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Evaluating the Effectiveness of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP): A case study of underdevelopment in tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

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Abstract

The Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) was introduced as a focused policy framework to direct public investments for the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes (STs). Despite clear constitutional provisions and legislative backing in both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, implementation challenges continue to hinder the desired outcomes. This study evaluates the effectiveness of TSP by analyzing budgetary flows, policy execution, and developmental impacts in selected tribal regions of both states. Drawing on budget documents, CAG audit reports, RTI responses, and departmental data from 2014-15 to 2023-24, the analysis reveals that while overall TSP allocations have grown, rising from ₹3,212 crore to ₹5,384 crore in Andhra Pradesh and seeing similar increases in Telangana, utilization rates remain inconsistent, often falling below 70%. In Telangana, nearly ₹1,200 crore earmarked under TSP remained unspent in 2021-22. Challenges such as delayed fund release, non-prioritized allocation of funds, and limited community involvement in planning were noted as key impediments. The study highlights that, although TSP aims to bridge socio-economic gaps, implementation often lacks convergence across departments, monitoring at the grassroots level, and effective engagement with tribal institutions like Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) and Gram Sabhas. The findings underscore the need for a more decentralized, transparent, and responsive system of planning and fund deployment to ensure that tribal populations receive the full benefits of targeted development efforts. Policy recommendations focus on capacity building, digital tracking of expenditure, and strengthening institutional linkages to improve TSP outcomes sustainably.

Keywords: Tribal Sub-Plan, scheduled tribes, policy implementation, budget utilization, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, underdevelopment, decentralized planning, ITDAs, gram sabhas

Introduction

India's tribal population, recognized as Scheduled Tribes (STs) under the Constitution, constitutes one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged and geographically dispersed communities in the country. With deep historical roots and diverse cultural traditions, tribal communities have long remained on the margins of mainstream development. The Constitution of India and successive Five-Year Plans have acknowledged the unique challenges of tribal areas and underscored the need for targeted state intervention to ensure their welfare. One of the most comprehensive strategies for addressing tribal development has been the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), introduced during the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-75), to institutionalize the equitable flow of public resources toward tribal communities.

TSP mandates that every government department at the Central and State levels allocate a proportion of their plan budget, equivalent to the ST population percentage, exclusively for tribal welfare. The approach is integrative, aiming not to isolate tribal development into a standalone silo but to embed it across all sectors including health, education, agriculture, housing, infrastructure, and employment. In essence, the TSP is envisioned as a means to mainstream tribal concerns within broader development planning and ensure outcome-based accountability. In states like Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, where the tribal population is both sizable and spatially dispersed across Scheduled and non-Scheduled Areas, the TSP has been institutionalized through specific legislation, nodal agencies, and dedicated monitoring frameworks. According to the 2011 Census, Scheduled Tribes constitute 5.53% of the

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population in Andhra Pradesh and 9.34% in Telangana. However, certain districts have significantly higher tribal concentrations. For instance, the Alluri Sitharama Raju (ASR) district in Andhra Pradesh has over 82.67% tribal population, while in Telangana, districts like Mulugu, Bhadradi Kothagudem, and Adilabad have emerged as key zones of tribal habitation. These areas have been marked for focused attention under the TSP framework due to their remoteness, socio-economic backwardness, and limited access to public services.

Despite decades of targeted investment and policy focus under the TSP, tribal areas in both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana continue to suffer from chronic underdevelopment. Empirical studies, audit reports, and field-level assessments reveal a persistent gap between budgetary allocations and developmental outcomes. While both states have made significant financial commitments, Telangana, for instance, allocated over ₹25,000 crore under TSP between 2014 and 2022, the on-ground realities in many tribal habitations still reflect deficits in drinking water supply, road infrastructure, school dropout rates, maternal health indicators, and livelihood opportunities. Similarly, in Andhra Pradesh, the TSP allocation increased from ₹3,212 crore in 2014-15 to ₹5,384 crore in 2022-23, yet field visits continue to report significant disparities in access to basic services in tribal hamlets.

Study Focus and Rationale

The present study aims to examine the implementation and effectiveness of the TSP framework in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, with a special focus on the disjunction between financial planning and service delivery in tribal-dominated regions. Drawing upon both quantitative and qualitative data, the study seeks to unpack the structural, administrative, and procedural barriers that impede effective realization of TSP objectives. It critically examines how allocated resources are translated into developmental benefits, and whether tribal communities perceive any tangible changes in their quality of life.

To provide an in-depth, field-based perspective, the study is anchored in two mandals that are emblematic of the broader tribal development challenges in both states:

- Koonavaram Mandal under Chintoor ITDA, Alluri Sitharama Raju district, Andhra Pradesh
- Amrabad Mandal under Mannanur ITDA, Nagarkurnool district, Telangana

Within each mandal, two tribal villages were purposively selected based on criteria such as population density, geographic remoteness, historical inclusion in development programs, and representation of different tribal communities. The selected villages are:

- Repaka and Abicherla from Koonavaram mandal, ASR district
- Udimilla and Padra from Amrabad mandal, Nagarkurnool district

A total of 400 respondents (100 from each village) were surveyed using a structured questionnaire with Likert-scale indicators. The survey captured community perceptions of development interventions, satisfaction with government services, access to livelihood support, participation in planning processes, and awareness of TSP-linked schemes.

The Dual Challenge in Telugu States

Tribal development in the Telugu states is uniquely shaped by both legacy issues and recent administrative shifts. The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014 created new institutional arrangements, with both states reconfiguring their tribal welfare departments, ITDA jurisdictions, and budgetary allocations under the TSP framework. Telangana, for example, created the Tribal Welfare Engineering Department (TWED) to streamline infrastructure projects, while Andhra Pradesh introduced the Tribal Sub-Plan Act, 2013, to enforce accountability mechanisms.

Yet, the effectiveness of these mechanisms remains contested. One of the recurring issues identified in both states is the inefficiency in fund utilization, where TSP allocations, though made on paper, often face procedural delays, poor targeting, or are absorbed into general welfare schemes without clear tribal focus. In some instances, projects have been implemented in tribal areas but without direct benefit to tribal residents, such as the construction of roads to non-tribal colonies, or setting up health facilities without staff or equipment. Another concern is weak institutional convergence. Although Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) are designated as nodal agencies for tribal development, they frequently lack the autonomy, inter-departmental coordination, and financial authority to implement integrated projects. Furthermore, Gram Sabhas, constitutionally empowered under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996, are often excluded from the planning process, reducing tribal ownership of development initiatives.

Significance of Evaluating TSP Implementation

This research is both timely and significant in light of ongoing national efforts to improve tribal welfare. The Pradhan Mantri Aadi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY), which aims to transform tribal villages into model habitations, complements TSP objectives and underscores the importance of convergence and saturation of services. As India pursues the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those linked to health, education, clean water, and poverty alleviation, the success of TSP holds crucial implications for equitable development.

More importantly, the study seeks to ground the discourse of tribal development in the lived experiences of tribal communities, moving beyond budgetary targets and official reports to understand what development means on the ground. It highlights not just gaps in service delivery but also community aspirations, agency, and resilience. By bringing forth voices from the margins, the study aims to contribute policy-relevant insights for revitalizing the TSP architecture in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Ultimately, the goal is to support a shift from budget allocation to outcome orientation, from departmental silos to convergence, and from top-down imposition to participatory governance. If effectively reformed and transparently implemented, the TSP has the potential to serve as a transformative tool for achieving inclusive growth and social justice for tribal communities in India.

Objectives and Methodology

Research Objectives

The present study aims to undertake a critical evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in the tribal-dominated regions of Andhra Pradesh

and Telangana. Despite over four decades of policy intervention through TSP and related tribal development programs, the persistence of underdevelopment in Scheduled Areas necessitates an in-depth inquiry into systemic gaps and community-level realities. Accordingly, the specific objectives of the study are:

- To assess the extent to which TSP financial allocations have translated into tangible developmental outcomes in the selected tribal mandals of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- To examine the institutional mechanisms governing TSP implementation, with a focus on the functioning of Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs), line departments, and Gram Sabhas.
- To evaluate the level of convergence, accountability, and community participation in the planning, execution, and monitoring of TSP-funded projects.
- To identify the key barriers in access to basic services such as drinking water, education, healthcare, livelihoods, housing, and road connectivity in the study villages.
- To document tribal community perceptions, aspirations, and satisfaction levels regarding development interventions under the TSP framework.
- To offer policy recommendations for improving the efficiency, targeting, and participatory governance of TSP in alignment with constitutional mandates and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research tools, to generate a comprehensive understanding of TSP implementation in tribal areas. The methodology comprises the following components:

1. Selection of Study Area

The research is anchored in two high tribal concentration regions, purposively selected to represent different ecological, demographic, and administrative contexts within Andhra Pradesh and Telangana:

- Koonavaram Mandal, under Chintoor ITDA, Alluri Sitharama Raju district, Andhra Pradesh.
- Amrabad Mandal, under Mannanur ITDA, Nagarkurnool district, Telangana.

These areas were selected based on

- High proportion of Scheduled Tribe (ST) population
- Geographic remoteness and inaccessibility
- Historic inclusion in TSP and other development schemes
- Persisting developmental gaps as per secondary data and audit reports

2. Village Selection and Sampling

Within each mandal, two tribal villages were selected using purposive sampling:

- Repaka and Abicherla from Koonavaram mandal (AP)
- Udimilla and Padra from Amrabad mandal (TS)

A sample size of 400 respondents (100 from each village) was selected through stratified random sampling, ensuring adequate representation of gender, age groups, and different tribal communities (e.g., Koya, Chenchu, Konda reddy.).

3. Primary Data Collection

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire that included:

- Socio-economic profile of the respondents
- Access to and satisfaction with services funded under TSP
- Livelihood sources and government scheme utilization
- Awareness and perceptions of TSP
- Participatory governance and Gram Sabha involvement

A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure community perceptions regarding development outcomes, institutional responsiveness, and satisfaction with services.

In addition to the survey

- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** were conducted with ITDA officials, Mandal-level officers, Gram Panchayat leaders, and community elders.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** were organized to capture collective perspectives, particularly from women, youth, and forest-dependent households.

4. Secondary Data Analysis

A thorough analysis of the following secondary data sources was undertaken:

- TSP budget allocations and expenditures (2014-15 to 2022-23)
- CAG audit reports, Annual Tribal Welfare Reports, and Planning Department evaluations
- District-level Human Development Reports and Statistical Abstracts
- Official data from ITDAs, Panchayati Raj, Health, Education, and Rural Development Departments

Budget data was compared against outcome indicators (health, education, infrastructure) to identify trends, bottlenecks, and mismatches in targeting.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

- Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, standard deviation), cross-tabulations, and correlation analysis.
- Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were thematically coded using NVivo software to identify recurring patterns, governance challenges, and institutional dynamics.
- Budget flow and project mapping were analyzed using Excel dashboards and Sankey diagrams to visualize fund allocation vs. project coverage.

6. Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent was obtained from all respondents.
- Anonymity and confidentiality were assured.
- The study was conducted in alignment with ethical research standards for working with vulnerable communities, including tribal groups.

Discussion

1. Understanding the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP): Evolution and Framework

The Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), now referred to as the Scheduled Tribe Component (STC) at the national level, was introduced during the Fifth Five-Year Plan in 1974-75 to ensure that a fair share of public expenditure reaches the Scheduled Tribes (STs). The guiding philosophy of TSP is to channel a proportion of the total Plan outlay of the Centre and States equal to the percentage of the tribal population in the total population. The goal was to bridge the development gap between Scheduled Tribes and the general population by focusing on critical areas like education, health, livelihoods, and infrastructure. The TSP mandates the earmarking of plan funds in proportion to the ST population in each State. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, this has been institutionalized through legislation post the bifurcation of the State in 2014, mandating dedicated nodal departments and Tribal Welfare sub-plans in state budgets. TSP programs are implemented through line departments and tribal welfare institutions, including Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs), which coordinate various schemes and monitor outcomes. Despite this structure, ground realities reveal disparities in funding flow, administrative capacity, and local participation, which

impact the delivery of benefits.

2. TSP Implementation in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana: Institutional Setup and Budget Trends

Institutional Setup

Both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have established dedicated departments for Tribal Welfare and Planning. Following bifurcation, both states passed legislation, specifically the Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan (Planning, Allocation, and Utilization of Financial Resources) Act, 2013, which remained in force in Telangana with modifications.

This Act mandates

- Annual preparation of the Sub-Plans by all departments.
- Nodal agency review and approval.
- Independent audits and legislative oversight.

Key Institutions

- Tribal Welfare Department
- Planning Department (Nodal for TSP coordination)
- ITDAs (e.g., Chintoor, Rampachodavaram, Paderu, Seethampeta, Nellore in Andhra Pradesh, Mannanur, Utnoor, Eturnagaram, Bhadrachalam in Telangana)
- State Tribal Advisory Councils

Table 1: Budget Trends (2014-2024)

				Rs. in Cr
Year	AP TSP Allocation	AP TSP Utilization	Telangana TSP Allocation	Telangana TSP Utilization
2014-15	3,260	2,354 (72.2%)	3,110	2,165 (69.6%)
2015-16	3,490	2,412 (69.1%)	3,570	2,460 (68.9%)
2016-17	3,745	2,895 (77.3%)	4,120	3,150 (76.5%)
2017-18	4,130	3,085 (74.7%)	4,750	3,210 (67.6%)
2018-19	4,560	3,225 (70.7%)	5,020	3,435 (68.4%)
2019-20	5,010	3,480 (69.4%)	5,600	3,765 (67.2%)
2020-21	4,950	3,140 (63.4%)	5,100	3,325 (65.2%)
2021-22	5,500	3,765 (68.5%)	5,940	3,980 (67.0%)
2022-23	6,240	4,225 (67.7%)	6,320	4,310 (68.2%)
2023-24	6,810	4,660 (68.4%)	6,850	4,770 (69.6%)

Sources: State Budget Documents, Tribal Welfare Departments, Planning Department Reports

Observations

- Both states consistently allocated near the mandated percentage (~9-10%) of the total budget to TSP.
- Utilization rates ranged between 63-77%, reflecting persistent issues in fund flow, project readiness, and administrative coordination.
- In Telangana, average utilization across the decade remained ~68.5%; in Andhra Pradesh, it was ~70%.

The study finds that on average, 68% of the allocated Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) funds were utilized during the 2018-2022 period across the selected districts. However, there is significant annual fluctuation ($\pm 20\%$), indicating inconsistent fund flow and delayed implementation cycles. Field interviews revealed that delays in administrative

approvals and challenges in last-mile delivery contributed to this inconsistency. While some flagship schemes, such as health outreach camps and bridge connectivity projects, were implemented, many planned interventions remained partially completed.

Table 2: TSP Fund Utilization Trends (2018-2022)

				Rs. in Cr
Year	Allocation (%)	Expenditure (%)	Utilization (%)	
2018-19	85.4	56.2	65.8	
2019-20	91.8	63.5	69.2	
2020-21	88.3	55.1	62.4	
2021-22	92.5	69.7	75.3	
2022-23	97.0	67.1	69.1	

Sources: State Budget Documents, Tribal Welfare Departments, Planning Department Reports

3. Data Analysis: Allocation vs. Utilization Trends (2014-2024)

A decade-long analysis of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) allocation and utilization in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana reveals both systemic commitment and persistent challenges. The

principle of earmarking budgetary resources for tribal development has largely been followed in terms of allocations. However, utilization gaps, yearly underspending, and lack of timely fund release have continued to undermine impact on the ground.

Table 3.1: Allocation-Utilization Ratio: Trends Over a Decade

State	Average Allocation (₹ Cr)	Average Utilization (₹ Cr)	Average Utilization %
Andhra Pradesh	4,769	3,351	70.3%
Telangana	5,128	3,487	68.0%

Sources: State Budget Documents, Tribal Welfare Department, Planning Department Reports

Despite large outlays, nearly 30% of funds remain unutilized, particularly in years with late budget approvals or administrative reshuffles. Interviews with ITDA officials

indicated delays in approval from line departments and lack of capacity at mandal/block levels as major constraints.

Table 3.2: Sectoral Allocation and Utilization under TSP (2014-2024)

Sector	Andhra Pradesh Allocation (₹ Cr)	Utilization (%)	Telangana Allocation (₹ Cr)	Utilization (%)
Education	11,230	73.4	9,745	78.2
Health	6,410	69.6	5,940	72.5
Infrastructure	9,130	64.1	8,560	68.3
Livelihood & Skill	5,710	59.5	4,980	62.8
Welfare Schemes	3,650	66.2	3,220	70.4

Sources: State Budget Documents, Tribal Welfare Departments, Planning Department Reports

4. Primary Survey Results: Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents (N = 400 Households)

To complement the budget analysis, a primary household survey was conducted across tribal villages in Chintoor (ITDA Rampachodavaram) and Mannanur (ITDA

Mannanur) regions. A total of 400 tribal households were surveyed using structured questionnaires, focusing on key socio-economic indicators, access to services, and perceptions about TSP implementation.

Table 4.1: Demographic Composition of Respondents

Variable	Chintoor (N=200)	Mannanur (N=200)	Total (N=400)
Average Household Size	5.1	4.8	4.95
% Female-headed Households	17%	13%	15%
% Households with Elderly (>60)	29%	24%	26.5%
% Households with Children <5	36%	41%	38.5%

Source: Field Study

Key Insight: A significant proportion of households have young dependents and elders, indicating a need for focused interventions on nutrition, geriatric care, and child health.

Table 4.2: Education Profile

Educational Status of Adults (18+)	Chintoor (%)	Mannanur (%)	Combined (%)
Illiterate	42.5	38.0	40.3
Up to Primary	28.0	31.5	29.8
Up to Secondary	20.5	23.0	21.8
Intermediate/PUC	6.0	5.5	5.8
Graduate and above	3.0	2.0	2.5

Source: Field Study

Observation: Over 40% of adults remain illiterate, and less than 3% are graduates, underscoring the limited impact of education-focused TSP schemes in tribal belts.

Table 4.3: Land Ownership and Livelihood

Indicator	Chintoor	Mannanur	Combined
% Households with Patta Land	54%	47%	50.5%
% Households dependent on Podu Cultivation	63%	58%	60.5%
% Engaged in MNREGS in last 12 months	76%	69%	72.5%
% Reporting Migration (Seasonal)	35%	41%	38%

Source: Field Study

Insight: Despite FRA implementation, a large number still depend on Podu (shifting) cultivation. Seasonal migration is

a coping mechanism due to erratic rainfall and lack of assured income sources.

Table 4.4: Asset Ownership Profile

Asset Type	Chintoor (%)	Mannanur (%)	Total (%)
Mobile Phone	72%	68%	70%
Bicycle	59%	63%	61%
Two-wheeler (Bike/Scooter)	21%	18%	19.5%
TV	18%	16%	17%
LPG Connection	42%	39%	40.5%
Bank Account (Any family member)	84%	79%	81.5%

Source: Field Study

Comment: Mobile and banking penetration is relatively good, reflecting the reach of Jan Dhan Yojana and DBT

schemes. However, ownership of motorized transport and modern appliances remains low.

Table 4.5: Housing and Basic Amenities

Amenity	Chintoor (%)	Mannanur (%)	Combined (%)
Pucca House	38%	34%	36%
Electricity Connection	91%	87%	89%
Toilet within premises	46%	41%	43.5%
Safe Drinking Water Source	58%	52%	55%
Tap Water Supply	26%	22%	24%

Source: ITDA Office, Chintoor & Mannanur;

Conclusion: Despite government push through SBM and Jal Jeevan Mission, a substantial portion of tribal households still lack access to sanitation and piped water. Progress is uneven across the two ITDA regions.

5. Case Studies from ITDA Regions - Chintoor and Mannanur

To understand the ground-level realities of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) implementation and its impact on tribal development, this section presents two micro-level case studies from prominent tribal development regions: ITDA Chintoor (Andhra Pradesh) and ITDA Mannanur (Telangana). These regions were selected based on (a) their geographical remoteness, (b) high proportion of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), and (c) substantial allocation under TSP but persistent developmental gaps. The analysis draws from primary fieldwork, household surveys (sample: 400 households), focus group discussions, and interviews with local officials and tribal residents.

5.1 Case Study 1: ITDA Chintoor, Alluri Sitharama Raju District (Andhra Pradesh)

Background: Chintoor ITDA covers parts of the Godavari River valley and is home to the Konda Reddy, Koya, and Konda Dora tribes. The region has been significantly impacted by displacement from the Polavaram project. Despite this, the area has seen major allocations under the TSP.

Key Findings

- **Infrastructure:** Several habitations lack all-weather roads and regular bus services. Out of the 50 surveyed villages, 38 reported poor road connectivity. Electrification projects have not been completed in 20% of hamlets.
- **Livelihoods:** Traditional podu cultivation continues. While land rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) were granted to 58% of surveyed households, only 41% received subsequent support such as soil conservation or irrigation.
- **Health and Nutrition:** The government constructed PHCs in 6 mandals, but 70% of them lacked doctors or

diagnostic facilities. Malnutrition levels were high, with 34% of children under 5 found to be stunted.

- **Education:** 64% of tribal children are enrolled in government-run ashram schools. However, dropout rates post-primary school remain high due to distance, language barriers, and economic reasons.
- **Utilization of TSP Funds:** TSP utilization in Chintoor over the past 10 years averaged **62.7%**, with unspent funds highest in livelihood schemes and tribal hostels.

Community Voices

“We were promised better housing after displacement, but the roads and borewells never came. We still walk five kilometers to fetch water.”

- Koya Sarith (36), displaced from Polavaram project

5.2 Case Study 2: ITDA Mannanur, Nagarkurnool District (Telangana)

Background: Located in the Nallamala forest zone, ITDA Mannanur primarily serves the Chenchu PVTG, a forest-dwelling tribe with a distinctive non-agricultural subsistence base. The region falls under Amrabad Tiger Reserve, complicating development activities due to environmental regulations.

Key Findings

- **Access and Connectivity:** The 62 habitations surveyed, 28 are not motorable during monsoons. Forest permissions delay the laying of roads and telecom towers. No digital connectivity in at least 40% of settlements.
- **Livelihoods:** Chenchus rely on NTFP (Non-Timber Forest Produce) such as honey, mahua flowers, and gums. However, absence of organized procurement systems leads to exploitation by middlemen. Only 17% of surveyed Chenchus had access to formal credit.
- **Health:** Tribal health outreach (THO) camps are irregular. Snakebite mortality and anemia remain major concerns. Institutional deliveries are at only 54% compared to the state average of 97%.
- **Education:** Seasonal migration and lack of mother-

tongue teaching create discontinuities in learning. Several PVTG residential schools are underutilized due to poor facilities.

- **Utilization of TSP Funds:** Over the past 10 years, utilization has been 58.3%. Delays are common in work requiring clearances from the Forest Department. Funds for eco-friendly housing and solar lights remain

underutilized.

Community Voices

“Our children walk to school for two hours every day. When it rains, they stop going. No one speaks our language there.”
- Chenchu Ramulu (74) Chenchu elder, Narsampalli

5.3 Comparative Summary of Development Indicators (2023)

Indicator	Chintoor (AP)	Mannanur (TS)
TSP Utilization Rate	62.7%	58.3%
Electrification Coverage	81%	68%
Road Connectivity (All-weather)	62%	55%
Institutional Deliveries	73%	54%
School Drop-out Rate (Secondary)	42%	49%
FRA Beneficiaries (Households)	58%	36%
Households with Bank Accounts	77%	52%

Source: ITDA Office, Chintoor & Mannanur;

4.5 Key Implementation Gaps

- **Delayed Inter-departmental Approvals:** Forest clearances for minor infrastructure delay projects in PVTG areas.
- **Underdeveloped Monitoring Mechanisms:** In both ITDAs, the absence of geo-tagged project tracking leads to weak accountability.
- **Limited Participation of Gram Sabhas:** In Mannanur, only 40% of the habitations had active Gram Sabhas during the planning process.
- **Weak Convergence with Line Departments:** There is minimal synergy between Tribal Welfare Departments and other welfare departments like health, education, and agriculture.

6. Impact on Tribal Development Indicators (Health, Education, Infrastructure, Livelihood)

The effectiveness of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in achieving

inclusive development can be objectively measured by examining improvements in key tribal development indicators. Based on a combination of secondary data (from government reports, Statistical Handbooks, NFHS-5, UDISE, SECC, and NITI Aayog) and primary survey data (N = 400 households from selected villages in Chintoor, ASR District and Mannanur, Nagarkurnool District), this section analyzes the tangible impact of TSP implementation over the period 2014-2024 across four major domains:

6.1 Health Outcomes

Access to healthcare in tribal areas remains inadequate despite targeted TSP allocations. Though mobile health units, PHCs, and tribal health camps were initiated under TSP funding, gaps remain in infrastructure, staffing, and medicine availability.

Table 6.1: Findings from Field Survey

Indicator	Chintoor (ASR)	Mannanur (Nagarkurnool)
Households with access to PHC	61%	54%
Reported availability of medical staff	43%	37%
Child immunization coverage (%)	78%	72%
Institutional deliveries (%)	65%	59%
Health camps held last year	2	1

Source: Field Suvery

Despite TSP allocations, low Gram Sabha participation led to underutilized health subcomponents. Many respondents reported delays in health camp schedules and stockouts of essential medicines.

6.2 Education Indicators

TSP supports education through infrastructure development (hostels, schools), scholarships, and remedial teaching. However, poor monitoring and irregular disbursement of scholarships were noted.

Table 6.2 Survey-Based Observations

Indicator	Chintoor	Mannanur
Access to primary school within 1 km	93%	91%
Functional hostel access (6-14 yrs)	52%	47%
Receiving tribal scholarships (%)	49%	41%
Dropout rates (14-18 yrs)	34%	38%
Toilet availability in school (%)	65%	62%

Source: Field Suvery

Community feedback indicated that scholarships often reach students after academic sessions start, causing financial burden. Infrastructure is available in many areas but underutilized due to teacher shortages and lack of quality inputs.

6.3 Infrastructure Development

TSP funds have been used to improve rural infrastructure, roads, drinking water, sanitation, and electrification. The impact has been uneven due to delays and fund reallocation to non-priority areas.

Table 6.3: Key Infrastructure Indicators

Facility Type	Chintoor	Mannanur
All-weather road connectivity	62%	69%
Drinking water (piped)	38%	42%
Sanitation coverage (toilets)	49%	53%
Electrification (24-hr)	78%	74%
Mobile Network Availability	65%	59%

Source: Field Suvery

Remote hamlets often remain unconnected. In both regions, 30-40% of respondents still depend on open wells or streams for drinking water. While electrification has reached most villages, power reliability is poor.

6.4 Livelihood and Economic Activities

Livelihood support is a core objective of TSP, including schemes like land development, MGNREGS, skill development, and market linkages. However, lack of convergence with line departments has weakened outcomes.

Table 6.4 : Employment and Income-Related Insights

Indicator	Chintoor	Mannanur
Households engaged in agriculture (%)	76%	72%
Receiving Rythu Bandhu/PM-KISAN	58%	61%
Received livelihood support under TSP	24%	21%
MGNREGS average person-days/year	32	39
Market linkage support received (%)	18%	16%

Source: field Survey

Only 1 in 4 families received any kind of structured livelihood support under TSP. MGNREGS participation is high, but wages are delayed, and assets created are not durable or productive in many cases.

Statistical Insight: Correlation between TSP Service Access and Development Indicators

Using Pearson correlation coefficients, we analyzed how access to TSP-funded services correlates with selected development outcomes.

Variable Pair	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Access to PHC vs. Institutional Deliveries	0.61
Scholarship Receipt vs. School Dropout Rate	-0.58
Road Access vs. Market Linkage Utilization	0.66
Electrification vs. Evening Study Time (hours)	0.71

This statistical relationship reinforces the argument that infrastructure and service access, when effectively delivered, directly improve health, education, and income-

related outcomes.

The data illustrate that despite the earmarked TSP allocations, the actual impact on core development indicators in tribal regions remains sub-optimal. While physical infrastructure has improved moderately, the "last-mile delivery" of essential services, especially health and livelihood support, is weak due to planning and monitoring gaps. Education and sanitation outcomes show modest gains, but dropout rates and awareness of rights and entitlements remain challenges.

7. Key Issues in Implementation of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)

Despite its progressive vision and constitutional backing, the implementation of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana has faced multiple systemic and operational challenges. The effectiveness of the TSP framework depends not only on fund allocation but also on timely release, participatory planning, and continuous monitoring. Field data, testimonies, and budget analysis point to recurring bottlenecks that undermine the impact of tribal development interventions. Four prominent issues stand out:

a) Underutilised Funds

One of the most persistent challenges is the underutilization of allocated TSP funds. Budgetary data from 2014-15 to 2023-24 for both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana reveal significant year-on-year gaps between allocated and utilized amounts. Departments often fail to design or execute schemes in a timely manner, leading to funds being parked or carried forward to the next fiscal year.

For example, in Telangana, the average annual TSP allocation during the period 2014-2024 was ₹8,000 crore, but actual utilization ranged from 65% to 85%, with the lowest utilization recorded during election and pandemic years. In Andhra Pradesh, similar trends were observed, particularly in departments like Agriculture, Roads and Buildings, and Higher Education. Field interactions indicate that a lack of convergence planning and inadequate capacity within line departments are contributing factors.

b) Delayed Releases

Even when funds are allocated, delays in the release of TSP funds, both at the state and district levels, severely affect implementation. These delays disrupt the agricultural cycle, halt construction projects mid-way, and postpone service delivery in health and education. Gram Panchayats and ITDA officials in Chintoor (ASR district) and Mannanur (Nagarkurnool district) reported that sanctioned amounts for critical works like drinking water supply and school infrastructure upgrades were often released in the final quarter of the fiscal year, leaving insufficient time for execution. Such lags also lead to rushed spending and poor-quality outcomes. The multi-tiered release mechanism, from state to nodal departments, then to district-level agencies, introduces bureaucratic inertia and is compounded by delays in Treasury approvals and tender processes.

c) Lack of Gram Sabha Participation

Despite constitutional provisions under PESA and administrative mandates under the TSP guidelines, Gram Sabha participation in planning and monitoring TSP schemes remains minimal or symbolic. In many surveyed

villages, including Repaka and Abicherla in Koonavaram mandal, and Thummala Bayalu and Chinthala in Mannanur mandal, respondents noted that Gram Sabhas were either not conducted or conducted without proper consultation. When held, decisions were typically top-down, with little space for community inputs, especially from women and youth. This lack of participatory governance results in schemes being poorly aligned with actual community needs and reduces accountability of implementing agencies.

Only 18% of the 400 respondents confirmed meaningful involvement in any Gram Sabha discussing development priorities or TSP fund usage in their villages.

d) Weak Monitoring Mechanisms

Monitoring and evaluation of TSP projects are fragmented and irregular, leading to poor transparency and little course correction. The Tribal Welfare Departments in both states have limited staffing, especially in remote ITDA areas. While TSP Cell mechanisms exist on paper, in practice, they are often under-resourced. There is no unified digital dashboard that captures scheme-wise TSP expenditures and outcomes. Field visits revealed incomplete school buildings, non-functional streetlights, and unstaffed primary health centers, reflecting poor follow-up and accountability mechanisms. RTI data and audit reports show gaps between reported completion and ground realities. The absence of social audits and third-party evaluations further compounds the problem.

Table 7: Summary Table: Key Implementation Bottlenecks Identified

Issue	Observed Impact	Field Evidence (Sample Villages)
Underutilised Funds	Budget lapses, delayed execution, loss of fiscal credibility	₹3.5 crore unutilized in Mannanur ITDA (2021-22)
Delayed Releases	Scheme implementation suffers; benefits are missed during critical periods	Drinking water project stalled in Abicherla
Lack of Gram Sabha Involvement	Schemes misaligned with actual needs, weakened ownership	Only 18% confirmed real participation
Weak Monitoring Mechanisms	Poor quality and sustainability of assets and services	Incomplete school buildings in Repaka and Chinthala

8. Voices from the Ground: Testimonies from Tribal Leaders and Civil Society

Field interactions in Chintoor ITDA (Alluri Sitharama Raju District) and Mannanur ITDA (Nagarkurnool District) revealed a complex and often disheartening reality behind the official numbers. Tribal leaders, village elders, and community-based organizations voiced concerns that despite the annual announcements of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) allocations, tangible improvements in basic amenities and livelihoods have been slow and uneven.

In Pydigudem village (Chintoor), a Koya youth leader expressed frustration: “Year after year, we hear about budgets, but our hamlets still struggle with drinking water and proper roads. Our Gram Sabha resolutions are rarely implemented.” Similar sentiments were echoed in Sarlapalli (Mannanur), where a Chenchu elder remarked: “We were promised land titles and livelihood support under TSP. But no official visited after the survey. We are still waiting.”

Civil society representatives working with forest-dependent tribal communities highlighted systemic issues in planning

and delivery. One NGO coordinator in Mannanur stated: “There is a trust gap. Tribals don’t see the schemes being implemented in spirit. Participation is symbolic, not *substantial*.” In Chintoor, activists emphasized the need for disaggregated data tracking and responsive grievance redressal mechanisms.

These testimonies underline the dissonance between budgetary allocations and on-the-ground outcomes. They also reflect a growing demand from tribal communities for meaningful engagement, transparency in fund usage, and a more accountable implementation of the TSP framework.

9. Recommendations and Policy Measures

The analysis of TSP implementation across Chintoor ITDA (Andhra Pradesh) and Mannanur ITDA (Telangana) reveals deep structural, procedural, and participatory challenges. To address these and ensure that tribal development is not just budgeted but meaningfully realized, a multi-pronged set of policy interventions is necessary. The following recommendations emerge from field data, testimonies, and fiscal analysis.

a) Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms for Planning and Monitoring

There is an urgent need to establish Tribal Sub-Plan Planning and Monitoring Units (TSPPMUs) at the ITDA level with dedicated technical and administrative staff. These units should facilitate evidence-based micro-planning, monitor fund flow, assess implementation status, and ensure alignment with community needs. Revitalizing the role of the Tribal Advisory Council with regular meetings, expert input, and follow-up mechanisms can enhance strategic oversight.

b) Ensuring Timely and Full Release of Allocated Funds

One of the consistent gaps is the delayed or partial release of TSP funds, which affects project completion and credibility. A rule-based and quarterly fund release mechanism tied to an online monitoring dashboard should be institutionalized. Unspent balances should be carried forward in a transparent manner rather than being absorbed into the general pool.

c) Enhancing Gram Sabha and Community Participation

Gram Sabha-based planning must be at the heart of TSP implementation. Capacity-building of tribal Gram Panchayats, sensitization of line departments, and mandatory incorporation of Gram Sabha resolutions into Annual TSP Plans are essential. Special awareness campaigns in local languages can empower communities to claim their entitlements.

d) Integrated Livelihood Development Approach

TSP should move beyond fragmented schemes and adopt a comprehensive tribal livelihoods framework that includes agriculture (especially shifting cultivation), minor forest produce, non-timber forest produce (NTFP) marketing, eco-tourism, and skill development. Dedicated livelihood support missions at the ITDA level can channel technical and financial inputs more effectively.

e) Real-Time Monitoring and Social Audits

A GIS-linked TSP dashboard that maps physical and

financial progress at the habitation level can improve transparency. Regular third-party evaluations and annual social audits conducted by local tribal youth and civil society groups must be mandated and publicly disclosed. This fosters trust and accountability.

f) Improved Convergence with Other Welfare Schemes

TSP cannot function in isolation. A convergence framework between TSP and flagship tribal development schemes like FRA (Forest Rights Act), PMAAGY (Adarsh Gram Yojana), Rythu Bandhu, Mission Bhagiratha, and NRLM must be operationalized at the planning stage. This ensures synergistic impact on education, health, housing, and livelihoods.

g) Capacity Building of Line Departments and Officials

Training of implementing officials, especially those at mandal and ITDA levels, on the spirit and operational guidelines of TSP is necessary. Tribal development cannot be a token duty; it must become a mainstream administrative priority.

h) Legal Backing for TSP Accountability

A stronger legal framework, akin to the SCSP/TSP Act enacted in states like Karnataka, could make the TSP implementation more binding. Legal mandates for outcome-oriented planning, fund utilization, and grievance redressal can plug existing loopholes. These policy measures, if taken together, can transform TSP from a budgetary commitment into a powerful tool for inclusive and sustainable tribal development.

Conclusion

The Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), conceptualized in 1974, was envisioned as a policy innovation to address the historical marginalization of Scheduled Tribes (STs) by earmarking a proportionate share of plan resources equivalent to their population percentage. Its primary goal was to ensure focused and outcome-oriented development interventions in tribal areas, especially through integrated tribal development projects (ITDPs), institutional mechanisms, and participatory governance. After five decades and numerous reforms, including the establishment of dedicated tribal development departments and nodal agencies, the fundamental question remains: Has TSP truly transformed the socio-economic landscape of tribal communities in India?

This study, drawing upon a mixed-methods field assessment across 400 households in Chintoor ITDA (AP) and Mannanur ITDA (TS), seeks to unpack the realities behind budget allocations, implementation bottlenecks, community engagement, and outcome effectiveness. Through structured surveys, focused group discussions, and key informant interviews, the research provides a grounded perspective of tribal voices, offering both quantitative insights and qualitative narratives.

Persistent Implementation Deficits

While TSP allocations have increased in absolute terms over the past decade (2014-2024), our data analysis clearly reveals a significant mismatch between allocations and

actual utilization. Utilization rates in both AP and Telangana often hover between 60-75% annually, with year-end fund rushes, underutilization in crucial sectors like education and livelihoods, and substantial unspent balances being carried forward without accountability. The delayed release of funds, sometimes up to the third or fourth quarter of the financial year, restricts planning and affects the timely delivery of services. This is particularly critical in tribal areas with difficult terrain, seasonal accessibility challenges, and administrative understaffing, where even a short implementation window can render the entire cycle ineffective.

Moreover, there exists a sectoral skew in spending, with a focus on infrastructure projects (roads, buildings, water tanks) that often lack accompanying service delivery guarantees or maintenance plans. Sectors like health, education, skill development, and livelihoods, which require sustained and participatory engagement, receive relatively lower prioritization and funds.

Weak Institutional and Participatory Mechanisms

Despite the mandated role of Gram Sabhas in planning and oversight under PESA and TSP guidelines, this field study highlights poor community participation. In both Chintoor and Mannanur, over 60% of respondents reported that no Gram Sabha meeting was held to discuss TSP projects, and decisions were taken by line departments or ITDA officials without community consultation. This undermines both the spirit of decentralized planning and the constitutional commitment to tribal self-rule.

Moreover, the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the ITDA and district levels remain weak. TSP does not have a dedicated digital dashboard or real-time monitoring tool in many ITDA regions. Project completion reports are rarely available in the public domain, and social audits are sporadic and poorly facilitated. There is also a visible capacity gap among line department officials and PRI functionaries, many of whom lack orientation in tribal rights, TSP planning norms, and participatory governance. This affects both the quality of project selection and the efficacy of delivery.

Socio-economic Impact: Gaps in Development Outcomes

Despite years of TSP implementation, tribal development indicators continue to lag behind state averages, particularly in health, education, and livelihoods. In Mannanur, for instance, the female literacy rate among surveyed households was only 42%, significantly below the state average. Similarly, access to institutional healthcare and maternal services remains patchy, especially in remote habitations. The quality of primary education is another concern, with many schools lacking regular teachers, infrastructure, or digital facilities. Though residential schools (Gurukuls, Ashram schools) have improved access, their uneven distribution and limited intake capacities leave many students behind.

In the livelihood's domain, agriculture remains the primary occupation, but only 28% of respondents in Chintoor and 35% in Mannanur had access to irrigation, making them highly dependent on rain-fed farming. Moreover, a significant proportion of tribal families do not receive timely benefits under key schemes like PM-KISAN, FRA pattas, or Rythu Bandhu, due to land records irregularities or exclusion errors. Even flagship schemes like PMAAGY and

livelihood missions often fail to converge with TSP projects, leading to fragmented delivery and duplication of efforts. The absence of convergence planning at the ITDA level remains a lost opportunity to leverage resources and scale impact.

Voices from the Ground: A Call for Respect and Recognition

The testimonies gathered during the fieldwork, whether from tribal sarpanches, elderly Chenchu farmers, or youth leaders, reflect a deep yearning for dignity, autonomy, and recognition. Tribals do not merely want development projects imposed upon them; they seek active roles in designing and governing these interventions.

One youth representative from Chintoor remarked: *"We are not poor because we lack resources; we are poor because the system doesn't listen to us."* Another woman farmer from Mannanur stated that *"the government gives us tanks and roads, but no seeds, markets, or forest rights. How will we survive?"* These voices point to the structural alienation still prevalent in tribal development discourse, despite progressive policies.

Way Forward: Towards an Accountable and Responsive TSP

The need for reimagining TSP is now more urgent than ever. First, there must be a legal framework for accountability, modeled after the SCSP-TSP Act of Karnataka or budget tagging mechanisms that ensures that TSP is not merely a notional allocation but an enforceable commitment.

Second, institutional strengthening at the ITDA level is vital, including the deployment of tribal development planners, convergence officers, GIS experts, and social audit facilitators. These bodies must work in tandem with tribal Gram Sabhas and civil society to co-create development plans.

Third, participatory planning, anchored in PESA provisions and localized needs assessments, must be the norm. Special budget literacy drives and planning workshops for tribal youth and panchayat members can empower communities to shape their futures.

Fourth, real-time digital dashboards, third-party evaluations, and independent grievance redressal forums should be integrated into the TSP governance architecture, enabling transparency and course correction.

Finally, convergence across departments, particularly forest, rural development, health, education, and agriculture, is necessary to address the multi-dimensional nature of tribal underdevelopment. TSP must be seen not as a budget line but as a comprehensive tribal empowerment strategy.

The Tribal Sub-Plan holds transformative potential. Yet, without political will, community participation, and administrative accountability, it risks becoming another well-intentioned but underperforming welfare mechanism. The case studies of Chintoor and Mannanur underscore this duality, while funds exist, their translation into meaningful outcomes remains uneven and exclusionary. By centering tribal voices, institutionalizing participatory governance, and embracing a rights-based and convergence-driven approach, TSP can indeed become a powerful tool of justice and development. As India advances toward its commitments under SDG-10 (Reduced Inequalities) and constitutional obligations, tribal development must no

longer be an afterthought, but a measure of the Republic's moral and democratic progress.

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Annexures

Annexure - I: Sample Distribution of Households Surveyed

ITDA	Mandal	Village	Total Households	Sample Households Surveyed
Chintoor	Chintoor	Rampa Rajavaram	120	20
Chintoor	Kunavaram	Mothugudem	150	25
Chintoor	VR Puram	Kothapalli	180	25
Mannanur	Amrabad	Mallapurpenta	100	50
Mannanur	Amrabad	Sarlapalli	90	50
Mannanur	Lingala	Narsapur	110	30
Mannanur	Lingala	Chitaldudyal	130	50
Total			—	400

Annexure - II: Access to Basic Services (in % of Households)

Service	Chintoor (%)	Mannanur (%)
Electricity Connection	84%	76%
Piped Drinking Water	41%	36%
Toilet within Premises	28%	32%
All-Weather Road Access	66%	54%
Health Sub-Centre Nearby	35%	38%
School within 1 km	89%	92%

Annexure - III: Employment and Livelihood Patterns

Livelihood Source	Chintoor (%)	Mannanur (%)
Agriculture (Own Land)	62%	58%
Wage Labour (Agricultural)	78%	72%
NFTF Collection	44%	61%
Livestock Rearing	28%	36%
Migration for Work	22%	18%

Annexure - IV: Scheme Coverage and Awareness

Scheme Name	Awareness (%)	Received Benefits (%)
Rythu Bandhu	64%	49%
PM-KISAN	52%	42%
FRA (Forest Rights)	45%	36%
MGNREGS	91%	74%
Arogya Sri Health	58%	22%
Kalyana Lakshmi	30%	14%

Annexure - V: Participation in Local Governance

Indicator	Chintoor	Mannanur
Attended Gram Sabha (Last 1 Year)	34%	41%
Women's Participation in GS	18%	24%
Aware of TSP Allocation to Village	11%	9%
Gram Sabha Discussion on TSP Held	8%	7%

Annexure - VI: Key Development Deficits Identified

Development Indicator	Chintoor - Gap (%)	Mannanur - Gap (%)
Quality School Infrastructure	54%	62%
Functional PHC/Health Staff	46%	51%
Road Connectivity	34%	48%
Livelihood Support Programs	61%	66%
Drinking Water Reliability	49%	52%

Annexure VII: TSP Allocation vs Utilization in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (2014-2024)

Year	Andhra Pradesh - Allocation (₹ Cr)	AP - Utilization (%)	Telangana - Allocation (₹ Cr)	Telangana - Utilization (%)
2014-15	3,215	61.4	2,802	68.2

015-16	3,780	67.2	3,041	71.5
016-17	4,015	69.1	3,440	75.3
017-18	4,230	71.6	3,602	76.2
018-19	4,790	68.4	3,895	73.9
019-20	4,560	64.9	4,120	72.5
020-21	4,920	66.3	4,435	70.1
021-22	5,285	68.5	4,750	74.2
022-23	5,540	72.8	5,015	76.6
023-24*	5,880	59.2	5,330	63.8

Source: Tribal Welfare Departments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (Compiled); *Note: 2023-24 figures are provisional (until Q3 of the fiscal year).