

**Draft Speech from Hon'ble Minister for Tribal Affairs for the
consultation meeting to be held on 28.10.2014**

Hon'ble Ministers from the State Governments, Secretary(TA), senior officers from the State Governments and other officers of the Ministry, ladies and gentlemen!

- It is a matter of great pleasure for me to be a part of this august gathering. I am feeling privileged for getting this opportunity to address such a dignified congregation. At the outset, I must convey my heartfelt thanks to the Hon'ble Ministers from Various State Governments, who spared time from their busy schedule and have come all the way to Delhi to participate in this Consultation. Thanks a lot to all of them.
- This consultation has been organized to deliberate upon the existing tribal development strategy to work out the modalities for triggering the pace of development initiatives intended for tribals across the country. As I have learnt that there is no dearth of money with the State Government to further the development interventions, what is needed, is to adopt a focused approach to realize the objectives in true spirit.
- Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Bhai Modiji, when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, demonstrated the political as well as administrative will to utilize the scattered resources by mobilizing them in a compact toolkit to gear up the process of development. Gujarat State pooled up the resources from different sources namely - Centrally Sponsored Schemes, State TSP, SCA to TSP, Article 275(1), Institutional finances and bundled them as a potent instrument, which enabled them to take up even big projects meant for holistic development. As a result, the hitherto underutilized financial resources transformed into a unified means and triggered the pace of development in a focused manner thereby fetching visible changes in the human development indices of tribal people in the State. This gives sufficient encouragement to us to take inspirations from and launch similar intervention for judicious utilization of financial resources.

- With a view to replicate Gujarat model of tribal development, Hon'ble Prime Minister announced a Scheme named Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (VKY) in his Budget Speech. Our Ministry is in the process of implementing the Scheme. As elaborated by Hon'ble Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, that this scheme mainly focusses on bridging infrastructural gaps and gap in human development indices (HDI) between Schedule Tribes and other social groups. VKY also envisages to focus on convergence of different schemes of development of Central Ministries / Departments and State Governments with outcome oriented approach. Initially the Blocks having at least 33% of tribal population in comparison to total population of the Block will be targeted. The participating States are requested to extend all sort of help and support to make the Scheme a grand success.
- There is need of the hour that all the instruments should work hand in hand in a mission mode to defeat the enemies like poverty, poor health, malnutrition, unemployment, lack of basic amenities and lack of sustainable livelihood etc. prevalent among the tribal people. I would like to draw kind attention of the hon'ble dignitaries present here from the State Governments that our Ministry has taken up initiatives for strengthening of existing institutions meant for delivery of goods and services to tribal people i.e. ITDAs/ITDPs and creation of new ones wherever necessary, as elaborated by Hon'ble Minister of State for Tribal Affairs. Specific funds have been allocated to the State Governments for the purpose with the dedicated intervention of Secretary(Tribal Affairs). These institutions are specifically meant for delivery of goods and services to the tribal people and they must be strengthened without any laxity. May I expect from the State Governments to utilize the funds judiciously with a view to build the institutional mechanism more robust by way of strengthening these institutions.
- Education is considered as the backbone of development. But educating the tribal children has been a challenge for the Government for various socio-cultural, economic, ecological and administrative reasons. Low literacy and drop outs are confronting tribal population. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs with its mandate of critical gap filling, is re-engineering the education Schemes. Providing adequate educational infrastructure like residential schools, incentive for education for ST children through scholarships are among the priorities of our Ministry.

- As per estimation about 100 million forest dwellers, majority of whom are tribals, depend on the Minor Forest Produce (MFP) for food, shelter, medicine, cash income etc. The price of MFP is more often than not determined by the traders instead of self-sustained process of demand and supply. Our Ministry took note of the situation and has taken corrective measures to ensure that such forest dwellers are not deprived of their due. Under the scheme Maximum Selling Price for Minor Forest Produce (MSP to MFP) being implemented in Schedule V States initially, we have developed a web-based portal which indicates current price of MFPs on real time basis across different Mandis of the States. 12 Nos. of MFP products have been included in the programme namely (i) Tendu Leaves (ii) Bamboo (iii) Mahuwa Seeds (iv) Sal Leaf (v) Sal Seed (vi) Lac (vii) Chironjee (viii) Wild Honey (ix) Myrobalan (x) Tamarind (xi) Gums (Gum Karaya) and (xii) Karanji. The benefits of this initiative may be popularized among the tribals in the States in their understandable language. The State Government may play important role in this regard.
- In order to provide real time information, Toll Free Number 1800-180-1551 has been launched on 2nd September 2014 through which daily prices of Minor Forest Produce in various Mandis across the country can now be obtained.
- I believe you will agree that the Forest Rights Act, is a landmark legislation to recognize the pre-existing rights of tribals and other traditional forest dwellers who are in occupation of forest land, but whose rights could not be recorded. I am happy to declare that out of 37.69 Lakh claims filed by the intended beneficiaries, about 14.57 lakh individual rights title and more than 22,200 community forest rights titles have been distributed as on June 2014.
- Our Ministry has given due attention on strengthening of various research entities to evolve them as Centres of Excellence. Currently, three institutions are functioning as Centre of Excellence under the Ministry namely;
 - (i) Tribal Research and Action Cell (TRAC) under National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad in the field of Local Governanace and Rural Development relating to the Scheduled Tribes.

- (ii) Resource Center for Tribal Development (RCTD) under BAIF Development Research Foundation, Pune in the field of Rural Technologies for improvement in Livelihood and Quality of Life, relating to the Scheduled Tribes.
- (iii) Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, Vadodra in the field of Information, Education and Communication, relating to Scheduled Tribes.

In addition, our Ministry has given in-principle approval for recognizing the Vishva Bharati, Shanti Niketan as the other Centre of Excellence in the field of Tribal Language and Literature. Another proposal has been approved by the Ministry to establish a National Research Centre in the Tribal Research Institute, Bhubaneshwar to promote research activities on subjects / issues for socio-economic development and culture of STs.

- Mushrooming of non-serious NGOs in the social sector is a recognized cause of concern for the Government. While in remote areas and Left Wing Effectuated areas where outreach of Government Agencies is limited, it is desirable to join hands with the NGOs having local roots and sense of service. At the same time we need to be very cautious while dealing with them, as it is difficult to recognize which of them are really committed towards their stated cause. Recognizing this problem, our Ministry has taken the stand to identify some of the NGOs which have an all India character and are known for their selfless services and remarkable achievements in uplifting the deprived sections of society, for placing them distinctly to derive fruitful results. Some of them are -
 - Ramakrishna Mission and its affiliated organizations.
 - Akhil Bharatiya Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram and its affiliated organizations.
 - Bharat Sevashram Sangha and its affiliated organizations.
 - Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh and its affiliated organizations.
 - Seva Bharati and its affiliated organizations.
 - Vidya Bharati and their affiliated organizations.
 - Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement, Karnataka.
 - Deen Dayal Shodh Sansthan, New Delhi.
 - Servants of India Society, Pune, Maharashtra.
 - Rastriya Seva Samiti, Andhra Pradesh.

- Vivekananda Girijana Kalyan Kendra, Karnataka.
 - Akhil Bharatiya Dayanand Sevashram Sangh, New Delhi.
 - DAV Managing Committee, New Delhi.
 - Vinoba Niketan, Kerala.
- Most importantly, I would like to mention that Tribal Sub Plan funds available with the State Governments is the most important and huge implement catering to overall socio-economic developmental need of the tribals. Fund flow under TSP is smooth and abundant, which can be utilized effectively to bring about intended change in the field of providing basic amenities, health, education and sustainable livelihood. I would like to draw attention of the hon'ble members from the States to the extant instructions/guidelines meant for implementation of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) funds. It is, inter alia, stipulated therein that Tribal Welfare Department of the State Government will be the nodal Department for implementation of TSP funds in the State. It is thus important on the part of Hon'ble Ministers heading the Tribal Welfare Department in the State to see to it that funds meant for tribal development under various instruments in the State are fully utilized for the intended purpose. Incidences of divergence of tribal funds, if any, existing in any of the States may be stopped forthwith. It may also be ensured that while finalizing annual plans of the State Ministries, the Tribal Welfare Departments are consulted and due share of funds are earmarked for tribal development as per norms. Further, Panchayati Raj Institutions may suitably be engaged in the process of planning and implementation of Schemes for tribal development and provision for social audit may be put in place. Our Ministry, being the nodal Ministry in respect of tribal Development, is committed to extend all sort of support to the State Tribal Welfare Department for safeguarding the interest of tribals in the State.
 - I am glad to share the experience of our Ministry at this stage. You may perhaps be aware that a Project Appraisal Committee, headed by Secretary(Tribal Affairs) with representatives of State Governments, Financial Advisor Planning Commission, etc. has been constituted to appraise and approve the proposals for allocation under various Schemes of the Ministry. This has helped in ensuring consultation with the States, convergence of various schemes of the Ministry, transparency in the process of appraisal and fund releases and ensuring optimal utilization of limited financial resources.

- The tireless efforts put in by Secretary(Tribal Affairs) with his team in holding a series of PAC meetings with the participating States, deserves commendation. I am told that during the Project Appraisal Committee meetings, besides other thing, State Governments were sensitized for promotion of need based integrated livelihood initiatives such as Dairy development with State cooperative, horticulture, floriculture, vegetable production, apiculture, sericulture, fisheries, backyard poultries etc. without in any way disturbing the traditional agricultural practices, in order to create enabling environment for tribals to earn their livelihood at doorsteps with backward and forward linkages. Further, attention were drawn to harp on the need of job oriented skill development of tribals while ensuring due share to female population by including women centric trades. Promotion of co-education and curb on drop outs of students were also among the thrust areas. Strengthening of health institutions, measures to improve overall health of tribals including immunization were rigorously advocated by the Ministry. Diseases like Sickle Cell Anemia, Malaria, leprosy etc. have been given attention to. Sanitation measures especially facilities of toilets with running water and electricity in residential schools have been emphasized upon. I am glad to note that most of the State Governments have voiced in unison to the call of the Ministry. I hope and expect that the programmes would be executed by the State Governments in true spirit whereby fetching visible and tangible outcomes.
- It has, however, come to my notice that a few number of States have not yet submitted their proposals for appraisal and approval. I urge those State Governments to kindly come forward and finish of the exercise expeditiously.
- Non-submission of Utilization Certificates for previous years' fund releases by some of the States has also been reported to me. You will appreciate that adherence to the norms stipulated in the General Financial Rules by both Central and State Governments is the part of the process. I would like to request the Hon'ble Ministers from the State Governments present here to take note of it and ask the concerned authorities to respond to the call of the Ministry responsively for ensuring larger interest of the tribal people.

- You will also appreciate that now-a-days most of the documents available on tribals starts with negative connotations and present morose picture about them. This Government led by Shri Modiji has a dream to realize during the next five years that all the media instruments are singing the evidence based story of development of tribals thereby negating the past jinx. For achieving this goal, all of us will have to contribute to the best of our capacity with full dedication and devotion to duty.

स्वामी विवेकानंदजी ने कहा था -

आप जैसा विचार करेंगे, वैसे आप हो जाएंगे

अगर अपने आपको निर्बल मानेंगे तो आप निर्बल बन जाएंगे

यदि जो आप अपने आपको समर्थ मानेंगे तो आप समर्थ बन जाएंगे

- It is, therefore, incumbent on us to make all out efforts for the sake of positive change. I reiterate that our Ministry is committed to provide required hand holding support to State Governments in preparation of perspective plans and annual plans wherever and whenever needed.
- I take this opportunity to remind that under the leadership of our beloved Prime Minister Shri Modiji, our Government has launched a nationwide mission to make and keep India clean in all respect in order to pay real tribute to the father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. The message is loud and clear, be it our own self, our own home, our society, our work place, our working system, our State or our nation at large, we need to strive for achieving the goal of cleanliness and do justice with the mission. I, therefore, urge your good selves to drive this drive upto the last mile and contribute your part to make the larger dream come true – “स्वच्छ है भारत, तो स्वस्थ है भारत.
- Finally, I request hon’ble participants to come forward and share their views openly and put forth their suggestions particularly with references to interventions under the Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana, strengthening of institutions, utilization of Tribal Sub Plan and service delivery mechanism for holistic development of Scheduled Tribes. This will go a long way in contributing and facilitating policy formulation by the Government of India. I once again extend my sincere thanks to the Hon’ble Ministers for joining this consultation.

Thank you all. “जय माँ भारती