



Empowering the Tribal Society

For Prelims: [Scheduled Tribe](#), [Constitutional Provisions Related to Scheduled Tribes](#), [Related Initiatives](#)

For Mains: Safeguards Provided by the Indian Constitution for Scheduled Tribes, Issues Faced By Tribes in India, Ways to Empower the Tribal Society of India

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Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Development of North-Eastern Region in Rajya Sabha has **pointed out various schemes and programmes that are introduced** by the government with an aim of **protecting, preserving, and promoting the country's tribal cultural heritage**.

What are the Recent Steps Taken for Empowerment of Tribes in India?

- **Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs):** The Government of India **has established seven ZCCs which are responsible for organising a wide range of cultural activities and programs across the nation on a regular basis**, which will help in conserving tribal languages and culture across the country as well.
 - The **councils are set up with headquarters at** Patiala, Nagpur, Udaipur, Prayagraj, Kolkata, Dimapur and Thanjavur.
- **Regional Festivals:** Under the Ministry of Culture, **several Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsavas and a minimum of 42 regional festivals** are organised through the ZCCs every year.
 - To support these activities, the Government provides Grant-in-aid to all ZCCs.
- **Promotion of Tribal Languages:** The government **also provides grants to State Tribal Research Institutes for the promotion of [tribal languages](#)**, the development of bilingual primers for the preservation of tribal languages and the promotion of **[tribal literature](#)**.
- **Tribal Research Information, Education, Communication and Events (TRU-ECE) Scheme:** Under this, financial assistance is provided to reputed Institutions for **TRU-ECE scheme** with the aim to promote tribal culture, artifacts, customs and traditions of tribal communities.
- **Eklavya Model & Museums:** Under the **[Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav](#)**, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has resolved to establish nearly **[750 Eklavya Model Residential Schools](#) to support the education of tribal students**.
 - The government has also sanctioned **ten [tribal freedom fighter museums](#) in order to acknowledge the heroic and patriotic deeds** of tribal people.
- **Adivasi Grants Management System (ADIGRAMS):** It monitors the physical and financial progress of the grants given by the Ministry to States and **can track the actual utilisation of funds**.
- **Janjatiya Gaurav Divas:** In 2021, it was decided to celebrate 15th November of every year as **[Janjatiya Gaurav Divas](#) to mark the birth anniversary of tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda**.

What are Other Related Government Initiatives?

- [TRIFED](#)
- [Digital Transformation of Tribal Schools](#)
- [Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana](#)
- [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act \(MGNREGA\)](#)

What are the Constitutional Provisions Related to Scheduled Tribes?

- The [Constitution of India](#) does not endeavor to define the term 'tribe', however, the term [Scheduled Tribe](#) was inserted in the Constitution through Article 342 (i).
 - It lays down that 'the [President](#) may, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within the tribes or tribal communities or parts which shall, for the purposes of this Constitution, be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes.
 - The [Fifth Schedule](#) of the Constitution provides for the setting up a [Tribes' Advisory Council](#) in each of the States having Scheduled Areas.
- **Educational & Cultural Safeguards:**
 - **Article 15(4):** Special provisions for the advancement of other backward classes (it includes STs).
 - **Article 29:** Protection of the Interests of Minorities (it includes STs).
 - **Article 46:** The State shall **promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people**, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes, and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
 - **Article 350:** Right to conserve a distinct Language, Script or Culture.
- **Political Safeguards:**
 - **Article 330:** Reservation of seats for STs in the [Lok Sabha](#).
 - **Article 332:** Reservation of seats for STs in [State Legislatures](#).
 - **Article 243:** Reservation of seats in [Panchayats](#).
 - **Administrative Safeguard:**
 - **Article 275:** It provides for the grant of **special funds by the Union Government to the State Government for promoting the welfare** of Scheduled Tribes and providing them with a better administration.

What Issues Are Faced by the Tribes in India?

- **Land Rights:** One of the most significant issues faced by tribal communities is the lack of secure [land rights](#). Many tribes live in forest areas or remote regions where their **traditional rights to land and resources are often not recognized, leading to displacement** and land alienation.
- **Socio-economic Marginalisation:** Tribal populations often experience socio-economic marginalisation, including poverty, **lack of access to quality education, healthcare, and basic amenities like clean water and sanitation facilities**.
- **Education Gap:** Education levels among tribal populations are generally lower than the national average. **Lack of access to quality education, cultural barriers, and language differences** can hinder the educational development of tribal children.
- **Exploitation and Bonded Labor:** Some tribal communities are vulnerable to exploitation, [bonded labor](#), and [human trafficking](#), **especially in remote regions where law enforcement is weak**.
- **Cultural Erosion:** Rapid urbanisation and modernisation can **lead to the erosion of tribal cultures, languages, and traditional practices**. The younger generation may face challenges preserving their cultural identity.
- **Lack of Representation:** Despite protective measures, **tribal communities often face inadequate political representation and lack a strong voice in decision-making** processes that concern their welfare and rights.

Way Forward

- **Land and Resource Rights:** Recognising and securing land and resource rights for tribal communities is crucial to their well-being. Displacement and land alienation have been significant issues faced by tribes, and **addressing these concerns is essential for their sustenance.**
- **Education and Skill Development:** Providing quality education and skill development programs tailored to the needs and cultural context of tribal communities can **enable them to access better livelihood opportunities and participate** more actively in the mainstream economy.
- **Healthcare and Sanitation:** Ensuring [access to proper healthcare](#) facilities and sanitation is essential to improving the overall health and well-being of tribal communities, who often **face unique health challenges due to geographical isolation** and limited access to services.
- **Empowerment of Women:** Recognising the crucial role of women in tribal societies and promoting their active **participation in decision-making processes, economic activities, and community development.**
- **Promotion of Indigenous Culture:** Preserving and promoting tribal languages, art, traditions, and cultural practices are **vital to maintaining the rich diversity of India's heritage.**
- **Participation and Inclusion:** Encouraging tribal representation and participation in local governance and **policy-making bodies, which will help ensure their voices are heard in matters that directly affect their lives.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Under which Schedule of the Constitution of India can the transfer of tribal land to private parties for mining be declared null and void? (2019)

- (a) Third Schedule
- (b) Fifth Schedule
- (c) Ninth Schedule
- (d) Twelfth Schedule

Ans: (b)

Q. If a particular area is brought under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India, which one of the following statements best reflects the consequence of it? (2022)

- (a) This would prevent the transfer of land of tribal people to non-tribal people.
- (b) This would create a local self-governing body in that area.
- (c) This would convert that area into a Union Territory.
- (d) The State having such areas would be declared a Special Category State.

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q. How do you explain the statistics that show that the sex ratio in Tribes in India is more favourable to women than the sex ratio among Scheduled Castes? (2015)

