out with new projects to reduce high dropouts in tribal areas.

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