

Report Summary

Tribal Sub-Plan

- The Public Accounts Committee (Chair: Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge) submitted its report on ‘Tribal Sub-Plan’ on December 18, 2017. The Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) aims to bridge the gap between the Schedule Tribes (STs) and the general population with respect to all socio-economic development indicators in a time-bound manner. TSP is not applicable to states where tribals represent more than 60% of the population. The Committee looked at the implementation of TSP in three ministries: (i) Human Resource Development; (ii) Health and Family Welfare; and (iii) Ayush.
- The Committee noted several discrepancies in the implementation of the TSP, including: (i) non-adoption of specific norms for release of funds, (ii) weak programme management, (iii) deficient monitoring system, (iv) and non-implementation of information programmes. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
- **Financial management:** The Committee noted that there has been no segregation of TSP funds under a separate head at the state, district or block level. Funds under TSP are required to be put into a separate head of account, to strengthen administrative arrangements for proper utilisation and monitoring of TSP funds. The Committee recommended that strict adherence to earmarking of funds into a separate head at every level should be made mandatory for release of funds. It also suggested that a more proactive approach should be taken to keep track of monitoring, fund utilisation, and implementation of schemes.
- **Non-lapsable pool for TSP fund:** The Committee observed that presently, funds at the end of the financial year were not being transferred into a non-lapsable pool of TSP fund, that could be utilised later. It recommended that: (i) efforts should be made towards optimal utilisation of allocated TSP funds for a given financial year; and (ii) a non-lapsable fund should be created to pool funds that could not be utilised in a financial year.
- **Central nodal unit for overview:** The Committee noted that guidelines detailing the process for an oversight had not been put out by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The basic objective of TSP is to channelize the flow of outlays from central ministries by earmarking funds for the development of STs in states (in proportion to their population). The Committee reasoned that to oversee this implementation of fund flow, a central unit of oversight should be set up. It recommended that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs should create a central nodal unit for oversight which will facilitate better co-ordination and efficient implementation of TSP through an online monitoring system.
- **Nodal units at state/district level:** The Committee noted that NITI Aayog had suggested that TSP ministries or departments should set up nodal units for programme monitoring. These units should also indicate state-specific allocation and release for STs separately under centrally sponsored schemes and central sector schemes. The Committee stated that presently, the Departments of School Education and Literacy and Higher Education have a dedicated unit to formulate and implement TSP under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It recommended that all TSP ministries or departments should set up their own dedicated nodal units for effective monitoring of TSP at the implementation stage.
- **Involvement of local community in the planning process:** A Comptroller and Auditor General audit report in 2015 had highlighted that plans for schemes were being formulated without specific consideration of tribal beneficiaries as required under TSP. The Committee noted that the planning process could be strengthened with the involvement of the community in tribal dominant blocks. It recommended that inputs/suggestions of local tribal community should be sought before finalising the plan for implementation of any programme under TSP.

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