

September 2022



# Kurukshetra

A JOURNAL ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## Tribal Life & Culture





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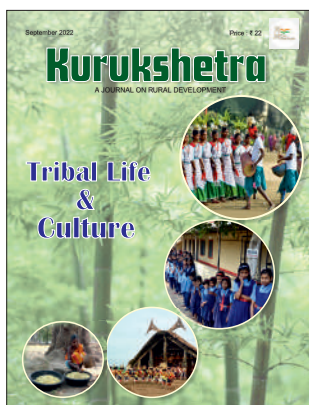


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India is home to the second-largest tribal population in the world. Scheduled Tribes (ST) comprise of about 8.61 percent of the total population according to the 2011 Census. The tribes of India are the oldest inhabitants of the country. They are vibrant, culturally rich, have different traditions, cultures, lifestyles, beliefs, food, languages, rituals, and a different approach to their lives. This is evident in their fairs, festivals, music, and dance forms. For millennia, despite urbanisation, loss of habitat, and sinking livelihoods, many tribal communities continue to practice their traditions and conserve the ancient wisdom inherited from their ancestors. Today, tribal groups are getting special attention from the Government. The theme of this issue of Kurukshetra is *Tribal Life and Culture*.

Our lead article *Tribal Development Strategies* gives us a brief overview of Constitutional safeguards and Development Plans and Programmes undertaken by the Government for the welfare of tribal population from the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan (1951-56) to the Twelfth Plan (2012-17) and also the current schemes and missions implemented and executed by the Government. The article *Tribal Art and Culture* through a random selection of a few tribal groups provides an introductory insight into Indian tribal culture. It provides us a glimpse of pictorial art and culture of some tribes like Bhil, Gond, Warli, etc., and dance forms of a few tribes such as Kalbelia, Kuruba, Bhimmas, etc. It shows the richness and diversity of India's tribal culture.

The North-eastern region is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions in Asia, and each state takes pride in a range of cultures and traditions. The percentage of the tribal population in the seven states of the region is also very high. The article *Changing Lives of Tribal Villagers* focuses on how the Flagship programme of Government of India, Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY) is enriching the lives of the tribal population in seven states of North-east.

Various research studies have shown that there is a correlation between literacy and poverty. Literacy rates of some sections of the society viz., Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continue to be lower than that of all communities is an area of concern. The article *Education for Tribals* states that the ultimate ambition of any education system is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education including access to schooling facilities in order to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. Therefore, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been implementing various schemes relating to education, health, economic empowerment, etc. in the Scheduled Tribe-dominated areas of the country. Many schemes are implemented with a specific target of uplifting education amongst tribal communities.

With this issue, we hope that our readers will get an insight into the beautiful life and culture of our tribal communities that live far away from this tech-savvy world and get to know about the efforts that our Government and different organisations are making to ameliorate the difficulties of our tribal population.

Happy Reading!

# Tribal Development Strategies

*Dr. K. K. Tripathy*

The Government of India's planned approach expedited the overall development of the Scheduled Tribes (ST) of the country, identified the problems and designed the ways and means to overcome the problems through various social, economic and political initiatives. While socio-economic initiatives have been implemented through schematic instrumentations by the government, there is a strong need to popularise a tribal-specific participatory self-governance system where the STs will manage their own resources and empower themselves in a participative and tribal-managed development process. Educational infrastructure needs to take into consideration how to enhance skills and the knowledge base of ST youth in the changing and competitive world through the provision of modern, need-based training and skill upgradation.

**D**evelopment of tribes of India has remained a central theme in various perspective Five-Year Plans and Annual Plans. However, challenges do exist today for India's Scheduled Tribes (STs) due to their traditional lifestyles, remoteness of habitations, dispersed population, and frequent displacement. STs constitute 8.6 percent (10.45 crore) of the total population of the country (Census, 2011). Around 92 percent of the ST population lives in rural areas. While the proportion of the ST population to the total population has marked an increasing trend from 6.9 percent in 1961 to 8.6 percent in 2011, the socio-economic progress of ST people vis-à-vis the rest of the population in the country remained skewed on various development parameters. In this context, this article reviews various safeguards enshrined in our Constitution and the strategies followed, policies framed and programmes launched for the welfare of the STs.

## Constitutional Safeguards

The framers and founding fathers of the Constitution of India appropriately recognised the special needs of the STs and made certain special safeguards not only to ensure social



and economic justice but also to protect these communities from any other possible exploitation. While the Fundamental Rights conferred upon the citizens ensure their holistic development, Directive Principles of State Policy delineated in the Constitution prompt the State to create a conducive environment that its citizens can enjoy. Moreover, there are special provisions laid down in the Constitution for areas which have a predominance of ST population. Constitutional provisions for STs are enlisted in Table 1.

## Development Plans and Programmes

The policy makers and planners accorded utmost priority to the welfare and development of STs from the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan (1951-56). The Plan laid down the principle for suitably designing such plans and programmes that could adequately and appropriately cater to the needs of all the underprivileged. Besides, special provisions were initiated towards securing effective and intensified developmental drives for the all-round development of STs.

At the end of the First Plan, the Government recognised the need for a concrete, integrated developmental planning to improve the socio-economic conditions of STs in the country. Consequently, during the Second Plan (1956-61), the Government grouped development programmes in Scheduled areas under four heads – (a) communications, (b) education and culture, (c) development of tribal economy, and (d) health, housing and water supply. An emphasis was laid on economic development, with the focus on reducing economic inequalities in society. The development programmes for STs were planned, based on respect and understanding of their culture and traditions and

**Table 1: Constitutional Provisions for Welfare of STs**

S. N.	Article/Schedules	Provisions in Brief
1	14	Equality before the law or the equal protection of laws
2	15	Government not to discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth
3	15(4)	States can make any special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens including STs
4	16(4)	Reservation of appointments or posts by States
5	38	State to strive to promote the welfare of its people by securing and protecting a social order
6	46	State to promote educational and economic interests of all the weaker sections including STs
7	164(1)	States with a large proportion of ST population (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha) shall have a Minister-in-charge of tribal welfare.
8	275(1)	Grants-in-aid for promoting the welfare of the STs and for raising the level of administration of the scheduled areas
9	330, 332 & 335	Reservations of seats for STs in the Lok Sabha, the State legislative assemblies and services
10	340	State to appoint a Commission to investigate the conditions of the socially and educationally backward classes
11	342	State to specify tribes or tribal communities as STs
12	275(1)	Grants from the consolidated funds of India each year to be released for promoting the welfare of STs
<b>Schedule</b>		
13	Fifth	Prescriptions outlined for the administration of Scheduled Areas and the setting up of Tribal Advisory Councils for monitoring and advising the matters relating to welfare of the tribal community [Article 244(1)]
14	Sixth	Administration of Scheduled areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram by designating certain areas as Autonomous Districts and Autonomous Regions and also by constituting District Councils [Article 244(2)].
<b>Constitutional Amendments</b>		
15	73 <sup>rd</sup> & 74 <sup>th</sup> Amendments & Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled areas Act 1996)	Major shift towards empowering and enabling the scheduled tribes to look after their own interest and welfare through their own initiative. PESA provides a constitutional, legal and policy framework to ensure sustainable autonomous tribal governance.

with an appreciation for their social, psychological and economic problems. The programmes on tribal welfare which were designed during the First Plan took an effective shape in 1961, the last year of the Second Plan, when the Government successfully opened 43 Special Multi-purpose Tribal Blocks, later termed as Tribal Development Blocks (TDBs). The Third Plan (1961-66) continued the plans and policies prescribed and followed during the Second Plan in order to provide equality and opportunities to STs.

The Fourth Plan (1969-74) vowed to realise a rapid rise in the standard of living of the people, ensuring equality and social justice to all. Six pilot projects in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha were set up in 1971-72. The Fifth Plan (1974-78) launched the Tribal Sub-plan (TSP) envisaging the percolation of direct benefits of development initiatives to the STs. The TSP not only aimed at the promotion of development activities to raise the level of living standards of STs,

but also envisaged the protection of interest of the STs through legal and administrative support. The TSP also stipulated to ensure accountability and transparency, along with the flow of funds from other developmental sectors for STs, which was proportionate to the population.

The Sixth Plan (1980-85) sought to ensure a higher degree of devolution of funds and earmarked poverty alleviation programme for at least 50 percent of ST families to cross the poverty line. Infrastructural facilities in Scheduled areas were expanded. During the Seventh Plan (1985-90), the emphasis was on the economic development of STs by creating two national-level institutions viz. (i) Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) in 1987 as an apex body for State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations, and (ii) National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, which was later bifurcated into two separate corporations – one for SCs and other for STs. The existing NSTFDC started operating in April 2001. While the former tried to provide remunerative prices for the forest and agriculture produce of STs, the latter made provisions for credit support for employment generation. The Eighth Plan (1992-97) focused on eliminating the exploitation of STs and paid attention to their special problems of suppression of rights, land alienation, non-payment of minimum wages and restrictions on the right to collect minor forest produce, etc.

The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) envisaged the creation of an enabling environment conducive for STs to exercise their rights freely, enjoy their privileges and lead a life at par with the rest of the society. The Tenth Plan (2002-07) focused on tackling the unresolved issues and problems faced by the tribal society on a time-bound basis.

The Eleventh (2007-12) and Twelfth Plan (2012-17) consolidated the welfare measures and offered directions to the States to design proper and appropriate developmental activities specifically relevant for the development of STs. The Annual Plans thereafter through NITI Aayog of Government of India take care of development needs of STs in States. The Aayog, from time-to-time, issues guidelines for implementing Tribal Sub-Plans by Central Ministries/Departments. Central Ministries/Departments have been mandated by NITI Aayog to

earmark funds in the range of 4.3 to 17.5 percent of their total Scheme allocation every year for tribal development. The socio-economic status of the STs on a few important development parameters is as follows.

### (I) Livelihood Development

The erstwhile Planning Commission adopted the Tendulkar Methodology to estimate poverty incidence in India based on the survey results conducted by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). As per these estimates, ST People living below the poverty line in 2011-12 were 45.3 percent and 24.1 percent in the rural and urban areas, respectively. State-wise details for the years 2009-10 and 2011-12 are given in Table 2.

**Table 2: ST Population below Poverty Line during 2009-10 and 2011-12 (in %)**

S. No.	State	Rural		Urban	
		2009-10	2011-12	2009-10	2011-12
1	Andhra Pradesh	40.2	24.1	21.2	12.1
2	Assam	32.0	33.4	29.2	15.6
3	Bihar	64.4	59.3	16.5	10.3
4	Chhattisgarh	66.8	52.6	28.6	35.2
5	Gujarat	48.6	36.5	32.2	30.1
6	Himachal Pradesh	22.0	9.5	19.6	4.0
7	Jammu & Kashmir	3.1	16.3	15.0	3.0
8	Jharkhand	51.5	51.6	49.5	28.7
9	Karnataka	21.3	30.8	35.6	33.7
10	Kerala	24.4	41.0	5.0	13.6
11	Madhya Pradesh	61.9	55.3	41.6	32.3
12	Maharashtra	51.7	61.6	32.4	23.3
13	Odisha	66.0	63.5	34.1	39.7
14	Rajasthan	35.9	41.4	28.9	21.7
15	Tamil Nadu	11.5	36.8	17.6	2.8
16	Uttar Pradesh	49.8	27.0	20.2	16.3
17	Uttarakhand	20.0	11.9	0.0	25.7
18	West Bengal	32.9	50.1	20.6	44.5
<b>All India</b>		<b>47.4</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>24.1</b>

Source: Reproduced from Annual Report 2021-22, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India

As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey, conducted by NSSO, the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in usual status (Principal + Subsidiary) for STs during 2017-18 and 2019-20 were 41.8 and 47.1 percent, respectively, against 36.9 and 40.1 percent recorded for all categories (Table 3).

**Table 3: Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for Scheduled Tribes (ST) and All from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (in %)**

Social Group	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
<b>PLFS (2019-20)</b>									
ST	57.4	38.0	47.9	56.3	25.6	41.3	57.2	36.5	47.1
All	56.3	24.7	40.8	57.8	18.5	38.6	56.8	22.8	40.1
<b>PLFS (2018-19)</b>									
ST	57.3	28.7	43.3	54.3	18.4	36.5	57	27.6	42.5
All	55.1	19.7	37.7	56.7	16.1	36.9	55.6	18.6	37.5
<b>PLFS (2017-18)</b>									
ST	56.6	27.6	42.5	53.6	18.4	36.6	56.3	26.6	41.8
All	54.9	18.2	37.0	57.0	15.9	36.8	55.5	17.5	36.9

Source: PLFS 2019-20, NSO, MoSPI, Reproduced from Annual Report of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021-22

Similarly, NSSO's PLFS survey 2019-20 indicates that the unemployment rates according to usual status for STs have reduced from 4.3 per cent to 3.4 per cent between 2017-18 and 2019-20 (Table 4).

**Table 4: Unemployment Rate (UR) for Scheduled Tribes (ST) and all from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (Figures in %)**

Social Group	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
<b>PLFS (2019-20)</b>									
ST	3.7	1.8	3.0	7.1	8.0	7.3	4.1	2.3	3.4
All	4.5	2.6	4.0	6.4	8.9	7.0	5.1	4.2	4.8
<b>PLFS (2018-19)</b>									
ST	4.4	2.4	3.8	10.5	14.4	11.5	5.0	3.3	4.5
All	5.6	3.5	5.0	7.1	9.9	7.7	6.0	5.2	5.8
<b>PLFS (2017-18)</b>									
ST	4.9	2.2	4.0	7.0	7.6	7.1	5.1	2.6	4.3
All	5.8	3.8	5.3	7.1	10.8	7.8	6.2	5.7	6.1

Source: PLFS 2019-20, NSO, MOSPI, Reproduced from Annual Report of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021-22



## (II) Literacy and Education

The literacy rates (Census 2011) of the total population and ST population for all age groups in 2011 were 73.0 and 59.0, respectively (Table 5). The youth literacy gaps between ST and all categories were recorded at 5.1 whereas for males and females the gaps were 7.1 and 14.7, respectively. Such widening gaps between the literacy rates of the general population and STs indicate that the literacy drives of the government are yet to benefit all citizens of the country equitably.

**Table 5: Literacy Rate by Age Group-Census 2011**

All Categories (age groups)	Total			Scheduled Tribe		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
All Ages	73.0	80.9	64.6	59.0	68.5	49.4
10-14	91.1	92.2	90.0	86.4	88.3	84.4
15-19	88.8	91.2	86.2	80.2	85.7	74.6
20-24	83.2	88.8	77.3	69.2	79.6	59.0
Adolescent (10-19)	90.0	91.7	88.2	83.6	87.1	79.9
Youth (15-24)	86.1	90.0	81.8	75.0	82.9	67.1

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India, Reproduced from Annual Report of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021-22

Drop-out rates are considered to be an important indicator reflecting the lack of educational development and inability of a given social group to complete a specific level of education. In the case of STs, the dropout rates show a declining trend for primary, upper-primary

and secondary classes (Table 6).

To address the issues of literacy and drop-outs from formal education and lower enrolment ratios, ST students have been accorded special incentives through the provision of free textbooks, uniforms, and free education in schools. While residential schools were built exclusively for the STs, the cost of boarding and lodging the ST students was borne by the Government. A special focus was also laid on ST students under District Primary Education Programme, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Mid-day Meals Scheme, and Navodaya Vidyalaya. The main objective of the educational promotion drive has been to promote literacy among ST students by providing hostel accommodation to those ST students who are not in a position to continue their education either because of the remote location of their villages or because of their poor economic condition. While the construction of girls' hostels was started during the Third Plan period, a separate scheme for the construction of hostels for Scheduled Tribe boys was launched in 1989-90. Tribal schools were established in TSP areas from 1990-91 onwards. The Government, however, decided to provide quality education to the ST students by utilising a part of funds under Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India for setting up 280 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) in 20 States from Class VI to Class XII in different States. This initiative was launched during 1997-98 with an objective to enable ST students to avail the facility of reservation in higher and professional education courses as well as in higher level jobs in the government and various public sector undertakings. Out of the targeted, 200 schools were functional when a revamped programme was launched on 12 September 2019.

**Table 6: Drop-out Rates in School Education for Scheduled Tribe Students**

Year/Class	Primary			Upper-Primary			Secondary		
	Girls	Boys	Overall	Girls	Boys	Overall	Girls	Boys	Overall
2015-16	4.18	4.29	4.24	9.64	9.70	9.67	26.28	26.27	26.27
2016-17	3.91	3.96	3.94	8.60	8.69	8.64	27.15	27.85	27.51
2017-18	3.48	3.82	3.66	6.14	5.95	6.04	21.36	22.90	22.14
2018-19	5.23	5.72	5.48	6.46	6.89	6.69	23.38	26.40	24.93
2019-20	3.45	3.90	3.69	5.65	6.15	5.90	22.49	25.51	24.03

Source: Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+), Ministry of Education, Reproduced from Annual Report of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2021-22

The Government has now identified 452 blocks in the country fulfilling the criteria of 50 percent or more tribal people and at least 20,000 tribal population for establishment of EMRSs under the revamped scheme which is in addition to 288 schools earlier sanctioned under the old scheme. The government has set a target of establishing 740 EMRSs. Presently, 378 schools are in operation across the country out of which 205 were made functional during the last five years (2017-22).

### (III) Entrepreneurship and Skill Development

The progress in literacy and education demands creation of an enabling entrepreneurial atmosphere along with skill development initiatives to ensure gainful absorption of educated ST persons nearer to their place of habitation. Under Skill India Mission, the Ministry of Skill Development (MSDE) has been delivering short-term skills through Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Scheme, National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), and long-term skills through Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS) and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) to the youth belonging to all section of the society including tribal community. All of the above schemes have the mandatory provision of utilisation of funds for tribals through Scheduled Tribes (ST) component. While resources are not an issue, the prime concern is how to encourage the participation of youth, employable STs in various vocations by mapping their needs and aspirations.

### Conclusion

Plans and Programmes of the government have continuously facilitated the socio-economic development of ST population. However, the achievement is skewed across States. The poverty gap between STs and all populations living below

poverty line shows that STs are more backward economically. Most of the STs who are living under poverty line are landless agricultural labourers having minimal or no access to productive assets.

The Government has identified the problems and designed the ways and means to overcome the problems through various social, economic, and political initiatives. There is a need to popularise a tribal-specific participatory self-governance system where the STs will choose their own destiny by managing their own resources and empowering themselves in the tribal-participative and tribal-managed development process.

While setting up of educational infrastructure like primary schools and residential schools at suitable places are praiseworthy, in Scheduled Areas, extra efforts could be made to enhance skill and knowledge base of the ST youth through the provision of need-based training and skill upgradation. Since a majority of the tribal community is dependent on minor forest produce and low-productive agriculture, efforts need to be made to make them more productive by improving the quality of the produce and linking the tribal produce with the markets in a sustainable manner. Last but not the least, intra-departmental cooperation, coordination, and convergence are required for the effective implementation of schemes dedicated to the upliftment of STs.

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*(The author is an Officer on Special Duty in the M/o Co-operation. Views expressed are personal. Email: tripathy123@rediffmail.com )*

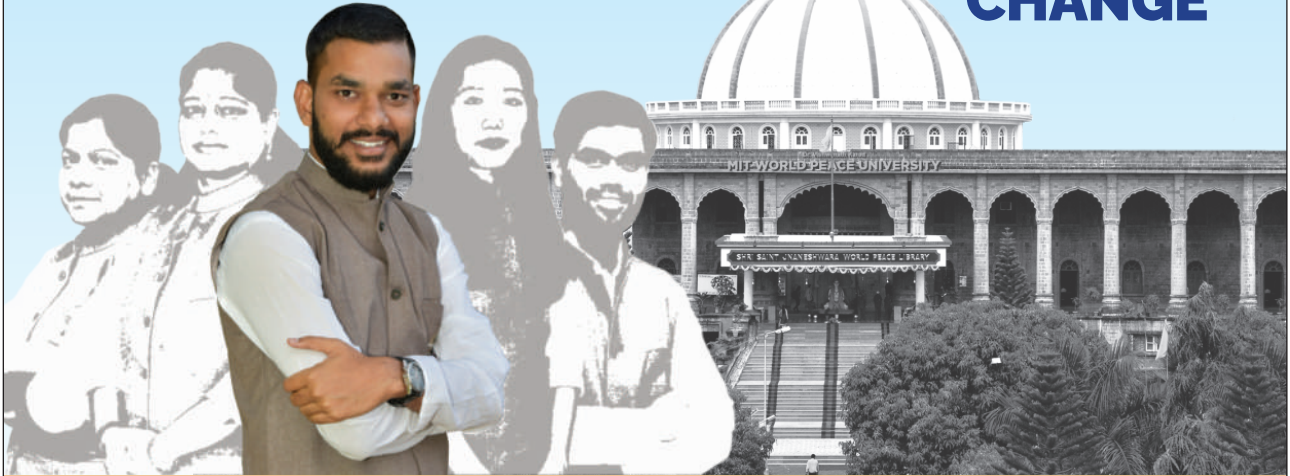




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## Organisations for Development of Scheduled Tribes

There was an utmost need to generate livelihood opportunities for STs based on locally available resources as well as linking their productive potential to the main economy of the country so that gainful employment opportunities are created at their doorstep. It is in this context, the role and mandate of National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) attains prominence. The former was intended to provide credit support for livelihood creation while the latter was created with an objective to provide remunerative price for the Forest and Agriculture Produce of tribal people.

**National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation:** NSTFDC, a Government of India undertaking under Ministry of Tribal Affairs was set up with the prime objective to boost economic development of Scheduled Tribes. NSTFDC strives towards empowerment of ST population through creation and promotion of sustainable livelihood. The corporation in collaboration with the state ST corporations and banks works for the economic upliftment of STs by way of providing concessional loans for undertaking various income generation activities. Term Loan Scheme provides concessional loan for viable projects costing upto Rs. 50.00 lakh per unit. Under the scheme, financial assistance is extended upto 90 percent of the cost of the project and the balance is met by way of subsidy/promoter contribution/margin money. Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana (AMSY), an exclusive scheme for economic development of Scheduled Tribes women provides loan upto 90 percent for projects costing upto Rs. 2 lakh. Micro Credit Scheme for Self Help Groups (MCF), a scheme for meeting small loan requirement of ST members under which the corporation provides loans upto Rs. 50,000 per member and maximum Rs. 5 Lakh per Self Help Group (SHG). There is also an Education Loan scheme, Adivasi Shiksha Rinna Yojana (ASRY) to enable the ST students to meet expenditure for pursuing technical and professional education including Ph.D. in India. Under this scheme, the Corporation provides financial assistance upto Rs. 10.00 lakh per eligible family at concessional rate of interest of 6 percent per annum.

**Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED):** This was set up in 1987 to provide remunerative price for the Forest and Agriculture Produce of tribal people.

**The National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS):** This is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. It has been registered as a Society, under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 in New Delhi on 1 April 2019 to establish, endow, maintain, control and manage the schools (hereinafter called 'Eklavya Model Residential Schools') and to do all acts and things necessary for or conducive to the promotion of such schools.

**The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST):** This was set up with effect from 19 February 2004 by amending Article 338 and inserting a new Article 338A in the Constitution, through the Commission (Eighty-ninth Amendment) Act, 2003. Main duties of the Commission are to investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Tribes and to evaluate the working of such safeguards, and to inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Tribes.

## Welfare Schemes for STs Administered under Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Ministry of Tribal Affairs administers various central sector and centrally sponsored schemes besides two special area programmes, viz., Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS) and Grants-in-Aid under Article 275(1) of the Constitution to contribute to the overall efforts for development of tribal people in the country. Some of the prominent schemes of the Ministry are: Pre-Matric Scholarship and Post Matric Scholarship; Support to Tribal Research Institute; Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs); Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS); Grants to States under Article 275(1) of Constitution; Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS); National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST Students; Scholarship to the ST Students for studies abroad; Grant in Aid to Voluntary Organisations working for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes; Support for Marketing and Development of Tribal Products.

## Schemes of Central Government

A new scheme, Logistics and Marketing of

Tribal Products in North East has been approved and an amount of Rs. 75 crore has been earmarked for the scheme for the current year. This scheme aims at development of tribal entrepreneurship in the North East.

Government has approved the scheme Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM) with a total financial outlay of Rs. 1,612.27 crore for implementation during the financial years 2021-22 to 2025-26. PMJVM has been redesigned through the merger and extension of two existing schemes for promotion of tribal livelihood, namely 'Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Development of Value Chain for MFP' and 'Institutional Support for Development and Marketing of Tribal Products/Produce'. PMJVM envisions to strengthen tribal entrepreneurship initiatives and to facilitate livelihood opportunities by promoting more efficient, equitable, self-managed, optimum use of natural resources, Agri/Non Timber Forest Produce(NTFP)/Non-farm enterprises.

Van Dhan Vikas Kendras are set up through Tribal Co-Operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED), which targets employment generation for tribal population by harnessing the wealth of forest i.e. *Van Dhan*. Under this programme, tribal community owned Minor Forest Produce (MFP) centric multi-purpose Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) are set-up in areas with significant tribal population. The scheme 'Marketing and Logistics Development for Promoting Tribal Products from North -Eastern Region' has been approved during 2021-22 for two years which aims to strengthen livelihood opportunities for tribal artisans through increased efficiency in procurement, logistics and marketing of tribal products.

In the Union Budget for 2022-23, Hon'ble Finance Minister announced a new scheme Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Tribes (VCF-ST). This scheme is meant to promote entrepreneurship among tribals who are oriented towards innovation and technology. The scheme aims to provide hand-holding to new incubation ideas and start-up ideas by ST entrepreneurs. It provides for concessional finance to the Scheduled Tribes entrepreneurs who will create wealth and value for society and at the same time will promote profitable

businesses. An amount of Rs. 50 crore has been sanctioned in the budget for this scheme, which is aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among the STs. The VCF-ST scheme would be a social sector initiative to promote ST entrepreneurship and to support and incubate the start-up ideas by ST youth.

Stand-Up India Scheme is a flagship scheme of Government of India. The objective of this scheme is to facilitate bank loans between Rs. 10 lakh to Rs. 1 crore to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower and at least one women borrower per bank branch of all scheduled commercial banks for setting up of projects. The enterprises under Stand-Up India Scheme may be in manufacturing, services or the trading sector. In case of non-individual enterprise at least 51 percent of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by an SC/ST or women entrepreneur. The scheme envisages 15 percent margin money out of which borrower shall be required to bring in minimum of 10 percent of the project cost as own contribution and balance of 15 percent may be mobilised through other sources.

To support projects under the Stand-Up India, a separate scheme titled Margin Money Support Scheme for ST Entrepreneurs was formulated by NSTFDC. Now, the ST Entrepreneurs can avail financial assistance upto 15 percent of the project cost as Margin Money Contribution.

Ministry of MSME, Government of India, is implementing Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) to facilitate generation of employment opportunities for unemployed youth across the country by assisting setting up of micro-enterprises in non-farm sector. An MoU with Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has been signed by NSTFDC for dovetailing NSTFDC schemes towards implementation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

Further, an MoU between NSTFDC and Ministry of Food Processing Industries has also been signed for availing benefits in respect of Food Processing units by the target group.

### Financial Support to STs

The Reserve Bank of India has continued its

endeavour of ensuring 'ease of access' to banking services for all sections of people across the country and further strengthening the credit delivery system to cater to the needs of all productive sectors of the economy, particularly agriculture and micro and small enterprises. There are several major centrally sponsored schemes under which credit is provided by banks and subsidy is received through government agencies. Credit flow under these schemes is monitored by RBI. Under each of these, there is a significant reservation and relaxation for the members of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities. In order to support and increase the outreach of NSTFDC, RBI allowed all scheduled commercial banks (except RRBs) to charge interest at rates even below base rate if NSTFDC provides refinance under its schemes. RBI further clarified that NSTFDC's refinance to scheduled commercial banks/regional rural banks on lending to STs is to be considered as priority sector lending. This clarification makes NSTFDC's refinance to PSU Banks/RRBs more attractive and has helped expansion of its outreach as initially, State nominated organisations only were appointed as Channelising Agencies of NSTFDC.

Special financial assistance is ensured to States for infrastructure development in tribal dominated areas under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution. Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub Scheme (SCA to TSS) is 100 percent grant from Government of India (since 1977-78). This grant is utilised for economic development of ITDP, ITDA, MADA, Clusters, PVTGs and dispersed tribal population.

The allocation for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes across all Ministries has witnessed an increase from Rs. 31,920.00 crore in 2017-18 to Rs. 37,803.26 crore in 2018-19, Rs. 51,283.53 crore in 2019-20, Rs. 52,024.23 crore in 2020-21 and Rs. 78,256.31 crore in 2021-22. For the year 2022-23, Scheduled Tribe Component (STC) in 42 Central Ministries covering 250 schemes is Rs. 87,584.66 crore and spent up to Rs. 13,088.94 crore as on 1 July 2022. Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Minister of Finance, in the Budget outlay for the Financial Year 2022-2023 has earmarked an enhanced Total Budget Outlay of Rs. 8,451.92 crore for the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, which is a substantial increase from the previous total budget outlay of 2021-2022 that stood at Rs. 7,524.87 crore. A substantial increase of 12.32 percent is reflected in the total budget outlay for the

Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Since its inception to 30 June 2022, NSTFDC has sanctioned projects worth of Rs. 4,412.03 crore under income generating activities and Rs. 81.00 crore under marketing support assistance covering 36,69,463 ST beneficiaries. The cumulative disbursement made under income generating activities is Rs. 3,054.90 crore and Rs. 69.70 crore under marketing support assistance benefiting 13,56,477 ST entrepreneurs.

## Conclusion

Government of India has been making consistent effort to empower STs. Over the years, government has made substantial efforts towards their holistic upliftment ranging from launching various welfare schemes in different sectors, providing soft loans at highly concessional rate of interests and increasing the budgetary allocations as evident from the Union Budget 2022-23.

The development of a community has multi-dimensional facets to it, however improvement in lot of human development indicators like health, education, nutrition, standard of living, per capital income etc., is highly dependent on sustainable livelihood systems a community adopts. The development in the tribal context is far languishing in comparison to the overall development of the country's economy calling for a need for far greater attention to tribal development through focused, tailored, and innovative interventions at the grassroots which can harness the potential of tribal population through innovation-driven and entrepreneurship-based modern economic system. The thrust is to transform the target group from passive recipient of welfare schemes to active managers of sustainable economic livelihood system. Institutional instruments for entrepreneurship building viz. skilling, motivation, hand-holding, technology, incubation, common facility and marketing support besides financing need to be integrated effectively. The financial assistance from government through its various schemes and institutions may not fulfil the existing gaps unless it is proportionately blended with effective contribution of private stakeholders in development and community participation.

*(The author is CMD, NSTFDC. Views expressed are personal. Email: asitgopal77@gmail.com)*

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# Tribal Art and Culture

*Hemanth Menon*

India has the second-largest population of tribal people worldwide. It is difficult to define and conceptualise tribes since they exist in a variety of socio-economic milieus and because of their ongoing assimilation and acculturation with the larger social structure. The evidence of the earliest tribal culture comes from India's Upper Palaeolithic period. Modern times make it easy to access various cultures. Culture encompasses more than just performing and visual arts. In a sense, culture subsumes within its scope the way of life of communities.

**T** There are tribes in practically every region of the planet. India has the second-largest population of tribal people worldwide. Scheduled tribes make up 8.6 percent of India's population, according to the 2011 Census. The STs comprise 11.3 percent of the Indian rural population and 2.8 percent of the Indian urban population. They are autochthonous to the land; it is nothing but being indigenous rather than being migrants or re-settlers. This qualifies them to be the earliest owners of the land. In some form, we owe a substantial credit to the tribal culture while we try to

decipher our past and diverse culture. It is difficult to define and conceptualise tribes since they exist in a variety of socio-economic milieus and because of their ongoing assimilation and acculturation with the larger social structure. Every tribe maintains its very own culture, dialect, and economic activities within its own ecological habitat. Several tribes remain obscure, isolated, and alienated, while others have migrated and have undergone metamorphosis.

The tribals contributed to many dimensions of India's ancient culture. So far as we know, four



*Warli Painting*

major ethnicities and cultures converged to establish what we could identify as Indian civilisation—the Vedic culture of the Indo-Aryans, the Indus Valley or Harappan culture and its antecedents, the Dravidian cultures of South India, and the Mongoloid people speaking languages of the Sino-Tibetan family. According to their racial classifications—such as Mongoloid, Western Brachycephals, etc.—some scholars have categorised the tribes. It can be argued that this is a very difficult and uncertain manner of classification simply because of interaction and engagement between the tribes. Some have attempted to categorise them as natives and new settlers.

The evidence of the earliest tribal culture comes from India's Upper Palaeolithic period, when a variety of tools show that this culture was alive but still developing. During the Upper Palaeolithic era, artistic attempts sprouted. Twelve years before the discovery of Altamira in Spain - the location of the oldest rock paintings in the world - the first known discovery of rock paintings was made in India in 1867–1868. Bhimbetka, Jogimara in Madhya Pradesh, Lakhudiyar in Uttarakhand, Tekkalkotta in Karnataka and Kuppallu in Telangana, among other places, are some examples of early rock painting sites. A stick-like representation of a human was in use. The primary animal motifs in the early paintings include a fox, a multi-legged lizard, and a creature with a long nose (later many other animals were drawn). There are also wavy lines, filled rectangular geometric patterns, and a cluster of dots.

Paintings are superimposed, starting with Black, moving on to Red, and finishing with White colour. The subjects of paintings evolved during the late historic, early historic, and Neolithic periods, and creatures like bulls, elephants, sambars, gazelles, sheep, horses, styled humans, tridents, and occasionally vegetal motifs started to appear. The Mesolithic period, which came after, is the one with the greatest concentration of paintings, the majority of which feature hunting scenes. In some of the images, men are being pursued by animals, while in others, hunter-men brandishing arrows and barbed spears are doing the chasing. A common theme is presented by community dances.

Then came the copper and bronze ages. The Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) coincided with this era. The Indian subcontinent's earliest known human civilisation is the Indus culture. The civilisation

placed great importance on art and culture. The IVC's artists undoubtedly possessed excellent artistic taste and a strong imagination. Given anatomical details they included, their depictions of human and animal figures were highly realistic. The following instances from the Indus Valley civilisation demonstrate this. A red sandstone figure of a man's torso and a soapstone bust of a bearded man are two excellent illustrations of how to handle three-dimensional volumes. Steatite seals and tablets with beautiful animal figures, including unicorns, bulls, rhinoceroses, tigers, elephants, bisons, goats, and buffalos, are also occasionally made of agate, chert, copper, faience, and terracotta. Perforated pottery was probably used to strain liquids. Deities like the mother goddess, the bearded man, and toy carts with animals were widespread. From bone and baked clay to gold and semi-precious stones, beads and ornaments are made from every imaginable material. Prior knowledge of these facts is necessary before we delve deeper and examine India's tribal culture.

Schedule Five of the Indian Constitution makes us aware of tribal communities in India. Thus, 'Scheduled Tribes' refers to the tribes that the Constitution recognises. In India, there are roughly 645 different tribes. However, our nation has a harmony of cultures due to which the beauty of Indian culture is evolving. Perhaps this helps to uphold the motto 'Unity in Diversity'. Modern times make it easy to access various cultures. A person in a remote area of the country can now easily access the traditional tribal art of, say, Bastar; thanks to technology and rising awareness. Let's take a quick look at some tribal cultures that also are braided into India's cultural tapestry.

*(A word to the wise: this is not an exhaustive list. This is just a random selection of a few tribal groups and their cultures to provide an introductory insight into Indian tribal culture.)*

There are numerous tribal painting styles, each with its own set of colours and themes. The Bhil are India's largest tribal group, according to the 2011 Census. Bhil culture places a high value on art. Their paintings' rich textures, steeped in rituals, symbolism, and traditions, connect them to nature. Bhil paintings are characterised by large, un-life-like shapes of everyday characters that are filled in with earthy, yet bold colours before being covered

with an overlay of uniform dots in a diverse array of colours and patterns that stand out against the background. Untrained eyes may confuse Bhil with Gond (another art form practised by the Gond Tribes, another major tribal group in India), as the patterns used in both art forms are nearly identical. Warli Painting is yet another popular tribal form. Warli is a traditional Maharashtra art form that traces its origins back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Basic geometric shapes such as circles, triangles, and squares dominate these paintings. The paintings' central themes are scenes depicting hunting, fishing, farming, and festivals, with dances, trees, and animals used to surround the central theme. A tribe from the jungle, the Saura has a unique culture. States like Odisha, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra are home to them. Nature's splendour is celebrated in Saura art. The 'Tree of Life', which has human and animal inhabitants on its branches and symbolises the harmonious coexistence of humans and animals, is the basis for the majority of paintings. *Idital*, the primary deity of the Sauras, is honoured by the wall paintings created by the Saura people, known as *Italons* or *Ikons*. The ritualistic significance of these paintings is derived from their use of tribal folklore.

Pictorial art extends beyond the basic institutions of painting to also include crafts. Indian tribal crafts are typically ritualistic, drawing a clear distinction between the artist and the art lover. The eastern Indian states of West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh are home to the ancient folk-art tradition known as *dhokra*. *Dhokra* craft objects are made using the lost wax-casting technique, which is one of the earliest and most advanced methods of metal casting known to human civilisation. The attractive *Dhokra* artefacts are characterised by a simple, organic design and are motifs-driven by native culture and way of life. Each tribal region creates something distinct in design and form that carries the indelible impression of its own mystic ideology and reflects the life and attributes, as well as religious beliefs and reflections, of its people. The *Prahlada Natakams* and *Jatrasare* a source of inspiration for the *Desiya Nata* of tribal Orissa, which contributes to its distinctive style. The use of creative props and the brightly coloured costumes—embroidered headdresses and painted masks that adorn the main actors—are in and of themselves works of art. Many different gods, goddesses, demons, and animals are represented by

masks carved from papier-mâché and sholapith - the weightless bark of a water plant. Each group has its own festivals, myths, taboos, rituals, superstitions, institutions, dances, songs, and music, as well as past memories of its particular clan, which have had a profound influence on the group's artistic impulses. The majority of craft forms have practical applications. From intricate wood carving to extensive weaving, they cover a broad variety of topics. Other tribal handicrafts include *Longpi* pottery (which is not shaped on a potter's wheel but rather by hand and with the aid of moulds); cane and bamboo handicrafts like the *Thul* (a double-walled basket); and special ornaments amongst various tribes.

We saw a common representation of festivities through dances in every piece of visual art discussed. Let's take a look at some tribal dance forms now. In 2010, UNESCO inscribed Kalbelia on the Representative List of Humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage. Women in flowing black skirts dance and swirl, mimicking serpent movements, while men accompany them on the *khanjari* instrument and the *poongi*, a woodwind instrument traditionally used to catch snakes. Traditional tattoo designs, jewellery, and garments richly embroidered with small mirrors and silver thread are worn by the dancers. The swirling, graceful movements of the dance form make it a sight to behold. People from the Kashmiri tribe Rauf perform the *Dumhal* dance. The performers wear long colourful robes and tall pointed caps adorned with beads and shells. The dancers march in a traditional parade while carrying a banner. The banner is then dug into the ground, and the men dance in a circle around it. Drums are used to accompany the music as dancers sing in chorus. *Hojagiri* is a popular tribal dance in India performed by the Riang community of Tripura state. This dance is well-known for its distinctive moves and steps. The performers are not permitted to move their upper torsos or arms. In Dadra and Nagar Haveli, the Kokna tribesmen perform the *Bhavada* tribal dance, which features masks and colourful costumes. Summer nights are chosen for the performance. *Gussadi*, another ancient tribal dance form, is performed by the Raj Gonds in Telangana. It lasts a fortnight and is also presented by Dandari troupes during the festival. The full moon day marks the start of this festival, which lasts until the fourteenth day of Diwali's dark night. There are tribal dances that are gender specific, just like in Kalbelia. *Mudiyattam*

is a type of tribal group dance that is frequently performed by women in Kerala. The music playing in the background is used to guide the movement's rhythm. Percussion will provide a captivating pulse to go along with the performance. The uncombed hair of the participants, which swings in rhythmic waves and is a graceful sight, is one of the main features of this dance form.

Dance is rather incomplete without the music that goes with it. Music, in and of itself, is an important component of art. There are times when the dance itself is the music. Karnataka's *Dollu Kunitha* is a drum dance performed to singing. In the course of display, it offers a remarkable variety and level of skill. Most of the men in the Kuruba community - a group of shepherds - perform this style of dance. The *Tarphaor Pavri*, a wind instrument made of dried gourd, is used to accompany Kokna tribal dance in the hilly regions of northwest India. As a result, the Kokna dance is also known as *Trapha Nach* or *Pavri Nach*. Indian tribal music features a lot of lyrical chanting, traditional sounds, and modern musical variations. Drums are used to recreate the native, ethnic tribal music live, along with other instruments. Indian classical music education differs from that of

tribal music. Its learning process is inherited. Music is passed down through generations. However, given the passage of time and changing tastes, variations in the current form are to be expected. Songs in tribal societies are mostly functional, with the added sanctity of a ceremonial rite. Bhimmas, a Gond sect in Chhattisgarh, for example, play large single-headed drums to petition their god Bhim, the third of the Pandavas, for rain.

Art is vast, and so is culture. With this modest effort, we were able to observe the richness and diversity of India's tribal culture. Culture encompasses more than just performing and visual arts. Religion, language, cuisine, and social customs are all included under the broader term of culture. In a sense, culture subsumes within its scope the 'way of life' of communities. Due to the distinctive nature of each practice, it might be challenging to list them all. Let's work to advance the beauty of what unites our culture while learning more about our heritage in our own modest ways.

*(The author is national coordinator with SPIC MACAY. Views expressed are personal. Email: hemanth@spicmacay.com)*

## Swachh Sagar-Surakshit Sagar/Clean Coast-Safe Sea

The cleanliness campaign- *Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar/Clean Coast-Safe Sea*- along India's entire coastline is being run and will be underway till mid of September this year. The coastal cleanup drive will be carried out at 75 beaches across the country. The campaign is a citizen-led mission for improving ocean health through collective action. Through this campaign, a mass behavioural change among the masses is intended by raising awareness about how plastic usage is destroying our marine life. The three underlying goals of the campaign are consume responsibly, segregate waste at home, and dispose responsibly.



# Changing Lives of North-eastern Tribes

*Dr. Tapati Baruah Kashyap*

The North-eastern region is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions in Asia, and each state takes pride in a range of cultures and traditions. The percentage of the tribal population in the seven states of the region is also very high. Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY) is intended to bring about significant positive changes in the lives of tribal communities living in forest areas across the country by way of improving livelihood opportunities for them. This, in turn, is expected to cause a socio-economic upliftment of the people.

**P**radhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY), a flagship programme of the Government of India, was unveiled by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on April 14, 2018. It is intended to bring significant positive changes in the lives of tribal communities living in forest areas across the country by way of improving livelihood opportunities for them. This in turn is expected to cause a socio-economic upliftment of the people. Needless to say, the majority of tribal people across India have an inseparable relationship with forests, and are dependent on various kinds of minor forest produce to earn a living.

While Tribal Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (TRIFED), an agency under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is responsible for developing, designing and pivoting PMVDY across the country. Different organisations have been entrusted with the task of implementing it in different states. At the grassroots level, tribal community-owned Van Dhan Vikas Kendra Clusters (VDVKCs) have been set up in the predominantly forested tribal districts, with each cluster constituting 15 tribal SHGs/Van Dhan Kendras, with the latter comprising up to 20 tribal forest produce gatherers or artisans. This way each Cluster covers about 300 beneficiaries. The

Government of India provides 100 percent funds through TRIFED, and each cluster is provided Rs. 15 lakh to conduct its activities.

The North-eastern region is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions in Asia, and each state takes pride in a range of cultures and traditions. The 2011 Census Report mentions 135 recognised scheduled tribes and 250 ethnic communities in the region. The percentage of tribal population in the seven states of the region is also very high – Arunachal Pradesh (68), Assam (12.4), Manipur (40.9), Meghalaya (86.1), Mizoram (94.4), Nagaland (86.5) and Tripura (31.8).

Several activities are interrelated in making the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana successful in the northeast. These include value addition to various minor forest produce available in the respective tribal inhabited areas, upgrading skills by imparting training, building successful entrepreneurship among the communities, and creating a dependable market linkage.

## Assam

In Assam, the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana is being implemented by three agencies. While



Welfare of Plain Tribes and Other Backward Classes (WPT&BC) department is the nodal agency, Assam Plains Tribes Development Corporation (APTDC) is the state implementing agency. The Guwahati-based Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), on the other hand, is the state resource agency. In Assam, over 300 Van Dhan Vikash Kendras covering 37 districts have been sanctioned till June 2022, of which at least 302 Kendras have already become fully functional. These cover around 92,119 beneficiaries, majority of them being women.

Formation of cooperative societies among the beneficiaries, and training programmes being a continuous programme, primary-level production has already started in at least 50 Kendras.

The most significant aspect of the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana programme in Assam is the creation of a brand called TRISSAM in order to bring about a uniform identity of all products manufactured by the tribal beneficiaries. Launched in September 2020, the brand has been designed and developed by IIE, and marketing has already begun through various marketing channels, state and national level exhibitions, and fairs. The list of value-added MFP products of the PMVDY beneficiaries of Assam includes wild honey, black rice, *joha* (aromatic) rice, *bora* (sticky) rice, *aijong* rice, *muri* (puffed rice), *chira* (flattened rice), *bhut jolokiya* (king chilli), mustard oil, black pepper, hill broom, green organic tea, jaggery, turmeric powder, bay-leaf/powder, incense sticks, jackfruit seed/powder, ginger powder/dry, various kinds of squashes and jams, etc.

## Manipur

In Manipur, 200 VDVKS have been set up so far, with 3,320 SHGs under them covering about 60,400 beneficiaries, mostly in the tribal-majority districts of Churachandpur, Tamenglong, Ukhrul, Noney, Kangpokpi and Pherzawl. While mobilisation and sensitisation were carried out through cluster-wise workshops and advocacy programmes, master trainers and experts were engaged in cluster-wise training. The Kendras have already started producing various products like fruit candies (of *amla*, wild apple, pineapple, ginger, Burmese grapes, plum), jam (of pineapple, *amla*, plum), pickles (of bamboo shoot, king chilli, banana stem, black olive), mushroom, spices (*dalchini*, turmeric, ginger, chilli, bay-leaf), banana chips, to name a few. Hill broom, common to several other North-eastern states, is

also another major product of Manipur's Van Dhan Kendras.

A couple of mobile vans have been also provided to sell the products door-to-door in the urban centres including Imphal, while the products are also being sold online. The concerted efforts of all stakeholders have made Manipur a leading state in the implementation of PMVDY, and this achievement was duly recognised by the central government by conferring it the "Champion State" title in October, 2020.

With products manufactured by the beneficiaries having found good market response, Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Vikas Yojana has emerged as a beacon of change, impacting the tribal ecosystem as never before in Manipur. It has provided employment to tribal women and improved their financial conditions.

Manipur has also bagged five national awards during the first Van Dhan Annual Awards, 2020-21 at the celebration of 34<sup>th</sup> foundation day of TRIFED. The five awards are Most Proactive State, Best Digital Friendly State, Best Sales generated (2<sup>nd</sup> Place), the Most number of Van Dhan Vikas Kendra established (2<sup>nd</sup> place), and Best Training (2<sup>nd</sup> place). Several Van Dhan Vikas Kendras of Manipur also received a few State Van Dhan Awards at the regional level.

## Mizoram

In Mizoram, Van Dhan Vikas Kendras established by TRIFED have emerged as new centres of livelihood, self-employment and income generation for tribal gatherers, forest dwellers and the home-bound labour and artisans of the state. While 44 VDVKS were set up in the first phase, 115 VDVKS are in the pipeline in the second phase. The programme aims to bring about sustainable livelihood for forest-based tribal people by facilitating skill upgradation, capacity building, training, as well as promoting value addition to various minor forest produce.

While the Registrar of Cooperatives Societies is the implementing and monitoring agency under the Department of Cooperation, 46,168 beneficiaries under the 159 Van Dhan Vikash Kendras in Mizoram are producing hill broom, bamboo shoot, various kinds of edible wild fruits, turmeric, *amla*, bay-leaf, ginger, honey, chilli, and *aloe vera*.

## Nagaland

With the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Vikas Yojana in the state, Nagaland has emerged as another example of tribal entrepreneurship that has showcased to the entire country how cluster development and value addition can help members earn significantly higher income. Nagaland has 206 Van Dhan clusters covering over 61,800 beneficiaries. Three agencies – the Directorate of Under-Developed Areas (DUDA), Nagaland State Cooperative Marketing and Consumers' Federation Ltd. (MARCOFED) and Nagaland Bee-keeping and Honey Mission – are jointly implementing the yojana. The Van Dhan clusters have also emerged as new centres of economic empowerment for the tribal communities by way of receiving support in terms of financial capital, training, mentoring, etc. in order to expand their business and enhance earnings.

The range of products of the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras of Nagaland includes wild honey, *amla*, nutgall, lac, ginger, turmeric, hill broom, *bael*, *neem* seeds, *shikakai* seeds, oyster mushroom, *nagarmotha* (nut grass), and *shatavari* (asparagus), to name a few.

While these products have become popular in Kohima and other urban centres of the state, the annual Hornbill Festival held at the Kisama tourist village in December has emerged as the major event

where tourists and visitors buy these products.

The VDVY and MSP for Minor Forest Produce (MFP) scheme focus on farmers' entrepreneurship programmes through processing, packaging, branding and marketing of locally available products, with Nagaland topping in three categories – Best Survey, Best Training and the most number of Van Dhan Vikas Clusters (VDVKs) established on the occasion of the 34<sup>th</sup> foundation day of TRIFED. The state also secured the third position in Best Sales Generated and Innovation and Creativity.

## Tripura

Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana programme in Tripura was launched in January 2020 with a central grant of Rs. 2.26 crore. While 17 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras covering 4,256 beneficiaries under 249 SHGs were set up in the first phase, ten more VDVKs were set up, taking the number of beneficiaries up to 8,100. The VDVKs provide support for setting up sheds, tool kits are provided, and training is imparted. During 2020-21, ten more VDVKs have been set up, and each VDVK provided *pucca* sheds, warehouses for storage, and add-on equipment etc. The Yojana is being implemented by Tripura Rehabilitation Plantation Corporation and Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission under the Tribal Welfare and Forest departments.

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### Van Dhan Yojana Bringing Smiles

**Suprasad Swargiary, a retired primary school teacher, associated with Dhanubhanga Kendra in Goalpara district said after undergoing training, members of their Kendra have been producing various products from local forest produce like blackberries, jackfruits, pineapples, bay-leaves, *neem* seeds, and bamboo sticks, and bamboo. A section of women of Dhanubhanga Kendra have been making bamboo jewellery, which is marketed through the TRISSAM network of IIE.**

**“The average income of the villagers has gone up. At the moment the increase in income is not very big. But then, every passing month the income is increasing,” he said. The Dhanubhanga Kendra, which covers about 30 hamlets under Dhanubhanga gram panchayat, has 303 beneficiaries- the majority of them being women.**

**Jahnabi Boro, Cluster Development Executive of Rangapara Kendra in Sonitpur district said there are 306 beneficiaries. “Our members have undergone four training programmes under IIE, one of which was for 30 days. Our members have been making pickles, juice and jam from locally available fruits and vegetables including *bhut jolokia* or king chilli, apart from incense sticks.**

**According to Jayanti Rabha of Bahupara Kendra in Kamrup district, 300 members of the Kendra have been manufacturing various food products from rice. These include various kinds of *laddoos* and traditional *pitha*, apart from *chira* and *moori* and black-rice cake. “Our villages being located on the outskirts of Guwahati, we have the advantage of a huge market close by. As such, our members also make *papad* and pickles, all of which are sold under the TRISSAM brand name”, she said.**

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## Sweeping Success

**Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana has brought about an exponential increase in income, and thus has transformed lives of several hundred tribal families across 16 districts of the state. One single item which has emerged as game-changer for these families is the hill broom, available in huge quantities across the hill state.**

**Take for example; Longleng which is said to be one of the most backward districts of Nagaland. Till a few years ago, villagers belonging to the *Phom* tribe of Langleng, used to sell their unique hill broom grass for just Rs. 7 per kg. With support from the Van Dhan Yojana, they now earn Rs. 60 per broom. They can make four or five brooms with one kg of broom grass. According to an official in Nagaland's Department for Development of Underdeveloped Areas (DUDA), hill-brooms are in high demand everywhere because they are sturdier and of finer quality. But, till the arrival of the Van Dhan Yojana, unscrupulous middlemen and traders were making all the money by dictating the price.**

**The hill broom intervention of Van Dhan Yojana has transformed lives of tribal villages in Longleng and other backward districts of Nagaland by increasing their income. Though hill broom grass is traditionally collected only during December-February, villagers have already started earning a handsome amount by collecting the broom grass during these three months in the VDV Kendras, and manufacturing, selling brooms round the year. During the COVID-19 lockdown, hill broom turned out to be a life-saver for tribal villages in several districts of Nagaland, with people processing, storing and selling their brooms within their respective villages, rather than having to go out to look for a market.**

**With the hill broom experiment working wonders, Nagaland's DUDA has announced the creation of seven VDVKs and through the SHG network, to exclusively engage in collection of 300 metric tons of hill broom between November 2022 and May 2023, particularly from Longleng, Mon and Tuensang districts and market them countrywide through the TRIFED network. TRIFED has meanwhile also launched a hill broom plantation drive in Nagaland, which in turn has also promised to stop *jhum* (slash-and-burn) cultivation in more areas of the state.**

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Some of the items that the beneficiaries have started producing by way of value addition of different minor forest produces are – honey, hill broom, spices, pickles, jam, juices and various bamboo products, apart from betel nut, tamarind, *sal* leaves, *neem* seed, *jamun* and *amla*.

One item manufactured by PMVDY beneficiaries of Tripura which has already attracted countrywide attention is the bamboo water bottle. An innovation of the Bamboo and Cane Development Institute (Tripura), tribal artisans have found this unique eco-friendly water bottle as a major income-generating item under PMVDY. Bamboo cultivation has remained a sustainable livelihood option for about 5,000 tribal families of Tripura, and value-addition of various bamboo items under PMVDY has begun to redefine the lives of the poor tribal communities.

### Meghalaya

Meghalaya and TRIFED have signed an MoU for implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana only in January 2021, with the Department of Planning as the nodal agency and Meghalaya Basin Management Agency as implementing agency. Thirty-nine VKDK clusters have been set up so far,

covering 585 self-help groups with a little over 11,000 beneficiaries. Some of the products include hill broom, bay-leaf, wild honey, black pepper, cinnamon, packing leaves, edible wild nuts and of course jams and pickles of various edible wild fruits like blackberry, gooseberry, wild olive, *soh broi* (*Ziziphus*) and *sohphie*. Meghalaya being a leading producer of plum, pineapple, orange, apricot, litchi, kiwi, jackfruit, peach, pear, etc, the VKDKs have also identified these for value addition under the Yojana.

### Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh, a late entrant into the Van Dhan Yojana programme, has signed an MoU with TRIFED in March 2021. The state Rural Development department has been made the nodal agency for the implementation of this scheme, while Arunachal Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (ArSRLM) is the State Implementation Agency. At least 85 VDVK clusters have been set up in the first year, and 1,275 SHGs have been brought under their umbrella, covering an estimated 25,000 beneficiaries.

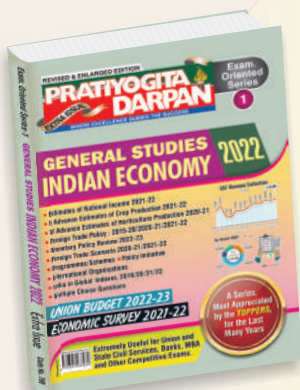
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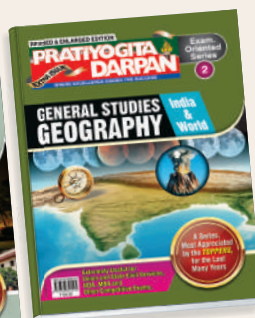
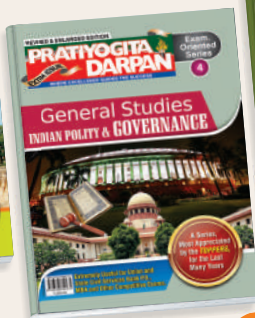
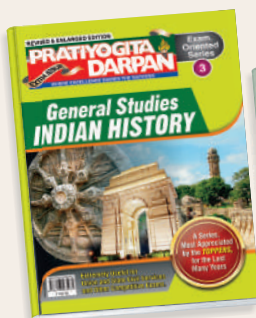
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- Narendra Modi

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# Livelihood Opportunities for Tribals

*Ramrao Mundhe  
Dr. Muniraju, S.B*

The Constitution of India provides special measures to protect the tribals and ensure their well being, accordingly the successive governments have not left tribals in state of isolation, illiteracy, poverty and hunger, but have done continuous efforts to bring them to the mainstream by providing relief and rehabilitations besides creating minimal infrastructure and other amenities as mandated under Constitution and laws enacted under it.

**T**he tribals are the original inhabitants of the Indian peninsula, as per census 1951 the size of the tribal population was 5.6 percent and as per 2011 census, the population size has increased to 8.66 percent, tribals inhabit in two distinct geographical areas viz. the Central India and the North- Eastern Region. More than half of the Scheduled Tribe population is concentrated in Central India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh (14.69 percent), Maharashtra (10.08 percent), Orissa (9.2 percent), Rajasthan (8.86 percent), Gujarat (8.55 percent), Jharkhand (8.29 percent) and Chhattisgarh (7.5 percent). About 89.97 percent of them live in rural areas and 10.03 percent in urban areas. Substantial tribal population still depends on the small farming, forest and forest based livestock for their livelihood, some of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) earlier known as Primitive Tribal Groups live in the forest and peripheries of forest and mountain regions as hunters, food gatherers, pastoralists and small farmers.

Tribal communities living in hilly areas have been using shifting cultivation—a practice that poses a great threat to the soil and forest ecology as a whole. The habitations of the tribals are geographically isolated and far from urban and industrial buzz but their abundance in natural resources like minerals, coal, water resources, forests, scenic destinations, etc., attracted the industry and business fraternity to invest and encash profit out of their investments, the investors have profited while tribals have lost their livelihood. Enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980, initiatives for development projects, and changes in the economic development policies of the successive governments have had a positive impact on the livelihood opportunities for tribals. The aspiration of the government to compete with others in Industrial development and to facilitate rural and urban communities have identified the forest and hilly regions habited by tribals for mining,

power generation, irrigation, protection of forests, conservation of wildlife, etc.

The Constitution of India provides special measures to protect the tribals and ensure their well being accordingly the successive governments have not left tribals in state of isolation, illiteracy, poverty and hunger, but have done continuous efforts to bring them to the mainstream by providing relief and rehabilitations besides creating minimal infrastructure and other amenities as mandated under Constitution and laws enacted under it. Both Government of India and state governments have created opportunities for tribal population in terms of education, health and wellbeing, employment, opportunities in political representation, and also by providing relief and rehabilitation in case of displacement from their habitations.

## Pre-Independence

Since evolution of human race, humans were hunters and food gatherers. Many communities settled and started living decent and dignified life while the tribals restricted their lives and livelihoods to forest and forest-based livestock. The tribals before the invasion of India by Mughals and British were considered to be an equal part of society and were fully involved in kingships, land and forest politics, tributary relationships with other groups, particular occupational specialisations, and even in commerce and war. However colonisation of India by Europeans transformed their life, with outsiders



exploiting them for their resources. Trees were cut down for timber. Forestland was used for tea, rubber and coffee plantations. Railway lines and roads were built in forest areas. Routes from forest to sea coasts were built to transport goods.

The concept of private property began with the Permanent Settlement of the Britishers in 1793 and establishment of the *Zamindari* system gave control over vast territories, including tribal territories, to feudal lords for the purpose of revenue collection by the British. The forced eviction of tribal communities from forest was initiated for timber economy and other revenue resources. The Indian Forest Act came into being in 1927, which provided that any forest area or wasteland that was not privately owned could be marked as reserved areas, no particular system or settlement rights were formulated for tribal communities living in forests in India, and large areas were not surveyed for this purpose. Tribal people involved in agriculture continued to cultivate crops without official land ownership. The practice of logging, hunting, foraging or agriculture by tribals and non-tribals alike under this system thus constituted encroachments. The British legislation and invasive policies affected tribal habitations in India particularly their livelihood posing a challenge for Government of independent India.

### Post-Independence

The Constitution of India provided several provisions for welfare and overall development of Scheduled Tribes. The Panchsheel policy of the then Government in 1952 has provided five principles for guiding the administration of tribal welfare and they are as follows.

- i. Tribals should be allowed to develop according to their own genius.
- ii. Rights of tribals in land and forest should be respected.
- iii. Tribal teams should be trained to undertake administration and development without too many outsiders being inducted.
- iv. Tribal development should be undertaken without disturbing tribal social and cultural institutions.
- v. The index of tribal development should be the quality of their life and not the money spent.

### Livelihood and Other Relevant Issues

Realising the Panchsheel policy, Article 275 of the Constitution mandates that a special financial grant to be provided for programmes for the social and economic welfare of the tribal population living in scheduled areas. Under this Article the Central Government has made a provision of Rs. 12 crore for the period of the First Five-Year Plan, for moving towards settled agriculture or terrace cultivation, introduction of improved methods of agriculture to benefit the communities.

The Second Five-Year Plan focused on development programmes in tribal areas grouped under four heads—(a) communications, (b) education and culture, (c) development of tribal economy, and (d) health, housing and water supply. About Rs. 47 crore was allocated for tribal development. States have also provided for the development of about 36,600 acres of land, regeneration of 6,570 acres of forest lands, distribution of agricultural implements and pedigree bulls, training of about 4,000 persons in various crafts and the establishment of 825 cottage industries centres.

Third Five-Year plan envisaged for economic rehabilitation of persons engaged in shifting cultivation, working of forests through cooperatives and formation of multi-purpose cooperatives for meeting the credit requirements of tribal agriculturists and artisans. Several programmes were undertaken for marketing their products, land improvement, land reclamation and soil conservation, minor irrigation, supply of improved seeds, manures, implements and bullocks, provision of facilities for training, demonstration of improved practices, development of cattle, fisheries, poultry, piggeries and sheep-breeding, organisation of training-cum production centres, and provision of assistance and advice to village artisans engaged in cottage industries.

The Fourth-Year Plan, as the most important programme for the economic betterment of Scheduled Tribes focused on development of tribal blocks started in the Second Plan from intensive development of areas with large concentrations of tribal population. Accordingly, programmes for increasing agricultural production and livestock produce got the first priority. Programmes for diversifying and modernising the occupational

pattern of landless labourers were also given priority. Schemes of economic uplift such as land allotment, grant of subsidies for purchase of ploughs, bullocks and improved seeds for development of agriculture and animal husbandry, schemes for soil conservation, land colonisation, minor irrigation, and organisation and development of cooperatives have been continued.

During the Fifth-Five year plan, Tribal Sub-plan was incorporated for 16 States and two Union Territories. These programmes were funded through provisions in the State plans, and Central assistance. About 40, out of 145 Integrated Tribal Development projects were formulated and an amount of Rs. 65 crore was spent during the first three years of the Plan.

The major activities of the Sixth Plan (1980—85) were all-out war on poverty and envisaged developmental effort in the identified areas with resources pooled from (i) outlays from State plans; (ii) investment from Central Ministries; (iii) special Central assistance; and (iv) institutional finance. The Large Area Multipurpose Societies (LAMPS) were set up to provide credit and marketing facilities. It also facilitated resettlement of shifting cultivators amongst tribals in 233 Blocks over 62 districts by provision of a package of services.

In the Seventh Five-Year Plan, focus was given on the development of folk and tribal arts, especially those which were facing extinction such as the folk art of the Himalayan regions, and that were threatened ecologically as also culturally. These arts were supported through assistance to voluntary organisations engaged in these fields and areas. Special attention was given towards children, pregnant women and nursing mothers, under the direct nutrition intervention schemes like Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) and Mid-Day Meals Programme (MDM). The Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) strategy, which was adopted during that period comprises of following:

- a) Identifying state of development blocks where tribal population is in a majority and their constitution into Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs) with a view to adopt therein an integrated and project-based approach for development;
- b) earmarking of funds for the TSP and ensuring

flow of funds from the Central and State Plan sectoral outlays and from financial institutions; and

- c) creation of appropriate administrative structures in tribal areas and adoption of appropriate personnel policies.

Large Agricultural Multi-purpose Societies (LAMPS) in tribal area were strengthened through broadening of their popular base in the board of directors and/or other executive bodies to make them effective instruments for the elimination of exploitation in the sale and marketing of tribal produce, consumer necessities and credit. To coordinate the activities of state-level Tribal Development Corporations, the national level Tribal Marketing Organisation was set up. Plan formulation and project reports were made in close consultation with beneficiary-participants. Scientific project reports were prepared for Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs), tribal concentration pockets, primitive tribal groups with reference to the natural resource endowment, the traditional occupations and skills of the people and a properly drawn-up development perspective.

During the Eighth Five-Year Plan the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation through the State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations had started managing collection and marketing of minor forest produce in such a way as to ensure reasonable returns to tribals. Limited access to credit for consumption and production purposes has increased dependence of Scheduled Tribes on money lenders/traders leading to: (a) siphoning of developmental benefits in order to discharge loan liabilities to money lenders and traders; and (b) loss of resource base in the form of land or other assets. An important objective during the Eighth Plan was, therefore, to provide increased access to credit from banks and cooperative institutions.

During Ninth Five-Year Plan period Ministry of Tribal Affairs was set up to exclusively work for the tribal development in the country. Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been implementing several schemes for creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for the Tribals. Similarly in States/UTs Independent Tribal Welfare Departments were set up.

Next three plans (10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>) were implemented through Ministry of Tribal Affairs as

separate Ministry for the welfare of Tribals in India. Many initiatives were carried out for promoting livelihood opportunities for tribals in India. Some of the major programmes that have been implemented to promote livelihood opportunities among tribals are mentioned as follows.

**(i) Institutional Support for Development and Marketing of Tribal Products/Produce:**

Under the scheme Grants-in-aid are released to State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations (STDCCs) and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED). To give comprehensive support to people belonging to various tribes in the entire range of production, product development, preservation of traditional heritage, support to both forest and agricultural produce of tribal people, support to institutions to carry the above activities, provisions of better infrastructure, development of designs, dissemination of information about price and the agencies which are buying the products, support to government agencies for sustainable marketing is provided and thereby ensure a reasonable price regime.

**(ii) Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Development of Value Chain For MFP:**

The scheme provides safety net and support to people belonging to Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers whose livelihood depends on collection and selling of MFP. The scheme ensures fair returns to Minor Forest Produce (MFP) gatherers mainly through Minimum Support Price (MSP) for identified MFP collected by them along with necessary infrastructure at local level.

**(iii) Van Dhan Vikas Yojana (VDVK):**

The Scheme aims for Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Development of Value Chain for Minor Forest Produces' targeting livelihood generation for tribals by harnessing the wealth of forest. Its main objective is to tap traditional knowledge and skill sets of tribals by adding technology and IT to upgrade it at each stage and to convert the tribal wisdom into a viable economic activity. The initiative targets the livelihood generation for tribal gatherers and transforming them into entrepreneurs. Idea is to set-up tribal community owned Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) in

predominantly forested tribal districts.

**(iv) Equity Support To National/State Scheduled Tribes Finance And Development Corporation (NSTFDC/STFDCs):**

The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) is a Government aided Not-for-Profit company having licence under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 to provide concessional financial assistance to scheduled tribes for their economic and educational development. It assists Self Help Groups and extends financial assistance for projects having unit cost upto Rs. 25 lakh per SHGs and provides upto 90 percent of the cost of the project subject to per member loan not exceeding Rs. 50,000. It provides concessional finance to tribal artisans empanelled with TRIFED for purchase of project related assets and working capital.

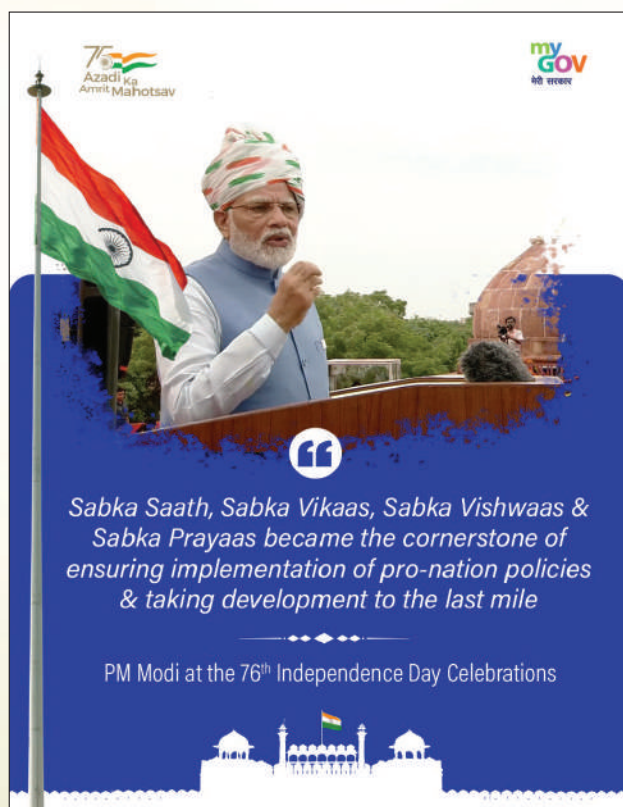
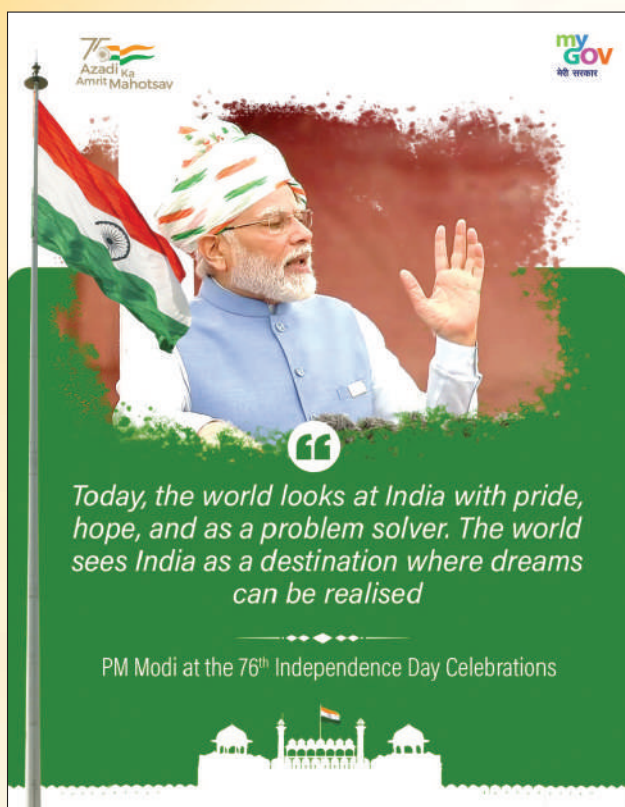
The NSTFDC also provide term loan for viable projects costing upto Rs. 25 lakh per unit. Under the scheme, financial assistance is extended upto 90 percent of the cost of the project and the balance is met by way of subsidy/promoters contribution/margin money. The rate of interest is 6 percent per annum upto Rs. 5 lakh and 8 percent per annum up to Rs. 10 lakh and 10 Percent above Rs. 10 lakh. The Adivasi Mahila Sashakikaran Yojana (AMSY) is an exclusive scheme for economic development of scheduled tribes women under which NSTFDC provides loan upto 90 percent for the project costing upto Rs. 1 lakh at an interest rate of 4 percent per annum. NSTFDC has disbursed about Rs. 1,900 crore since its inception. In the recent past, NSTFDC has introduced new schemes for skill development of scheduled tribes such as Adivasi Shiksha Rinn Yojana (ASRY), Awareness Generation, etc.

These schemes highlight that the government has been committed to the cause of inclusive empowerment of tribal communities in India through development of their livelihood. As stated above, various landmark initiatives have been taken to eliminate poverty and empower the tribal communities in India.

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# Highlights from Prime Minister's address to

- » The world is looking at India proudly and with anticipation. The world has started searching for solutions to the problems on the soil of India. This change in the world, this change in the thinking of the world, is the result of our experienced journey of 75 years.
- » We started our journey with the mantra of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, but gradually the countrymen have added more colours to it with Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas. So, we have seen our collective power and collective potential.
- » Today, the world is discussing about holistic health care. But, when it talks about holistic health care, it looks towards India's yoga, India's Ayurveda and India's holistic lifestyle. This is our legacy that we are providing to the world.
- » It is the job of the government to make efforts to provide 24 hours electricity, but it is the duty of the citizen to save as many units as he can. It is the responsibility and efforts of the government to supply water to every field, but a voice should come from each of my fields that we will move forward by saving water by focusing on 'per drop more crop'. It is our duty to do chemical free farming, organic farming and natural farming.
- » Today, natural farming is also a way of becoming self-reliant. Today, the factories of Nano Fertilizer have brought a new hope in the country. But natural farming and chemical-free farming can give a boost to self-reliance. Today, new employment opportunities in the form of green jobs are opening up very fast in the country.





# the Nation on the 76<sup>th</sup> Independence Day

- » India has opened up space through its policies. India has come up with the most progressive policy regarding drones in the world. We have opened up new doors of opportunities for the youth of the country.
- » I also call upon the private sector to come forward. We have to dominate the world. One of the dreams of a self-reliant India is to ensure that India does not lag behind in fulfilling the needs of the world. Even if it is the MSMEs, we have to take our products to the world with Zero Defect, Zero Effect. We have to be proud of Swadeshi.
- » In every walk of life, whether it is the playground or the battlefield, the 'Nari Shakti' of India is coming forward with a new strength and a new belief. I can see the manifold contribution of 'Nari Shakti', my mothers,

sisters and daughters, in the next 25 years compared to the contribution in the 75 years of India's journey. The more we pay attention to this aspect, the more opportunities and facilities we provide to our daughters, they will return us much more than that. They will take the country to a new height.

- » I do not want to discuss everything but would definitely want to focus on two issues. One is corruption and the other is nepotism. We have to fight against corruption with all our might. In the last eight years, we have been successful in working for the betterment of the country by saving two lakh crore rupees which used to go into the wrong hands, using all the modern systems like Direct Benefit Transfer, Aadhaar and Mobile.

(Content Source:

PIB and Infographics Source: MyGov)

75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav myGov 75th Independence Day

**“ For the next 25 years we need to focus on the 5 resolutions: ”**

- Viksit Bharat**
- Getting rid of every trace of Gulami in us
- Pride in our **glorious heritage**
- Unity & togetherness for an **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**
- Fulfilling duties** as citizens

PM Modi at the 76th Independence Day Celebrations

75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav myGov 75th Independence Day

**I urge the youth to devote the next 25 years of their lives to the development of the nation. We will strive for the overall development of humanity. That is India's power**

PM Modi at the 76th Independence Day Celebrations

# Education for Tribals

Rashi Sharma  
Purabi Pattanayak

The ultimate ambition of any education system is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education including access to schooling facilities in order to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. Therefore, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Tribal Affairs have been implementing various schemes relating to education, health, economic empowerment, etc. in the Scheduled Tribe dominated areas of the country. Many schemes are implemented with specific target of uplifting the education amongst tribal communities with specific focus in the Scheduled Tribe dominated areas of the country.

**A**ccording to the 2011 Census, Scheduled Tribes (notified by the Government of India under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution) constitute 8.6 percent of the total population of the country. There are 705 Scheduled tribes living in different parts of India and are notified in 31 States and UTs (Census 2011). The government has formulated a number of schemes for the socio-economic development and adopted a tribal sub-plan. Education was conceived as a means for promoting the overall development of the tribes and also adopted as a strategy for mainstreaming them.

Various research studies have shown that there is a correlation between literacy and poverty. Kotásková et al. (2018)<sup>1</sup>, in its study on 'The impact of Education on Economic Growth' provided evidence for linkage between education and economic growth and concluded that "the higher is the quality of education, the greater is the impact of education on the economic growth. The impact should be evident but only after certain period of time as the impact might not be ascertainable immediately."



Literacy rates of some sections of the society viz., Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continue to be lower than that of all communities is an area of concern.

In 1991, the literacy rate of the Scheduled Tribes was 29.60 percent as compared to 52.21 percent for the general population. The gap between the two was as high as 28.09 percent. By 2001, the literacy rate for the general population had jumped to 64.84 percent as compared to 47.10

**Table 1. Literacy Rates among STs and All (in %)**

Year	All			Scheduled Tribes		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	8.53	13.83	3.16
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	11.30	17.63	4.85
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	16.35	24.52	8.04
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	29.60	40.65	18.19
2001	64.84	75.26	53.67	47.10	59.17	34.76
2011	73.00	80.90	64.60	58.96	68.50	49.40

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India

<sup>1</sup>Source: Kotásková et al. (2018). The impact of Education on Economic Growth: The case of India. Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis (Volume 66, No. 1)

percent for tribal population. The gap between the two has been somewhat bridged but the difference of 21.71 percent is still on a significantly higher side. According to the 2011 Census, the literacy rate of the Scheduled Tribes of India is only 58.96 percent against the national literacy rate of 72.99 percent. It is observed that, the differential in literacy rate in case of all communities and Scheduled Tribes was about 14 percent points and in case of females it was still higher. Differential in their literacy rates based on 2011 Census is shown in table 2.

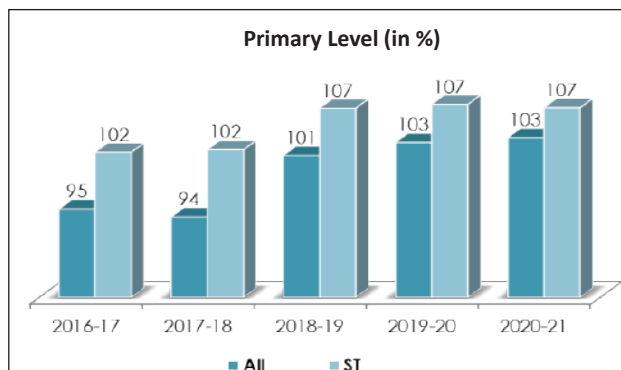
**Table 2. Literacy Rates of all castes and STs in 2011 (in %)**

All castes	All Persons	Male	Female
	<b>72.99</b>	<b>80.89</b>	<b>64.64</b>
Scheduled Tribes	58.96	68.53	49.35
Differential in literacy rates of all Communities & ST (in %)	14.03	12.36	15.29

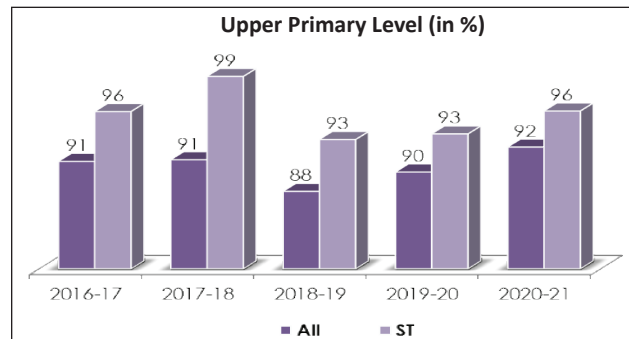
Source: Census 2011 (Office of the Registrar General, India)

The status of tribal students in schooling has also improved over the years. The number of students belonging to the tribal population has shown consistent growth in the periphery of school education. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has improved over the years and in the last five years i.e. from 2016-17 to 2020-21, the progress made by tribal students in the school education in India can be observed in Figure 1. Analysis has shown that the GER for ST students is above the national average for the last five years at primary and upper primary level, however, it starts decreasing at secondary and senior secondary level.

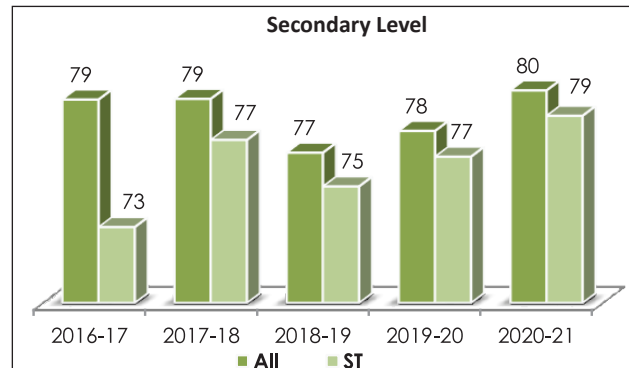
**Figure 1: Comparison of GER status**



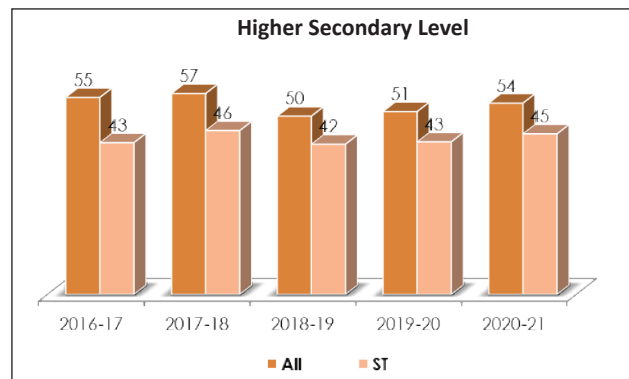
Source: UDISE data 2016-17 to 2020-21



Source: UDISE data 2016-17 to 2020-21



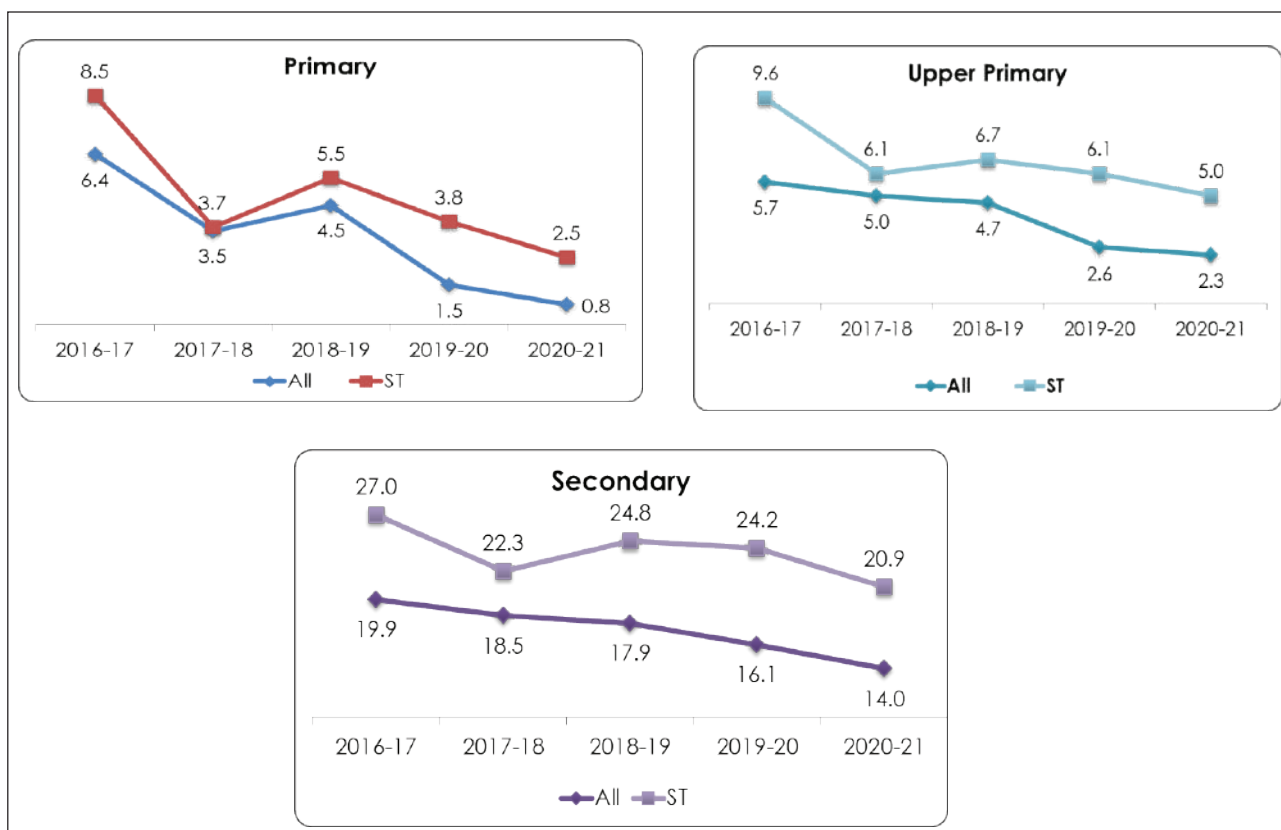
Source: UDISE data 2016-17 to 2020-21



Source: UDISE data 2016-17 to 2020-21

Another challenging factor which has shown consistent improvement in the last few years is the dropout rate of students; however, the major challenge still persists at secondary level. A comparative analysis of the percentage of annual average dropout rate for ST students at primary, upper primary and secondary level respectively as compared to the general population from 2016-17 to 2020-21 can be seen in figure 2. The data as per UDISE on dropout rates at primary, upper primary and secondary level from 2016-17 to 2020-21 indicates a decreasing trend and hence an improvement in the status of school-going tribal children at all levels. All-India annual average drop-out rates fell during

**Figure 2: Annual average Drop-Out Rate at Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary Level**



Source: UDISE database from 2016-17 to 2020-21

2016-17 to 2020-21 by 5.6 percent for all children in primary level (classes 1-5) and by 6 percent for tribal children. For upper primary level (Classes 6 to 8), annual average drop-out rates fell during 2016-17 to 2020-21 by 3.4 percent and by 4.6 percent for tribal children. For Secondary level (classes 9-10), drop-out rates for children all over India fell by 5.9 during 2016-17 to 2020-21. In case of tribal children, the figure for the same period was 6.1 percent.

### Genesis of Educational Policies and their Focus on Tribal Education

After independence various commissions were constituted to study, review, analyse and recommend the desired contextual changes in education system. The first university education commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Thereafter, the Secondary Education Commission was appointed in 1952 under the chairmanship of Dr. A. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar. Commissions for Tribal Education, Government of India recommended the formation Scheduled Areas

and Scheduled Tribe Commission (1960 - 61) under the chairmanship of U.N Dhebar for investigating and reporting the problems of Scheduled Tribes. The Commission submitted its Report in 1961. This was followed by adoption of a new Tribal Sub-Plan. The Commission recommended educating the tribes by using vernacular language as the medium of instruction with the support of trained teachers from the tribal communities in the nearby places. The commission suggested promoting tribal culture and arts, by adding folklore, songs, etc. in the curriculum. The commission also identified the basic issues related to the educational backwardness of tribal communities and the drop-out of the students. This led to the formation of new tribal education policies. Subsequently, the Kothari Commission also supported the recommendations and suggestions of Dhebar Commission, by adding notes on the importance of the need for promoting parental education among tribal population, and also gave suggestion to take immediate action on the early childhood learning of tribal children in the next five years (Dhebar Commission Report, 1961; Kothari Commission Report, 1966)

The second National Policy on Education (NPE) was formulated in 1986 with a vision to remove the disparities, inequality and to bring educational opportunity for all. Moreover, it has given more priority to the promotion of tribal education, such as the establishment of primary schools in tribal areas; address the need for starting Model Residential Schools including *Ashram* Schools for tribal students in the country; starting Anganwadis in tribal hamlets, etc. In May 1990, a committee under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurti was set up to review NPE and to make recommendations for its modifications. The committee highlighted on the issue of removing disparities in education by stating that “the rural areas in general and the tribal areas in particular, have suffered in terms of resources, personnel and infrastructure facilities”. The special earmarking for girls within the special component plan for Scheduled Castes and Tribal sub-plan was also one of the specific recommendation made by the committee.

### Various Programmes/Schemes on Education

**The RTE Act:** The year 2002 marked a path breaking initiative with the passing of 86<sup>th</sup> amendment in the Constitution of India wherein article 21A was inserted to ensure that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain norms and standards. This subsequently resulted in formulation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 which gave a legal mandate to provide free and compulsory elementary education to every child in the age group of 6-14 years.

**Samagra Shiksha Scheme:** Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education is implementing Samagra Shiksha scheme, effective from 2018-19. Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the scheme. The Scheme reaches out to girls, and children belonging to SC/ST, Minority communities and Transgenders. Under Samagra Shiksha, there is a provision of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs). KGBVs are residential schools from class VI to XII for girls belonging to disadvantaged groups such as SC, ST, OBC, Minority and Below Poverty Line (BPL). At

<sup>2</sup><https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1845626>

present 4,986 KGBVs are functioning in the country with an enrolment of 6.69 lakh girls. Preference are given to Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), LWEs, Special Focus Districts (SFDs) and the 115 aspirational districts.

The other programmes run by the MoE are Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalays. Fifteen percent seats for Scheduled Caste and 7.5 percent seats for Scheduled Tribes are reserved in all fresh admissions in all Kendriya Vidyalayas.

The Central Sector Scheme ‘National Meanscum-Merit Scholarship Scheme’ has objective to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest their drop-out at class VIII and encourage them to continue the study at secondary stage.

Further, Ministry of Tribal Affairs<sup>2</sup> has been implementing various schemes relating to education, health, economic empowerment, etc. in the Scheduled Tribe dominated areas of the country. Following schemes are implemented with specific target of uplifting the education amongst tribal community.

- i. **Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS):** In Union Budget of 2018-19, Government of India announced that to provide quality education to the tribal children in their own environment, EMRS schools will be established in every block having more than 50 percent ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons (as per census 2011). The scheme was approved by the Union Cabinet on 17 January 2018 for establishing 452 new schools based on population criteria. These EMRSs were to be at par with Navodaya Vidyalayas with special facilities for preserving local art and culture besides providing training in sports and skill development. The scheme has been revised and as per the new scheme, 452 new EMRS would be set up across country. With 288 schools already sanctioned under the old scheme, total number of schools to be set up becomes 740. It is envisaged that by 2025, every block with more than 50 percent ST population or at least 20,000 ST persons would have EMRS functioning from its own building with 480 students each. At present out of 684 schools sanctioned, only 378

schools have been made functional with an enrolment of 1.05 lakh students<sup>3</sup>.

- ii. **National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST Students:** The scheme provides financial assistance for pursuing MPhil and PhD in Universities and for perusing graduate and post graduate courses in top 246 Institutes like IIT/AIIMS etc.
- iii. **National Overseas Scholarship (NOS) to the ST Students for Studies Abroad:** Under the Scheme, financial assistance is provided to 20 ST students every year for pursuing higher studies abroad.
- iv. **Pre-Matric Scholarship:** Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under which financial assistance is provided to ST students studying in classes IX and X.
- v. **Post-Matric Scholarship:** Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under which financial assistance is provided to ST students studying beyond class X.
- vi. **Support to Tribal Research Institute (TRI):** This scheme aims to strengthen TRIs to carry out research, documentation, training and capacity building activities and serve as a knowledge hub catering to overall tribal development. Tribal museums are also established under this scheme.

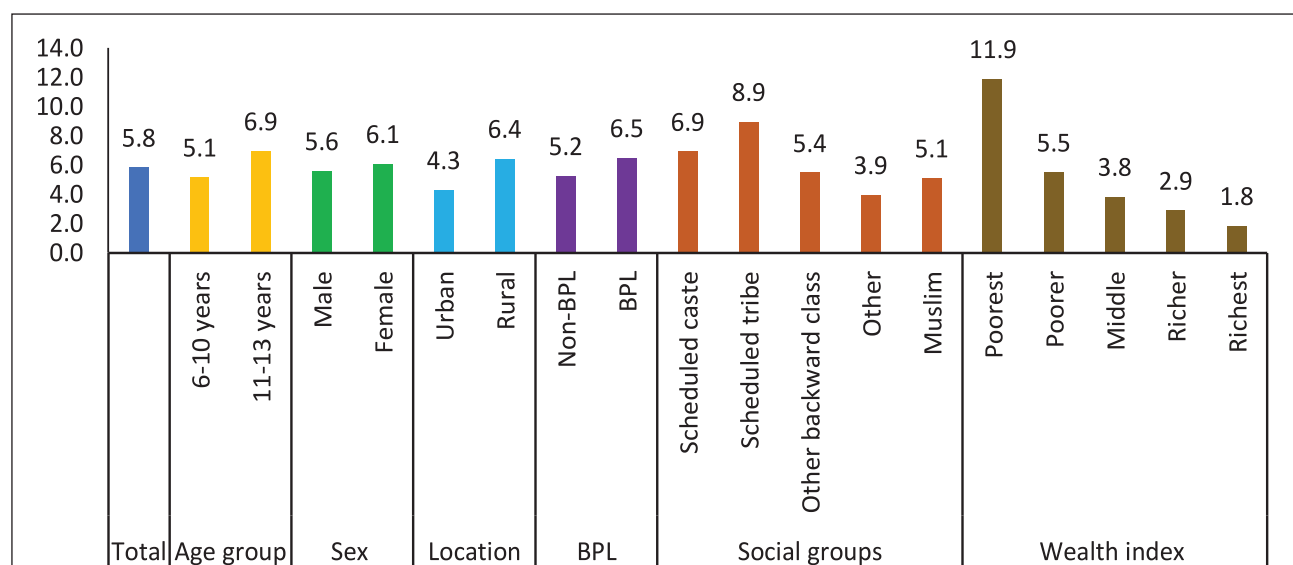
- vii. **Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):** This scheme adopts a habitat level development approach to improve the quality of life through intervention in housing, drinking water, education and health services, livelihood support, and cultural aspects.

### Major Challenges for Tribal Education

In the case of Scheduled Tribes, the remoteness of habitations, lack of travelling facilities, insufficient infrastructure facilities, illiteracy of parents, communication problem, and segregated population are the primary constraints for the educational attainment of these children. These challenges can be categorised as follows.

- 1. **Lack of Adequate Infrastructure in Schools :** Adequate infrastructure which include gender segregated functional toilets, *pucca* school buildings, electricity, water, play area, library, sports facilities, and safe and conducive environment for learning are the primary requirements for retaining a child in the school. The tribal areas are generally remote, hilly and in dense forests, therefore, schools located in these areas will not have above facilities which could be treated at par with urban area schools. These issues ultimately lead to child dropping out of school. As per National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) round 5, proportion of girls, children living in

**Figure 3. Proportion of Children aged 6-13 not Attending School, 2019-21 (%), NFHS-5**



<sup>3</sup><https://dashboard.tribal.gov.in> (as on 1.07.2022)

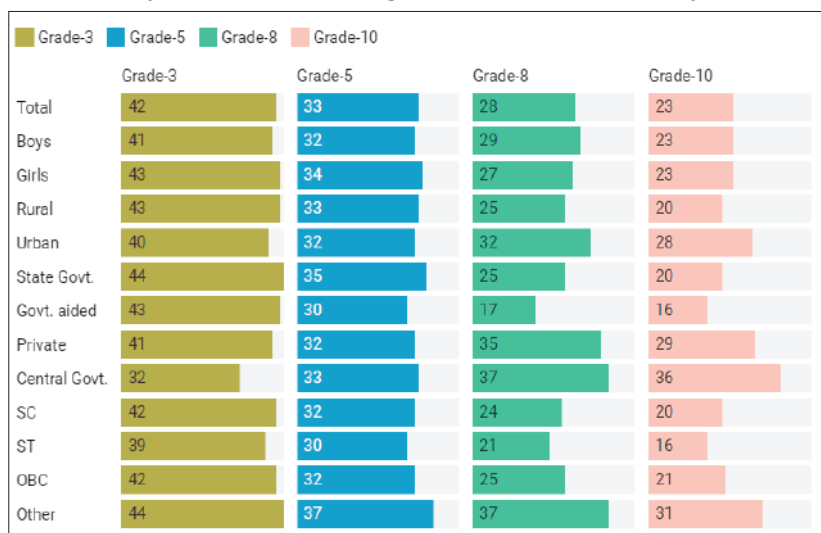
rural areas and from SC and ST social groups; children aged 11-13 and children from poorest families not attending school is relatively high, which is depicted in figure 3.

- 2. Low Learning Level of Children:** Despite being RTE Act and so many schemes for promoting quality education, low learning levels of children are a grave concern for our education system. Although, this problem is not limited to only tribal children but entire education system. The recently released results of National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021, indicate that only 42 percent children at Grade III are proficient in all subjects which decrease to 23 percent in class X. Further disparity among social groups widens strikingly at grade VIII and grade IX.

substantially to a successful acquisition of the school language in the long run. In a country like India that occupies multiple cultures and languages, one language dominating learning and education as a medium of instruction can leave many illiterate and foster unproductive learning. The struggle between mother tongue and dominant language in classroom leaves the aspiring learners from the Scheduled Tribes behind in learning.

- 4. Lack of Teachers and Appropriate Pedagogy:** Due to disproportionate teacher's deployment, schools in far flung areas and difficult terrain face shortage of teachers. Many primary schools merely have single teacher and that teacher is not aware about the needs of tribal students

**Figure 4. Percentage of Proficient Students by Gender, Location, Social Groups and School Management (combined all subjects), 2021**



and due to communication gap, tribal students are termed as slow learners which is far from the fact. Further, teachers should adopt play based and activity based pedagogy to make learning interesting so that children do not find education irrelevant. Real life application of knowledge and respect for tribal knowledge may make a huge difference in educational outcomes of the students.

The above list of challenges is not conclusive, it only point-outs to the core issues of which solutions are required on urgent basis.

- 3. Medium of Instruction:** It is a well established fact that primary education in mother tongue has huge benefits. This has been well reiterated by existing literature (Pattanayak 1981; Fishman 1996; Thomas and Collier 1997; Baker 2000; Cummins 2000, 2001; Magga et al 2004; Skutnaab-Kangas 2000, 2009) which is unanimous on the benefits of mother tongue language development in contexts where multiple languages are used for a variety of purposes. According to Kelkar (1994) —own language learning has beneficial effect on other language learning and teaching. Lightbrown and Spada (2013) have also observed that continued education in the local language contributes

### Way Forward

The National Education Policy 2020 reaffirms that bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes in both school and higher education will continue to be one of the major goals of all education sector development programmes. The NEP 2020 strongly emphasised to ensure equity and inclusion and has given a national perspective to the education of tribals. It clearly recognises the challenges faced by the tribals communities at multiple levels due to various historical and geographical factors both culturally and academically. Therefore to ensure inclusion of marginal communities in quality educational space of India, the NEP 2020 proposed the policy strategy

to identify special education Zones (SEZs). The SEZs will be the identified regions where significantly large populations from educationally and socio economically disadvantaged groups reside.

The next step could be to preserve and assimilate tribal knowledge in curriculum framework to ensure that quality education not only is accessible to all diverse groups but also is relevant and connected with their traditions, aspirations and needs. NEP 2020 puts special emphasis on Indian Knowledge Systems, including tribal knowledge, and indigenous and traditional ways of learning. It also provisions for specific courses in tribal ethno-medicinal practices, forest management, traditional (organic) crop cultivation, natural farming, etc. The integration of tribal knowledge in curriculum and text books will pave way for improving learning outcomes of tribal students.

Further, multilingual education is required to be promoted in big way and instruction in mother tongue as envisaged in Article 350A of the constitution which provides for facilities for instruction in mother tongue at the primary stage – “It shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.” The RTE Act and NEP 2020 also propagates mother tongue as medium of instruction wherever possible.

As per NEP 2020, special attention may be given to employing local teachers or those having familiarity with local languages. A pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of under 30:1 may be ensured at the level of each school. Areas having large numbers of socio-economically disadvantaged students will aim for a PTR of less than 25:1. Teachers will be trained, encouraged, and supported with continuous professional development. The availability of local teachers will resolve two issues simultaneously; i.e. availability of teachers and communication gap between teachers and students.

The ultimate ambition of any education system is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education

at all levels of school education including access to schooling facilities in order to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. As rightly envisaged in NEP 2020, universal access to quality education to all children is the key to India’s continued ascent, and leadership at the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation.

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# Tourism Potential in Tribal Regions

*Dr. Suyash Yadav*

Scheduled Tribes constitute 8.6 percent of India's population and they exhibit enormous diversity. Their protection and development require attention. The ecological setting in which they live, along with their unique cultural attributes are facets that can be a tourism offering. This will aid in the preservation and promotion of the tribal culture, if planned holistically. Owing to the sheer diversity and the sensitivities in the tribal population of India, there can't be 'one size, fits all' approach to tribal tourism development pan India; rather it has to be a tailor made approach for tribal regions of tourism potential, identified after due diligence. Monitoring the negative socio-cultural impacts of such form of tourism and regulating or re-sculpting tourism development plans accordingly is very important.

**I**ndia has one of the largest and diverse tribal populations in the world. The tribal population has a distinct culture and history, though in terms of numbers they are a small minority. The population of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the country, as per Census 2011, stood at 10.45 crore; STs constitute 8.6 percent of the country's total population. Tribes are enormously diverse in respect of language, ecological settings in which they live, physical features, size of their population, modes of making a livelihood and level of development. There is

a lot to learn from tribal cultures and systems. UN Commission on Sustainable Development highlighted the key role of Indigenous people in the conservation of natural areas and species on their lands.

The category of 'Scheduled Tribes (STs)' has politico-administrative dimension whereas the word 'tribe' has socio-cultural connotations. It is to be noted that over 80 percent of STs work in the primary sector. Madhya Pradesh tops all the states with 14.7 percent ST population of the country. The largest number of tribal communities is found in Odisha.



Bandarvula Tribal Interpretation Centre, Jhargram, West Bengal

Source: <https://jhargram.gov.in/tourist-place/bandarvula-tribal-interpretation-centre/>

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of India such as Sentinelese and Jarawa tribes of the Andaman Islands have pre-agricultural system of existence. There are total 75 PVTGs in India. Their characteristic features include practices of hunting and gathering, zero or negative population growth, extremely low level of literacy in comparison with other tribal groups. PVTGs belonging to Andaman and Nicobar survived the tsunami through understanding the patterns and forces of nature.

The findings of Xaxa Committee on socio-economic, health and educational status of tribal communities of India gave important insights regarding the status of tribes in India. Protection and development of tribes are the two most fundamental issues related to the community. Almost 60 percent of the forest cover of the country is found in tribal areas. Traditional tribal economy depends on forests and other natural resources available in their habitat. Some tribal communities have adopted a way of life, similar to the neighbouring non-tribal communities. Tribal-inhabited regions are rich in mineral, forest and other resources, therefore large-scale development projects are invariably located in those areas. Land is the basis of socio-cultural, religious identity and livelihood of a tribe. A massive push to a development agenda with economic liberalisation characterised by the private companies entering into tribal areas has been met with ample resistance by tribes.

According to Centre for Science and Environment, about half of the top mineral-producing districts are tribal districts. Researchers are of the view that social and geographical isolation of the tribal community from the outside world can be attributed to their poverty. Tourism related to indigenous people can be used to diminish this isolation. Owing to the sheer diversity and the sensitivities in the tribal population of India, there can't be 'one size -fits all' approach to tribal tourism development pan India; rather it has to be a tailor made approach for tribal regions of tourism potential, identified after due diligence.

### Tribal Tourism in India

In order to ensure economic and social prosperity for the tribal community of India, a well-planned, sensitively executed and holistically monitored policy intervention aimed at identifying,

preserving, and promoting tribal heritage is required. Tribal people are often known by terms such as indigenous (native) people, aboriginal people, *moolnivasi* (original inhabitants), *adivasi*, *janajati*, hunter-gatherers, etc. There are over 476 million indigenous people living in 90 countries across the world, accounting for 6.2 percent of the global population. Indigenous people of India constitute the second largest tribal population in the world after Africa. World Tribal Day is observed on 9<sup>th</sup> August every year. November 15<sup>th</sup> has been declared as the National Tribal Pride Day.

The intangible heritage that the tribal population possesses including the traditional knowledge system contains many positive and productive elements that are really precious for the entire humanity. Tourism can be one of the tools through which, the rich cultural heritage of the tribes manifested in its folklore, costume, jewellery and lifestyle, their harmonious and sustainable ways of living, indigenous practices by tribal healers and medicinal plants can be offered as a unique attraction to the potential visitors. In this process the economic benefits can be reaped by the tribal community. Tourism may act as a motivation (monetary incentive) for cultural preservation and promotion, and can prevent cultural facets from fading into oblivion.

Tribal tourism refers to a form of travel in which tribes allow tourists to experience authentic indigenous life (tribal habitat, heritage, history and handicrafts, culture, values and traditions) by allowing the tourists to visit their villages for them to be exposed to a culture completely different from their own. In India, this concept is in its nascent stages but it is popular in countries like Ethiopia, Kenya in Africa; Ecuador, Peru, Brazil in South America, etc. Ethnic tourism, tribal tourism, indigenous tourism, rural tourism, eco-tourism, nature based tourism, agri-tourism, community based tourism, responsible tourism are few terminologies which are all closely aligned and used in academia to explain the concept of travel to tribal areas. These concepts are a part of the wider umbrella of Alternative Tourism which in essence means tourism activities or development that are viewed as non-traditional, often defined in opposition to large-scale mass tourism to represent small-scale sustainable tourism developments.

A widely accepted perspective is that ethnic tourism has multiple benefits, such as cultural/identity revival and socio-economic, and sometimes even political gains for local minority residents (Adams 2003). In the year 2018, Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India (GoI) inaugurated the project 'Development of Tribal Circuit in Chhattisgarh' implemented under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme (SDS) of MoT, in Gangrel, Chhattisgarh. It was the first Tribal Circuit Project under SDS. Construction of its first phase in Vananchal region of the state got completed in 2022 at the cost of Rs. 94.23 crore. Jashpur, marked for tribal tourism circuit under SDS, has been developed as an ethnic tourism village. Ethnic tourism village at Sarodha Dadar, Eco-Ethnic Tourist Destination at Gangrel, Route Facilitation Centre at Nathianwagaon, Ethnic Tourist Village at Kondagaon, Ethnic Tourist Destination at Jagdalpur, Eco-Ethnic Tourist Destination at Chitrakoot and Eco-Ethnic Tourist Destination at Tirathgarh have been developed. SDS (launched in 2014 -15) is a scheme of MoT for development of thematic circuits in the country in a planned manner.

In a year 2021, a document of MoT titled 'National Strategy and Road Map for Development of Rural Tourism in India - An Initiative towards AatmaNirbhar Bharat', the SWOT (strength-weakness-opportunity-threat) analysis of rural tourism in India mentions, "apart from the mainland rural areas, India has coastal, Himalayan, desert, forest and tribal areas amongst others for tourists". Further it suggests the states of India to identify clusters of villages having high potential for tourism development on various sub themes which also includes "unique tribal culture".

### **Tribal Tourism and Museum Development in Uttar Pradesh: Tharu Tribe**

Tharu Tribal community lives in the Terai (foothills of the Himalayas) lowlands. Terai area is quite fertile. The districts of Uttar Pradesh lying close to the Nepal border have maximum Tharu tribal population. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has decided to promote tribal tourism in the regions inhabited by Tharu tribe. This tribal group also has a presence in Nepal, Bihar and Uttarakhand. Tharus are recognised as a Scheduled Tribe in India. Tharu people worship mainly their tribal Goddess (Earth) which they refer to as 'Bhumsen' in their language.

They worship Lord Shiva as Mahadev. They are worshippers of Theravada Buddhism. Maximum people from this tribe work either as forest dwellers or are farmers.

Tharu people plant rice, wheat, mustard, corn, and lentils. They also collect minor food produces from forest like wild fruits, medicinal plants, etc. They hunt deer, rabbit and wild boar and also do fishing. They stay in isolation in their own localities. Their homes, especially the outer walls and verandas are decorated and coloured. Wine made by rice is quite popular in this tribe. Major items on the Tharu plate are *bagiya* or *dhikri* which is a steamed dish of rice flour that is eaten with chutney or curry and *ghonghi*, an edible snail that is cooked in a curry made of coriander, chilli, garlic, and onion.

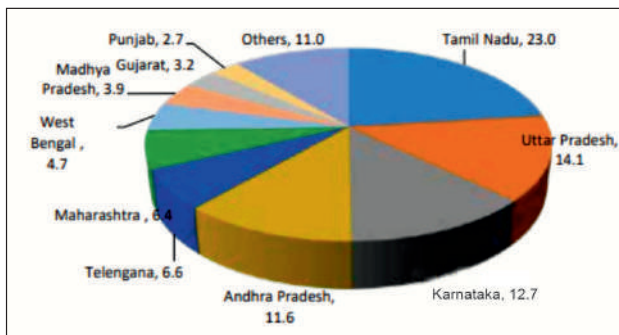
The Uttar Pradesh Government has started a new scheme to put Tharu villages on the tourism map. The government aims to offer tourists an experience of living in the natural Tharu habitat that contains traditional huts made of materials naturally found in the forest. The aim is to connect Tharu villages in the districts of Balrampur, Bahraich, Lakhimpur and Pilibhit bordering Nepal, with the 'home stay scheme' of the UP Forest Department. With this scheme, Tharu homeowners will be able to charge tourists directly for the accommodation and home-cooked meals. The forest corporation would also provide basic training to Tharu people so that they can communicate aptly with the tourists.

Burman *et al* (2007) states that museums and village cultural centres play an important part in preserving and promoting tribal culture, but unfortunately not much has been done in this area. A good example of a Tribal Museum is the one located at Shillong, namely the Don Bosco Museum, which is the largest of its kind in Asia. Apart from the above initiative, few months ago the official spokesperson of the culture department, U.P government announced that 'Tharu Janjati Museum' will be set up in Imilia Koder Village of Balrampur district which will be the first of its kind in the state. Sonbhadra, Lakhimpur Kheri, and Lucknow districts have also been spotted for the construction of Tribal Museums. Museums are also effective mediums to preserve and promote the cultural facets. There is a huge demand for tribal artifacts, textiles, ornaments, paintings, potteries, cane and bamboo products, and organic and natural food products, but the supply side of this economy is

way below the demand side and thus the community fails to profit from its produce. Promoting tourism in the tribal areas can aid in strengthening the supply side.

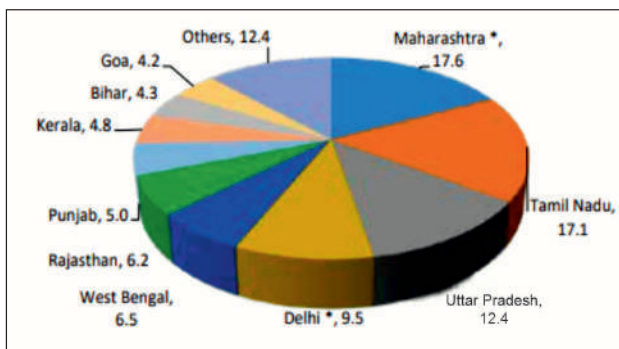
Advantages of tribal tourism include domestic and global propagation of the culture and tradition of the Tharu tribes. The state government says it would help in creating jobs and bring economic independence and advancement in the tribal population. The handicrafts of Tharu tribes will get the buyers through tourism which will create financial opportunities. Statistical data (refer pie chart below) shows that Uttar Pradesh has stood in the top three positions in the list of states ranked in India on the basis of domestic and international tourist arrivals. This footfall would be exposed to a more vibrant basket of tourism offerings in U.P. with Tribal tourism getting added to it. An empowered status of women in tribes, ability to live in sync with nature, role of tribes in climate conservation, waste management techniques, sustainable food practices (majority of them) are few facets of their culture which can attract and mesmerise the tourists.

**Figure 1. Percentage Share of Top 10 States/UTs in Domestic Tourist Visits in 2020**



Source: India Tourism Statistics 2021, MoT, Gol

**Figure 2. Share of Top 10 States/UTs in India in Number of Foreign Tourist Visits in 2020**



Source: India Tourism Statistics 2021, MoT, Gol

## Conclusion

The tribal economy is mainly concentrated around the collection and processing of minor forest products and cultivation largely for the purpose of domestic consumption. They usually struggle to meet their economic needs with a bare minimum income. It is a proven fact that tourism empowers the host population economically. Tourism development in the destinations characterised by indigenous people, where the visitors are prepared to ‘travel responsibly’, will pave the way for preservation and protection of tribal heritage in a sustainable way. Tribal tourism can act as an instrument of economic development and employment generation particularly in tribal districts. Tribal tourism can play an important and effective role in achieving the growth with equity which is very essential for sustainable development. The guiding policy making principle should be that tourism can’t be a compensation for non-development of tribes; it should be a wilfully opted supplement by the tribal community.

Understanding of tribal destination image and perceptions of visitors is very critical to region and provide the basis for more effective and efficient future strategic planning for tribal tourism development. There is need of capacity building for local tribal community members in terms of tour guiding, hospitality and tour operations for tourism to become more participative. There is need of public private partnership for tourism infrastructure development in the tribal region and also the sustainability concern of tribal areas is to be given due emphasis. The most fundamental premise of ensuring success of using tourism as a means to preserve and promote tribal heritage is to consider opinion of tribal community and their participation in planning and development of tribal tourism at each and every stage of tourism development. Mohanty (2007) suggests that inviting participation of the tribal people not only at the implementing level but also in the designing of tourism is the key. Local people should be encouraged and expected to undertake leadership role in planning and development with the assistance of government and business enterprises.

With Ms. Droupadi Murmu being elected as the President of India, the first president from the

tribal (Santhal) community, there can't be a bigger watershed moment to holistically address tribal concerns in India in a multidimensional manner.

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# Reconsidering Indigenous Knowledge System

Partha Pratim Sahu

In the emerging discussion on localisation of Sustainable Development Goals and strengthening of the local economy through 'vocal for local', reconsidering the role and potential of indigenous knowledge system could be a crucial strategy for mainstreaming the indigenous communities including tribal and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) who continue to remain on the fringe of development discourse.

*When we marginalise indigenous peoples, we cut off a vast body of knowledge that is of great value to humanity (World Health Organisation, 1999).*

**R**emoteness, isolation and peripherality are the common lenses through which indigenous communities such as tribal and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are viewed. Vulnerability, marginality and lack of modernity are a few of the stylised characteristic features of these communities. The Constitution of India recognises the special status of tribal people as 'the Scheduled Tribes' and provides safeguards to protect their rights and culture. However, despite a large number of schemes and programmes, the 104 million (as per Census 2011) tribal people have remained marginal - geographically, socio-economically, and politically. These communities also witness varying degrees of discrimination and exclusion in access to land, job, credit, health, education, housing, basic amenities, and other public services. Tribal communities, though marginalised, have rich Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), which could be useful if they are properly integrated in modern and contemporary knowledge systems. IKS could play an important role in mainstreaming tribal communities, living in remote locations, devoid of infrastructure and schemes and programmes of the Government.

Indigenous knowledge is embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals and is inextricably linked to identity of indigenous peoples, their experiences with the natural environment, and hence their territorial and cultural rights. Indigenous people, therefore, place a great deal of importance on passing knowledge on to their future generations—not only for the sake of preserving the knowledge but also for preserving their own cultures and identities (UN-DESA, 2009). Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) is an integral part of tribal culture and has wide-ranging relevance



in livelihood, education, health, agriculture, and livestock.

## Key Issues and Concerns

Indigenous communities are not only custodians of some of the most biologically diverse territories in the world, but also responsible for a great deal of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity, and their traditional knowledge has been and continues to be an invaluable resource that benefits all of mankind (UN-DESA, 2009). However, these communities continue to face challenges in terms of preservation and expansion of their traditional knowledge and innovations in every field. The indigenous knowledge is often not adequately valued and recognised. Very often comparisons are made to prove that scientific or modern knowledge is better than the indigenous knowledge system. Such arguments are made on grounds such as lack of validation, accreditation and scientific authenticity. But both modern and indigenous knowledge system have their own strength and weaknesses. It is important to take advantage of the creativity and innovativeness of both systems and see both systems as complementary sources

of wisdom. There are many instances where the subsequent pairing of scientific research with traditional and indigenous experience led to a technology that became widely adopted though the system continues to undergo modification and improvement. For instance, indigenous knowledge of agricultural practices, plant disease management and cattle treatments are often utilised by Indian farmers. Tribal communities of India have also rich knowledge systems of traditional medicines. These systems and their practitioners, healers can be enormously useful if they are properly integrated with the primary healthcare delivery systems in India.

Another important area of concern is poor documentation; i.e., the non-availability of a full-fledged institutional framework to map, profile, and accredit the large body of indigenous knowledge and innovations. Partly because of remote and difficult geographical areas and due to the low level of education and skill of tribal population, their knowledge and innovations remain unnoticed and unrecognised. There is a need to create a repository and data management system to store, display and disseminate IKS. However, efforts are being made by governments, the international community, civil society organisations, academics, and of course, indigenous peoples themselves, to preserve, protect and expand IKS. In 2002, UNESCO launched its Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) Programme, which aims at empowering local and indigenous peoples in various aspects of environmental management by advocating recognition and mobilisation of their unique knowledge. It also contributes to the safeguarding of traditional knowledge within indigenous communities by reinforcing their inter generational transmission (UN-DESA, 2009). The availability of digital technology has greatly expanded possibilities for preserving indigenous knowledge that is more sensitive due to the unique characteristics of indigenous knowledge and the needs of indigenous communities. A knowledge network hub; i.e., Centre for Indigenous Knowledge for Agriculture and Rural Development(CIKARD) was established in 1987 at Iowa State University to focus on understanding, recording, preserving, and using the indigenous knowledge of farmers and rural people around the globe, and on making this knowledge available to development professionals and scientists. It is facilitating a decentralised approach for recording

and utilising indigenous knowledge systems through a growing network of regional and national indigenous knowledge resource centres.

A more recent threat that is raising concern is the misappropriation of indigenous knowledge in the form of 'biopiracy'. When researchers appropriate indigenous traditional knowledge without proper procedure, acknowledgement, or benefit-sharing agreement, this is considered biopiracy. For instance, many Western companies are patenting traditional medicines without granting due recognition to the indigenous communities whose knowledge systems went into identifying the active ingredients as useful for particular ailments. A growing number of widely used consumer products, pharmaceutical drugs, cosmetics and handicrafts are derived from traditional knowledge and indigenous cultural expressions. In the absence of a strong regulatory framework, traditional knowledge is being ever more exploited for profit, for which there is an increase in aspiration and demand from indigenous peoples for due protection and recognition of their traditional knowledge. Internationally, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) recognises the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination, self-governance, and organisational structures in support of these rights. Importantly, Article 31 states that the indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games, and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions (UNDRIP, 2008).

### Reconsidering Indigenous Knowledge System

Indigenous knowledge is a new focus in development discourse. Growing numbers of scientists and organisations are recognising that it offers cheap, locally adapted solutions to development problems, or that it can be melded with scientific knowledge to boost productivity and living standards. Therefore, policymakers need to

pursue several steps to include IKS into mainstream knowledge and innovation narrative (See Box 1)

- In view of localisation of SDGs, IKS should be placed as a prerequisite for achieving SDGs. The training and capacity development required to promote IKS should be located within the UN-SDG framework.
- The complementary nature of indigenous and scientific knowledge systems needs to be recognised. The key is to provide both knowledge systems with more opportunities in which they can inform, educate and stimulate one another. There is a need for more research on IKS and wider dissemination of those findings. It is also important to establish a dedicated research lab to validate and accredit various indigenous innovations. Science can help mobilise traditional knowledge through preparing guidelines on methods for obtaining, assessing, and presenting traditional conservation knowledge and preparing an inventory of traditional knowledge systems.
- Various ministries and Government departments [such as Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Tribal Research Institute (TRIs)] who are directly or indirectly working on tribal issues must create a National Consortium of Indigenous Knowledge Resource Centre. There is a need to document indigenous knowledge and innovation. For preservation and expansion, there is a need to develop a template for collecting this information and have proper documentation in place. Each region has a repository of indigenous knowledge and we need to document it and pass it on to our future generations to preserve these valuable knowledge systems.
- A strong legal framework is also the need of the hour that facilitates social participation, indigenous practices, and the protection and conservation of indigenous knowledge and resources.
- Intellectual Property Right (IPR) and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) are also issues of great concern. All stakeholders such as Government, corporations and researchers should continue to be held socially and ethically responsible for R&D and product development involving

Indigenous People and their knowledge. The collaborations and partnerships must reinforce the best ethical standards and ABS principles.

- Indigenous communities are frequently perceived as disappearing in social and cultural forms and therefore, they do not appear in the curriculum of the formal school system. However, students need skills and knowledge to enable them to work in indigenous and non indigenous economies and contexts. There is a critical need to analyse National Educational Policy and identify public policy initiatives that would allow indigenous knowledge components to be added into the curricula of secondary schools, universities, and extension training institutes.
- Full and effective participation of indigenous communities in various decision-making institutions related to their society, economy and culture is imperative. At the same time, the Government must recognise and respect indigenous institutions and incorporate strategies that respond to the particular needs and visions of those communities in form of various policies of livelihood, education and healthcare.
- Local institutions such as Panchayats can also play a crucial role in (a) uncovering and validating Indigenous Knowledge, (b) including representation of Indigenous people, (c) creating a local level Consortium for Indigenous Knowledge (CIK), and (d) helping indigenous entrepreneurs to formalise by connecting them to different Government schemes and programmes.
- Emerging issues such as (a) need for policies and disaggregated data in order to address indigenous peoples' issues and protect their rights, (b) resolution of conflicts involving indigenous peoples, and (c) displacement of indigenous peoples, migration, urbanisation and so on are also important while discussing IKS.
- The larger goal should be towards creating new, more effective knowledge systems that merge the positive aspects of indigenous and scientific knowledge systems. Role of training, research and extension institutions, social scientists can become a part of the process of both mediating between indigenous and



### Box 1: Strategies or Pathways to Mainstream IKS

For the IK Communities or Individuals	For Policymakers (National and State level)
Establish a representative association for IK communities or individuals, and a formalised legal structure that can enter into legally binding agreements with outside stakeholders	Involve IK-holding communities (or individuals) in policy consultations
Document your IK to ensure its preservation, and determine which elements must remain secret and which can be shared with outside stakeholders	Ensure your domestic policies and provide laws for IK-holders to control access to, and to benefit from exploitation of their knowledge
Ensure that access agreement with outside stakeholders benefits your association and the communities where association members live and work	Support IK documentation projects initiated by IK-holding communities

scientific knowledge systems and orienting research toward accomplishing these more socio-economically just and ecologically sustainable systems. In addressing forward-looking strategies, it is important that indigenous peoples' rights are considered in a holistic way.

We are not sure how the IKS will look like in the future but the intersections of different knowledges, systems, concerns and priorities will converge to inform and develop new practices in this area.

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## Glimpses of Tribal Culture



### Warli Paintings

*Warli Tribe, Maharashtra*

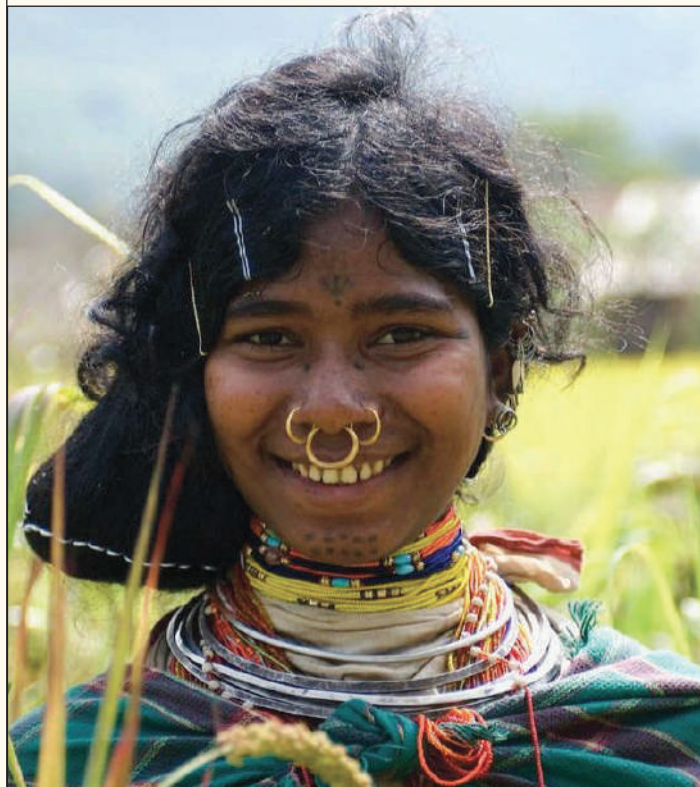
In the North Sahyadri mountain range of Maharashtra lives the Adivasi tribe by the name of 'Warli'. Known to be amongst the largest tribes in India in terms of numbers and living close to the bustling metropolis of Mumbai – the Warli shun modern culture and live on their own terms. Their life is all about farming. They greatly respect nature and wildlife for the resources that they provide for sustenance. The characteristic style of Warli painting as we see it – was not recognised until the 1970's, even though it is believed to date back to the 10th century A.D.

Originating from the cracked and unknown walls of the village of Warli, the Warli folk art of imagination, beliefs and customs, spontaneously expressed in unpretentious monochromatic tribal style, has travelled across borders and reached connoisseurs and art collectors. With the Warli tribe inhabiting the Thane and Nasik areas of Maharashtra, this art can be traced back to the Neolithic era (2500-3000 BC).

*Continued on Next Page*

## Glimpses of Tribal Culture

The Niyamgiri hills range in #Odisha, Eastern India, is home to the Dongria Kondha #tribe. The Dongria women embellish themselves with distinctive jewellery, tattoos and hairstyles. #Dongria girls wear clips in their hair and rings and beads around their necks.



As the legacy of ancient Chhattisgarh goes, Todi was a musical instrument designed and developed by the artisans of the Gadwa tribe of Chhattisgarh, crafted in big sizes and used by the infantry of the tribal kings of Bastar to declare the battle.

Further, it was used for motivating the army and later developed into a medium for the divine intervention of God's blessings.



### Chakhesang Shawl

Curated by Chokri, Kheza and Sangtam tribes, Nagaland

The Chakhesangs, formerly known as Eastern Angami, is an amalgamation of three sub-tribes namely, Chokri, Kheza and Sangtam, represented respectively in the three syllables 'Cha-Khe-Sang'.

This is an Exclusive GI Product from Nagaland. This is the feminine version of Rira. It is predominantly white and the spears are replaced by Eru- Wealth and Reward design. The shawls of Chakhesang are not only made of cotton but also made of nettle and jute plants.

The use of unconventional materials such as nettle, Deccan jute, the bark of the DeBarge tree is unique to this tribe. The dyeing of shawls is also done through the use of natural material that is collected from the forest. Yarns such as acrylic, polyester, wool are used for making the products.





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