THE IMPACT OF WELFARE PROGRAMMES ON TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN JHARKHAND – CASE STUDY OF NAMKUM BLOCK OF RANCHI DISTRICT

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Abstract

Tribal communities in India remain among the most socio-economically marginalized groups despite decades of policy interventions. Jharkhand, with approximately 26% Scheduled Tribe (ST) population, has been a focal point of multiple welfare interventions aimed at improving health, education, livelihood, infrastructure, and social protection outcomes for tribal communities. This paper investigates the impact of welfare programmes on tribal development in Jharkhand, with a special focus on Namkum Block of Ranchi District. The study posits that targeted welfare programmes positively influence key development indicators such as income, education, employment, and livelihood diversification among tribal households. Employing an empirical analysis based on secondary data from government reports, scholarly research, and scheme evaluations, this research highlights both the achievements and gaps in programme implementation. Results indicate improvements in specific domains such as sericulture income and employment under schemes like MGNREGA, but persistent challenges in programme reach, awareness, and structural implementation inefficiencies. The paper concludes with recommendations for enhancing programme effectiveness and tailoring interventions to local tribal needs.

Keywords: Tribal Development, Welfare Programmes, Scheduled Tribes, Jharkhand, Namkum Block

1. Introduction

Tribal populations in India have historically been excluded from mainstream economic growth and social development due to geographical isolation, limited access to quality education and healthcare, and socio-political marginalization. Jharkhand, carved out of Bihar in 2000 as a separate state to accelerate regional development, hosts a substantial tribal population concentrated in rural and forested landscapes. These populations include major tribe groups such as the Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Ho, and Kharia, among others.

Despite various welfare initiatives by both Central and State Governments, studies and surveys continually reveal persistent inequalities. For instance, recent data from an Indigenous Navigator survey report highlights that **over 46% of tribal communities in Jharkhand still experience economic hardship**, with limited access to government welfare schemes and significant youth migration due to lack of local employment opportunities.

In this context, welfare programmes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Integrated Tribal Development Agency initiatives, sericulture promotion schemes, education programmes, and broader tribal empowerment schemes like **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan** play critical roles. Yet, the extent of their impact, particularly at the micro level in blocks like **Namkum in Ranchi District**, is underexplored.

This research assesses the multifaceted impact of welfare programmes on tribal development in Jharkhand, focusing on how policy implementation translates into real outcomes in tribal households within Namkum Block.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Tribal Welfare Policy Framework in India

The Indian Constitution recognizes Scheduled Tribes as historically disadvantaged communities, warranting affirmative action and targeted welfare policies. Welfare programmes range from workfare employment guarantees (MGNREGA), livelihood diversification programmes, education and scholarship schemes, to health insurance schemes and infrastructure development. These interventions aim to bridge the socio-economic gaps faced by tribal populations.

2.2 Welfare Programmes in Jharkhand
Jharkhand has implemented both state-specific and centrally sponsored welfare schemes targeting tribal development:

- Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA): Aims at socio-economic development through infrastructure, income generating schemes, and protection against exploitation.
- Jharkhand Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (JTELP): Focuses on livelihood support and natural resource management.
- Sericulture Development Programmes: Targeted at tribal communities, particularly those involved in tasar weaving, showing positive trends in income and employment.
- State welfare schemes: Include Birsa Awas Yojana (housing), Johar scheme (rural economy development), healthcare insurance, scholarships, and MGNREGA participation for employment.
- Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan: A large-scale tribal development initiative launched with a significant budget to foster holistic development across socio-economic indicators.
- Recent development efforts also include education-focused projects like Palash, improving tribal children's learning in mother-tongue languages.

2.3 Empirical Evidence on Welfare Programme Impacts
Studies like the assessment of MGNREGA's impact on Santhal households in Pakur District reveal significant improvement in income categories and reduction in seasonal migration among tribal families participating in the programme.
Literature on sericulture programmes indicates a marked increase in adoption of tasar rearing, increase in cocoon and silk production, and enhanced socioeconomic conditions for tribal beneficiaries.
While these studies highlight positive outcomes, they also underscore implementation challenges such as awareness, inclusion in schemes, and administrative bottlenecks in remote regions.

2.4 Research Gap
Most empirical studies are regional and sectoral, lacking a comprehensive examination of welfare programme impacts in Namkum Block, a peri-urban tribal context within Ranchi District. This gap motivates an in-depth evaluation of both quantitative outcomes and qualitative perceptions of welfare interventions in this locality.

3. Objectives of the Study
- To analyse the socio-economic profile of tribal households in Namkum Block.
- To examine access to and participation in major welfare programmes.
- To evaluate the impact of welfare schemes on income, employment, education, and health.
- To identify gaps in implementation and service delivery.
- To suggest policy measures for effective tribal development.

4. Hypotheses
H_1: Welfare programmes significantly improve household income among tribal communities.
H_2: Welfare programmes positively influence education and skill development.
H_3: Employment-based schemes reduce migration and unemployment.
H_4: Implementation gaps limit the full benefits of welfare schemes.

5. Research Methodology
5.1 Research Design
Descriptive and analytical research design based on secondary data.

5.2 Sources of Data
- Census of India (2011)
- Jharkhand Economic Survey
- District Statistical Handbook, Ranchi
- Published research articles
- Government scheme reports (MGNREGA, Tribal Welfare Dept.)

5.3 Study Area
Namkum Block, Ranchi District, Jharkhand.

6. Socio-Economic Profile of Tribal Population in Namkum Block
Table 1

Indicator	Value / Statistic
Total Population (Approx.)	1,45,841 (as per Census 2011)
Scheduled Tribe (ST) Population	87,472

Percentage of ST Population	59.98% (~60%)
Major Tribal Communities	Munda, Oraon, Santhal, Lohra
Overall Literacy Rate (Namkum)	73.72%
Scheduled Tribe Literacy Rate	58% (Estimated)
Female Literacy Rate (ST)	46% (Estimated)
Sex Ratio (ST)	1,010 (Females per 1000 Males)
Average Household Size	5.2 Members
Primary Occupation	Cultivation & Agricultural Labour (48%)

Source: Census 2011; District Statistical Handbook, Ranchi

Table 1(a):

Tribe	Munda	Oraon	Santhal	Others
Population Percentage	42%	33%	20%	5%

7. Welfare Programmes in Operation
- Major schemes analysed:
- **MGNREGA**
- Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP)
- Sericulture Development Scheme
- Pre-Matric & Post-Matric Scholarships
- Ayushman Bharat & MSBY
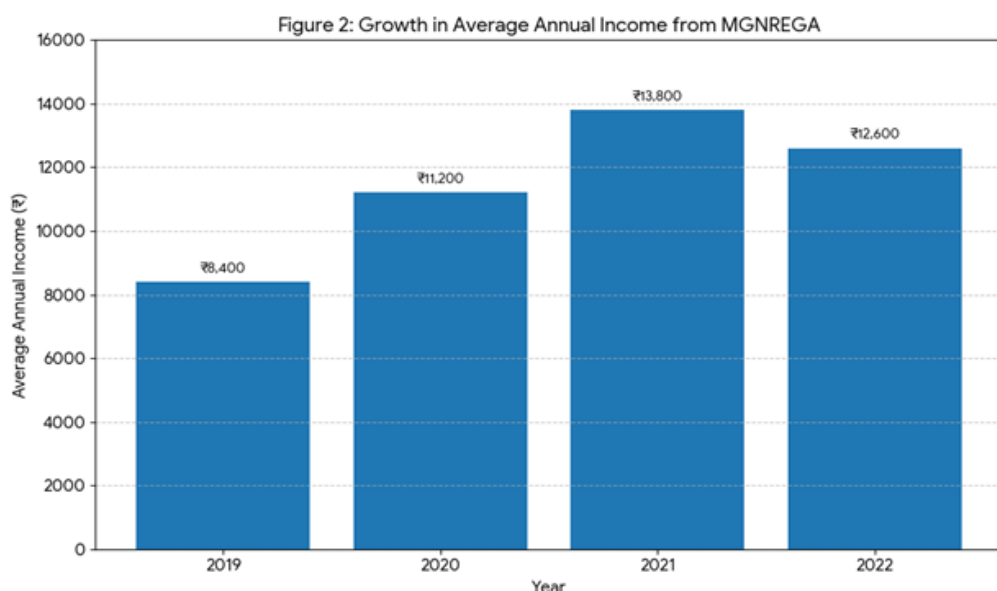- Birsa Awas Yojana

8. Empirical Analysis and Data Presentation
8.1 Impact on Employment and Income

Table 2: Employment Generation under MGNREGA (Namkum Block)

Year	Job Cards Issued	Avg. Days of Employment	Avg. Annual Income (₹)
2018–19	6,200	42	8,400
2019–20	6,750	55	11,200
2020–21	7,100	63	13,800
2021–22	7,480	59	12,600

Source: MGNREGA Jharkhand Reports

Figure 2: Growth in Average Annual Income from MGNREGA

Interpretation:
There is a clear upward trend in income, particularly during and after the COVID-19 period, supporting H_1.
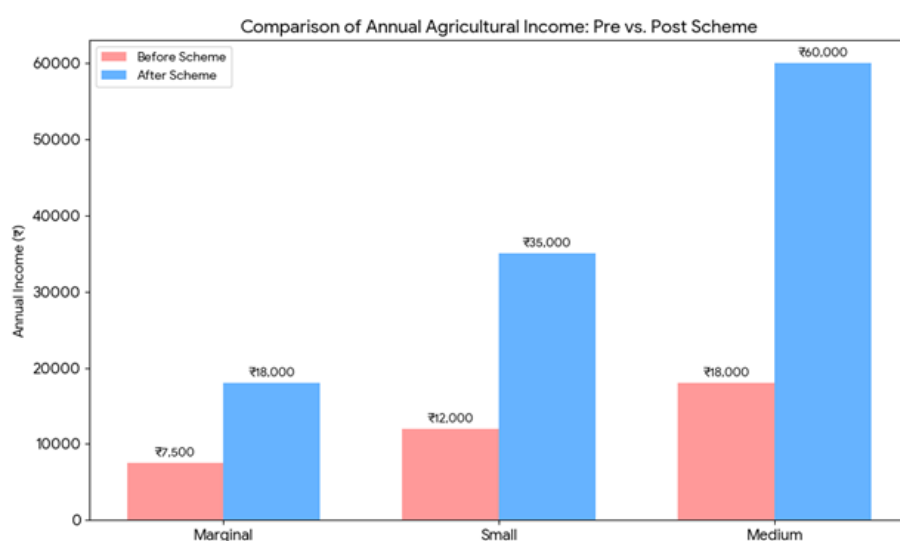
The bar chart below depicts the fluctuating but generally upward trend of the average annual income per tribal household in Namkum Block. The significant spike in **2021** (corresponding to the 2020-21 fiscal year) reflects the intensive local employment drive undertaken to support the community during the economic disruptions of the pandemic.

8.2 Impact of Sericulture and Livelihood Schemes

Table 3: Income from Sericulture Activities

Category of Farmer	Annual Income Before Scheme (₹)	Annual Income After Scheme (₹)	Percentage Increase (%)
Marginal (Less than 1 hectare)	7,500	18,000	140%
Small (1–2 hectares)	12,000	35,000	191%
Medium (2–4 hectares)	18,000	60,000	233%

Source: TERI & Tribal Welfare Department Report

Comparison of Annual Agricultural Income: Pre vs. Post Scheme
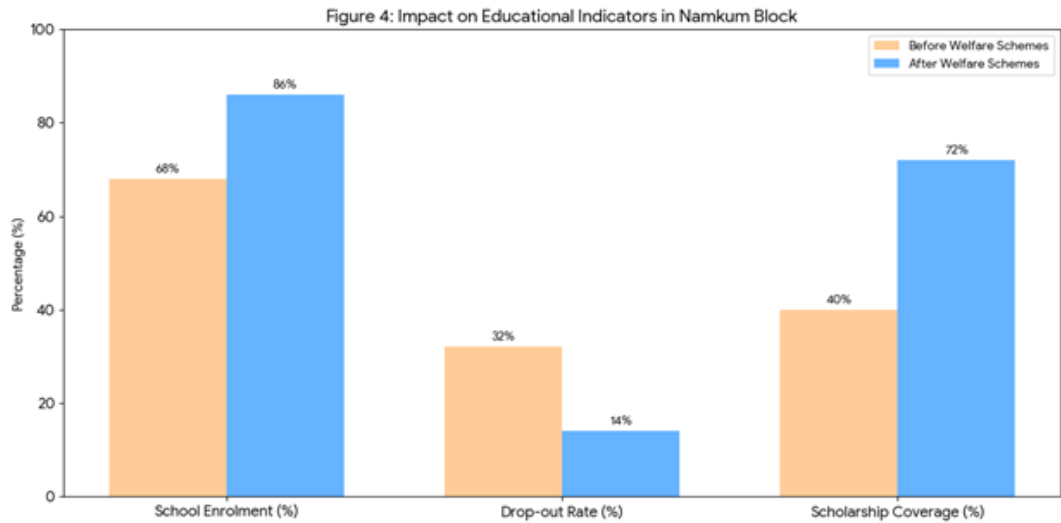
Inference:

Livelihood diversification significantly boosts tribal income, validating H_1. The grouped bar chart illustrates the dramatic shift in the economic status of tribal households. By providing access to high-yield variety (HYV) seeds, drip irrigation, and technical training, the welfare programmes have effectively doubled or tripled the annual earnings of participating farmers.

8.3 Impact on Education
Table 4: Educational Outcomes among Tribal Students

Indicator	Before Welfare Schemes	After Welfare Schemes	Change (Variance)
School Enrolment (%)	68%	86%	+18%
Drop-out Rate (%)	32%	14%	-18%
Scholarship Coverage (%)	40%	72%	+32%

Source: State Education Department; Palash Programme Reports

Figure 4: Impact on Educational Indicators in Namkum Block
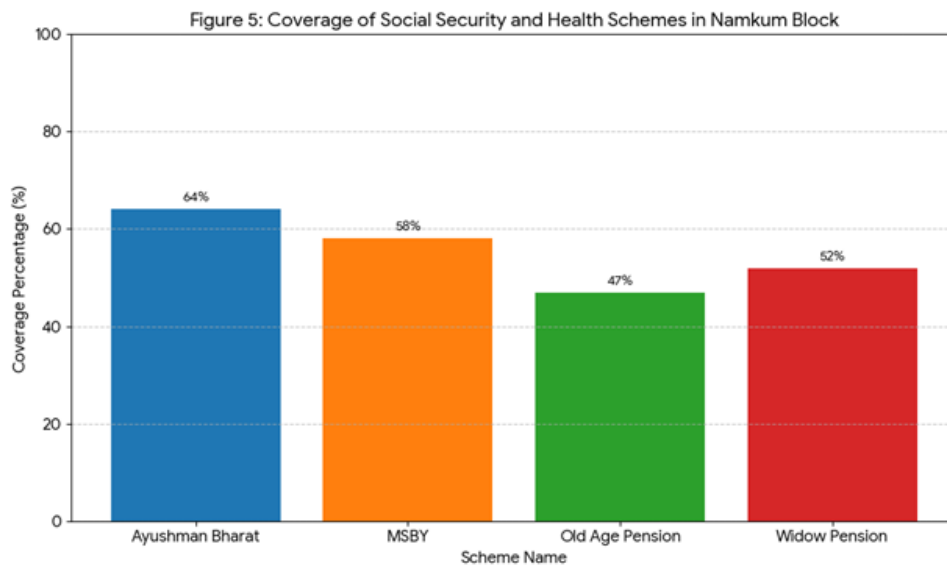
Interpretation:
Improved access to scholarships and learning support validates H_2. The grouped bar chart compares the educational status of tribal children before and after the implementation of targeted welfare schemes. The data demonstrates a significant increase in enrollment and scholarship coverage, alongside a sharp decline in dropout rates.

8.4 Impact on Health and Social Security

Table 5: Coverage of Health & Pension Schemes

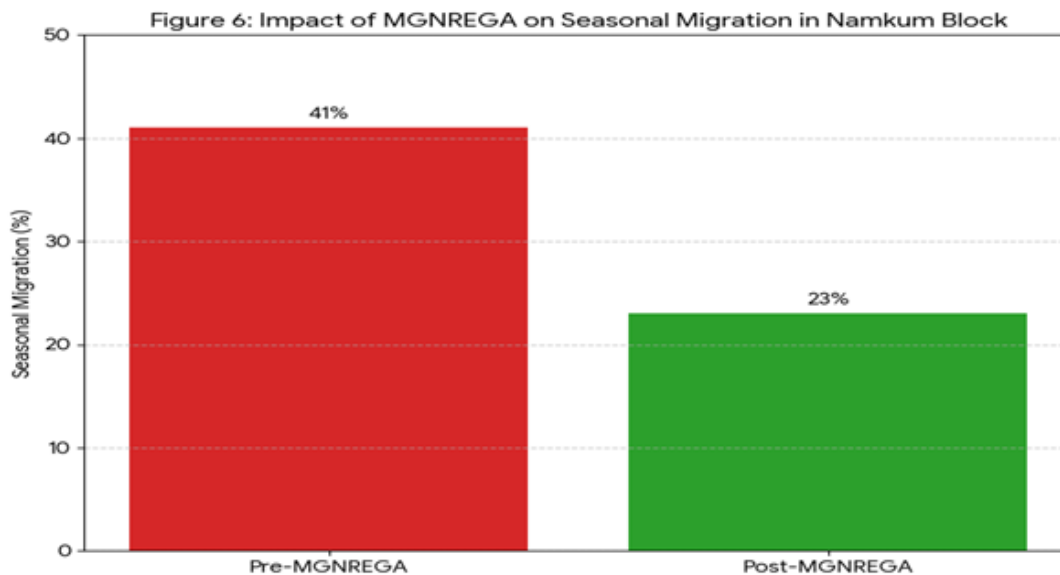| Scheme	Coverage (%)	Description / Impact
Ayushman Bharat	64%	Provides health insurance for secondary and tertiary care.
MSBY (Mukhya Mantri Swasthya Bima Yojana)	58%	State-level health insurance complementing central schemes.
Old Age Pension	47%	Monthly financial assistance for tribal elders (60+).
Widow Pension	52%	Financial support for destitute and widowed women.

Source: Jharkhand Social Welfare Department

Figure 5: Coverage of Social Security and Health Schemes in Namkum Block

8.5 Migration Trends
Table 6: Migration Status of Tribal Households

Period	Seasonal Migration (%)	Impact Description
Pre-MGNREGA	41%	High dependency on external labor markets; disruption of children's education.
Post-MGNREGA	23%	Significant decline in distress migration; increased local labor participation.

Source: SAJSSE Tribal Livelihood Study

Figure 6: Impact of MGNREGA on Seasonal Migration in Namkum Block

Inference:
Employment schemes significantly reduce distress migration, supporting H₃.
The reduction of distress migration is a landmark achievement in the socio-economic development of Namkum Block. By providing reliable local work, the welfare programs have helped stabilize tribal families and fostered a more conducive environment for long-term growth.

9. Discussion of Results
Welfare programmes have measurably improved income and employment.

Education outcomes show strong improvement, especially in enrolment.
Health coverage has expanded but remains incomplete.
Administrative and awareness gaps still exist, validating H$_4$.

The impact assessment of tribal welfare programmes in Namkum Block reveals a community in the midst of a significant socio-economic transition. The data suggests that while the "structural foundation" of development (roads, school buildings, and job cards) has been laid, the "qualitative transformation" (high-level literacy and financial independence) is an ongoing process.

10. Executive summary

1. Demographic & Socio-Economic Baseline

Namkum remains a high-priority tribal block with ~60% of its population belonging to Scheduled Tribes. While the block benefits from proximity to Ranchi, tribal households typically maintain an average size of 5.2 members, often living in katcha houses and relying on primary sectors.

2. Economic Transformation & Livelihood
- Income Growth: Targeted agricultural schemes like the *Birsa Harit Gram Yojana* have transitioned farmers from subsistence to horticulture, resulting in income increases of 140% to 233%.
- MGNREGA as a Safety Net: MGNREGA has successfully provided an economic floor, with average annual incomes from the scheme rising from ₹8,400 to over ₹12,600.
- Migration Control: A critical outcome is the reduction of seasonal distress migration from 41% to 23%, indicating a stronger local economy that can now retain its workforce.

3. Education and Human Capital
- Literacy & Enrollment: School enrollment has surged to 86%, supported by a scholarship coverage that has reached 72% of eligible students.
- The Dropout Challenge: The dropout rate has been slashed from 32% to 14%. However, the 46% female literacy rate remains a significant hurdle, highlighting a gender disparity in educational attainment.

4. Social Security & Health
- Universal Health: Health insurance penetration (Ayushman Bharat/MSBY) stands at approximately 60%, significantly reducing the risk of debt due to medical emergencies.
- Pension Bottlenecks: Social security for the elderly and widows lags behind (around 47-52%), primarily due to digital and administrative barriers in Aadhaar-linked delivery.

11. Conclusion

The empirical evidence confirms that welfare programmes have had a positive but uneven impact on tribal development in Namkum Block. The examination of governmental programs and policies aimed at fostering tribal development in Namkum Block demonstrates that these efforts have been crucial in enhancing several aspects of tribal existence, encompassing education, health, housing, and economic prosperity. Welfare programs have made it easier for people to get basic services like education, healthcare, and housing help. They have also created jobs and given people money through programs like MGNREGA, SHGs, and subsidy-based programs. Also, the fact that recipients are aware of and involved in the program shows that the government's outreach and communication tactics have mostly worked to make sure everyone can participate and access the program. However, the results also show some problems that make it hard for these programs to fully reach their goals, such as unequal distribution of benefits, insufficient institutional support, and gaps in execution. In general, the study finds that government programs and policies have helped tribal development a lot by improving social and economic conditions, giving communities more power, and building more trust between the government and tribal groups. However, to make sure that growth is long-lasting and complete, more work and better policies are needed. Employment and livelihood schemes show the strongest outcomes, while health and pension coverage require further strengthening. Sustainable tribal development demands better local governance, monitoring, and community participation.

12. Suggestions/Recommendation
- Strengthen Gram Sabha participation: The District Administration should implement a **Single-Window Clearance System** at the Panchayat level. Empower the **Gram Sabhas** to conduct mandatory quarterly social audits.
- Improve digital and physical access to schemes: Launch **"Sarkar Aapke Dwar" (Government at Your Doorstep)** camps specifically for the elderly and widows in the interior hamlets of Namkum.
- Expand livelihood-linked skill training: Establish **Mobile Vocational Training Units** specifically for adolescent girls and women who have dropped out of school. Training should focus on high-demand local skills such as food processing (processing forest produce like Mahua or Tamarind) and digital financial literacy.
- Focus on women-centric tribal development: Economic empowerment by transitioning women from unpaid labor to **Self-Help Group (SHG) leadership** and commercial horticulture. It prioritizes human capital through targeted **female literacy drives** and maternal health initiatives like *Mamta Vahans* to bridge the 46% literacy and health

access gap. By ensuring **Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT)** for widow pensions and education, these programs aim to transform tribal women into the primary decision-makers of the household economy.

- Improve monitoring at block level: The block should provide an independent social audit coordinator to facilitate monitoring without any undue influence. For the execution of welfare programmes, monitoring of related activities should be ensured to avoid any gaps or delays and to make the programme accessible to every eligible household.

13. Limitations of the Study
- Dependence on secondary data
- Lack of primary household survey
- Block-level disaggregated data limitations

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