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# UNIT 1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF TRIBAL POLICIES

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit, we would be discussing the historical perspectives of tribal policies down the decades, both before and after the colonial period. After going through the unit you should be able to:

- a) Understand various policies for tribals in the colonial period.
- b) Examine the policies for tribals in the post-colonial period.
- c) Explain the Draft National Tribal Policy.

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The colonial period in India began with the British colonizers entering India in the 18<sup>th</sup> century for trade and commercial ventures. They observed economic and cultural diversity and heterogeneity in livelihood. Hence, they categorized the Indian populations into certain habitational and occupational groups for their administrative convenience. The colonizers tried to develop these categories by way of providing education, health facilities, and communication so as to bring them into the mainstream society. They started implementing various laws, acts and policies for the development and benefits of these people.

After decades of policies for tribals during the colonial period and despite various Constitutional provisions and Acts, the plight of the tribals still persists. The following sections diachronically brief the tribal policies of the colonial and, post-colonial periods respectively. The post-colonial period is further divided into two sub-sections, namely pre and post-economic liberalization. The eleventh five-year plan and Draft Tribal National Policy, which are part of the post-economic liberalization period, are treated separately.

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## 1.2 TRIBAL POLICIES DURING PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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The British attributed the backwardness and inferiority of the tribes to habitation structure and isolation of the people who were shy of coming to the mainstream society. Hence, they tried to bring them to the mainstream culture through certain policies. They engaged revenue collectors, forest officials, and local people to collect data pertaining to these people. Economic development of the people was a prime requisite of that period. This section elaborates the British policies for tribal development during the colonial government.

The history of the forest policies reveals that interest in forestry was noticed as far back as 1806 with the reservation of teak forest in Malabar during the British period. It was done so in connection with the supply of timber to England for the royal navy and other needs during the war with Napoleon. In course of time, because of unabated railways expansion in British India and lack of any supervision of the felling operation, great chunks of forests were destroyed. The Government became aware of rapid depletion of the forest due to such reckless and wasteful manner of forest operation by private enterprise. Then in 1862 the Governor General called for a department of forest to supply the required wooden sleeper for the railways. Thus, the British India witnessed the establishment of Forest Department in 1864 with the help of the German foresters. The practice of scientific forestry in India may be said to have begun with Mr. Dietrich Brandis who took over the responsibility as the Inspector General of the forest, India, in 1864 (Dash, 2002, p. 354). Forest Department was established in the same year. Prior to this the British made a stopped the free movement of forest dwellers on the forest. In 1865, the Forest Act of 1865 was enacted that empowered the government to appropriate any land covered with trees. However, notification could only be effected, if existing rights of individuals and communities were not impinged upon (Mohapatra, 1997, available at <http://www.ganesha.co.uk/JoPubWeb/Frontdiss.htm>). In 1878 another act was made which was particularly concerning with removing ambiguity about the 'Absolute Proprietary Right of the State'. The new act was designed to facilitate strict State control over forest resources, and was distinctly 'annexationist' in nature (Lowbuary, 2005, available at <http://www.ganesha.co.uk/JoPubWeb/Frontdiss.htm>).

In order to check the deforestation and for consolidation of the forest estate, the assertion of State monopoly right over forest was needed and for this purpose, the need of a separate department was felt, and at the same time, the enactment of legislation was needed for its operation. Such provisions were required to control the previously exercised unlimited rights of the users over the forests.

This policy went against the tribal as well as non-tribal communities. In this way the customary use of forest by villagers was not based on their rights but on a privilege which was being exercised at the mercy of the rulers. The loss of rights and the consequent loss of control over the natural resources agitated the forest dwellers giving rise to revolts in tribal areas and the people did not cooperate with the forest department. In fact, alienation of natural resources has been one of the main reasons for many tribal rebellions in the past as well as in the present. This also gave rise to another fact that the people who were taking care of the forest for their existence when it became the ruler's property, turned passive in its protection. Consequently, a settlement over forest was carried out in 1880. The

first forest policy was issued and declared in the year 1894 following the recommendation of Dr. Voeicker, a German expert. This policy, thus, emphasized the basic issues like the public benefit, preservation of climate and physical condition of the country, commercial neutralization of the timber and of the State revenue, checking of the encroachment of forest land for cultivation and use of forest in the interest of local population, etc. (Dash, 2002, p. 355). But it is a fact that no act has been mentioned about the 'tribe' and their access to forest resources. It was only the National Forest Policy 1988, in which the Adivasi forest rights was mentioned which introduced contractors, traders and non-tribal labourers to forest areas in a substantial manner. The Indian Forest Act of 1927 recognized concessions and privileges of the forest dwelling tribal peoples and peasants in respect of cultivations, grazing of animals, collection of firewood, and timbers for household consumption, of raw materials for crafts, mining and quarrying of stone, hunting and fishing gathering, besides those with regards to employment and other services (Mahapatra, 2002, p. 393).

The colonial governments including the Dutch and the Portuguese entered India for trade and commerce. However, due to communication constraint it was difficult for them to export goods and materials, particularly forest resources from India. So it was necessary for them to construct railway lines so as to make their commerce viable. Later on, they enacted Land Acquisition Act in 1894 to have a control over both the public and private land. This Act envisaged that, "acquiring of land for some public purpose by government/government agency, as authorized by the law, from the individual landowner(s) after paying government fixed compensation in lieu of losses incurred by land owner(s) due to surrendering of his/their land to the concerned government agency" (Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land\\_Acquisition\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_Acquisition_Act)), which the State still follows even after Independence for the construction of dams, and setting up of mining and industries in the tribal areas.

The rulers of the colonial period realized the difficulties in administration in the far flung tribal areas irrespective of the acceptance of policy of isolation or segregation. The isolation of the tribals, it was felt, would keep them away from political interference which was catching momentum at that time. Another assumption was that the tribals were better and happier in their natural surrounding and traditional socio-cultural milieu. It was further realized that isolation would protect the tribal against the hostility and exploitation, which they found on the increase. As isolationists, the British in position declared certain contiguous and thickly populated tribal belts as 'Excluded and Partially Excluded' areas. The policy of isolation was supported by the then separatist anthropologists who advocated for tribal reserves. For them, isolation, broadly speaking referred to a phenomenon where a group of people or communities was disconnected from other communities and resided in remote pockets having their own distinct ways of life. It could be in a relative form, complete or partial.

Subscribing to isolation, Elwin in 1939 suggested for the establishment of the 'National Park' theory (Mann, 1993, p. 77). Within the framework of policy of isolation and the creation of Excluded and Partially Excluded areas, some legislation was enacted. For example, Inner Line Regulation in 1873, which aimed at controlling trades and industries in the tribal areas of Northeast and restricting transfer of tribal land to non-tribals coming from outside and thereby to curb land alienation. With the restraint entry into interior tribal settlements, the other channels of

exploitations, such as money-lending would, it was thought, also be curbed. Thus, broadly speaking, the basic idea was to keep tribals away from the people coming from more advanced communities. The protection and preservation of tribal life and culture were ensured by the Scheduled District Act of 1874 that provided for special tribal administration. This excluded the tribal areas from the operation of ordinary laws of the country. The exclusion of the backward tracts from the jurisdiction of provincial government was also suggested by Montague-Chelmsford Report of 1918. Showing increasing concern of the tribal affairs and to protect tribal heritages, the tribal areas were divided into 'Wholly Excluded Areas' and 'Area of Modified Exclusion', according to Government of India Act, 1919. Under the Government of India Act, 1935, these areas were regrouped as "Excluded" and "Partially Excluded" areas (Mann, 1993, pp. 77-78).

On the eve of the Independence it was decided to put all the tribal communities, in a separate Schedule of the Constitution of India. Thus, the 'excluded and partially excluded areas' were enlisted in Fifth and Sixth Schedule (Mann, 1996, p. 2). The areas inhabited by Scheduled Tribes were termed as 'Scheduled Areas'/'Agency Areas'. These areas are specially defined in Para 6 of the part C of the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Although the genesis of the concept of the Scheduled Area was traced back to the Scheduled District Act of 1874 in the pre-Independence period, the Scheduled Areas were retained to assist the tribals in enjoying customary right without exploitation and to develop and protect the tribes and their environment (Mallavarapu, 2006, p. 35).

As said earlier the tribal populated areas were divided into Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas under the Fifth and Sixth Schedules. The States except Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram are administered under Fifth Schedule of the Constitution and the remaining states were under the Sixth Schedule. Articles 244 (2) and 275 (1) are especially meant for the Sixth Schedule Areas that were later re-formed as 'Schedule Districts'. This kind of formation by Verrier Elwin also made special provisions for the tribes of Northeastern India. The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh find special attention in Elwin's book *A Philosophy of NEFA*. In the post-Independence period, the NEFA (North East Frontier Agency) visualized land in three Jhum Land Regulations in identical terms for the Three Frontier Tracts separately (Roy Burman, 2005, p.118). With regard to the forest policy, the Assam Forest Regulation was enacted. Communal land system prevailed in one form or the other in all the States of North-East, but remained, inoperative only in Tripura. The Manipur State Hill People Regulation, 1947, envisages the right to enjoy land within the boundaries of their village. The Arunachal Pradesh (Land Settlement and Record) Act, 2000, is a denouncement of the concept of *terra nullius*, meaning the traditional rights on land used by community. In this Act, a community is perceived as a 'legal person' only in a nominalistic manner. The Jhum Land Regulation recognized residents of a village as a whole, the clan, sub-clan, phratry or kindred as a community (Roy Burman, 2005, p.124).

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### **1.3 TRIBAL POLICIES DURING POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD**

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In the post-Independent period, the British policy of isolation was shifted to the integration model of tribal development. So, various conventional programmes were started in the tribal areas so as to meet the Constitutional commitment and for bringing about social and economic change among the tribal people. New

direct and indirect measures were imposed to promote the integration of the tribal. The British protective legislations and their after-effect in certain parts of tribal India could not be found compatible with the democratic traditions, socialisms and integrations proposed in Independent India (Mann, 1993, p. 79).

Jawaharlal Nehru, who was concerned about formulating a tribal policy said, “I have no doubt that the development and change and so-called progress will come to them because it is becoming increasingly difficult for any people to live their isolated life cut off from rest of the world. But let this development and change be natural and be in the nature of self development with all the help one can give in the process” (Rath, 2006, p. 86). V. Elwin, a pronounced anthropologist worked among the Indian tribes and closely associated with Nehru, made a tremendous contribution to the tribal development policies. In his disputed isolationist approach Nehru insisted that tribal should maintain a selective distance from the mainstream socio-political and economic system, which was, however, not applicable to the Nehruvian patriotism. So Elwin changed his notion of isolationism to integrationism (Rath, 2006).

Based on his integrationist model, Nehru gave the policy of Panchsheel. The main features of the policy were:

- a) Tribal people should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.
- b) Tribal people’s right in land and forest should be respected.
- c) We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work for administration and development.
- d) We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry with their social and cultural institutions.
- e) We should judge results not by statistics or the amount of money spent but the quality of human character that is evolved (Mann, 1993, p. 36).

After Independence, a new forest policy was formulated in 1952 as a modification of the previous forest policies that more or less emphasized upon the destruction of forest or ecological deterioration. The Forest policy (1952) encouraged the formation of forest development committees in different states of India to check the commercialization of forest resources. In report of the committees on ‘Forest and Tribals in India’ (1982) some new lights have been thrown towards the forest based tribes of the country. The report was prepared under the chairmanship of B. K. Roy Burman, an Indian anthropologist and as such anthropological view points are duly reflected in the recommendations. At the outset of the report, he wrote a letter to Shri P.C. Sethi, the then Hon’ble Minister of Home Affairs, Government of India, saying that “there is a symbiotic relationship between the tribal social organization and forest economy in the specific historical context of our country”. Further, “the overwhelming majority of the populations living in forest are tribal communities” and that “they are not only forest dwellers” but also “they have evolved a way of life which, on the one hand, is woven round forest ecology and forest resources and on the other, ensure that the forest is protected against depredation by man and nature”. He emphasized that “there cannot be any

development of forest without development of the forest dwelling tribal communities". The committee recommended that "the symbiosis between the tribal communities and the forest management should be established through imaginative forestry programmes and conservation and reorganization of traditional skill of labour" (as cited in Dash, 2002, pp. 357-358).

Just after Independence Five-Year Plans were initiated making target for development of certain specific projects including tribal development so as to make them integrated into the mainstream societies or thereby making their own destinies of 'self-development' by getting rid of exploitation by non-tribals. In pursuance of this, tribal development policies were framed in different consecutive Five Year plans of the Planning Commission.

In the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) no special attempts were made except introducing certain schemes on education and welfare. The schemes under this sector were meant to supplement the general development efforts for the backward classes including tribal populations.

In the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) forty three Special Multipurpose Tribal (SMPT) Blocks were established in the scheduled area and the programmes of each block were given an additional thrust by siphoning a special allocation of Rs. 15 lakhs for five years. The Dhebar Commission (1960-61) was appointed to study the whole gamut of tribal development. The Dhebar commission recommendations have gone a long way to strengthen the protective shield and giving Panchayat Raj a tribal bias, besides taking a comprehensive and integrated view of tribal development. The commission's recommendation on planning and development were more specific for solving the problems of land alienation, indebtedness, promotion of education, protecting tribal interest in forest and sectoral development. The Dhebar commission also recommended establishment of Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institutes in states for conducting training for official and non-official development functionaries and workers taking part in research studies so that their results can be used as feedback in planning and administration (Mohanty, 2002, p. 94).

During the Third Five Year Plan (1961-69), on the basis of Second Five Year Plan, 415 Tribal Development Blocks were set up to improve the conditions of tribal areas and to involve tribal people in the process of development with the aid of Panchayat Institutions as well. Priorities were in the order of economic upliftment, education, health, housing and communication.

In the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78), three categories, namely (a) area of tribal concentration, (b) dispersed tribals, and (c) Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) were given attention. Problems of the mentioned categories were emphasized. The basic approach towards tribal development adopted in the Fifth Plan was to identify larger areas of tribal concentration which included the Scheduled Areas, contiguous TD Blocks and other backward regions having 50 per cent tribal concentration.

In the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85), it was noticed that certain pockets of tribal concentration outside the tribal sub-plan area were still left out of the tribal sub-plan strategy. It was therefore decided during the Sixth Plan that pockets of centre groups villages/pockets having a minimum of 10,000 tribal population of which at least 50 percent are scheduled tribes, should be carved for intensive integrated development and Modified Area Development Approach, (MADA) under the Tribal sub-plan.

In the Seventh Plan (1985-90) the objective remained to be a mix of area-cum-family development. Simultaneously paying attention to the vulnerable sections amongst the scheduled tribes it can easily be ascertained that their resources based mainly on environmental devastation.

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What were the policies of the British Government for the tribals?

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2) What were some of the main policies of the Government for tribals in the Independent India?

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## 1.4 TRIBAL POLICIES IN THE ERA OF ECONOMIC LIBERALIZATION

Liberalization as a concept gained momentum in 1990s as a form of globalization and economic reforms. It has made tremendous change in the economic life of certain tribal groups, particularly those who are advanced. The civil societies played an important role in providing the tribal Self Help Groups (SHGs) money and various loans at a subsidised rate. From the above discussed Five Year Plans, such efforts were made from the 8<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. It increased the economic growth and infrastructure of the concerned tribals. The skilled tribals also started migrating to the other parts of the country where they were working in public sector agencies and government as well. More involvement of international agencies was also found in the tribal development policy. They too were funding tribal development projects.

The major objectives and strategies of the eighth five year plan were to make the tribal sub-plan strategies more result-oriented and purposeful. Adequate emphasis was laid on the development of irrigation, horticulture, crops diversification, and improvement in the quality of education of the tribals. Special schemes were formulated during this period for the educational development of the scheduled tribes, particularly in the field of women education and reducing the drop-out rate among the Scheduled Tribes (ST) students at primary level.

The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) aimed to empower STs by creating an enabling socio-economically conducive environment for them to exercise their rights freely, enjoy their privileges and lead a life of self-confidence and dignity, at par with the rest of society. Therefore, a major shift was visualized in this period so as to envisage their advancement through a process of empowerment. This process essentially encompassed three vital components, viz. (i) social empowerment, (ii) economic empowerment, and (iii) social justice. To this effect, while ST-related line Ministries/Departments implemented general development policies and programmes, the nodal Ministry of Tribal Affairs implemented certain ST-specific innovative programmes (Dixit, 2006, pp. 187-188).

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) focused on tackling the unresolved issues and problems on a time bound basis, besides providing adequate space and opportunity for the tribals to empower themselves with the strength of their own potentials. The National Scheduled Tribe Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) was set up in 2001 under which 14.53 lakh STs benefited.

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## **1.5 ELEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN AND THE SCHEDULED TRIBES**

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This Plan does not make special plan for STs. It rather continues the existing schemes and programmes of the previous plans that were directed at the socio-economic development of the tribal population through an 'area based approach'. It has only identified nomadic and de-notified tribe as disadvantaged. The Department of Elementary Education and Literacy and Higher Education in states have a provision for special incentives for ST students which include textbooks, uniforms, abolition of tuition fees, and so on. Special focus is also accorded to ST students under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Mid-day meal programme, Navodaya Vidyalaya, National Talent Search Scheme and the like (Planning Commission, 2008). Post-Matric Scholarships are open to all ST students whose parents' annual income is up to one lakh rupees, to facilitate students to pursue professional courses.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) scheme recommended encouraging tribal languages in all the schools in tribal areas; opening of Adult Literacy Centres and spreading Inclusive Education. Regarding higher education, this plan has recommended setting up new colleges in tribal areas and establishment of central university was a mandate to promote educational avenue for tribal population. This plan also encourages tribal languages through text books and appointment of tribal teachers who were well versed in the tribal language and establishment of boy and girl hostels in different educational institutions.

This Plan recommends looking after the socio-cultural discrimination faced by disadvantaged groups including scheduled tribes at different levels. It promotes health care of the tribal people and setting up Auxiliary Nursing Midwifery (ANM) training centres in tribal blocks. Under housing schemes of the plan includes the *Adim Jati* for tribal and primitive tribal groups and *Halpapti* housing schemes for ST families.



### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1) What are the main features of the policies for tribals in the era of economic liberalization in India?

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- 2) What are the main features of the policies for tribals in the Eleventh Five Year Plan?

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## 1.6 DRAFT NATIONAL TRIBAL POLICY

This policy was formulated in order to address the issues concerning tribal groups like lower literacy levels, economic constraints, poor infrastructure, diminishing control over natural resource base, persistent threats of eviction from their habitat, exclusion from mainstream and economy in distribution of wealth and opportunities and non-empowerment and to place Scheduled Tribes on a progressive and constructive path and make them active partners in Nation building (Draft National Tribal Policy, 2006, p. 4). It was recommended that this policy shall be guided by the existing Constitutional Articles including the PESA Act and the Nehruvian Panchsheel. According to Dixit, The National Policy recognizes that a majority of Scheduled Tribes still live below the poverty line, have poor literacy rates, suffer from malnutrition and disease, and are vulnerable to displacement. It also acknowledges that STs in general are repositories of indigenous knowledge and wisdom. The National Policy also aims at addressing each of these problems in a concrete way. It lists out measures to preserve and promote tribal cultural heritage (2006, p. 259).

The National Tribal Policy seeks to increase the literacy rate of the tribal which is still low compared to the national literacy rate. It ensures development of education among the tribal by providing them financial assistance, and emphasizing on vocational education, and mother tongue in the school curriculums. The forest dwelling tribal people have possessed a kind of knowledge about their surrounding pertaining to medical system, agriculture, ethno-veterinary, environmental conservation and so on which the National Tribal Policy seeks to preserve and promote. The tribals seldom utilize the modern medical system albeit its availability in most of the areas due to their strong belief in traditional medical system and experiences. They are also prone to attack by various hazardous diseases due to vitamin deficiency. Against this backdrop, the National Tribal Policy seeks to

promote the modern health care system and also a synthesis of the Indian systems of medicine like *ayurveda* and *siddha* with the tribal system (Ibid, 262).

Since Independence, displacement of tribal population from their habitation is a huge problem due to construction of dams, industries and mining. It has largely affected the tribal people in terms of cultural, economic, health, and other kinds of vulnerabilities. The National Policy for Tribals, therefore, stipulates that displacement of tribal people is kept to the minimum and undertaken only after possibilities of non-displacement and least displacement have been exhausted. When it becomes absolutely necessary to displace Scheduled Tribe people in the larger interest, the displaced should be provided a better standard of living (Dixit, 2006, p. 264).

Shifting or slash-burning cultivation has been the main economic pursuit of the tribal people. But various acts of States deprive the tribal of their traditional practices as a result of which their subsistence economy gets affected. The National Tribal Policy, in order to handle the problem of shifting cultivation, seeks to rationalize the land tenure system.

This Policy seeks to develop the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) who are the most vulnerable among the tribal population. It envisages developing both the categories of PTGs, i.e. those who are isolated from the surrounding and placed in isolated ecological niches (heritage groups); and those who are located in the fringes of mainstream population and have contact with them. It seeks to develop them economically and to preserve their eco-system, life styles, and traditional skills of both the groups of PTG.

Land alienation and land transfers are two important problems in most of the tribal regions that cause them economic vulnerability which the National Tribal Policy ensures to stop. It seeks to formulate State anti-alienation land laws so as to scrutinize the loopholes of various State laws and bring them in conformity with the PESA Act. It also seeks to amend the Indian Registration Act in order to identify the transferee whether or not is a member of Scheduled Tribe. It seeks to establish special fast-track courts in Scheduled Areas to deal with the case of tribal land alienation and litigation.

The Human Development Indicators (HDI), of the ST population are much lower than the HDI of the rest of the population in terms of all parameters, such as education, health, employment, income, etc. STs also suffer from geographical and cultural exclusion, aspects which do not get captured in the HDI. Similarly, lack of capacity to make choices is not accounted for ([www.tribal.nic.in/finalContent.pdf](http://www.tribal.nic.in/finalContent.pdf)). Hence, the draft National Tribal Policy ensures to enhance all the indicators among the tribal population. It intends to check drop-out rate of tribal children particularly among girls by providing them various facilities, i.e. book, stationery, scholarship, reimbursement of examination fees, free bus travel, mid-day meal, etc. It encourages preserving the tribal language, not only in teaching but also in the form of books. It targets to operate the Eklavya Model Residential Schools with classes sixth to twelfth by the end of the Eleventh plan. It also ensures to stop teacher absenteeism by providing employment to the local tribals.

Poor health is a major problem in the tribal areas due to inaccessible health facilities, food insecurity, poor sanitation and safe drinking water. The tribal people still practice their traditional medical system albeit the availability of modern medical

facilities in some part of tribal regions. Of course the major problem is lack of communication, i.e. proper road etc., which the National Tribal Policy seeks to fulfill. It also seeks to establish Primary Health Centre (PHC) in most of the tribal regions. It aims to provide safe drinking water, and good hygiene and sanitation among STs so as to eradicate disease epidemic.

The National Tribal Policy seeks to develop livelihood standard of STs through different livelihood schemes like vocational training, establishment of Industrial Training Institute (ITI), encouraging traditional arts and crafts or agro-forest based activities. It also encourages marketing of these activities including minor forest produces (MFPs) so as to generate income through Banks, NSTFDC, TRIFED, etc. Migration is becoming a common problem in some specific tribal areas that has been creating various problems like school drop-out, health, and the like so, the National Tribal Policy seeks to arrest migration by providing income generating employment schemes in the tribal areas.

The draft National Tribal Policy aims to bring equality among male and female by providing the latter various legal aids or by policy frame-works. The policy also encourages the NGOs to work in the tribal areas so as to reduce the dependence of tribals exclusively on government. The policy intends functioning of various Acts and laws meant for Fifth and Sixth Scheduled Areas so as to ensure their development and security. While dealing with the scheduling and de-scheduling of tribes, this policy intends to follow the criteria developed by Lokur committee, i.e. primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with community at large and backwardness ([tribal.nic.in/finalContent.pdf](http://tribal.nic.in/finalContent.pdf)). It also seeks to make policies for nomadic tribes. The draft National Tribal Policy encourages strengthening research on the cultural facets of the tribal life that remained neglected during the earlier decades of anthropological research. Thus, this policy intends to establish more Tribal Research Institutes, particularly in the States predominantly inhabited by tribals.

### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer.

1) What are the characteristic features of the draft National Tribal Policy?

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## 1.7 LET US SUM UP

The tribal policies can be seen in two broad periods: first, in the colonial period, and second, in the post-colonial period. In the colonial period, there was a policy of isolation of the tribes. In the post-Independence period, the British policy of isolation was shifted to the integration model of tribal development. Various conventional programmes were started in the tribal areas so as to meet the Constitutional commitment; and for bringing about social and economic change among the tribal people. In the early 1990s there was a shift in the economic policy of the Government of India with the introduction of economic liberalization,

which impacted majority of the tribal groups adversely. The Eleventh Five Year Plan does not make special plan for STs. It rather continues the existing schemes and programmes of the previous plans that were directed at the socio-economic development of the tribal population through an 'area based approach'. This Plan has laid emphasis on poverty eradication in rural and tribal areas which focuses on sustainable development, education, employment, access to forest resources and agricultural production and subsidies. The draft National Tribal Policy tries to address the issues concerning lower educational levels, poverty, poor infrastructure, diminishing control over natural resource base, persistent threats of eviction from their habitat, exclusion from mainstream economy in distribution of wealth and opportunities and non-empowerment and to place Scheduled Tribes on a progressive and constructive path to make them active partners in nation building.

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