



An overview of sub-plan for schedule castes and schedule tribes in India (2004-2012)

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Abstract

Over the past decade, the policy discourse on tracking public expenditure in India has gained more importance. One of the main reasons for the increasing scrutiny of government budgets and their implementation has been the strategies followed by civil society organisations (CSOs), mass movements and international development agencies working in the country. These stakeholders have laid emphasis on decentralisation from the perspective of marginalised and disadvantaged sections of the population. Among the disadvantaged sections of society, SCs and STs have been the most excluded and neglected throughout the process of development programmes and policies of successive Union and state governments. They have remained the most disadvantaged sections due to socioeconomic exploitation and isolation over a long period.

In order to ensure direct “policy-driven” benefits for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) through specific interventions, the Planning Commission during the 1970s introduced plan strategies known as the Special Component Plan (SCP) and the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP). The name Special Component Plan for SCs (SCP) was changed to Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) in 2006. The main objective of SCSP and TSP was for channelling Plan funds for the development of SCs and STs in accordance with the proportion of these communities in the total population (16.6% and 8.6% respectively at the national level as per 2011 Census of India). In view of this, the present paper tries to present an overview on Sub-Plan for Schedule Castes / Schedule Tribes in India during the period of 2004-2012.

Keywords: schedule castes, schedule tribes, sub-plan, India

Introduction

Over the past decade, the policy discourse on tracking public expenditure in India has gained more importance. One of the main reasons for the increasing scrutiny of government budgets and their implementation has been the strategies followed by civil society organisations (CSOs), mass movements and international development agencies working in the country. These stakeholders have laid emphasis on decentralisation, i.e., empowering the local people through devolution of power to the panchayats (as key institutions for preparing local plans and budgets for inclusive development); using the Right to Information Act, 2005, as a tool to seek greater transparency in governance; and, analysis of budgets by CSOs as the key to assessing priorities underlying public policies and effective implementation of development schemes from the perspective of marginalised and disadvantaged sections of the population.

Among the disadvantaged sections of society, SCs and STs have been the most excluded and neglected throughout the process of development programmes and policies of successive Union and state governments. They have remained the most disadvantaged sections due to socioeconomic exploitation and isolation over a long period. For thousands of years, they have been pushed to low income generating occupations, inferior trades, unhygienic environment and menial jobs. Although untouchability has been abolished by the Constitution, caste rigidities continue to confine many SC workers to low-status occupations (N. Paul Divakar, Subrat Das and Pooja Parvati, 2011).

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (UDHR). Magna Carta accepted by King John in 1215 AD to United Nation declaration of Human rights 1948. Human rights are legitimated. Which is further elaborated in various international and national conventions, laws, and constitution of nations.

“ESC (Economic, Social and Cultural) Rights guarantees individuals, the right to work and to just and favorable conditions of work; to social security; to an adequate standard of living; to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; and to education, among others. These rights are guaranteed to all without discrimination” (ECS, 1966).

Indian constitution has also ensured the human right under fundamental rights in its various articles. Some of them are right to life and liberty, right to food, right to equality, right to personnel freedom, right to religion, fair trail in court, social and economic rights, etc. As per the doctrine of human rights, it is well documented that among the various socially disadvantaged groups, Scheduled Castes (SCs/Dalits) and Scheduled Tribes (STs/Adivasis) are the most excluded. This reflects in the lower attainments of various development indicators among them compared to the rest of the population. In the post-independence era, successive governments have formulated laws, special programmes and policies for reaching these excluded sections of population, to provide legitimate power to ensure the rights of people but these have hardly reached a large section of the SCs/STs and not able to

enjoy their rights. There are many hurdles that restrict people to enjoy their rights in which one of main cause is improper budgetary allocation to ensure the human rights. Without proper budgetary provision state cannot ensure the right of their citizen (World Bank, 2011).

In order to ensure direct “policy-driven” benefits for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) through specific interventions, the Planning Commission during the 1970s introduced plan strategies known as the Special Component Plan (SCP) and the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP). The name Special Component Plan for SCs (SCP) was changed to Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) in 2006. The earlier approach for development intervention for SCs and STs relied solely upon “incidental” benefits flowing to them from various interventions by the government. The main objective of SCSP and TSP was for channelling Plan funds for the development of SCs and STs in accordance with the proportion of these communities in the total population (16.6% and 8.6% respectively at the national level as of 2011 Census of India) (N. Paul Divakar, Subrat Das and Pooja Parvati, 2011). In view of this, the present paper tries to

present an overview on Sub-Plan for Schedule Castes / Schedule Tribes in India during the period of 2004-2012.

Caste system and economic development

The Indian society has been a caste society that sanctioned the role, status and occupation of each caste and disallowed any social mobility through religious, social and economic sanctions. Religious scripture played an important role and any disapproval of the established norms was met with boycott, punishment and commission of atrocities. SCs were the worst sufferers and hence their socio, economic and political conditions remained precarious and they humiliated. The Constitution guaranteed equality before the law, abolishment of untouchability and also made provisions for the special attention given to SCs so that they would not be left out from development. Sixty years have passed and despite several development measures having been initiated for the welfare of SCs the situation is not encouraging (Yamini Mishra, Gyana Ranjan Panda, Colin Gonsalves, 2009).

Table 1: Stark difference of SC development indicators

	All India	SC	Non SC/ST
Infant Mortality Rate	73	83	68
Literacy	65	55	69
Undernourished children under	47	54	44
Households without access to Health care	40	44.15	37.15

Source: NSSO Survey, NFHS, Census 2001 and IIDS Data

The Infant Mortality rate in SCs is 83% and Child Mortality rate is 39% which is higher than non SCs who have IMR and CMR 61% and 22% respectively. 56% of SC women suffer from anemia. The morbidity among SC children is also high, more than 3/4th of SC children are anemic. More than half of the SC children suffer from malnutrition or under nutrition. Malnutrition is generally considered a common disseminator of deprivation that reduces child survival. According to 2001 census, the literacy rates for both SC/STs were lower as compared to the non-SC/STs. Literacy rate at all India level is 65% whereas for the SCs it is 55% compared to non SCs which is 69%. The literacy rate was particularly low among the SC women (41.9%). School attendance was about 10%

less among SC boys than other boys, while the difference among girls was about 5%.

The indicator of undernourishment (in term of minimum weight for age) of the children is much higher for SC children - 54 per cent for SC and 44 per cent for non SC/ST. Similarly, undernourishment reflected in terms of stunting (in terms of height for age) was 52 per cent for SC children and 43 per cent non SC/ST children.

In 2000, overall, an average of about 40% persons/households did not have access to public health services. The percentage of persons/house holds was lower among SCs as compared to non-SC/ST. The percentage for SC was 44.15 and for non-SC/ST was 37.15.

Table 2: Schedule Caste Access to Resources

	All India	SC	Non SC/ST
Monthly Per Capita Expenditure	361	Rs.285	Rs.393
Poverty	26	37	21
Aggregate Capital Assets	78783	49189	134500
Landless	7.8	10	6.2

Source: NSSO Survey, NFHS, Census 2001 and IIDS Data

In 2000, at all India level, the Monthly Per Capita Expenditure for SCs was Rs. 285 much lower than the non-SCs which were Rs.393. With lack of access to fixed sources of income, low wage earning and under employment the SCs suffer from high incidences of poverty. In 2000, in the rural areas about 45% of SCs were poor compared to 21% among the non SCs. Compared with the non SCs, the incidence of aggregate

poverty was 70% higher among SCs. About 80% of the SCs live in rural areas. In 2000 out of the total SC households only 16.8% of them pursued cultivation as an independent self employed occupation, whereas for non-SC/ST the percentage was more then double (41.11%). About 28% of SCs households had acquired some access to fixed capital assets compared to 56% for others households. The percentage of

landless households among the SCs in rural areas is about 10% as compared with 6% for Non-SCs households. The percentage of landless and near landless among SCs is about 75% as compared to 54% for the non-SCs.

Gender Difference

The development of any group /community is marked by the development of women within that group/community. In 2001 about 57% SCs women workers in rural areas were agricultural laborers. Only 21% were cultivators compared to non-SCs who were 45% as cultivators. In rural areas 2.1% of SCs women were unemployed as compared to 1.4% for non-SCs/ST women. A large number of SCs women are engaged in unclean occupations such as scavenging. SC women who work as wage labourers faced discrimination in wage earning particularly in urban areas. In 2001, the SC women casual wage labourer received daily wage earning of Rs. 37 compared to Rs.56 for non-SC/ST (Report on Working Group on the Empowerment of Scheduled Caste, Eleventh Five Year Plan). In 2001 the literacy rate was lower among SCs women (41.9%) as compared to 58.2% for the general female population. Beside low literacy rate another problem of SCs/ST women was their high drop-out rate. SC women have the worst health indicators, such as high maternal mortality rates and low nutritional status measured by Body Mass Index (BMI). The women from the SC groups have poorer level of nutrition as compared to non-SCs/ST women. In 1999/2000, among SC women, 42 per cent had low BMI as compared to 33 percent of non-SCs women. The maternal mortality rates are higher for SCs women because of lack of access to health services both public and private. SCs women are subjected to constant harassment and violence from non-SCs.

The data based on the study of NSSO, NFHS survey 2005-06, Census 2001, IIDS Data Bank and Report on Working Group on the Empowerment of Scheduled Caste, Eleventh Five Year Plan figures out how SCs are still out of the mainstream of Indian society. It also questions the ineffectiveness of the development measures taken by the government. Is the budgetary allocations made for the welfare schemes directed towards SCs in proportion to what is needed to bring the SCs out of these inhuman conditions? It is imperative to study the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan in this context because this was a novel and path breaking policy which differed from the previous development schemes. Had the centre as well state government followed its principle the conditions of SCs would have changed drastically.

Sub plan for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are the most excluded and under privileged among the various socially disadvantaged groups in our country. In the post-independence era, successive governments have formulated laws, special programmes and policies for addressing the developmental needs of these excluded sections of population. These, however, have not contributed to the development the SC/ST population in any significant way. The Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) are two major planning strategies through which developmental needs of these groups are sought to be addressed. The allocation towards SCSP and TSP is required to be in proportion to the

respective share of SCs and STs in the population.

The landmark schemes for the upliftment of the SCs/STs are the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), which were introduced in 1979. Recognising the need for exclusive budgetary allocation for the socially discriminated people, there were clear guidelines for quantifying the proportion of allocation from the overall budget for the SCs and STs. But, even after almost three decades, the progress in implementing these schemes is disconcerting. However, some of the recent government reports and the election manifesto of the Congress led government reiterate the intention of properly implementing the SCSP and TSP.

The Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) is a special strategy, which was adopted during 1979 by Planning Commission (Sixth Five Year Plan) with the prime objective of giving special and focused attention to social, economic and educational needs of Scheduled Castes (SC). Under this strategy, States/UTs and Central Ministries are required to formulate and implement SCSP as part of their Annual Plans by earmarking resources from each sector of the Plan in proportion to the SC population. The targeted flow of resources through SCSP is intended to provide additional benefit to the SC population, over and above what they would get through the normal Plan. This is necessary to bridge the gap between the general population and SCs in terms of different indicators of development. Several recommendations and instructions were circulated to all ministries/departments for the implementation of SCSP. Separate Codes 789 was allotted and a copy of letter No. T-14018/25/95-Codes/336 dated 01.09.1995 was circulated with the correction slip No. 251 dated 16.01.1995 for incorporation in para 3.8 of General Direction to LMMHA (List of Major & Minor Heads of Accounts) by Controller auditor General to all concerned in States/UTs and Union of India. In spite of all these attempts no Ministries/Departments have been following the instructions, no allocations have been made under SCSP and no separate code has been opened. Looking at the gaps in allocations and implementation the Planning Commission in 2005 again gave the following instructions:

- Earmarking of funds for SCSP from total State plan outlay at least in proportion to SC population.
- Making SCSP funds non divertible and non lapsable.
- Making the social welfare department (the department concerned with the development and welfare of SCs) the nodal department for formulation and implementation of SCSP.
- Placing the earmarked funds at the disposal of the nodal department concerned, which inturn will reallocate the funds to sectoral departments for implementation of schemes directly relevant to SC development.
- Placing the earmarked funds for SCSP under a separate budget head/subhead for each development Department.

Union Budget for SCSP and TSP

As regards the priority for Dalits and Adivasis, only a handful of the Union Government Ministries/Departments have reported their Plan allocations earmarked for Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) in Union

Budget 2010-11. And, the guidelines of SCSP (for earmarking 16.2% of Plan Allocations for SCs) and TSP (for earmarking 8.2% of Plan Allocations for STs) have not been fulfilled in the single years of budget too. The Union Budget outlays for SCSP and TSP as proportion of the Total Plan allocation of the Union Government (excluding the Central Assistances to the State & UT Plans) have registered small increases in 2009-10(RE) – Plan allocation earmarked for SCs has increased from 6.25 % to 7.20 % in 2010-11 (BE), while Plan allocation earmarked for STs shows an increase from 3.68 % in 2009-10 (RE) to 4.3 % in 2010-11 (BE). Also, of the funds shown as earmarked for SCs and STs, a large chunk is meant for basic

social services and employment generation programmes, with little emphasis on providing funds for long term development and empowerment of the SCs and STs.

Union Budget provision for SCSP

The total budget allocation under Plan Outlay for the last seven year (2004-05 RE to 2009-10RE) is Rs. 9,19,249 crore and under the SC Sub Plan (SCSP) the Government of India is liable to allocate Rs. 1,48,918 crore exclusively for SCs (16.2% of the total plan budget) but it has allocated only Rs. 60,383 crore for the welfare of SCs, which means Government of India has been deprived for SCs, by Rs 88,535 crores.

Table 3: (Resource flow for SCSP) (Rs in Crore)

Financial Year	Total Plan Expenditures(Uts) Central Government	Amount due for SCP According population Norms (16.2%)	Amount allocated under SCP plan expenditure	Amount Denied for SCP plan expenditure	% Allocated under SCP plan expenditure	% allocated for SCP according population norms	% Denied amount for SCP according population norms
2004-05 RE	85061	13780	3611	10169	4.25	26.20	73.80
2005-06 RE	109900	17804	6579	11225	5.99	36.95	63.05
2006-07 RE	129804	21028	8474	12554	6.53	40.30	59.70
For the 11th Five Year Plan 2007-12							
2007-08 RE	152313	24675	12368	12307	8.12	50.12	49.88
2008-09 RE	208252	33737	14727	19010	7.07	43.65	56.35
2009-10 RE	233919	37895	14624	23271	6.25	38.59	61.41
2010-11 BE	284284	46054	20466	25588	7.20	44.44	55.56
Total	878768	142360	62185	80175	7.08	43.68	56.32

Source: Calculated from the Expenditure Budget Vol. I and Vol. II, Union Budget (respective years).

In the financial year 2010-11 the total budget allocation under Plan Outlay is Rs. 2,84,284 crore and under the SC Sub Plan (SCSP) the Government of India is liable to allocate Rs. 46,054 crore exclusively for SCs but it has allocated just Rs. 20,466 crore for the welfare of SCs, which means SC have again deprived, this time by Rs 25,588 crores.

Union Budget provision for TSP

Plan allocations earmarked for the Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the Union Budget present a similar picture. The proportion of

total Plan Outlay of the Union Government earmarked for STs had increased during 2004-05 (RE) to 2007-08 (RE), but it declined during 2008-09 (RE) and 2009-10 (RE); it stands at 4.30 percent in 2010-11 (BE). This, as is evident, is grossly inadequate considering the proportion of ST population in total population of the country (which is roughly 8 per cent). It also violates the basic premise of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) which requires the government to make budgetary allocations proportionate to the tribal population in the country.

Table 4: (Resource flow for TSP) (Rs in Crore)

Financial Year	Total Plan Expenditures /Uts) Central Government	Amount due for TSP according population norms (8.2%)	Amount allocated under TSP plan expenditure	Amount Denied for TSP plan expenditure %	Allocated under TSP plan expenditure	% allocated for TSP according population norms	% Denied amount for TSP according population norms
2004-05 RE	85061	6975	2382	4593	2.80	34.15	65.85
2005-06 RE	109900	9012	4176	4836	3.80	46.34	53.66
2006-07 RE	129804	10644	5565	5079	4.29	52.28	47.72
For the 11th Five Year Plan 2007-12							
2007-08 RE	152313	12490	7447	5043	4.89	59.63	40.37
2008-09 RE	208252	17077	8771	8306	4.21	51.36	48.64
2009-10 RE	233919	19181	8601	10580	3.68	44.84	55.16
2010-11 BE	284284	23311	12226	11085	4.30	52.45	47.55
Total	878768	72059	37045	35014	4.22	51.41	48.59

Source: Calculated from the Expenditure Budget Vol. I and Vol. II, Union Budget (respective years).

Also, of the funds shown as earmarked for SCP and TSP, a large chunk is meant for basic social services and employment generation programmes, with no emphasis on providing funds for long term development and empowerment of the SCs and STs. Only the following Ministries of the Union Govt. have reported substantial magnitude of funds earmarked for SCs / STs in Union Budget.

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
- Dept. of Rural Development (Ministry of Rural Development)
- Ministry of Women & Child Development
- Dept. of Elementary Education & Literacy (Ministry of HRD)

- Dept. of Secondary Education & Higher Education (Ministry of HRD)
- Dept. of Health & Family Welfare.

Conclusion

Although the SCSP and TSP were put in place much earlier, it is only since 2004-05, different Departments/Ministries started to show the proportion of budget earmarked for SCSP/TSP and in that year, only 5 out of 104 Departments/Ministries showed their earmarked allocations for SCs/STs. However, in the subsequent years, the number of Departments/Ministries that showed their earmarked allocation for SCs/STs increased gradually and this number in 2009-10 is around 30. But, in terms of the proportion of total allocation for SCSP/ TSP from all Departments/ Ministries, it remains a gross violation of the SCSP/TSP norms. The subsequent discussion reveals the same and the declining trend of earmarked allocations in the last two years.

The budget should represent the aspiration of all citizens of this country. It should focus on the marginalized community which has traditionally been kept out of the main discourse. It is the task of the government to bring them into the whole process of development. The SCSP can create ample space for SCs to play an important role in the whole economy and so why this apathy from the government side. Why are the Ministries which are driving economic growth and which can really turn SCs from mere beneficiaries to entrepreneurs, high skilled professionals, managers, contractors, share holders and etc keep mum not ensuring that this happens. The Budget should allocate the due share to SCs and the programmes/schemes should encourage and open opportunities which empower them and make them self-reliant.

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