



## Aboriginals and Climate Change

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**“Adi Darshan’: The only way to save the planet”** This article is based on which was published in The Indian Express on 21/01/2020. It talks about the impact of climate change on aboriginals and them being a solution to it.

Indigenous people/ Aboriginals/ Tribals are on the frontline of climate change, as they live in parts of the world where its impacts are greatest, impacting livelihoods, culture and lives. However, indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge can play as change agents, towards mitigating and adapting to climate change.

### Impacts of Climate Change on Indigenous People

- **poorest of the poor**

**Asia and the Pacific, vulnerable to the impacts of climate change,** Indigenous people are an estimated 5% of the world’s population. 80% of these indigenous people are spread across a region particularly thereby affecting indigenous people the hardest.

Indigenous people are among the and thus the most threatened segment of the world’s population in terms of social, economic and environmental vulnerability.

- **renewable natural resources**

- Aboriginals protect 22% of the Earth’s surface, which harbours 80% of the planet’s biodiversity.
- Consequently, their role is of particular importance in the sustainable management of resources as well as environmental and biodiversity conservation, which are essential for combating climate change.

Economic, social and cultural activities of this community depend on that are most at risk to climate variability and extremes.

- **geographical regions and ecosystems polar regions, humid tropical forests, high mountains, small islands, coastal regions, and arid and semi-arid lands,** They live in that are the most vulnerable to climate change. These include among others.

- **indigenous people to migrate.** High levels of vulnerability and exposure to climate change force This makes them more vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and environmental hazards in the area of destination.
- **Gender inequality**, which is a key factor in the deprivation suffered by indigenous women, is exacerbated by climate change.
- **often lack recognition.**

The lack of consultation and participation is a root cause of social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities, as well as discrimination and exploitation. Indigenous peoples, their rights, and their institutions Consequently, consultation with and participation of indigenous people in decision making is limited in the absence of dedicated public mechanisms.

## India's Tribal Policy

Specific parts of the Indian Constitution, the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 or PESA, and the Panchsheel Principles of Jawaharlal Nehru, constitute the overall Tribal Policy of India.

## Indian Constitution

- **Fifth and Sixth Schedules-** provide for alternate or special governance mechanism for certain schedule area.
- **Article 342 (1&2).** Most of the tribes in India are collectively identified as Scheduled Tribes under
- **Article 244 under Part X** provides special provision for the administration in Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas notified under Fifth Schedule.

## The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 or PESA

- It ensures self-governance through traditional Gram Sabhas for people living in the Scheduled Areas of India. Scheduled Areas are areas identified by the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
- It is implemented with respect to a number of issues such as customary resources, minor forest produce, minor minerals, minor water bodies, selection of beneficiaries, the sanction of projects, and control over local institutions.

## The Tribal Panchsheel policy

- People should develop along the lines of their own genius, and the imposition of alien values should be avoided.
- Tribal rights in land and forest should be respected.
- Teams of tribals should be trained in the work of administration and development.
- Tribal areas should not be over administered or overwhelmed with a multiplicity of schemes.

- Results should be judged not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the human character that is evolved.

## Other Legislations

- **Protection of Aboriginal Tribe (Regulation), 1956 and Regulations under Indian Forest Act, 1927** prohibit people other than the member of an aboriginal tribe from entering a reserved area in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006** concerns the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other resources.

## How indigenous people can act as change agents?

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- **An IPCC report 2018**, states that a significant part of traditional indigenous identity is linked to the natural world. Due to their methods of managing forests and agro-ecological systems, as well as their traditions passed down through the generations.
- **complex cultural relationship.natural capital is their core productive asset. vanguard of running a modern economic model** Thereby, they act as the based on principles of a sustainable green economy.  
Indigenous peoples' economy primarily depends on natural resources and ecosystems, with which they also share a As
- This is particularly important for climate change mitigation, especially regarding efforts directed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the adaptation of agricultural practices to climate change as well as green growth.
- **traditional knowledge and cultural approach**
  - **'climate-smart agriculture' (CSA)** For example, incorporates a combination of traditional and modern techniques, which is one of the most cited and promoted techniques aimed at mitigating, and adapting to, climate change.
  - **crop and livelihood diversification, the use of new materials, seasonal climate forecasting and community-based disaster risk reduction.** Also, this traditional knowledge can help in
  - **Aboriginal Australians mosaic cool-fire burning technique** For example, it is reported that had important knowledge about preventing bushfires that have caused the gravest destruction recently. They deploy a where small patches of low-intensity fires are lit during the cooler months to burn off the bush undergrowth, reducing the number of flammable materials.

Indigenous peoples' to the issue is unique, and of high relevance and value for climate change adaptation.

## Way Forward

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- **Sámi parliaments in the Nordic countries**, The which address issues regarding the erosion of aboriginals' local culture and suggest significant ways to resist 'mainstreaming' and 'assimilation', can be emulated all across the globe.
- **Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989**  
It provides for an important framework for strengthening dialogue among all stakeholders, including indigenous peoples' organizations, governments, trade unions and employers' organizations to ensure meaningful consultation with and participation of indigenous people in decision making.  
ILO's must be adopted by all the nations.
- **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** The states that, if you do have access to these communities' resources or knowledge, it should only be with their free, prior, and informed consent.
- **universal philosophy** Therefore, rather than treating aboriginals as passive recipients of mainstream cultural practices (external influences on tribal philosophy), society must backtrack in search of a that not only captures our intimate oneness with nature but also restores dignity, humanity and collective conscience to the human race.
- **Adi Darshan or discussion on tribal philosophies**, In this context, organised by Jharkhand government is a step in the right direction.

### ***Drishti Mains Question***

Indigenous people are one of the most vulnerable sections facing climate change, however, they can act as change agents, towards mitigating and adapting to climate change. Discuss.