

**Research Article****Income and Employment Generation Programmes for tribes in ITDAs of  
Telangana – A Study****Dharavath Saraswathi**

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Kakatiya University

**Corresponding Author: Dharavath Saraswathi**

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**Abstract**

Human society is evolved far away from traditional economic methods. Tribes are important social group in the society which is consisting about 8% among the population. Their economy was mostly depends upon hunting and gathering of forest goods and wildlife. But in the process of marching towards globalization their occupations are disappeared. Many of the tribal population lost their economy. To improve their socio economic conditions the governments brought many policies and schemes in India as well as Telangana. Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) are specialized administrative units set up by the Tribal Welfare Department to coordinate and implement tribal development and welfare programs in areas with significant Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations. They focus on socio-economic upliftment, infrastructure development, service delivery, tribal livelihood support, and implementation of Tribal Sub-Plan and related schemes. In Telangana State there are 4 ITDA namely Eturungaram, Bhadrachalam, Uttoor and Mannar functioning for the upliftment of Tribes. This paper focused on what are the employment and income generation policies in Telangana state and how they are helped in their upliftment.

**Keywords:** Tribe, Development, Upliftment, economy, ITDA, plan, population etc.

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**Introduction**

Human society has economically evolved much far, from hunting and gathering society to digital world and quantum computing. Tribal populations constitute an important segment of India's demographic structure and are primarily concentrated in forested and hilly regions. In Telangana, Scheduled Tribes account for a significant proportion of the population, especially in districts such as Bhadrachalam, Mulugu, Adilabad, Nagarkurnool and Warangal. Despite constitutional safeguards, tribal communities continue to experience low income levels, high unemployment, and limited access to education and markets. Income and employment generation occupy a central position, as economic self-reliance is considered essential for sustainable tribal development. To improve their conditions socially and economically, many tribal welfare and development programmes has implemented by the governments. Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA) are key instruments in the provision of Tribal Development. Earlier the tribal employment and economic activities are mainly associated with the forest pickings and hunting of the wild animals. But due to wild life act and other acts related to protection of forests, the tribal people lost their economic opportunities. To help them, the governments are started focusing on employment generation and make the economically self-sufficient.

**Objectives of the Study**

The present study aims to:

1. Examine the role of ITDA programmes in income generation among tribal communities in Telangana.
2. Analyze employment creation through skill development, self-employment, and wage employment initiatives.
3. Identify the major achievements and limitations of ITDA interventions.
4. Suggest policy measures to strengthen tribal livelihood programmes.

#### **What is ITDA:**

**Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs)** are specialized administrative units set up by the Tribal Welfare Department to coordinate and implement **tribal development and welfare programs** in areas with significant Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations. They focus on socio-economic upliftment, infrastructure development, service delivery, tribal livelihood support, and implementation of Tribal Sub-Plan and related schemes. Income and employment generation programmes are implemented through subsidies, training, asset distribution, and institutional support.

#### **ITDAs in Telangana State**

In Telangana state, there are total four Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA) which covers different districts and tribal groups.

##### **1. ITDA Bhadrachalam:**

The jurisdiction of ITDA Kothagudem extends across four districts—Bhadrachalam, Kothagudem, Khammam, Mahabubabad, and Mulugu covering several tribal mandals and habitations. The agency focuses on improving livelihoods, income generation, education, health, infrastructure, and social welfare of tribal communities such as Koya, Gond, Lambada, and other indigenous groups.

##### **2. ITDA Eturunagaram**

ITDA Eturunagaram is one of the key Integrated Tribal Development Agencies functioning under the Tribal Welfare Department of Telangana State. Headquartered at Eturunagaram in Mulugu district, the ITDA was established to promote the socio-economic development of Scheduled Tribe communities living in remote and forest-dominated regions of eastern Telangana. The jurisdiction of ITDA Eturunagaram covers several tribal mandals of Mulugu district and adjoining areas, which are largely hilly, forested, and difficult to access. The major tribal communities in this region include Koya, Gond, Kolam, and Lambada, whose livelihoods traditionally depend on agriculture, forest produce, and wage labour. The ITDA plays a vital role in reducing regional backwardness by implementing Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) and other welfare programmes

##### **3. ITDA Utnoor**

ITDA Utnoor is one of the prominent Integrated Tribal Development Agencies functioning under the Tribal Welfare Department of Telangana State. Headquartered at Utnoor in Adilabad district, the ITDA was established to address the socio-economic and educational backwardness of tribal communities in the northern tribal belt of Telangana. The jurisdiction of ITDA Utnoor covers several tribal mandals of Adilabad district, which have a high concentration of Scheduled Tribe population. The major tribal communities in this region include Gond, Kolam, Naikpod, Pardhan, and Lambada tribes. These communities primarily depend on agriculture, forest-based livelihoods, and seasonal wage employment. ITDA Utnoor plays a crucial role in reducing poverty and improving living standards in these remote areas.

##### **4. ITDA Mannanur**

ITDA Mannanur is a specialized Integrated Tribal Development Agency functioning under the Tribal Welfare Department of Telangana State, established mainly for the welfare and development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), especially the Chenchu tribe.

Headquartered at Mannanur in Nagarkurnool district, the ITDA operates in the forested regions of the Nallamala hills, covering tribal habitations spread across multiple districts. The jurisdiction of ITDA Mannanur extends over parts of Nagarkurnool, Mahaboobnagar, Nalgonda, Rangareddy, and Vikarabad districts. The Chenchu community, traditionally dependent on hunting, gathering, and forest resources, faces unique challenges such as geographical isolation, low literacy levels, health issues, and limited livelihood options. ITDA Mannanur plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges through targeted interventions.

### **ITDA Programmes for Income Generation**

#### **Livelihood and Asset Distribution**

A key strategy is the distribution of livelihood assets and financial assistance to tribal households to initiate small enterprises. In Telangana the ITDAs provides livelihood assets such as sewing machines, pushcarts, livestock, agricultural inputs, and small business kits to the tribal women. These assets enable tribal households to start micro-enterprises, generate regular income, and reduce dependence on seasonal wage labour.

#### **Agricultural and Allied Activities**

Agriculture remains a primary livelihood source for tribal communities. In Telangana ITDA promotes: Improved agricultural practices by providing input and farm machines. Plantation crops, Sericulture and animal husbandry helps diversify income sources and ensure year-round employment, particularly for women. Restoration of Podu lands, Community Forest Rights (CFR) strengthened them economically. In a massive drive in 2023, over 4 lakhs Acres of forest lands distributed to the 1.5 lakhs tribal population.

#### **CM's Giri Vikasam Scheme:**

This scheme, an innovative program under the Scheduled Tribes Special Development Fund (STSDF), focuses on land development and providing irrigation facilities and power supply to tribal farmers to enhance agricultural productivity and improve sustainable self-employment in agriculture.

#### **Promotion of Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**

Tribal SHGs play a crucial role in income generation. ITDA supports SHGs through training, revolving funds, and market linkages. Women SHGs, in particular, have contributed to financial inclusion and entrepreneurship among tribal women. The tribal foods are also selling in market and earning money. Mahua Laddus in Utnoor under the ITDA Utnoor has highest reputation in this.

### **ITDA Programmes for Employment Generation:**

#### **Skill Development and Vocational Training**

ITDA conducts skill development programmes in trades such as tailoring, electrical work, computer skills, and service-sector jobs. These programmes enhance employability and facilitate entry into both self-employment and wage employment.

#### **Job Melas and Placement Support**

Job fairs organized by ITDA provide a platform for tribal youth to interact with private employers. These initiatives have resulted in direct job placements, especially for educated tribal youth.

#### **Coaching for Competitive Examinations**

To promote long-term employment security, Telangana ITDA's provides free coaching for competitive examinations, enabling tribal students to access government jobs in various sectors.

#### **Giri Super Bazar:**

The Giri Super Bazaar, established by Telangana Girijan Cooperative Corporation (TGGCC), provides unadulterated, quality branded, natural consumable items at reduced rates in three ITDA areas. The Girijan Filling Stations address fuel shortages in scheduled areas, create employment for local tribal youth, and prevent the sale of contaminated fuel. TGGCC has set up

value-added processing units for honey, chilli, and turmeric, offering fair prices to tribal farmers and generating employment while supplying quality products to tribal welfare and educational institutions. The Van Dhan Vikas Yojana (VDVK) supports sustainable Minor Forest Produce (MFP) collection through safety equipment distribution and training, enhancing sustainable MFP production.

#### **Tribal Artisan Support:**

Specific programs for tribal craftsmen (e.g., Dhokra metal craft, bamboo work) involving training, supply of toolkits and marketing linkages through GIRIJAN stores. Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) and its "Tribes India" initiative, offering empanelment, marketing via e-commerce, skill development via Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, branding, and organizing melas/festivals like Aadi Mahotsav for direct sales, helping revive crafts like Dhokra and bamboo work by providing market access and boosting livelihoods for Gond, Koya, and Lambada artisans. In Telangana at present the Government is running 4 outlets and 17 Van Dhan Kendras which is running in erstwhile Warangal, Adilabad, Mahaboobnagar and Khammam Districts. Around 5200 Tribal families got benefited economically with these outlets.

#### **Tribal Forest Dwellers Empowerment Scheme:**

This is another popular scheme enacted by the Indian government. The central government has enacted the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, which has given scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwellers a right to hold a part of forest land for their self-habitation and/ or for self-cultivation or for any other traditional activity for generating livelihood. This scheme's goals include raising awareness, offering beneficiaries training programs, providing NSTFDC subsidized grants and loans, helping them market their produce, and assisting scheduled tribes and forest dwellers in making productive use of their land. Under this program, a scheduled tribe that has been granted land rights under the Forest Rights Act of 2006 is qualified to receive financial aid. Since this program promotes tribal women to be self-sufficient and less dependent on males, women will be given preference over men, even though both men and women from the tribal villages are eligible to receive help.

#### **Chief Minister Scheduled Tribe Entrepreneurship & Innovation Scheme:**

It was started in the year of 2019 by the Telangana Government to promote the tribes towards entrepreneurship and the objectives are,

1. To promote entrepreneurship culture among Scheduled Tribes.
2. To nurture tribal youth to be employment providers through enterprise development.
3. To create new jobs and reduce unemployment.
4. Grassroots economic development at District level.
5. To facilitate innovative business solution for un-met social needs.
6. To create incubation centre, which shall be responsible for providing end to end business support eco system for tribal entrepreneurs on a continuous basis.

#### **Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana:**

This is an exclusive concessional scheme for the economic development of eligible Scheduled Tribe Women. The main purpose of this scheme is to make tribal women self-sufficient by providing affordable loans. These loans are given based on the requirement of the unit through State Channelizing Agencies (SCA). The beneficiaries have to full fill the eligibility criteria of the National Scheduled Tribes Finance & Development Corporation (NSTFDC) and comply with the terms and conditions of the lending by the SCA. This scheme ensures that the tribal women are assisted in carrying out their entrepreneurial activities by facilitating loans at a concessional rate of interest.

#### **Micro Credit Scheme (MCS)**

For Self Help Groups (SHG) This is an exclusive scheme for Self Help Groups developed to meet the small loan requirement of scheduled tribe members. Under this scheme, loans up to Rs.50,000 per member and a maximum of Rs.5 Lakh per Self Help Group (SHG) will be granted. Many tribal women have got benefitted from these schemes by forming various self-help groups. Both the state as well as the central government is encouraging tribal men and women to form these self-help groups for their economic development

#### **Girijan Co-operative Corporation (GCC) Ltd:**

The GCC was created to carry out a number of tasks, such as buying small forest products or surplus agricultural products, selling goods unique to the local forests, and meeting other household needs through a network of more than 300 GCC depots and more than 580 purchase points in Telangana State's tribal areas. In addition to protecting these tribal communities from exploitation by middlemen, petty traders, and small merchants, Girijan Co-operative Corporation (GCC) took on the responsibility of these communities and their interests. It also aimed to create a mutually beneficial connection between the tribal people and the rest of the world.

#### **The Telangana State Scheduled Tribes Co-operative Finance Corporation Ltd. (TRICOR):**

In various tribal regions of Telangana, TRICOR has started a joint campaign to encourage entrepreneurship among tribal women in collaboration with the Women Entrepreneurship Hub, the Telangana government's program for women entrepreneurs. On the occasion of the International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples in Hyderabad, the TRICOR and Women Entrepreneurship Hub signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to carry out this joint project within the boundaries of the three Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) in Telangana State: Bhadrachalam, Eturunagaram, and Uttoor. Utilising the current institutional finance framework and providing logistical support, the TRICOR has been entrusted with the discovery and selection of entrepreneurs. As per the MOU, the Women Entrepreneurs hub will implement the key tasks such as the capacity building of entrepreneurs help them secure market linkages, engage sector-specific mentors and provide them exposure visits besides assisting the entrepreneurs in creating detailed project reports and securing credit linkages.

#### **Telangana Scheduled Castes Co-operative Development Corporation Ltd:**

In order to address the financial gaps in various economic assistance programs and to implement various programs for the economic development of Scheduled Caste households in the state, Telangana Scheduled Castes Co-operative Development Corporation Ltd was established in 2014. Additionally, it helps the indigenous communities develop assets that generate revenue and provides training programs that improve their abilities and lead to self-employment.

#### **Challenges and Limitations**

Despite notable achievements, ITDA programmes face several challenges:

- Inadequate infrastructure in remote tribal areas
- Limited market access for tribal products
- Insufficient follow-up and monitoring
- Skill mismatch with evolving labour market demands

#### **Suggestions and Policy Recommendations**

1. Strengthen market linkages for tribal products through cooperatives and e-commerce platforms.
2. Expand skill training programmes aligned with local and regional labour market needs.
3. Improve access to credit and financial institutions for tribal entrepreneurs.
4. Enhance monitoring mechanisms to ensure sustainability of income-generating assets.

#### **Conclusion:**

The Integrated Tribal Development Agencies along with other agencies playing crucial role in promotion of income and employment generation among tribal groups in Telangana state. Through livelihood support, skill development, and employment-oriented initiatives, ITDA

programmes have contributed to economic empowerment and social inclusion. However, addressing infrastructural gaps, improving market integration, and strengthening institutional support are essential for ensuring sustainable tribal development.

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