

**Minutes of the “State Level Consultative Workshop on Tribal Sub Plan”
held in State Planning Commission on 30.11.2015**

The third civil society consultative meeting on Tribal Sub Plan was held at the State Planning Commission under the chairmanship of **Tmt. Santha Sheela Nair, IAS (Retd)**, Vice-Chairperson, State Planning Commission (SPC) in coordination with **Social Watch-TamilNadu, PAALAM, REEDA** and **AMBU** on 30.11.15, Monday. The deliberations were held in two venues concurrently, one at the SPC Conference Hall and the second in the PWD Conference Hall.

Out of the 36 Tribal Communities of Tamilnadu, 17 participated through their organizational leaders. The Vice Chairperson, SPC while inaugurating the conference declared that SPC has made itself proud by conducting such conference that has happened only to the SC/ST sector. She also thanked the coordinators **Dr. R. Christodas Gandhi I.A.S (Retd)**, and **Fr. John Kumar, Director, Social Watch-TN** who with great devotion and determination serve the cause of SCSP and TSP as well as gender budgeting. She recapitulated on the successful implementation of suggestions that emerged in two earlier conferences and assured to take up with the Government, the constructive ideas to materialize in the current meeting.

Topics Covered

S.No	SPC Conference Hall	PWD Conference Hall
I.	Evolving Tribal Development Department	Schemes for Irular Tribals
II.	Schemes for Malayali Tribes	Schemes for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)
III.	Government of India Schemes for Tribals	Tribals whose Population is Less than 700 and below
IV.	Large Sized Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPs)	Analysis of Tribal Sub Plan 2015 – 2016

Record of Discussions at SPC Conference Hall

I. Evolving Tribal Development Department

Dr. B.C. Archana Kalyani IFS, Director, Tribal Welfare, briefed the audience on the action initiated to vest more authority and funds on the Tribal Department by bifurcating tasks from Director, Adi Dravidar Welfare. The civil society's demand for strengthening the Department was echoed by us. The audience regretted the absence of Secretary, Adi Dravidar & Tribal Welfare (ADTW) and Director ADW who could have made the discussions more categorical. After lengthy deliberations, the following demands were urged upon the Government:

1. Action to constitute the Tribal Advisory Council under the constitution.
2. Action to declare Scheduled areas under the constitution.
3. Creation of a separate Secretary for Tribal Welfare.
4. All tribal residential and Ekalaiva schools should be brought under the administrative control of Director, Tribal Welfare.
5. Director-Tribal Welfare should be made the budget controlling authority for TSP.
6. Action by Director-Tribal Welfare to convene weekly meetings with Tribal representatives. 36 TN Tribes could be clubbed in to six clusters and each cluster called in turn. Therefore every tribal community will have a chance to meet the authorities once at least in two months. Six clusters can be formed in the following fashion:
 - i. Malayalis
 - ii. Irulars
 - iii. PVTG
 - iv. Tribes with less than 700 population.
 - v. Tribes having more than 700 but less than 5000 population.
 - vi. The rest of 36 Tribes
7. The Vice Chairperson observed that the recommendation made by Dr. R. Christodas Gandhi I.A.S (Rtd) for setting up a Tribal Development Authority on the lines of Sports Development Authority of TN instead of a Directorate is worth considering in view of the fact that TSP Budget is only 1% of the total Budget.
8. The civil society very categorically insisted that they do not desire officers at the District Headquarters but only at their own locations at the Block level. About 30 Block-level officers will suffice. They also emphasized that only Tribals be appointed in the Department.

II. Schemes for Malayali Tribes

Thiru.K.A.Gunasekaran, President, Tamilnadu Pazhankudiena Makkal Kuddamappu explained the following demands towards the development of tribals in general and Malayali tribes in particular:

- i. Integrated and effective education has to be provided to the tribal children to ensure prosperous future.
- ii. The tenders promoted by government departments specifically by Public Welfare Department, Highways and Minor Ports Department have to set apart 10% to tribal entrepreneurs.
- iii. To preserve the cultural nuances of tribal people it is demanded to conduct competitions on “Tribal Culture” among students and encourage them with cash rewards.
- iv. There should be transparency at district level in terms of fund utilization for tribals in Tribal Sub Plan.
- v. It is recommended that before the preparation of State Budget specifically the Tribal Sub Plan it is mandatory to convene a state level tribal representative meeting to get their feedback.
- vi. There should be department wise social auditing on account of fund utilization in Tribal Sub Plan fund and Government of India PVTG fund.
- vii. The forest Rights Act 2006 has to be effectively implemented in tribal areas to ensure sustainable livelihood for the tribal people.
- viii. The Fifth Scheduled Areas in Tamilnadu has to identified and distributed to the tribal people.

III. Government of India Schemes for Tribals

Thiru.Ramakrishnan, HOD, State Planning Commission explained the present government of India Schemes and pointed out the areas of improvement.

- Government of India schemes for tribals mostly focuses on economic sustainability and educational improvement of tribals. **Thiru.Alwas**, Hon’ble Secretary, NAWA pointed out that in the case of educational improvement of tribals in Tamilnadu the quality of education and other facilities like food and stationery have to be upgraded. The graduates from tribal community can be appointed as teachers so that there is no problem of unavailability of teachers.
- It is felt that the government of India fund for tribal especially for “Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG’S) has to be utilized properly for which the district collectors who are the implementing agencies for government have to take effective action by designing and implementing suitable projects in the tribal areas.

IV. Large Sized Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPs)

There are about 22 LAMP Societies in Tamilnadu. The main focus of LAMP is to improve among tribals the production and trade of agricultural and horticultural produce through co-operative ventures. As per the Forest Rights Act 2006 the tribals are endowed with the rights to collect and sell Minor Forest produce (MFP).

Tmt.Jayashree Muralidaran, Registrar of Co-operative Societies – Tamilnadu made a detailed power point presentation on the role and functions of LAMPs in Tamilnadu. She also explained the ways and procedures to avail the loans and other benefits in LAMP.

Record of Discussions at PWD Conference Hall

I. Schemes for Irular Tribals

The following persons presented the demands for the development of Irular Tribals in Tamilnadu.

Thiru.Sudaroli Sundaram, Founder- Pazhangudi Makkal Munnani, **Thiru.Irulapoo Selvakumar**, General Secretary, Tamilnadu Adivasi Federation (TAF), **Tmt. Sornalatha**, Managing Trustee, ASSET, **Dr.Sugumar**, Scientist, Kalpakkam.

- A detailed and district wise demands were presented in the State level Consultation on Tribal Sub Plan held on 4th March 2015 and we have not received any communication about the action taken on the presented demands. It would be better that there is follow-up in the state level consultation.
- The schemes for tribals do not reach them or not on time in par with schemes for other people.
- Mr. Ravi, member, Irular Snake Catching Society presented the current status of Snake Catching Societies in Tamilnadu and he demanded that there should be proper plans to improve the
- The Post-Matric Scholarship is not released on time which severely affects the education of tribal students.
- The Irular tribal community lives in three kinds of regions. And they are;

1. Coastal Region:

- Starting from Thiruvallur district Pulicat till Nagapattinam district Taaramangalam

- Irulars live in coastal region whose livelihood depends on fishing and related jobs.

2. Plains:

- The majority of Irulars live in plains.

- Thiruvalur, Kancheepuram, Thiruvanamalai, Vellore, Vilupuram, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Cuddalore, Ariyalur, and Coimbatore are the districts where the population of Irulars is more compared to other districts. (From 8000 to 31,000 Irular populations).

- Their primary occupation is working as daily-wages in rice-mills, brick chambers.

3. Hilly region:

- Irulars also live in the hilly regions of Nilgris and Anaikatti where forest becomes the primary source of living.

- As per their living place their occupation varies and so it would be effective that the government implements schemes in reference to their living place.
- District Collectors and other tribal development related officials have to convene periodic meetings with Irular representatives to understand their problems and design schemes accordingly.

II. Schemes for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

Dr. B.C. Archana Kalyani IFS, Director-Tribal Welfare presided over the panel. **Thiru. Manikandan**, **Tmt. Neeji Saraswathy**, Tribal representatives, Kota Tribes and **Thiru. Alwas**, Hon'ble Secretary, Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association (NAWA) made valuable contributions. There has been considerable change in the quality of schemes sanctioned since 2012. Keeping in view GOI guidelines to ensure substantive schemes instead of individual grants, sizeable livelihood schemes like rice mill, brick kiln, tractors and tillers were provided. However it was regretted that, out of four years in the 12th Five year plan GOI grant was obtained for only two years foregoing about Rs.40 crores. Valuable suggestions were made to streamline mooted proposals and execution of schemes:

a. The Director, Tribal Welfare should obtain proposals also from the PVTG community and need not delay finalising the proposals awaiting Collectors' report.

b. The Director, Tribal Welfare should have on-going dialogues with PVTG community representatives all through the year so that threadbare discussions are made possible for selecting suitable schemes for the year.

c. Advance action shall be taken in 2015 itself or before April 2016 to prepare the 13th Five year Plan projections.

d. On behalf of the civil society, **Dr. R. Christodas Gandhi I.A.S.** (Rtd), **Thiru. Manikandan**, and **Thiru. Alwas**, Hon'ble Secretary, NAWA Ooty have submitted detailed proposals for PVTG. Cultural Tourism, Entrepreneurship for graduates and housing are three focused schemes suggested for the 6 PVTGs in Ooty.

e. There was a bit of chaos in fixing execution authorities due to which GOI grant could not be fully utilized in time leading to non-release of subsequent grants by GOI. Government should seriously consider entrusting PVTG works to LAMP societies and ST Associations whose bonafides are well established.

III. Tribals whose Population is less than 700 and below

The peculiar situation of such of those Tribes whose population does not exceed 2000 was discussed in the last SPC meet on 04.03.2015. The 2011 census reveals that there are 12 Tribes whose population is less than 700.

Kaadar representative **Thiru. Ravi** made a presentation of their state of affairs in Vaalpaarai. **Dr. R. Christodas Gandhi I.A.S** (Rtd) who chaired the session highlighted the following action programmes:

1. The civil society should intimate to Director-Tribal Development and TN Social Watch whatever information they have of these 12 Tribes.
2. The Vaalparai Tribes (four of them: Kaadar, Maga Malasar, Iravaalar and Muduvar) have formed an Association after the then Development Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary Dr. R. Christodas Gandhi visited them in 2012. This association should be strengthened in various ways.
3. Efforts should be taken to identify organizations or activists for other such Tribes for coordination with administration and self-help.
4. The State Planning Commission is sponsoring a project to study Kaadars and suggest schemes for their progress. This study will jointly be undertaken by **REEDA (Dr. R. Christodas Gandhi, I.A.S (Rtd))** and **Social Watch - Tamilnadu (Fr. John Kumar)**. The Collector of Coimbatore and Sub-Collector, Pollachi will extend necessary assistance to the project team.
5. Concrete efforts should be taken to educate one family member upto graduation and to secure livelihood for each family.

IV. Analysis of Tribal Sub Plan 2015 – 2016

Fr. Kumar, Director, Social Watch – Tamilnadu presented the analysis of Tribal Sub Plan 2015 – 2016.

Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) is a forerunner to **Special Component Plan (SCP)** or **Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP)** as it is otherwise called. TSP came into vogue in the 1970s itself.

The size of Tribals is so small in Tamil Nadu, constituting a little over one percent (1.10%) or 7,94,697 in numbers (As Per Census 2011), that a sensible and focused planning could change the fortunes of all the Tribals for the better with just the 1% plan allocation under TSP.

We attempt to present a model TSP Annual Budget spread over a five year Plan

Period for the Tamil Nadu bureaucrats to consider and get convinced.

The first principle to be kept in mind as against common assumption is not to 'main-stream' Tribals. Many will find it hard to digest. But elsewhere it has been clearly explained how 'main-streaming' is used as a ruse for maiming innate skills and culture and subjugating Tribals by reducing them to a miniscule minority in all spheres of governance and social employment.

Secondly Tribals do not require multiplicity of schemes but select thrust schemes where concerted efforts can converge to give Tribals strengths for self-determination and economic build-ups.

1. Higher Education
2. Focused Horticulture Schemes
3. Venture Capital Fund
4. Palaverkadu Irular Aquaculture
5. Thodar Diaries
6. Irular Tea Factory in Kothagiri
7. Special infrastructure and economic plans for Tribal communities whose population is less than 700 (2011 census)
8. Civil society consultative meetings.

The participants unanimously thanked the efforts of State Planning Commission in addressing the problem of Scheduled Tribes and promoting participatory budget making process.
