

## *Chapter 3*

### **Economy**

Tribal economy, wherever it is found in the world, is characterised by backwardness in comparison to modern standards. The technology which the tribals use are best fitted with their environs and traditional attitude. Economic organisation of Indian tribes matches well with the rest of the world. Basically, tribal economy focuses on their elementary sustenance needs. Few among the elementary features of tribal economy are as follows: -

*Geographical and Cultural Isolation:* Tribals generally prefers to stay in out-of-the-way and remote areas and maintain their discrete cultural heritage.

*Primitive Technology:* The technology which the tribal economy use is quite simple and crude. Tools are either made by the user himself or are acquired for free from craftsmen or manufacturing groups.

*Limited market exchange:* Maximum of the resources, goods and services within a tribal society take place in a limited sphere, both population-wise as well as regarding physical space.

The community itself behaves like a supportive unit. Tribal communities are economically inter-dependent. The distribution is generally based on gift and ceremonial exchange.<sup>1</sup> The economic system of a tribal society is indistinguishable from its social organisation. The former is really an extension of the latter. The community is largely dependent on the forces of nature which are propitiated through numerous rites and rituals, that are performed individually or in groups. The entire community takes part altogether. Religion flowers spontaneously within the tribal social and economic life and becomes an invisible thread fully integrated into the whole system. The livelihood of the individual, therefore, is not governed by concepts of utility and exchange, which are commonplace in

modern society. The community is more like a big family in which they tolerate and support each other; communal enjoyment of the fruits of labour may finally settle all their mutual disputes. The surplus produce with an individual may not be meant for storage but might be used in arranging a big feast or a grand festivity to gain prestige. The community is administered by its own social code which is influenced by its level of economic development. The role and responsibilities of women in the economic life are substantially higher than in advanced societies. Women are equivalent cohorts in tribal life and, in fact, contributes a bigger share of labour input.<sup>2</sup>

In the pre-independence time tribals living in forests, hills and even on the plains were out-of-the-way from the normal national life. The standing of the tribals was unsatisfactory due to negligence and exploitation by the administrator. The architects of the Indian constitution paid special devotion to the tribal problems, keeping in view nation's commitment to equality and social justice as treasured in the Preamble to the constitution. As already pointed out at length in the preceding chapters, the British Government followed a strategy of isolating the tribals both because the administration of tribal areas was difficult and the government sought to quarantine the tribals from political upsurge in the remaining part of the country. British administrator might have sincerely believed that the tribals would remain happier and better if they were permitted to live as they were. But the result was that it hampered the advancement of competence amid the tribals. They were incompetent to face the growing challenges of the contemporary world and were forced to depend on traditional methods.<sup>3</sup> Their rights in forest were encroached upon. Outside elements introduced for the persistence of government and forest work continued to exploit them.<sup>4</sup> The land and forest resource of the tribals were steadily and progressively taken up by rich people from outside, like landlords and money lenders. The tribals were twisted into bonded labourers and forced to lead a life of severe poverty. They

revolted often against such conditions but the outside world remained unfamiliar to them.<sup>5</sup> Poor and inaccessible routes of communication and lack of interest of the rulers in them halted any prospect of improvement in tribal conditions. Whatever development took place within them was due to the exertions of Christian Missionary.

Since independence, the intention of the government has been to assimilate the tribals with the normal national life. This approach of integration was the brain child of Nehru administration which implemented a policy of protecting tribal interests through legal measures besides introducing development programmes to expand the living standard of the tribals. Several constitutional provisions (ex. Article, 46) were made for tribal welfare. The Constitution proposed a framework for enabling the tribals to indulge in the mainstream of national life and ensured suitable protection and support, wherever necessary. The administration reached that it was obligatory to make some exceptions for tribal areas and that they may not entirely be fetched under all institutions and laws prevailing elsewhere in the country.<sup>6</sup> Many schemes of development were thus formulated and implemented. Efforts were taken to advance the Scheduled Tribes socially, economically and culturally.

Separate Tribal Development Blocks in the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) succeeded the formation of Special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks in 1956 of which reference has been given in the earlier chapter. Tribal Sub-plan (TSP) within the State plan at the time of the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79), the formation of Large-scale Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS), Tribal Development Agencies, Integrated Tribal Development Area Projects (ITDA), Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) and Micro Projects for Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) were taken up in that regard.<sup>7</sup>

### **3.1. Five Year Plans and Tribal Development**

Planned economic development was implemented as the national policy in India soon after Independence. The tribal communities, like all other constituent clusters in the nation, were probable to contribute to this national endeavour regarding quality without discrimination of any kind. The distinctive socio-economic circumstances of the tribal areas and tribal communities was recognised by the tribal national leadership from the very beginning. The Constitution constructed a framework for permitting the tribal communities to connect with the mainstream of national life and for ensuring suitable protection and support, wherever necessary, from their traditions, maintaining their identity.<sup>8</sup> The planners were delegated with the charge of determining objectives and approaches of tribal development.

The First Five Year Plan (1951-56), while admitting that there may be some validation for such a strategy of non-interference to the tribals, informed that it was not accurate as the tribal life get inclined by social forces from outside, and tribal communities have reached a certain degree of acculturation escorted by the diffusion of communications in the tribal areas, and of social amenities for the advancement of their lives.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Community Development Programme for overall development of rural areas, especially among the weaker sections, was started.

During the Second Five Year Plan (1956 -1961) the Ministry of Home Affairs provided funds to the Ministry of Community Development for the establishment of Special Multi-purpose Tribal Blocks (SMPT) in areas with a large make of tribal population. This programme gave the initial effort in the direction of cohesive tribal development.<sup>10</sup>

During the Second Plan the government of India appointed a committee in 1959 under the chairmanship of Verrier Elwin to evaluate the functioning of these Blocks. By

the recommendations of these committee SMPT Blocks were retitled as Tribal Development Blocks (TDB) at the time of the Third Plan period. The committee proposed that many new blocks to be established in all those areas where more than half of the population are tribe.<sup>11</sup>

The Tribal Development Agencies (TDA's) were established at the time of the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-1974) for the upliftment of tribal and rural families. The Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, initiated this programme mainly for small and marginal farmers. The Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agencies (ALDA) were the foremost in the series. Devotion was distracted from area development to the development of individuals who were proficient of special consideration according to certain objective criteria. The Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) was another measure in the similar direction but with a difference. Here attention was paid to the complications facing regions which were affected due to their agro-climatic condition. Tribal Development Agencies (TDA's) were established on the pattern of SFDA to concentrate on the difficulties of the tribal population. The level of investment here was more than what was allotted to the TD Blocks. During the Fourth Plan, six tribal development agencies were started. Each Tribal Development Agency enclosed a group of TD Blocks. Tribal Development Agencies were expected to encompass elements of economic development, social services and prospective measures. Since it was clear that the actions of the TDBS had not been properly integrated with the general development plans for the region, measures were taken to rectify this drawback by adopting the integrated area development approach. During the middle of the Fourth Five Year Plan, i.e., in the year 1972, the Planning Commission set up a "Task force on Development of Tribal Areas" with L. P. Vidyarthi as the Chairman. It came to the conclusion that, in spite of various kinds of investment by the

State and Central governments, the problems of the basic tribal like the backward methods of technology in agriculture, land alienation, indebtedness, low rate of literacy, poor health of nutrition, adverse effects of industrialization etc., had not been resolved. An important reason for this in the committee's opinion was the fact that the tribal problem had so far been viewed as one of promoting their 'welfare' divorced from considerations of their development.<sup>12</sup>

A Task Force was constituted at the commencement of Fifth Five Year Plan in 1971 to review the progress that had been made so far and to suggest future programmes. The recommendations of this Task Force were merged into the Fifth Five Year Plan for the tribal development.<sup>13</sup> The Task Force recommended the division of tribal into the following categories: (i) Area of Tribal Concentration, (ii) Scattered Tribals and (iii) Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). The Home Ministry, Government of India, issued thereafter directives for the identification and development of Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). The following criteria were considered for the identification of PTGs:

(i) Pre-Level of agricultural technology, (ii) Low Literacy Rate, (iii) Isolated and Disappearing Population. Based on these criteria, 75 PTGs were identified all over the country; West Bengal has 3 PTGs. A special programme for their development has been launched.

An altogether new approach was adopted for the advancement of the tribals at the time of Fifth Five Year Plan. This was termed as Tribal Sub-plan. It forecasted the over-all development of the tribal areas and provided the mechanism for assimilating the developmental activities of the government and the semi government organizations by sponsoring through the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP). The goal of the Sub-Plan was to slender the distance between the heights of growth of tribal and other areas, and enlightening the excellence of life of the tribal communities in general.<sup>14</sup>

The programme of Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) was initiated during the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85). By the termination of the Sixth Five Year Plan period, altogether 245 MADA projects were established in the country. Through these MADA Projects, 75% of the S.T population were benefited. Tribal scattered in different areas were failed to be fetched under the MADA project, which they sought to do. Attempts were made through the MADA projects for the expansion of education, health and sanitation among S.Ts. Emphasis has also been made to abolish oppression and indebtedness among the tribals.<sup>15</sup>

The basic premises of the Tribal Sub-Plan continued throughout the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90). The Tribal Sub-Plan strategy during the Seventh Plan comprised of the following:

- (a) Identification of the Development Blocks where tribal population are in mainstream and their composition into ITDPs with an opinion to implement an integrated and project-based approach for their development.
- (b) Coloration of funds for the Tribal Sub-Plan and safeguarding flow of funds through the States, sectorised outlays and financial institutions.
- (c) Formation of proper administrative structures in tribal areas and implementation of proper personnel strategies.

Though in the approach, pattern or structure did not display any change, better co-ordination was sought to be attained between the various agencies. Priority were given to the social services. Large-scale Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS) were reinforced through augmentation of their popular base. The Seventh Plan focused on rehabilitation of poor tribals and the eradication of tribal women's backwardness.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of all efforts to branch out economic activities in non-formal sectors, agriculture continues to be the principal source of livelihood in TSP areas. The main

stagger is being on the expansion of fisheries, sericulture, horticulture, plantation on waste land and growing vegetables. During the Eighth Plan these areas were to provide additional income and new strides of employment to the tribals.<sup>17</sup>

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) set a target of seven percent growth rate for the economy. The core objectives of the Ninth Plan were the generation of adequate productive employment, eradication of poverty, empowerment of women and socially underprivileged clusters. The aim was to warrant food and nutritional security for all, particularly the vulnerable sections of society. The Ninth Plan therefore, sought to implement people-oriented planning in which the, government and the people, particularly the poor, could fully participate. As the approach paper to the Ninth Five Year Plan put it “the principal task of the Ninth Plan was to usher in a new era of people oriented planning, in which not only the government at the Centre and the States, but the people at large, particularly the poor, can fully participate.”<sup>18</sup> A participatory planning procedure is an indispensable precondition for endorsing impartiality as well as quickening the growth rate of the economy. For approaching this goal, the Government of India enacted an amendment (1993, 1<sup>st</sup> June) to the Constitution of India (73rd Amendment) for ensuring representation of backward and marginalised communities e.g. Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and women in Panchayati Raj institutions. The draft report of the committee on decentralized planning and Panchayati Raj for the design of the Ninth Five Year Plan mentioned that “... large parts of the country and vast section of the population have been untouched by this progress. The approach for the Ninth Five Year Plan has drawn attention to the need for national policy for tribal development.”<sup>19</sup> Efforts were made to guarantee that the tribal economy was protected and supported against threats from the external markets. The ownership rights of the tribal people in respect of minor



forest produce vis-a-vis the use of medicinal plants was protected as per the provision of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

Based on the facts it became necessary at the commencement of the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) <sup>20</sup> recorded in The Mid-Term Appraisal of the Ninth Five Year Plan, (1997-2002) to state that “A small bunch of bureaucratic programmes had done little to avert the precipitous pauperization, exploitation and disintegration of tribal communities and therefore, most of the persistent problems like poverty, indebtedness, land alienation, displacement, deterioration of forest villages and the tribes living therein, shifting cultivation etc., continue to persist even till today as the ‘Unresolved Issues of Tribal Development’, the Tenth Five Year Plan lays down its first priority in finding solutions to these very Unresolved Issues. Solutions to this effect can best be found only when the deprivation and exploitation of tribes is eradicated. The Tenth Plan will, therefore, adopt eradication of deprivation/exploitation of tribes as the centre-point in its approach, while pursuing simultaneously the Ninth Plan commitment of empowering the tribes”.

The Eleventh Plan<sup>21</sup> experienced a paradigm swing regarding the overall empowerment of the tribal people, keeping the issues associated to governance at the centre. The operational essentials of the Fifth Schedule, Tribal Sub Plan 1976, Panchayat ESA 1996, RFRA 2006; the appeal of a tribal centric, tribal-participative and tribal-managed expansion procedure; and the necessity for a cognizant withdrawal from dependence on a mostly under-effective official delivery system were anticipated to be considered at the time of this swing.

### **3.2. Governmental Schemes and Tribal Development in West Bengal**

#### ***Public Distribution System (PDS)***

India’s Public Distribution System (PDS) is the principal distribution organization of its sort in the world. PDS was familiarized at the time of World War II as a war-time

rationing system. PDS originated as a scheme of handling scarceness and for disbursement of foodgrains at reasonably priced prices. Gradually, it developed into an imperative part of Government's policy for managing food economy of the country. PDS is supplemental in the sense that it is not projected to make accessible the entire prerequisite of any of the commodities circulated under it to a household or a segment of the society.<sup>22</sup>

Dholakia and Khurana addressed PDS as “a retailing system supervised and guided by the State.”<sup>23</sup> Progress Evaluation Organisation, Government of India (1985) demarcated PDS as a “set up under which specified commodities of everyday use are procured and made available to consumers through a network of FPS in urban as well as in rural areas.” The scheme functions under the joint accountability of Central and State Governments. The Central Government is in authority for obtaining, storage, carriage and bulk distribution of food grains, while State Governments are in authority for disbursement to consumers through the system of Fair Price Shops (FPS). States have the operative tasks plus allocation within the State, identification of below poverty line families, disbursement of ration cards, management and witnessing the effectiveness of FPS. Under the PDS, currently certain commodities specifically wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene are given to the States/UTs for distribution. Few States/UTs also distribute extra stuffs of mass consumption through PDS like pulses, edible oils, iodized salt, spices, etc. In the narrow sense, PDS is familiar with fair price shops.

The PDS, as it is recognized in India, has grown over a long time. It was originated from victims of famines and droughts. They are ascribed to be of the nature of fire-fighting operation “concerned only with putting out the flames and providing a modest measure of temporary relief to the affected population”.<sup>24</sup> This type of effort was initially taken up in 1939 under the British government specifically at the initial phase of Second

World War. The government focused on the disbursement of food grains to the deprived of few cities where severe insufficiency circumstances was observed, and also in states where private trade was unsuccessful in providing commodities affordable by the poor.

Far ahead in 1943, as a result of great Bengal Famine, this distribution system was extended to further cities and towns. Prolonged periods of economic trauma and disruption, like wars and famines, gave intensification to this type of food security system. Primarily it concerned itself with administrating scarce food supplies. Subsequently it was found obligatory to practice a more organised and institutionalised approach, together with measures overhanging usual happenings of market and trade. This form of providing food security happened in India for long, in terms of constitutional rationing in selected urban areas and endures to be present even today in a few urban centres.<sup>25</sup>

The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in 1997 was transformed from a general and universal scheme to a scheme targeting food subsidy (in proportion to state poverty levels estimated by the Planning Commission) to BPL households. Following the guidance given in a persuasive World Bank document,<sup>26</sup> the Government of India presented the TPDS in order to shorten the food subsidy. The policy originated targeting the households based on income criterion, that is, the income poverty line was used to delineate 'poor' and 'non-poor' households. The TPDS has a 2-tiered pricing structure for Below Poverty line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) households. In addition, the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) was introduced in December 2000, as a sub-scheme to benefit the poorest of the poor.

The entitlements for the BPL and AAY households are fixed (cereals per household per month) and also the issue prices. Although these are revised over time, the subsidy transfer per household has been rising over time. The APL allocation and prices depend on the availability of grain stocks and the expenses included and are changed more

frequently. The two main hitches of the TPDS are related to errors in delivery and targeting. These add to the “cost” of delivering one rupee of subsidy to a “poor” household.<sup>27</sup>

The beneficiaries of the TPDS are categorised into three groups, viz. the general households, the Antyodaya households and the priority households. Though the identification criteria for these three groups are not mentioned in the Act, but the following sections of the population are seen to have benefited from the priority category: landless labourers; small and marginal farmers (with land up to two hectares); workers in urban informal sector and households of construction workers. The Antyodaya category will comprise of Vulnerable Tribal Groups, households regulated by terminally ill persons, widows or single women; physically challenged persons; households headed by a person aged 60 years or more with no means of subsistence; persons freed from bonded labour and those who are entitled to the Mukhyamantri Khadyanna Sahayata Yojana.

#### *Objectives of PDS in India*

Historically, the aims of the PDS have been:

- Maintaining price stability,
- Provisioning subsidized foodgrains to poor households,
- Uplifting the welfare amenities for the poor (by providing access to basic foods at reasonable prices to the vulnerable population),
- Rationing at the time of scarcity, and
- Cross checking private trade of foodgrains.

It is observable that few among these aims are less significant today than it was in the past. The initial aims are very important. Rather, sustaining price firmness is vital in the post-liberalization era as private traders have prearranged a free hand and international price fluctuations can simply disturb domestic prices. In the milieu of prevalent

malnutrition and inflation in food prices, admittance to elementary foods at affordable prices remains an important policy intrusion.

Under this project, the Central and State governments share the responsibility of providing food grains to the recognized beneficiaries. The Centre obtains food grains from farmers at Minimum Support Price (MSP) and vends it to states at Central issued prices. It bears the responsibility of transferring the grains to godowns in each state. Further, it is the State's obligation of transferring food grains from these godowns to each fair price shop, where the recipient purchases the food grains at the lower Central issue price. Lots of states subsidize the price of food grains further prior of selling to recipients. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the only agency at the Centre that is accountable for transporting food grains to the State godowns.

State-level ministries of food and civil supplies regulates links ration shops within their establishments, and are accountable for allocating licenses to the private traders who works under it. State governments also offers 'ration cards' to their residents. Once they were used on a nominally universal basis, but more recently they are supplied to a 'targeted' basis and determine the quantities to which consumers are entitled.

Dev and Suryanaryana (1991)<sup>28</sup> made an evaluation of the act of PDS using the National Sample Survey (NSS) data. Their findings exhibited that the relative dependence on the PDS was much higher in rural areas as related to those of urban areas. The NSS data at the all-India level displayed that the PDS was not favouring the middle or richer groups but it may be noted that although the focus of the PDS is to help vulnerable sections of the society, in the absenteeism of a proper verification, the rich are getting about 20-50 percent of their purchases from the PDS particularly for commodities like rice, sugar and kerosene.

Radhakrishnan et al (1997)<sup>29</sup> and Deaton (1999)<sup>30</sup> have quantitatively evaluated the extent to which PDS is able to alleviate poverty. PDS is generally disapproved for its urban favouritism and its catastrophe to assist effectively the deprived group of the population. But such evaluation failed to contemplate the counterfactual and considered the fiscal transfer as the net gain accumulating to the poor using PDS.

India's Public Distribution System is a vital resource for providing food security to the deprived people. It is a foremost concern for government to raise food accessibility to the poor. Thus, it has a vital role in helping the deprived people. Many people died earlier because of malnutrition. Yet, the fact remains that till now PDS provide only temporary relief.

In comparison with the other castes the Scheduled Tribes people received more benefit from PDS both in terms of quantity and value (Table 3.1 and Table 3.2). Their benefits also augmented over time. In 2004-05, only 33 per cent ST received PDS benefits which increased to 76.3 per cent in 2011-12. In 2011-12, the majority of STs (76.1 per cent) received 0.1 to 2 kg food grains per capita per month.

**Table 3.1 Per capita per Month PDS Foodgrains for Tribal People in West Bengal, 2004 and 2011**

PDS (in Kg)	2004-05					2011-12				
	ST	SC	OBC	General	Total	ST	SC	OBC	GEN	Total
0	66.9	68.6	75.3	83.4	77.8	21.7	45.6	50.2	61.3	54.1
0.1-2	21.3	21.3	19.9	10.9	15.0	76.1	53.8	49.0	37.2	44.7
2--5	7.5	8.0	4.3	4.5	5.6	1.0	0.5	0.4	1.2	0.9
5--10	3.0	1.9	0.4	1.1	1.4	1.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2
10 & Above	1.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
All	100	100	100	100	100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's Estimation from NSSO unit level data of Consumption Expenditure in India, 64<sup>th</sup> Round 2004-05 and 68<sup>th</sup> Round 2011-12

**Table 3.2 PDS (in Rs.) for Tribal People in West Bengal, 2004-05 and 2011-12**

PDS (in Rs)	2004-05					2011-12				
	ST	SC	OBC	General	Total	ST	SC	OBC	GEN	Total
0	66.9	68.6	75.3	83.4	77.8	21.6	45.6	50.0	60.8	53.8
0.01-10	25.8	19.8	18.6	10.1	14.3	33.7	22.5	25.6	20.4	22.1
10--30	5.4	9.9	5.0	5.1	6.4	37.9	30.4	22.5	16.2	21.8
30--60	0.9	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.2	4.8	1.3	1.4	2.1	1.9
60 & Above	1.0	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.3	2.0	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.4
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: As in Table 3.1

### ***Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)***

This scheme is an employment-oriented urban poverty alleviation scheme. The Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) pursues to deliver lucrative employment to the urban unemployed or underemployed poor by reassuring self-employment schemes or establishment of wage employment. The triumph of this programme depends on the formation of suitable community structures on the UBSP pattern. This programme is administered through urban local bodies and community groups.

The Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana is sponsored on a 75:25 basis among the Centre and the States. It consists of two schemes, namely - (i) The Urban Self Employment Programme (USEP) (ii) The Urban Wage Employment Programme (UWEP).<sup>31</sup> The Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) was announced on 01.12.1997 after merging the schemes explicitly Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY), Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP), and Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP). This scheme also offers subsidiary skill development and training programmes to the urban poor so that they can have access to the market condition. The programme goals the urban poor, i.e. those living below the poverty line, as demarcated by the Planning Commission over time.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Swarna Jayanti Shahari

Rozgar Yojana with an opinion to solidify these local bodies and community organizations addressed the issues of employment and income generation faced by the urban poor.

### ***Sampoorna Rojgar Yojana***

To provide a larger push to supplementary wage employment, infrastructural development and food security in the rural areas, the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana was inaugurated on 25 September 2001, with a yearly expense of Rs.10000 crore. The scheme was articulated by assimilating the previous Employment Assurance Scheme (the only Additional Wage Employment Scheme for rural areas) and Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (a Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme). It visualizes generation of 100 crore mandays of employment annually and stretches a push to additional wage employment, infrastructure development and food security. It is instigated with the prime objective of providing additional wage employment in all rural areas, thus providing food security and improved nutritional level. The secondary objective of the scheme comprises formation of durable commodity, social and economic assets and infrastructure development in rural areas.<sup>33</sup>

The chief intention of the Scheme is to provide skilled and local employment and thus improve skills levels in all rural and urban areas. The scheme is built for all rural and urban unemployed educated youth who wants employment and are ready to do physical and skilled work in and nearby locality/village/habitat. Beneficiary gets fixed wages and enticements on the basis of their performance.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the scheme is self-targeting in nature

For wage employment, priority is certain for agricultural wage earners, non-agricultural unskilled wage earners, marginal farmers, women, members of SC/ST families, parents of child labour withdrawn from hazardous occupations, parents of handicapped children, and adult children (above the age of 16 years) of handicapped



parents who are keen to work for wage employment. SGRY has special safeguards for the frailer sections of the community i.e. the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Resources are earmarked under both the streams for taking up activities exclusively for SC/ST families and communities.<sup>35</sup>

### ***National Rural Employment Guarantee Act***

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005, further retitled as the “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act” (MGNREGA), is an Indian labour law and social security measure that goals to assure ‘right to work’. It purposes to guarantee living security in rural areas by assuring at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to each household whose adult members accepts to do unskilled physical work.<sup>36</sup> It is a significant schemes initiated by government to attain inclusive growth preliminary with 200 districts on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006; the MGNREGA incorporated all the districts of India from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.<sup>37</sup> The statute was addressed by the government at the time of its inception as “the largest and most ambitious social security and public works programme in the world”.<sup>38</sup>

The MGNREGA was introduced with the objective of “enhancing livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work”.<sup>39</sup> Another purpose of MGNREGA is to generate durable assets (such as roads, canals, ponds, wells). Employment is to be generated within 5 km of an aspirant's dwelling place, and at least subsistence wage is to be remunerated. If work is not given within 15 days of applying, aspirants will get unemployment allowance. Thus, employment under MGNREGA is a legal privilege.

MGNREGA is executed mainly by gram panchayats (GPs). The engrossment of contractors is barred. Labour-intensive tasks like generating infrastructure for water

harvesting, drought relief and flood control are favoured. Not only it ensures economic security and generates rural assets, it also supports in shielding the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity, among others.<sup>40</sup> The law offers many protections to promote its operative management and implementation. The act clearly indicates the principles and agencies for implementation, a list of works sanctioned under it, their financing and most prominently the comprehensive measures to guarantee transparency and culpability.

MGNREGA ensures in minimum of 100 working days. The figure of ST job card holders increased from 6.7 lakh in 2006-07 to 10.19 lakh in 2010-11. Maximum of the ST households in West Bengal have MGNREGA job card. The number of person days of employment under MGNREGA also increased from 81.88 to 208.30 lakh during this period. (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3 Performance of ST Households of MGNREGA in West Bengal, 2006-07 to 2010-11 (In lakh)**

No./Year	2006- 07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Total job cards	6.70	9.65	10.17	10.75	10.19
Person days Generated	81.88	133.71	116.53	223.18	208.30

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

***Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)***

The Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme scheme was publicized on 15th August, 2008. It is a credit accompanying Scheme of Govt. of India by amalgamating erstwhile REGP and PMRY scheme. The principal objective is to produce unrelenting and sustainable employment opportunities in Rural and Urban areas of the country.

Government of India has permitted the initiation of a new credit associated subsidy programme so-called Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) by integration two schemes that were in action till 31.03.2008 specifically Prime Minister’s

Rojgar Yojana (PMRY) and Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) for generation of employment opportunities by forming micro enterprises in rural and urban areas. PMEGP is directed by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME). It is executed through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), a legal organization under the directorial controller of the Ministry of MSME as the single prime agency at the national level. The concern for administering the scheme at the State level lies with the State KVIC Directorates, the State Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs), District Industries Centres (DICs) and banks. The Government subsidy under this grasps the identified Banks through the KVIC for eventual distribution among the beneficiaries / entrepreneurs. The executing agencies, namely KVIC, KVIBs and DICs supported Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) autonomous institutions/Self Help Groups (SHGs)/ National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) / Udyami Mitras empanelled under Rajiv Gandhi Udyami Mitra Yojana (RGUMY), Panchayati Raj institutions and other relevant bodies in executing the Scheme, specifically in identifying beneficiaries, initiation area specific viable projects, and providing training in entrepreneurship development.<sup>41</sup> The intensions of the scheme are laid down as follows:

- (i) To create employment prospects in both rural and urban areas of the country by setting up of new self-employment ventures/projects/micro enterprises.
- (ii) To bring together artisans engaged in the traditional mode of production and the rural and urban unemployed segments among the youth and provide self-employment prospects to the level conceivable, at their place.
- (iii) To offer continual and sustainable employment to a large segment of traditional and plausible artisans and rural and urban unemployed youth to help seize migration of rural youth to urban areas.

- (iv) To increase the wage-earning potential of artisans and help in the economic growth rate among the rural and urban employment.<sup>42</sup>

The following kinds of persons are suitable to apply under this scheme:

- (i) Any individual, above 18 years of age.
- (ii) There will be no income ceiling for backing in setting up projects under PMEGP.
- (iii) Assistance under the Scheme is available only for new projects sanctioned specifically under the PMEGP.
- (iv) Self Help Groups (including those belonging to BPL provided that they have not availed any benefits under any other Scheme).<sup>43</sup>

#### ***Aajeevika – National Rural Livelihoods Programme***

Aajeevika was initiated by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India in June, 2011. NRLM was established with an outline to include 7 Crore rural poor households, across 600 districts, 6000 blocks, 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats and 6 lakh villages in the country using self-managed Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and amalgamated institutions and sustaining them for livelihoods within a period of 8-10 years. In addition, the poor tribal people would be helped to accomplish increased access to their rights, entitlements and public services, diversified risk and improved social indicators of empowerment.<sup>44</sup>

#### ***Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)***

Under SGSY financial assistance is given to members of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and also to tribal families for generating income and creating assets with the help of bank credit and subsidy. The objective of the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is to bring the poor families (Swarozgaries) above the poverty level by ensuring significant sustained level of income over a given span of time. This motive is

accomplished by forming the rural poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) so that their training and skill development and establishment of income creating assets are improved. The SHG approach supports the deprived tribal people to build their self-possession by community action and interaction between different groups in the form of group meetings and aims to help them in collective decision making enabling them to identify and prioritize their desires and resources. This would facilitate not only monitoring what is more important in identifying and providing the various services required by them.<sup>45</sup>

### **3.3. Economic Status of Tribal People in West Bengal**

Tribal culture in India is passing through a phase of transition to the economic change that is taking place in the country. Modern technology and concepts have been developed. The tribal economy too is moving towards modern economy as of the advent of few new economic typologies amidst them, viz., labourer type and white-collar job type. It is very hard to find a modest and specific form or trend of modification in tribal economy as it is fast fluctuating on local levels. But the finest approach to the identification of the change would be to consider the different new economic activities and developments on one hand and the description of new resultant forms of economic activities which have emerged on the other.

As tribal people mostly live near to forest and rugged terrain of hilly plateau surface and the ecozones negative to agriculture, they primarily dependent on their surrounding environment for food supply, primitive economy or tribal economy altogether stand for man's almost absolute dependence on nature for food supply and collection with very low degree of manipulation of natural resources. Non-specialization of economic involvement is the unique feature of primitive or tribal economy. But simultaneously the tribals are now in transition and have been increasingly exposed to over widening market mechanism. The tribal economy is very fast losing its distinctiveness and identities. In

fact, interference of market mechanism is prominent in major spheres of tribal economy like resource availability, economic participation and activities, network of economic relationship, ownership of land and inheritance of community land by individuals, differentiation of professions and role specialization. In fact, land and labour of tribal society are now within the purview of market economy.<sup>46</sup> The modern economic activities are changing the traditional tribal economy. The following modern forces need mention in the changed context of new economy of the tribes, viz.: education, new link of tribal market, co-operatives, money lenders, commercial bank etc.

### ***Education and Economic Development***

Educational development is an indispensable commitment for social and economic advancement of any community. This is predominantly true in case of West Bengal tribes. Educational backwardness occurs due to economic, social and political backwardness. Education has dual role to play. Apart from being an important input for the economic development of tribes, it also helps in enhancing their inner strength for facing the upcoming challenges of life. The education has received a grand welcome by the tribals and the elites among the tribals are fast moving towards urban and industrial fields for white-collar jobs in public or private enterprises and business. The tribes are taking up new jobs according to their educational qualifications.<sup>47</sup>

A good economy is an important determining factor for full-fledged development of all aspects of human life i.e. education, social, health, material culture and so on. In other words, poor economic condition is a great hindrance in any developmental work including education. One of the elementary weaknesses of the new situation is the non-communication at various levels between the two systems. Therefore, a comprehensive educational programme will be the most important input for harmonising the relationship between the industrial and the tribal world. It will be obligatory to evolve suitable

programmes of formal and non-formal education and orientation programmes addressed to different groups in the area. A well organised comprehensive citizen education programme may become a crucial element in providing the protective shield to the local community. To restructure the formal educational system itself keeping in view the requirements of the score sector and the task of enabling the local community to join the industrial society at various levels conditional on their academic and professional attainment.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Tribal Markets***

Tribal life has experienced many changes from the time that tribal economics have begun to be the international market. The co-operative movement has also been an important factor in bringing about this change. Tribals are accepting new seeds and fertilizers from the co-operatives. Forest labour co-operative societies and banks are providing financial assistance for the generation of forest resources. Emergence of a commercial aptitude is directly replicated in the increase in the production of potatoes, green vegetables, etc.<sup>49</sup>

### ***Tribes and Forest***

The United Nations Report <sup>50</sup> on tribal development succinctly brings it out and states as follows:

“Tribal people in general, acquire either directly or indirectly a considerable amount of their livelihood from the forests. They subsist on edible leaves and roots, honey, fish and wild game. They build their homes with timber and bamboo and practice cottage crafts with the assistance of local raw materials. They use herb and medicinal plants to cure their disease and even their religion and folk-lore are woven round the spirits of the forests. Commercial transactions are predominantly by barter, trade being left mostly to the outsiders who controlled the money economy.”

The colonial state intruded upon the very concept to property in India. It was interested only in increasing its revenue, for which reason<sup>51</sup> promoted extension of cultivation, with the result that forest land decreased continuously. The forest became for the first time a resource controlled and regulated for the profit of the British Empire and British capital. This brought the colonial regime in direct conflict with forest dwellers or the tribes with their deeply entrenched notion of ownership of forest and its resources.<sup>52</sup>

Tribals have continuously been dependent on forests to gratify the basic needs of their life. They consume fruits and herbal medicine and their houses with leaves and straw. They use the timber both for fuel and construction purposes and trade in the importance of forests has been realised at a national level. A new perception of ecological services has emerged that underlines the need for compensating the forest dwellers and forest managers for the services they perform in conserving moisture, storing water, providing biomass, recharging ground water, etc., for the benefit of the communities living in the plains or elsewhere.<sup>53</sup>

After the Second World War, development schemes were initiated in almost all the states in India in addition to prescriptions regular working plans. In the post-independence period, these arrangements were inadequate to realize the needs of the situation. The increment in cultivation encouraged by the government sponsored Grow More Food campaigns also resulted in much clearing of forest areas. Inevitably, the pressure of a rapidly increasing population, increased demand for wood and the growing imbalance of the land under permanent vegetation (forest) and land under cultivation highlighted the crucial issue of forest management in ecological and economic terms in the state of West Bengal.<sup>54</sup>

Any attempt to reduce their activities in this regard led to conflict with the tribal population. Co-operative societies and corporations have been formed in several states for



the systematic collection and sale of minor forest products so that the proceeds are not misappropriated by the intermediaries like moneylenders and contractors. The commonly adopted occupations which most of the tribals follow in and around forests include cattle rearing, pig rearing, poultry farming and the rearing of cattle and sheep, the felling of trees, transport of logs, charcoal and catechu making, collection of grass and the making of charcoal and catechu etc.

The beginning of a forest policy<sup>55</sup> in India may be dated to the year 1894 when it was stated that - "The sole object to which the management of forests is to be dedicated is to promote the general well-being of the country. The maintenance of adequate forests is dictated primarily for the preservation of the climate and physical conditions of the country and secondly, to fulfil the needs of the people." The government of India first professed the forest policy in 1952. The subsequent forest policy of the Government of India has been in accordance with declaration of 1952. This synchronised with the recommendations of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations.<sup>56</sup>

It said - "While Forest Regulation, forest education and forest research constitute the basis for sound forest management, the wellbeing and goodwill of the people in the neighbourhood of forests offer the steady ground on which it stands, no forest policy, however, well intentioned and methodically drawn up, has the slenderest chance of success without the enthusiastic support and co-operation of the people. Only knowing their rights to forest produce or, free of royalty, is not enough but what is necessary is the curiosity in them for the utilisation of forests. Intermediaries who exploit both the forests and the local labour for their own gain may with advantage be formed to suit local conditions. Once the local population learns to look upon the forests as a means of its livelihood, a great step forward will have been taken."<sup>57</sup>

The steps taken by the government of West Bengal in the arena of forest management in the early years after independence were similar to those of Tamil Nadu. One outstanding feature was the taking over proprietorship of most of the private forests of the state by the Forest Department by the execution of the West Bengal Estate Requisition Act, 1953 (Act I of 1954) and also the transfer of forest areas of Manbhum and Purnea from Bihar to West Bengal, with effect from 1 November 1956. Here also an excessive determination was made to Vana Mahotsava and wildlife preservation activities during 1955-60.<sup>58</sup>

The tribal Panchsheel enjoins that the rights of the tribal on land and forests ought to be valued. This is keynote to be trailed in dealing with the tribals regarding forests. In order to exercise closer control over the use of forest produce, the tribals were not allowed by the forest staff the rights which they thought were their due. They were simply given certain concession or privileges<sup>59</sup> which were as follows:

- i. Right to take water for agriculture purposes.
- ii. Digging of wells or canals for agricultural purposes.
- iii. Free grazing in exposed forests.
- iv. Removal of timber, bamboos, reeds, canes, etc. for creation and mending of houses and for agricultural implements.
- v. Collection and removal of head loads of dead wood for domestic use.
- vi. Gathering of grass for cattle and for covering their huts.
- vii. Cultivation of forest lands, etc.

Process for execution of the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and Rules 2008 has started. Under this Act, Scheduled Tribes who have been using forest lands for their residence or livelihood will be granted forest rights. Similar rights will be granted to non-tribals also

who have been in use of forest land for more than 75 years. The work of receiving claims for recognising the forest rights in this State is more or less complete. Districts wise status report on implementation of the provisions of Forest Right Act of West Bengal as on 31.03.2011 as shown in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 Status Report on Implementation of the Provisions of Forest Right Act as on 31.03.2011**

Districts	Individual Claims		Community Claims		Total
	ST	Non-ST	ST	Non-ST	
Purulia	21921	11638	19	648	34226
Bankura	20107	11767	512	95	32481
Paschim Medinipur	37377	14929	953	286	53545
Jalpaiguri	4553	2346	3010	2032	11941
Burdwan	3456	0	177	0	3633
Birbhum	883	0	67	0	950
Coochbehar	183	0	9	0	192
Hoogly	08	5	1	0	14
Murshidabad	14	0	0	0	14
Darjeeling	89	178	15	0	282
Total	88591	40863	4763	3061	137278

*Source:* Annual Administrative Report 2010-11, Backward Class Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal.

In West Bengal, a number of field research findings highlight certain crucial aspects of Joint Forest Management (JFM). The survey report submitted by the Indian Institute of Bio-Social Research and Development (IBRAD) jointly with the Department of Forest, Government of West Bengal, in Paschim Medinipur shows that there has been remarkable regeneration in the Sal forest lands after the establishment of Forest Protection Committee (FPCs) under JFM programme.<sup>60</sup> It is vital to note that increase of vegetation cover has enhanced the production of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP), which is important for the sustenance of the people together with the village economy. Top priority is attached to NTFP operation as they provide seasonal employment to tribal people living in close juxtaposition to forests. Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5 Performance of Non-Timber Forest Produce**

Name of the District	Crop Year 2009-2010						Crop Year 2010-2011		
	Collection of Kendu Leaves & Pruning of Kendu Plants			Collection of Sal Seeds			Collection of Kendu Leaves & Pruning of Kendu Plants		
	Cash Credit	Qty. of leaves	Man-days	Cash Credit	Qty. of leaves	Man-days	Cash Credit	Qty. of leaves	Man-days
Purulia	48.79	2096.42	29949	4.75	130.00	10833	42.92	1835.06	26215
Bankura	75.87	3416.70	48810	-	-	-	60.80	2683.36	38334
Paschim Medinipur	78.19	3559.30	50847	10.51	288.10	24008	70.36	2670.54	38150
Total	202.85	9072.42	129606	15.26	418.10	34841	174.08	7188.96	102699

Source: As in Table 3.4

### ***Tribals and Agricultural Implements***

The agriculture is often at a primitive stage and is confined. The tribal people raise only to the raising of food crops for domestic and local consumption. Cash crops, as a rule, do not find a place in their economy. Animal husbandry also play a significant role in tribal economy. Some tribal groups of the Nilgiri hills, have a pastoral economy, like the Todas. They depend entirely on buffaloes and their milk products which they exchanged with their neighbours for other necessities of life. The Bhutias of North Uttar Pradesh and part of West Bengal exchanged agricultural and pastoral activities. Traditionally they were graziers, stock-breeders, agriculturists and traders.<sup>61</sup>

The tribals in the plain areas of West Bengal are shares-croppers or agricultural labourers. But the Oraons of Sundarban of West Bengal plough, ideal for local alluvial soil totally eliminating the use of their traditional variety of their homeland.<sup>62</sup>

In the tribal areas of the hill districts of North Bengal, sufficient plain land for cultivation is not available. The hill slopes are, therefore, used as agricultural field. These slopes being covered with forest, the local tribals like Toto, Lepcha and others until the other day used to practise shifting cultivation. The nature of cultivation and local physical

environment of the hilly region being entirely different from the plain area of West Bengal, the agricultural implements of this region exhibit certain speciality of their own.<sup>63</sup>

### ***Hunting and Fishing***

Hunting is practised by almost all the tribal communities in West Bengal to supplement their food with animal protein. The traditional hunting implements consist of bow and arrow, bolt, spear, tangi, dao, knife, *danda* (heavy stick), etc. At present, well-to-do tribals possess guns as well for group hunting. Fishing is also widely practised by all the tribal communities of the State. Innumerable types of traps, polo, cast net, rod and line, hooks, tridents, etc., are the common fishing implements in use by them. There is no much regional variation, except in the hilly area where basket traps are mostly used for fishing. Both the peasants and the tribals practised the same method and implements for fishing. The traps and nets are generally equipped by the tribal themselves. Sometimes they are purchased from the local market as well.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Gathering Implements***

The tribal communities like Birhor, Kora and others depend till today to a large extent on gathering fruits, roots, tubers etc. mainly for their personal consumption and fire wood, creepers for rope, honey etc. for sale in the markets. For the collection of fire wood and creepers etc. cutting implements like the axe, scythe, tangi are used by them. In the Tarai region for gathering forest products, considerable use of knife is made by the Jungle Rabhas, who depends on gathering even now.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Rope – Making Implements***

Rope manufacturing is the principal occupations of the Bihors. For this they use the fibre of the '*Chihor-lata*' jungle creeper which they cut with two objects known as 'Chanut' and 'Chutaili' which they themselves form out of the branch of the trees. The handmade rope is not of much length.<sup>66</sup>

### ***Tribals and Industrialisation***

Those tribals who are skilled craftsmen in wood, basket making and cane work can find useful employment in state co-operatives and forest corporations. In West Bengal numerous tribals, mostly belonging to the Santal community, have been employed as used labourers in Chittaranjan Locomotive Factory, Hindusthan Cable and other local factories, dams and other development projects. A good number of them have been resettled in nearby areas Workshop in the district of 24 Paraganas (North). Work in industries is a new type of experience for the tribals and they still prefer cultivation if sufficient agricultural land is available.<sup>67</sup>

### ***Special Central Assistant to Tribal Sub-Plan (SCA to TSP)***

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, special funds for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Fund from the Central government come in terms of Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan (SCA to TSP). This is accompanying the Normal Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) of the State. This fund is used basically for the introduction of numerous Income Generation programs with cent percent subsidy to lift the ST families above the poverty line. 30% of SCA to TSP is used for Infrastructure Development Schemes related to Income Generation Activities and remaining 70% is used for Income Generation Activities through SHGs and Job oriented training programmes. The Income Generation schemes are initiated by the West Bengal SCs & STs Development and Finance Corporation and West Bengal Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation Ltd. The Infrastructure Development Schemes are initiated by the Department of Tribal welfare right through the P.O.-Cum-Dist. Welfare Officers at the District Level in the ST subjugated areas.<sup>68</sup> (Table 3.6).

**Table 3.6 Status of Utilization of funds under SCA to TSP in West Bengal, 2008-09 to 2010-11**

Year	Allocation from MOTA, Gol.	Expenditure	Percentage of Expenditure
2008-2009	3,255.75 Lakh	3,255.75 Lakh	100 %
2009-2010	2,654.34 Lakh	2,654.34 Lakh	100%
2010-2011	3,384.00 Lakh	1,276.00 lakh	37.70%

Source: As in Table 3.4

The Income Generation Activities are provided to finance–

a) Power tillers, Tractors, and Diesel Pump sets, Minor irrigation (Lift irrigation), Fishery, Composite Fishery, Beetle - leaf cultivation, Vermi-compost,

b) Animal Husbandry: Goatery, Piggery, Milch-cow, Poultry, House dairy, Bee keeping,

c) Small Trade & Business: Grocery, Ready-made garments, Tailoring, Paddy husking, Fruit & vegetables - Whole sale/retail, Stationery shop, Cane & Bamboo work, Sal -leaf plate making,

d) Rural Transport: Van-rickshaw, Tata ace, Mahindra Maxima, Tata Sumo, Diesel Taxi, Truck,

e) Horticulture, f) Fisheries etc.

Job Attentive Training Programme for unemployed Youths:

a) Computer Training under Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL),

b) Pre-examination training for government services like the IAS, WBCS, PSC, SSC, MISC, PSC Clerkship examination),

c) Personal Skill Development Programme like learning languages, Spoken English, Spanish, Basic IT, Soft Skill etc.

d) Agricultural Skill Development Programme through Krishi Shramik Kalyan Kendra etc.<sup>69</sup> (Table 3.7)

**Table 3.7 Number of Tribal Families benefited through Income Generation Activities and Job Oriented Training programme in West Bengal under SCP to TSP**

Year	Target	Achievement	% of Achievement
2008-2009	32,000	21,824	68.20
2009-2010	20,000	18,282	91.41
2010-2011	22,245	5,600	25.17

Source: As in Table 3.4

Infrastructure Development Schemes of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal helps tribals in generating income through various forms of construction like cow sheds, goat sheds, piggery sheds and market sheds. Rearing poultry, bridges & culverts, Minor Irrigation works that include digging of Ponds, irrigation channels, link roads, sinking of deep tube well and shallow tube well etc. Expenditure of 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 on infrastructural activities under SCA to TSP in West Bengal is given in Table 3.8.

**Table 3.8 Expenditure on Infrastructural Activities under SCA to TSP in West Bengal**

Year	Total Allocation (Rs. In lakh)	Allocation for Infrastructure (Rs. In lakh)	Percentage of Allocation Infrastructure	Percentage of Expenditure
2008- 2009	3,255.75	976.725	30	100
2009- 2010	2,654.34	796.30	30	100
2010- 2011	3,384.00	1,015.00	30	48.31

Source: As in Table 3.4

***Grants under Article 275 (I) of the Constitution (100% Central Assistance)***

Grants under this head are provided by the Union government which is adding to the Normal Central Assistance to finance State Plans to cover the expenses of such schemes undertaken by the States with the approval of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for the well-being and development of the Scheduled Tribes. These are to be used essentially for the creation and upgradation of such critical infrastructure as is essential to recuperate the economy in tribal areas. The scheme intends for the Community Development in ITDP areas, service-deficient tribal areas and other scheduled areas (may be Non-ITDP areas) and may cover construction under the filling heads.



(a) Construction of Roads, Bridge and Culverts, (b) Minor Irrigation schemes like Check Dam, Water Harvesting Structure scheme, Re-excavation of Canal, Ponds and Tank, Construction of Irrigation Channel, etc. c) Electrification-through the Grid and Non-Conventional Energy, d) Construction and Re-construction of Ashram and School attached Hostel and School Building, e) Construction of Community Hall etc.<sup>70</sup> (Table 3.9).

**Table 3.9 Financial Achievement of Fund under Art.275 (1) of the Constitution**

Year	Received from GOI	Fund has given to the Implementing Agencies	No. of Beneficiaries
2008-2009	2,489.09	2,489.00	2, 50,100
2009-2010	2,320.00	2,320.00	2, 62,000
2010-2011	4,848.00	4,310.07	3, 90.000

Source: As in Table 3.4

***Assistance to Self Help Groups of Scheduled Tribes under SCA to TSP***

Groups having 7 to 20 Scheduled Tribe Members of BPL Category which have been existence for at least six months, are entitled for subsidized assistance under this scheme. However, Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed by Panchayats, NGO etc. can also be taken into consideration under this scheme. Assistance in terms of subsidy not exceeding Rs. 10,000/- is provided to each of the ST members of the SHG from SCA to SCP. Performance of the Corporation under Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) during FY 2010-11 is indicated below. (Table 3.10)

**Table 3.10 Performance of the SHG of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal, 2010-11**

Target (No. of Beneficiaries)	Physical Achievement (No. of Beneficiaries)
15,000	11,279

Source: As in Table 3.4.

***Adibasi Mahila Swashaktikaran Yojana (AMSY):***

Adibasi Mahila Swashaktikaran Yojana (AMSY) is initiated by the Corporation for the Economic Upliftment of Tribal Women. It is a Micro-Credit Finance Scheme for ST

Women. AMSY is a micro credit project that has been implemented since 2003-2004 for empowering poor tribal women.<sup>71</sup> The performance of the AMSY in West Bengal in 2009-10 and 2010-11 is shown in Table 3.11.

**Table 3.11 Performance of the AMSY in West Bengal in 2009-10 and 2010-11**

Districts	2009-2010				2010-2011			
	No. of Units	Loan Amount	Subsidy Amount	Total Outlay	No. of Unit	Loan Amount	Subsidy Amount	Total Outlay
Purulia	1997	200	199	399	270	27	27	54
Bankura	720	74	70	144	0	0	0	0
Paschim Medinipur	971	99	94	193	0	0	0	0
Jalpaiguri & Darjeeling	420	42	42	84	0	0	0	0
Maldah	412	41	41	82	0	0	0	0
Birbhum & Murshidabad	600	60	60	120	10	1	1	2
Bardhaman & Hooghly	500	50	50	100	20	5	0	5
Dakshin & Uttar Dinajpur	560	56	56	112	0	0	0	0
Twenty-four Pargana (N) & (S)	390	39	39	78	100	80	20	100
Purba Medinipur	0	0	0	0	60	6	6	12
Total	6570	661	651	1312	460	119	54	173

Source: As in Table 3.4.

### ***Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation Ltd***

Since 1973 the West Bengal Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation Limited, under the patronage of the Backward Classes Welfare Department, Govt. of West Bengal, has been functioning exclusively for the enhancement of the tribals. There is a Board of Directors for policy making. A Managing Director functions as its Chief Executive. The corporation has got 4 regional offices, in Purulia, Bankura, Paschim Medinipur and Jalpaiguri and 4 branch offices at Malda, Suri, Bardhaman and Balurghat. The Large-scale Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS) of North & South 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur are supervised from the head office.<sup>72</sup>

### ***Village Grain Bank***

The village grain bank scheme has been introduced to safeguard the poor people against starvation during any natural calamity or lean season. Each grain bank furnishes to the requirement of 30-40 tribal families. The number of village Grain Bank of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal 2009-10 is shown in Table 3.12.

**Table 3.12 Performance of Village Grain Bank of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal 2009-10**

Name of the District	2009-2010	
	Unit	Members
Bankura	70	2800
Purulia	80	3200
Paschim Medinipur	55	2200
Purba Medinipur	6	240
Jalpaiguri	52	2080
Darjeeling	8	320
Maldah	20	800
Uttar Dinajpur	7	280
Dakshin Dinajpur	40	1600
Birbhum	28	1120
Bardhaman	2	80
Hooghly	10	400
Murshidabad	10	400
Twenty-four Pargana (N)	6	240
Twenty-four Pargana (S)	8	320
Total	402	16080

Source: As in Table 3.4.

### 3.4. Changing Scenario of Employment, Consumption and Poverty of STs in West Bengal

#### *Trends Employment of STs in West Bengal*

Opportunities for the ST livelihood have increased over time in West Bengal. ST workers are now no longer confined to agricultural activities but are even shifting from farm to non-farm sector as well. The ST workers and worker participation ratio in West Bengal, 1971 to 2011 is shown in Table 3.13.

**Table 3.13 ST Workers and Worker Participation Ratio in West Bengal, 1971 to 2011**

	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Workers					
Male	705000	834000	1080303	1229606	1470385
Female	247000	440000	583806	774611	1038781
Worker Participation Ratio					
Male	55.2	54.1	55.7	55.3	55.5
Female	20.0	29.1	31.2	35.5	39.2

Source: Census of India 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011, [www.censusindia.gov.in](http://www.censusindia.gov.in)

Data reveals that the participation rates of tribal males are more or less same over time. Though in case of female workers, the ratio has been increasing over time. In 1971 it was 20 percent, 31.2 percent in 1991 and now it becomes 39.2 percent in 2011. If we see the occupational structure of the tribes, majority of the tribes are agricultural labours, this case has been seen both for males and females. But the percentage share of female is more than male in case of agricultural labour. Table 3.14.

**Table 3.14 Occupation wise Classification of ST in West Bengal, 2001 and 2011**

Occupation	2001		2011	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Cultivators	25	12.6	16	6.6
Agricultural Labour	46.1	62.0	52.7	65
Household Industry	1.7	4.7	1.6	4.1
Other Services	27.1	20.6	29.8	24.3
Total Workers	100	100	100	100
	1195480	953775	1470385	1038781

Source: Census 2011, [www.censusindia.gov.in](http://www.censusindia.gov.in)

### *Trend of Consumption Scenario*

The Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) is defined as the ratio of household monthly consumer expenditure and the size of household; this gives us a good reference point to study the behaviour and patterns of consumption expenses. (Table 3.15).

**Table 3.15 Trend of Monthly per capita Consumption Level of tribes in West Bengal**

	1993-94		2004-05		2011-12	
	ST	ALL	ST	ALL	ST	ALL
Rural	242.33	286.43	483.39	618.47	953.44	1225.88
Urban	544.99	533.56	1108.26	1294.59	1983.84	2874.69
Total	262.37	353.88	525.26	806.33	1079.15	1701.35

Source: Authors' calculation based on the unit level data of NSSO (50<sup>th</sup>, 61<sup>st</sup>, 66<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> round)

It presents the trend of MPCE of tribes and non-tribes over time. In case of tribes, over time the MPCE has increased, in 1993 it was Rs. 238.88 which became Rs. 1004.5 in 2011-12. The similar trend is also seen in case of non-tribes. Though, their MPCE has been always greater than tribes over time. Data also follow up the same trend. Finally, in case of West Bengal as a whole the trend of MPCE has been discussed here is on market price. For better analysing we have to compute the constant price over time.

However, it is necessary to present our information on consumer expenditure at constant price to make the comparison over periods a realistic one as the changes in the price level substantially influence the level of consumer expenditure in terms of money. Moreover, the period 1993-94 to 2011-12 i.e., the span of our study, has never been a period of stable prices as expected in an economy forgoing ahead with a various development program involving huge amount of investments in both private and public sector. Consequently, the observation made in the above table has been adjusted for the price changes and they are expressed at a constant price of 1987-88.

Data reveals that the MPCE in constant price for both ST and non-ST is also increasing over time. Though for non-tribes their values of expenditure are always greater

than the tribes. That is the consumption expenditure of both tribes and non-tribes that has been increasing in market price along with the constant price.

### ***Trends of Poverty***

Economic progress can be found out by comparing whether the number of people living below the poverty line shows gradual decline or not. The data collected by planning commission estimates population living below poverty line over a period of time and is given in Table 16. As apparent from the statement the population of ST people below the poverty line is comparatively larger than the remaining population in West Bengal as well as in India.

As prices varies across states and amongst rural and urban areas in the same state, similar is the case of the poverty line which varies in nominal rupees across states and amongst urban and rural areas within the same state. Correspondingly, since prices upsurge over time due to inaction, the poverty line in nominal rupees in a given place is also accustomed upwards over time. The first estimate in this repute after independence was given by the Planning Commission of India in 1993 considering the report submitted by Professor D. T. Lakdawala who headed an expert group.<sup>73</sup> The rural poverty line was raised on the recommendation of an expert committee led by Professor Suresh Tendulkar in 2009.<sup>74</sup>

The two estimates provided by Lakdawala and Tendulkar for rural and urban areas in West Bengal have been shown below. It indicates a diminution in the number of ST people who live below the poverty line in both rural and urban West Bengal (Table 3.16). In rural West Bengal it decreased from 62 per cent in 1993-94 to 33 per cent in 2009-10 and in Urban West Bengal it decreased from 39.4 per cent to 20.6 per cent.

**Table 3.16 Percentage of Scheduled Tribes population below Poverty Line in West Bengal, 1993-94, 1999-2000, 2004-05 and 2009-10**

Year	Rural		Urban	
	ST	ALL	ST	ALL
1993-94	62.0	40.8	39.4	22.4
1999-2000	50.0	31.9	31.9	14.9
2004-05	42.4	28.6	25.7	14.8
2009-10	32.9	28.8	20.6	22.0

*Source:* 1. Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.

2. Planning Commission, Government of India.

To sum up, a realistic and all-inclusive tactic to tribal development alone can produce good results. The tribals are generally considered as mere beneficiaries and are not been involved either in the decision-making process or in the implementation. As the anomalies of the tribals are unique, it is essential that they are actively involved in future in both the planning and implementation of welfare programmes. Both total and sectoral evaluation should be undertaken and they must remember the fact that although the Government policies and programmes for the tribals have helped to recover their standard of living but still one third of them remain poor.