

Development of PVTGs in Tripura (India) and Annual Budget 2023-24

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Abstract

The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India represent some of the most marginalized tribal communities, living in remote, dispersed habitats with limited access to basic resources. Currently, 75 PVTG groups are spread across 18 states and 1 union territory. In the Union Budget 2023-24, the government announced the Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission, allocating ₹15,000 crore over the next three years for their socio-economic upliftment (Lakshman, 2023). This mission aims to ensure access to safe housing, clean drinking water, sanitation, healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities for these vulnerable communities. The budget also introduced two other key initiatives: the National Sickle Cell Elimination Mission and a recruitment drive to employ 38,000 teachers and support staff for Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), further supporting education among tribal students (India Today, 2023). The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is working in close collaboration with states, including Tripura, to implement these schemes, focusing on infrastructure development, healthcare, and sustainable livelihoods to uplift PVTGs. For the PVTGs of Tripura specifically, the Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission will provide targeted interventions based on the state's particular needs, such as improving education, healthcare, and connectivity to enhance their living conditions. The detailed allocations and impact on Tripura's PVTG population can be seen in the Ministry's broader developmental plans, aligning with the national goal of leaving no citizen behind.

Keywords: PVTGs, Schemes, Budget 2023-24, Development, Tripura,

Introduction and Background of PVTGs in Tripura

The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) Reangs in Tripura represent one of the most marginalized and socio-economically backward tribal communities. Like other PVTGs across India, they face severe challenges due to their geographical isolation, limited access to basic amenities, low literacy rates, and reliance on primitive agricultural practices. These communities have been identified as particularly vulnerable due to their stagnating or declining populations, subsistence-level economies, and limited interaction with mainstream society. Their socio-economic conditions are far behind other tribal groups, necessitating focused attention for their development.

In India, the PVTG category was first introduced by the Dhebar Commission in 1973 to highlight tribal groups that were especially vulnerable. These groups were initially referred to as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). Recognizing the need for dedicated support, the Government of India officially recognized these communities in 1975. Over time, the number of identified PTGs grew from 54 to 75 by 2008, and the term "Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group" (PVTG) was adopted in 2006 to better capture their precarious socio-economic conditions (Ministry Of Tribal Affairs, 2011).

Tripura, with its own share of Reang PVTG community, mirrors many of the challenges faced by these groups nationwide. These communities have distinct identities, languages, and lifestyles, often living in small, isolated habitations with minimal

access to modern infrastructure or government services. Despite various state and central government interventions, many of these communities remain outside the reach of mainstream development programs.

The Government of India and the state of Tripura have been working towards addressing the specific needs of PVTGs, with special attention given in the Union Budget 2023-24. The launch of the Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission, as announced by the *Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman*, marks a significant step in addressing the socio-economic development of these groups. With an allocation of ₹15,000 crore over the next three years, this mission aims to ensure the saturation of basic facilities such as housing, clean drinking water, sanitation,

Objectives

This study aims to critically evaluate the role of budgetary allocations as a strategic tool in the government's developmental approach, specifically targeting the holistic development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Tripura. The analysis will explore the various stages and forms of financial commitment by the government, examining how these funds

Research Methodology

The primary source of information for this study is the 2023-24 Budget Report, which provides key data on the development initiatives targeted at PVTGs in Tripura. Additionally, a variety of government and non-governmental organizations have made relevant information accessible through both online and offline platforms. This paper utilizes data from authoritative sources such as the Office of the Registrar General of India (Census reports), which

education, healthcare, and sustainable livelihoods within PVTG habitations (Lakshman, 2023). This initiative is expected to have a substantial impact on Tripura's PVTG community, addressing critical gaps in infrastructure and access to essential services.

The inclusion of Tripura's PVTG Reang community under this mission signifies a concerted effort by both the state and central governments to bring about inclusive growth and ensure that these vulnerable groups are not left behind. With schemes tailored specifically for their development, Tripura's PVTG community is set to witness improvements in their living standards, access to education, healthcare, and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, marking a new chapter in their development trajectory.

are directed toward infrastructure, education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities. By focusing on recent and past budget allocations, particularly the provisions made under the 2023-24 Union Budget, the study assesses how these financial resources are being utilized to address the unique challenges faced by Tripura's PVTG community and contribute to their socio-economic upliftment.

provides vital demographic insights, and records from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Secondary data from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), annual reports from State Tribal Research Institutes, non-governmental organizations, academic journals, and books have also been referenced to provide a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic conditions of PVTGs. These diverse data sources ensure the robustness and reliability of the findings presented in this study.

Issues Facing PVTGs in Tripura

The socio-economic conditions of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Tripura, as in other regions of India, remain challenging. Their traditional lifestyles are often not aligned with the broader economic and social frameworks of modern society. While government interventions have gradually improved their circumstances, PVTGs still face significant hurdles. Over the past few decades, their way of life has seen slow transformation, primarily due to government policies and initiatives. For instance, children from

PVTG families now have greater access to education, yet many are forced to forgo schooling in favor of work to support their families. Additionally, due to their limited awareness, these communities are frequently exploited by intermediaries. To address this, the Government of India launched the Conservation-cum-Development (CCD) initiative, which supports PVTGs by providing livelihood opportunities while preserving forest ecosystems.

Some persistent issues remain that continue to hinder the development of PVTGs:

1. Unequal Implementation of Schemes:

Government schemes often benefit only a small subset of PVTG populations. For example, in Odisha, the Lanjia Saura PVTG receives focused benefits only in a few blocks, while members of the same group in neighboring areas are left out, receiving only Scheduled Tribe (ST) benefits (Singh S. S., 2017). Similar discrepancies in implementation have been noted in Tripura.

2. Inadequate Baseline Surveys: Despite their designation as PVTGs, only 40 out of 75 groups have comprehensive baseline surveys, according to the Anthropological Survey of India. This lack of data hampers the proper implementation of community-centered welfare programs.

3. Non-Update of PVTG Lists: The failure to update the list of PVTGs has led to duplication and overlap. For instance, the Mankidi and Birhor in Odisha represent the same tribal group but are listed separately in the central government's PVTG list. Such issues complicate the implementation of targeted development programs.

4. Stagnant Population Growth: Many PVTGs, such as the Birhor in central India,

continue to experience little to no population growth. Some communities, like the Onge and Andamanese, are in decline, a trend seen in parts of Tripura as well (S.C., 2019).

5. Loss of Traditional Livelihoods:

Industrial projects, tourism, deforestation, and climate change have eroded the traditional livelihoods and ecosystems of PVTGs, leaving them in poverty. This often leads to widespread malnutrition, poor health, and illiteracy, exacerbating their socio-economic marginalization.

6. Educational Barriers: Education levels among PVTGs remain low, particularly among women. The literacy rate among PVTGs is about 38.99%, which is significantly lower than other tribal groups (S.C., 2019). This gap hinders their integration into broader development initiatives.

7. Health Issues: High infant mortality rates, chronic illnesses like leukemia, and widespread malnutrition continue to plague PVTG communities. Poor healthcare access exacerbates these problems, with many tribal areas suffering from inadequate medical services (Singh S. S., 2017).

8. Infrastructure Deficiencies: Many PVTG settlements in Tripura lack basic

infrastructure, such as clean drinking water, proper sanitation, and adequate housing. Many homes have insufficient lighting and ventilation, and during the rainy season, families often share living spaces with livestock. These unsanitary conditions contribute to poor health and increased vulnerability (S.C., 2019).

Union Budget 2023-24 and its Impact on the Development of PVTGs in Tripura

The Union Budget, often referred to as the annual financial statement, is a critical declaration of the government's projected income and expenditure for a particular financial year. As mandated by Article 112 of the Indian Constitution, the Government of India is required to present this statement each year, which details the nation's financial plan from April 1 to March 31. The Union Budget is divided into two main components: the Revenue Budget and the Capital Budget. The Revenue Budget covers the government's income inflows and its expenditures, while the Capital Budget focuses on capital payments and

Key Initiatives from the Union Budget 2023-24 Impacting PVTGs in Tripura

1. **Pradhan Mantri Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups Development Mission**
The 2023-24 Union Budget introduced the Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission, which aims to uplift the socio-economic conditions of PVTGs across India, including those in Tripura. This mission is designed to ensure that PVTG families and habitations are equipped with essential services such as safe housing, clean drinking water, sanitation, healthcare, education, and sustainable livelihood opportunities. The mission also includes efforts to enhance road and telecommunications connectivity, which are critical for integrating remote PVTG

These persistent issues underscore the need for a more targeted and inclusive approach to the development of PVTGs in Tripura, ensuring that they are not left behind in the larger national development agenda.

revenues associated with governmental investments (Times, 2023).

The Union Budget serves as a roadmap for government spending during the fiscal year, outlining both new initiatives and continued investments. This year's budget, announced on February 1, 2023, has placed a strong emphasis on the development of tribal communities, particularly the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), including those in Tripura. The fund allocations and special programs introduced for tribal upliftment have drawn significant attention from policymakers and intellectuals alike, seeking to analyze the rationale and expected outcomes of these investments.

areas with the broader economy and society (Ministry of Finance, 2023).

As part of this initiative, ₹15,000 crore has been allocated for the next three years under the Development Action Plan for the Scheduled Tribes (DAPST). This funding aims to saturate PVTG habitations with these essential services, ensuring that no group is left behind. In Tripura, this will help address the specific needs of the state's PVTGs, such as improving educational access and healthcare infrastructure in remote tribal areas, where these services are often lacking.

2. **Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST)**

The DAPST, which evolved from the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), continues to allocate funds across various ministries to ensure a

comprehensive development framework for tribal communities. In the 2023-24 budget, 41 Ministries/Departments will allocate between 4.3% and 17.5% of their total scheme budgets towards projects related to tribal development, including education, healthcare, infrastructure, skill development, and employment generation (Ministry of Finance, 2023). This holistic approach ensures that the PVTGs in Tripura benefit from multiple layers of support, enabling sustainable and inclusive development.

Since 2013-14, funding under the DAPST has seen significant growth, from ₹21,525.36 crore to ₹1,17,943.73 crore in 2023-24, a nearly fivefold increase. This escalation in funds highlights the government's commitment to addressing the persistent challenges faced by PVTGs, particularly those in Tripura who suffer from poor infrastructure, low literacy rates, and limited healthcare access (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2023).

The focus on PVTGs in Tripura is part of a broader national effort to uplift the most marginalized sections of society through targeted and sustained government intervention. By addressing key issues such as infrastructure, education, healthcare, and livelihoods, the 2023-24 Union Budget lays the foundation for long-term development, ensuring that PVTG communities in Tripura can participate more fully in the state's economic and social progress.

National Sickle Cell Elimination Mission

In the Union Budget 2023-24, the Government of India announced a proactive initiative to tackle sickle cell anemia, a hereditary disease disproportionately affecting tribal populations, including those in Tripura. This mission will be led by the Ministries of Health and Family Welfare and Tribal Affairs, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and state governments. The

initiative focuses on the integrated prevention, treatment, and management of sickle cell disease, ensuring a comprehensive approach to this major health challenge facing tribal communities (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2023).

Central Recruitment of Teachers for Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)

As part of the ongoing interventions to improve educational opportunities for tribal children in rural and remote areas, the central government has announced the recruitment of 38,000 teachers and support personnel for over 750 Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) across the country. These schools are designed to cater to 3.5 lakh tribal students, including those from Tripura. Established in 1997-1998, the EMRS program aims to provide high-quality education, focusing on both academic and holistic development, for tribal children from grades VI to XII. Each school accommodates up to 480 students. Previously, the construction and operational costs of these schools were supported by state governments under Article 275(1) of the Constitution (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2023; Singh D. A., 2017).

Scheme for the Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

The Scheme for the Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), launched on April 1, 2008, remains a key intervention for improving the socio-economic conditions of PVTGs in Tripura. Under this scheme, state governments are provided the flexibility to design programs that address the specific socio-cultural needs of PVTGs. The focus is on ensuring their survival, protection, and sustainable development, addressing areas such as housing, land development,

agricultural initiatives, animal husbandry, and the construction of essential infrastructure like roads.

Tripura, as a state with vulnerable tribal populations, is expected to benefit from these targeted interventions. The scheme mandates that each state, including Tripura, prepares a long-term Conservation-cum-Development (CCD) Plan for every PVTG within its jurisdiction. These five-year plans are comprehensive, addressing all facets of PVTG development, and must be approved by an Expert Committee established by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Funding is provided exclusively by

the central government, and the programs are implemented through the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) (Singh D. A., 2017). Importantly, the scheme operates in conjunction with the Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Schemes under Article 275(1) of the Constitution, ensuring that the funds are allocated for vital development activities that are not covered by any other central or state program (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2023). The funds released in previous 8 financial years as per the Ministry of Tribal Affairs can be seen below in table 1 and figure 1.1(Lakshman, 2023).

Table No. 1: Funds released and utilisation report

Serial No.	Financial Year	Funds Released (in crores)	Utilisation Reported (in crores)
1	2016-17	338.00	319.96
2	2017-18	239.49	223.19
3	2018-19	250.00	250
4	2019-20	249.99	249.99
5	2020-21	140.00	140
6	2021-22	250.00	160
7	2022-23	252.00	124.79
8	2023-24	256.14	-----

Figure 1.1: Funds Released for the PVTGs development in previous 8 years

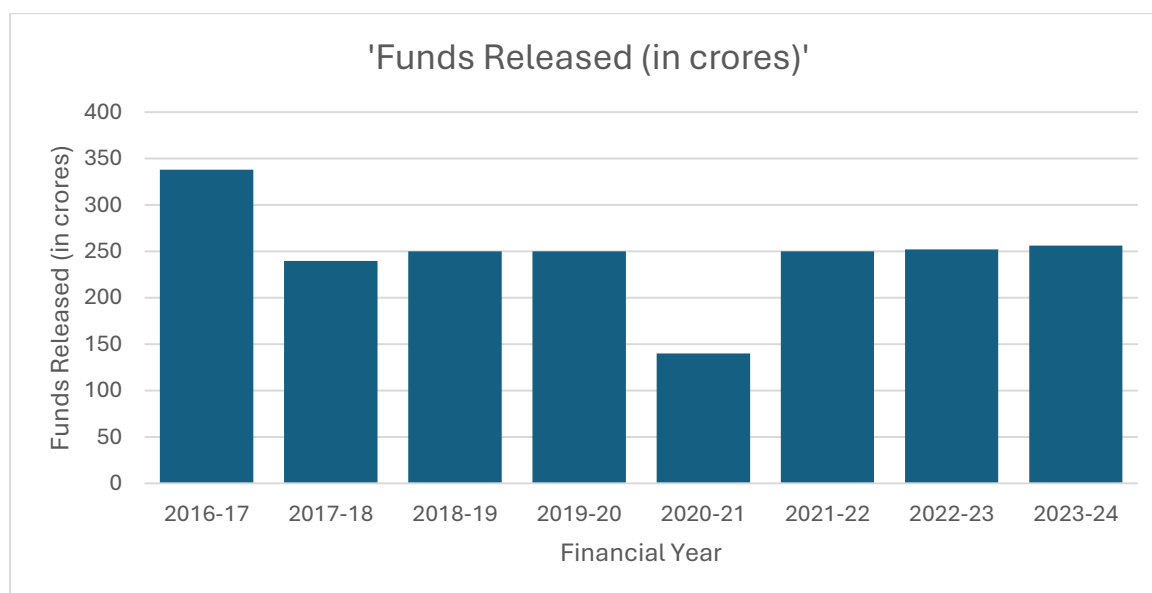
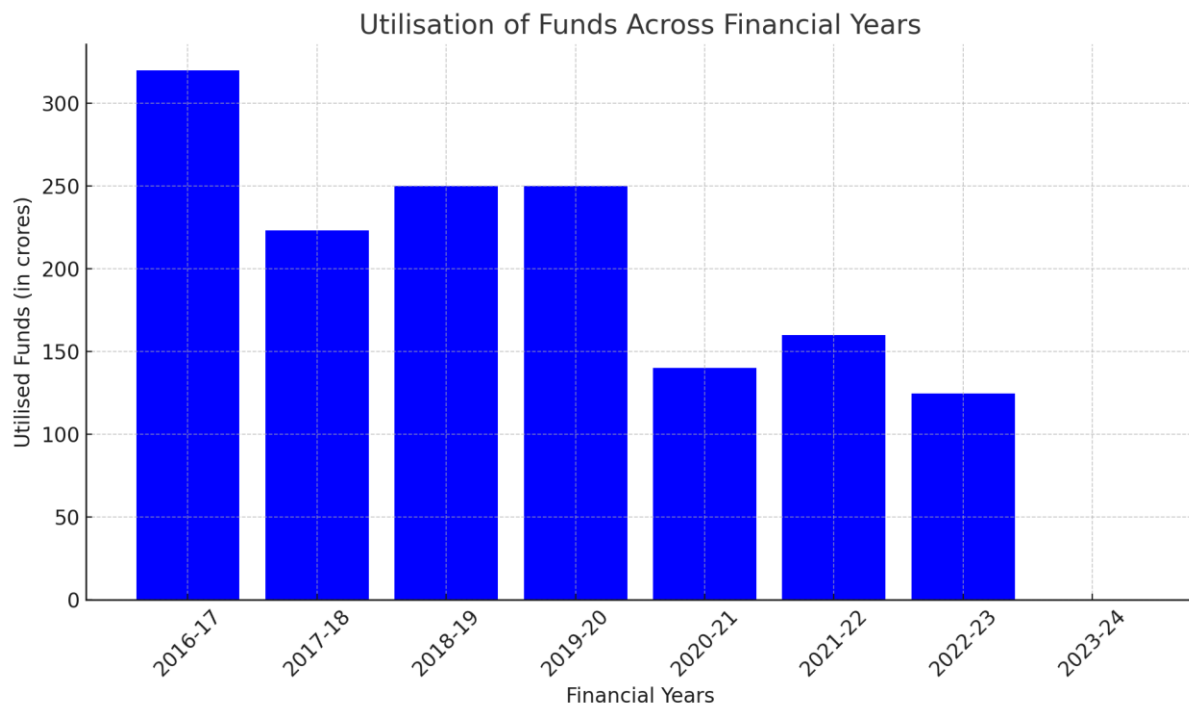


Figure 1.2: Funds utilisation for the PVTGs development in previous 8 years



The PVTG Growth Plan aims to facilitate the comprehensive socio-economic development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) while simultaneously preserving their unique cultural heritage and historical integrity. The initiative is designed to support the States and Union Territories (UTs) through financial assistance tailored for diverse developmental domains. Key aspects of the program include:

1. **Economic Empowerment:** Enhancing livelihoods by promoting agricultural activities, animal husbandry, horticulture, and dairy farming. The plan also encompasses vocational training and skill development to boost employment opportunities within these sectors.
2. **Educational Advancements:** Addressing educational needs to uplift academic standards and accessibility for the PVTGs in Tripura.
3. **Healthcare Services:** Improving health outcomes through targeted healthcare initiatives that cater specifically to the needs of these tribal groups.
4. **Infrastructure Development:** Strengthening community infrastructure by constructing essential community assets such as safe drinking water facilities. This includes the preservation and development of springs and underground water resources.
5. **Sanitation Improvement:** Establishing adequate sanitation facilities to promote hygiene and prevent diseases within PVTG communities.
6. **Legal and Habitat Rights:** Ensuring the recognition of habitat rights under section 3(1) e of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, alongside the development of land and forest resources that are crucial for the livelihood of these groups.
7. **Social Security Measures:** Implementing social security initiatives to provide a safety net for the vulnerable populations.
8. **Cultural Preservation in Housing:** Encouraging the construction of housing that reflects traditional architectural practices, thereby preserving the cultural essence of PVTG habitats.
9. **Sustainable Energy Solutions:** Facilitating the installation of non-conventional energy

sources for lighting, which are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

10. **Innovative Development Activities:** Supporting any other innovative activities that contribute to the holistic development of PVTGs in Tripura.

Monitoring and Impact Assessment

The program's effectiveness is monitored through various mechanisms to ensure accountability and continual improvement:

- **Utilization Certificates:** These are mandated for subsequent fund releases, aligning with the General Financial Rules (GFR) guidelines (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021).

Targeted Initiatives to Mitigate Poverty and Enhance Education Among Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Tripura

Efforts to alleviate the persistent issues of high poverty rates and inadequate education among Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) should prioritize addressing the fundamental causes and eliminating geographic barriers to access facilities. These efforts should be integrated with broader strategies aimed at reducing socio-economic disparities in mortality, thereby producing measurable improvements at the population level for PVTGs (Busch, 2022).

In India, transformative impacts on the lifestyles of PVTGs have predominantly resulted from educational interventions. Education plays a pivotal role in the socialization process of individuals and is considered crucial in the contemporary economic, social, and political decision-making processes. In rural economies, where traditional systems of economy, culture, customs, and practices prevail, education has facilitated significant transformations of these structures (Pancholi, 2018).

These initiatives underscore the commitment to integrating PVTGs into the broader socio-economic framework of Tripura while respecting and nurturing their distinct cultural identities (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, 2021).

- **Progress Reports:** Regular updates on the scheme's implementation are mandated to assess impact and operational challenges.
- **Central and State Coordination:** Meetings and conferences with state officials facilitate the timely submission of applications and address implementation hurdles (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021).

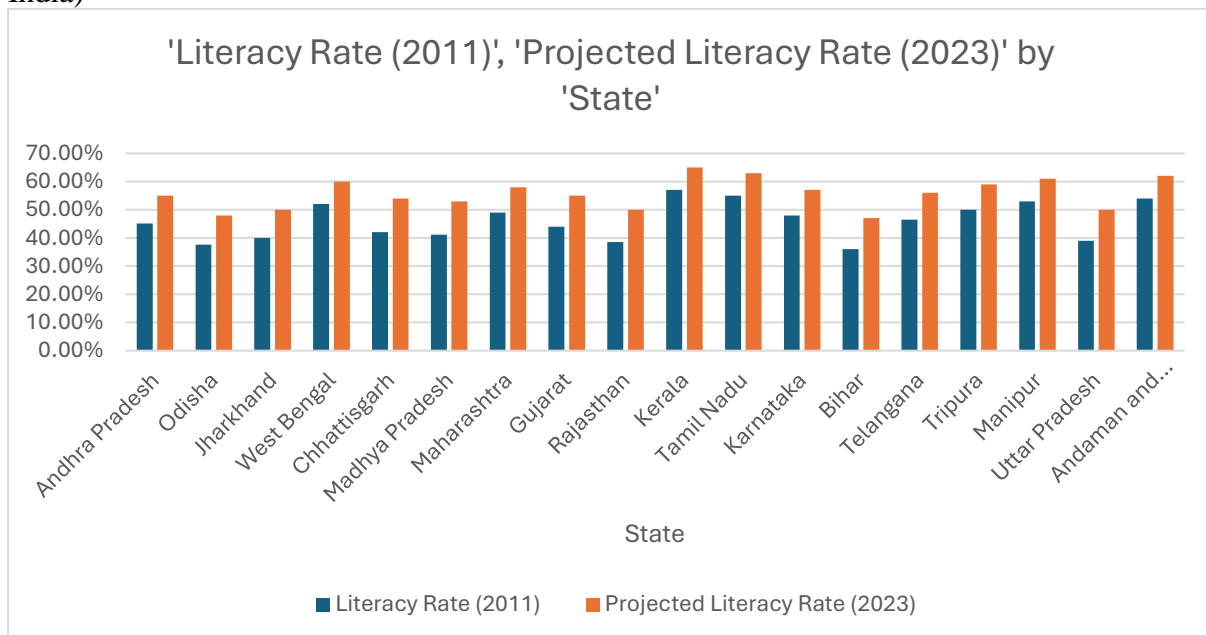
The essential nature of education, the reality in many areas, including Tripura and other states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand, is stark. Many individuals spend their entire lives without access to educational opportunities, and the level of education among tribal societies remains worryingly low. The 18th report of the Backward Class Commissioner highlighted the urgent need for the rapid expansion of education to foster the betterment and societal integration of scheduled tribal communities (Commissioner for Backward Classes, 2018).

The literacy rate among these communities has shown a marked increase between 2001 and 2011, suggesting that governmental interventions and contributions from developmental organizations are facilitating positive lifestyle changes within PVTGs (Reddy, 2020). The fiscal year 2023-24 holds greater expectations for positive socio-economic growth within these communities. Although the rate of change in educational status has been slow, the recent budget announcement regarding recruitment under the 'Ekalavya Model Residential Schools' scheme is anticipated to be a game-changer for tribal development in Tripura.

Table 2. Literacy Rate of PVTGs in 2011 and Projected Data for 2023 (State-wise in India)

State	Literacy Rate (2011)	Projected Literacy Rate (2023)
Andhra Pradesh	45.10%	55.00%
Odisha	37.60%	48.00%
Jharkhand	40.00%	50.00%
West Bengal	52.00%	60.00%
Chhattisgarh	42.00%	54.00%
Madhya Pradesh	41.20%	53.00%
Maharashtra	49.00%	58.00%
Gujarat	44.00%	55.00%
Rajasthan	38.50%	50.00%
Kerala	57.10%	65.00%
Tamil Nadu	55.00%	63.00%
Karnataka	48.00%	57.00%
Bihar	36.00%	47.00%
Telangana	46.50%	56.00%
Tripura	50.00%	59.00%
Manipur	53.00%	61.00%
Uttar Pradesh	39.00%	50.00%
Andaman and Nicobar	54.00%	62.00%
Total Literacy (Avg)	46.00%	55.72%

Figure 2.1: Literacy Rate of PVTGs in 2011 and Projected Data for 2023 (State-wise in India)



Public Perception and the Evaluation of Governmental Programs for Marginalized Community in Tripura

The evaluation of governmental programs is heavily influenced by public perception, especially those aimed at aiding marginalized communities. In Tripura,

initiatives have been designed to provide essential services and resources directly to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), aiming to alleviate burdens that include physical exertion and financial costs associated with accessing basic necessities.

The noble intentions behind these programs, implementation often encounters significant hurdles. Research indicates that programs intended for the doorstep delivery of essential resources have not always achieved their primary objectives. Families frequently need to travel to collect other essential items from Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) stores, which are not always distributed concurrently with the primary resources, necessitating multiple trips and thus undermining the convenience and cost-saving intent of these programs.

However, these initiatives have not been without success. They have facilitated improved access to essential goods for thousands of PVTG families, ensuring regular and reliable delivery that helps

Conclusion

The challenges faced by the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Tripura have been significant over the past decades. Recognizing their rights and addressing their socio-economic, socio-cultural, educational, and health needs requires concerted efforts. Fortunately, protective measures against exploitation and domination have evolved due to changing norms, contributing to their welfare.

The recent announcement of the Prime Minister's PVTG Development Mission marks a promising step towards holistic development. This initiative aims to address a broad spectrum of issues affecting PVTGs, including improving access to quality education and healthcare services. The mission's focus extends to enhancing housing, sanitation, employment opportunities, healthcare access, and road transportation infrastructure, which are

mitigate the risk of food deprivation or under-delivery by local distributors. The oversight of these distributions by local government officers has played a crucial role in reducing the vulnerability of these families to exploitation. Such programs have provided economic opportunities by involving community members in various aspects of the supply chain, such as the repackaging of goods. This involvement not only fosters economic empowerment but also creates a steady source of income for members of local Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

While these programs have faced significant challenges and have not fully achieved their goals, the positive impacts on the lives of beneficiaries in Tripura are undeniable. These initiatives underscore the potential for governmental programs to contribute significantly to the well-being of marginalized communities, highlighting the need for ongoing assessment and adjustment to ensure their objectives are fully realized.

critical for elevating the standard of living in tribal-populated areas of Tripura.

Despite notable advancements, significant challenges remain. Persistent issues such as poverty, illiteracy, inadequate livelihood options, migration, and the lack of essential services like drinking water, sanitation, healthcare facilities, all-weather roads, and affordable transportation continue to hinder their progress. Moreover, discrimination and exploitation still persist, demanding ongoing vigilance and action.

The 2023 budget allocation prioritizes the development of PVTGs, reflecting a commitment to eradicating the deep-rooted issues of impoverishment within these communities in the coming years. The government's dedicated efforts, if sustained and effectively implemented, are expected to foster significant improvements in the lives of Tripura's particularly vulnerable tribal groups.

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