



ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ମୁକ୍ତ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ, ସମ୍ବଲପୁର, ଓଡ଼ିଶା
Odisha State Open University, Sambalpur, Odisha
Established by an Act of Government of Odisha.

Diploma in TRIBAL STUDIES (DTBS)

TBS-2 Tribal Issues in India

Block – 2

RECOGNITION OF TRIBE

UNIT-1 DENOTIFIED TRIBE (DNTS)

**UNIT-2 SCHEDULED AND NON-SCHEDULED CATEGORIES
OF TRIBES**

**UNIT-3 PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS
(PVTGS) IN INDIA**



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UNIT 1: DE-NOTIFIED TRIBES (DNTS)

Structure

- 1.0 learning objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 History of De-notified Tribes (DNTs)
- 1.3 Lives and Livelihood Patterns among DNTs
- 1.4 Welfare Measures for DNTs
- 1.5 Critical Issues of DNTs
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Keywords
- 1.8 Suggested Readings

1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit provides you a holistic overview of De-notified Tribes (DNTs) of India. It gives you insightful understanding about the history of their evolution as De-notified Tribes and various developments that occurred thereafter. It will give you knowledge about their lives and various livelihood strategies. Information about various challenges encountered by them along with the welfare measures undertaken by the government are also explained in a nutshell. At the end of the unit, you will be able to:

- Find out the reasons and ways in which colonial administration has subjugated tribal communities in India and termed them Criminal Tribes.
- Know about various Commissions and Committees constituted for addressing the issues of De-notified tribes.
- Recognize the impact of modernization and technological revolution on de-notified tribes resulting in making them redundant and jobless.
- Learn about various legal and constitutional provisions on de-notified tribes and other nomadic communities.
- Know about various critical issues related to de-notified tribes, including the stereotypical perception associated to them and their routine challenges.
- Understand the ways in which de-notified tribes are subjected to discrimination, subjugation and harassment.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

De-notified Tribes (DNTs) are those communities which were listed under Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and various other legislations enacted by British India till 1947.

They were denoted as *Criminal Tribes* with tendencies of committing non-bailable offences under Indian Penal code. Once notified, they all were mandatorily required to submit their whereabouts including their routine movements to the colonial authorities. Stringent rules were enforced to seek submission of these communities in such a manner that mere suspicion could result into arrests. Imposition of criminal charges was easiest task to contain them into systematic repression.

India after independence has enacted the Criminal Tribes Laws (Repeal) Act in 1952. Through this act government has repealed all discriminatory laws against these communities and de-notified them. After that, these communities were popularly called under a common terminology as de-notified tribes or DNTs. In the State of Maharashtra and nearby areas they were also called as *Vimukta Jati*.

A sizeable number of populations within de-notified tribes are nomads. Nomads are the communities who frequently migrate to different places in search of livelihood means. They are different altogether from semi-nomads communities whose duration, distance and frequency of migration are less than the former ones. Except the differences in degree of mobility both of them falls under a social category of nomadic people.

Moreover, de-notified tribes are profoundly present across Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Class (OBC) community. And few of them are also not found in any of these categories. They are not categorized anywhere.

1.2 HISTORY OF DE-NOTIFIED TRIBES (DNTS)

The revolt of 1857, popularly known as first freedom struggle of India has shaken the roots of colonial empire. It has worked as a catalyst for fuelling movements in various parts of the country. Of many, the tribal revolts were most significant. They were predominated in central India now the State of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand. They have troubled the British for years. This has forced them for a comprehensive review of its policies in India. Number of laws was enacted to strengthen their catch hold over the land and its people. It was the period when colonial exploiters have started intervening in matters of nomadic people.

Nomads were into the business of communication and transportation due to their cultural attribute of travelling long distances. They usually transport salt, wool, spices and other consumer items from places where they are available in abundance to the place where they are not. Unfortunately, they were considered as messengers for communication spreading revolts and instigating mutinies in different part of the colonial India. So, the British have framed laws to restrict their mobility and to keep a check on their movements. As a result of that the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 was

enacted. The act was a severe blow to their life and livelihood patterns. There were stringent rules imposed to restrict their mobility and to keep them under surveillance. The folk and cultural practices were drastically contained. It was due to apprehensions over sending secret messages in form of folk dances and performances. This has resulted in severe blow to the lives of nomadic and DNTs.

There were approximately 192 ethnic communities enlisted under Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. It was a comprehensive act that included nomadic traders, wanderers, forest-dwellers, pastorals and all those people who do not adhere to settle life of agriculturalist. This has resulted in long term negative impact on DNTs and nomads of the country. They were perceived as non-performer of any economic occupation and hence criminals. It was a period when images of DNTs were deformed and tarnished. Moreover, the Hindu caste system prevalent in India has never given a place to nomads. They were not accommodated in their hierarchical caste arrangement. This has increased their miseries manifold.

The Act of 1871 was later amended in 1897, 1908 and 1911 to provide unfettered powers in the hands of ruling class. The law became stringent to arrest anyone on pity pretext and could debar them of their child, who will be removed from their criminal parents. In 1924, after certain modification the act was implemented on entire British India. Several other laws like the Salt Tax Act, the Forest Act were all enacted to uproot nomads from grassroots.

It was on recommendations of Shri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar Committee in 1952 that the Criminal Tribes Laws (Repeal) Act was enacted and the tribal communities enlisted under Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and others were de-notified. Later, the same was replaced by Habitual Offenders Act of 1952. In this act, the target was shifted from community to individuals, where police was empowered to investigate on suspect's criminal tendencies against the required settled life. Hence, the de-notified tribes became 'habitual offenders'.

But in reality they were the worst victim of both colonial exploitation and societal ostracisation. Their conditions underwent serious deterioration and they were forced to live in margins of the society. And since they don't reside on a permanent place it is difficult for government to cover them under any schemes. Only a small chunk of people who falls under the categories of SC, ST or OBC are benefited. This they get from the schemes which were operational for those communities and not the DNTs. Majority of them still left out of government umbrella of development.

Surprising, the government does not have any database on DNTs demography. There are mere estimations which vary from nearly ten percent of the population to crores in number. Though we don't have their exact data but it is undoubted that they still counts in a substantial numbers. To address these challenges the government of India has constituted a National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic

Tribes (NCDNT) in year 2003. Later, it was reconstituted in 2005, under the chairmanship of Balkrishna Renke. The commission which was popularly known as Renke Commission has submitted its report in year 2008. It has claimed that there are nearly 150 DNTs and 500 nomadic groups in the country. Out of many recommendations which Renke Report have submitted, the major one was for abolishing Habitual Offenders Act of 1952. It is still in existence and demeans the dignity of DNTs and other nomadic communities. The provisions like giving regular attendance to the police station, restricted mobility and mandatory approval for outstation long distance travel for these people is extremely inhuman. It was also recommended by United Nations through its Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) for repealing the Act and rehabilitating DNTs and other nomadic communities.

Another commission under Bhiku Ramji Idate also called the Idate Commission was appointed in 2015 and has submitted its recommendations in 2018. Unfortunately, recommendations under Idate Commission were repetition of Renke Commission with few original findings. Later, controversies encircled the commission and its recommendation underwent as a futile exercise. The failure of Idate Commission has brought accountability issues for the government, but the costs paid by communities were long lasting.

It is very unfortunate that we still don't have any appropriate data on these communities. Their inclusion by various States in SC, ST and OBC categories does not provide a viable solution to their issues. Moreover, their institutions like folk music, dance, and cultural practices were all either understudied or underrepresented in literature. The discourse of Subaltern Studies which claims to rectify the historical wrongs of marginalization done within academic world has also failed to represent them suitably. Let us now focus on their lives and livelihood patterns.

1.3 LIVES AND LIVELIHOOD PATTERNS AMONG DNTS

The DNTs have always lived in a complex relationship with the mainstream society. They have a distinct attribute of not having any belongingness to land or attachment with any place. They have continued with their traditional occupations of transporting grains, salt and other commodities to various places. This was destroyed by exploitative colonial policies rendering them without any work. Since, they were not acquainted with any other work it is argued that they ultimately went into illegal activities.

Colonial laws prevented DNTs to collect forest produce and grazing their livestock. This coupled with the famines of 1866, 1876, and 1898 has resulted in criminalization of many among them. On the one side they were exploited and on the other, their opportunities for growth were drastically diminished. The rising dis-

contentions among DNTs were fuelled by the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, which has restricted their mobility and opportunities for alternate occupations. They were subjected to limited mobility, mandatory registration and routine tortures. This ultimately resulted in rising number of DNTs engaged in dacoities. Later on those who were not listed in Criminal Tribes Act were also considered criminal. It was the phase when a discriminatory negative image of DNTs and other tribal or nomadic communities was generalized in the mainstream.

Traditionally DNTs were engaged in number of occupations like dancing, singing, puppetry, handicraft, fortune telling, hunting, herding, acting, monkey charming, snake charming, bear charming, artisanship, construction and building works, fishing, brewing liquor, traditional herbal medicine selling and mendicancy. Almost all of their occupations either ended due to modern laws or became redundant of any use. DNTs were popularly known for their traditional art of entertainment. They use to entertain people through singing, dancing, acting, puppetry and magic shows. They were not only popular medium of entertainment but also the only medium for public entertainment. But in due course of time technological revolution has made them redundant. With evolution of TV industry and various modes of entertainment, the traditional art lost its charm. It does not withstand to the modern technologies. This has left many DNTs with no work to do.

DNTs that were into occupation of monkey charming, snake charming, bear charming or related activities involving animals also underwent trouble. Government has come out with number of laws prohibiting cruelty and other related activities involving usage of animals. This was done to protect wild life from people involved in cruelty. But the impact was much higher on DNTs. They no more can employ animals in their occupation. Few of such laws are, Wild Life Protection Act (1972), Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act (1960), Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999), etc. They have debarred DNTs from those types of occupations which involve wild life.

The DNTs were having close proximate to ecological surroundings. Since they travel to far distances they get acquainted to most of natural and herbal medicines evolved through traditional knowledge. So, DNTs employed to take the profession of selling these traditional herbal medicines. It was a noble profession serving mankind and carrying forward traditional knowledge system for future generations. But the profession got affected by corrupt practices from non-DNTs who have recently entered in it. As a result, there started a number of bogus cases resulting health issues harming people at various places. Few magical and supernatural remedies also started into practice. This led to spread of superstitions and illegal practices in the name of healing. Hence, the government has enacted Drugs and Magic Remedies Act (1954) prohibiting all such practices in a nutshell. The law though gave protection from fake practitioners but has also made barriers for the DNTs. Holistic ban over

such practices resulted in an ill effect on DNTs. They were forced to leave a profession which was nurtured by them since decades.

Further, the rapid pace of industrialization and technological revolution has reduced them to jobless. Their handicraft, technology and artisanship were all become obsolete. They did not withstand with the trends of modernization. This has doubled their miseries and quadrupled their plight. They are living lives into destitution. Suffering from extreme poverty, landlessness, illiteracy and homelessness, they are living in the margins of society in slums both rural and urban. They hardly have civic amenities of proper drinking water, electricity, toilets, ration cards, BPL cards, job cards, voter identity cards and caste certificates. These socio-economic conditions are restraining their development and growth in the country.

Moreover, they are ostracized from mainstream society. People from different sections of society do not entertain them for cultural exchanges or interactions. Though they don't settle on particular land but if they want to settle, they were not allowed to own land in the society. They were subjected to discrimination at various levels. Their tarnished image is generalized by authorities to ensure that they do not receive any benefit out of them.

One of the critical issues related to DNTs is about their being subjection to violence and brutality. Considering their stereotypical image crafted in early era they were perceived as alien or outsiders intending to intervene in mainstream society for illegal activities. Carried forward by the conservative outlook the DNTs found a troublesome environment. Rather than extending help and having mercy with them, they were brought to cruelty and torture.

Police remained unfriendly with the DNTs. It still considers them as agents of dacoit and related acts of mischief. That is why they use to penalize them at every point of time. They were soft targets who can be put behind the bars on petty charges. It is argued that police remained violent and brutal to DNTs. A famous Marathi autobiography of Laxman Gaikwad, Uchalya has mentioned about those atrocities. The novel provides insight into harsh realities from a perspective of a DNT. The novel was translated in English with title, The Branded. It has described about various forms in which police thrashed their men and assault their women. The practice is still carried away in many part of India. Due to poor living conditions they did not get their voice heard.

In such socio-economic conditions it was always a survival issue for the DNTs. Since, they have not learned new skills required in the market, they did not get employment. Many of them underwent labour intensive jobs and those who are incapable undergoes to begging, scavenging, rack-picking related menial jobs.

Another critical issue that recently came into discussion is about bar dancing girls in Mumbai and other urban and sub-urban areas. The controversy came to limelight

after few incidents of molestation and harassment of women bar dancers got reported and media attention. A number of civil society organisations jumped into the matter and pressurized government for banning bar dancing. They have made their point on various pretexts like, human rights issues of women bar dancers, safety measures and over ethics of bar dancing. Voiced from dominant sections of the society which does include a good number of women, government has taken action and put a ban on few of those performances. But the ban has not provided any alternate employment opportunity for thousands of women dancer who were rendered jobless. Majority of them hailed from DNT community. They were traditionally entertainer who practiced dance performances. They were into the practice of bar dancing as it has a traditional resemblance and were left with no other alternative employment. The ban on same has disastrous impact on their livelihoods and survival. The community which was already on margins was forced to perish at the cost and comfort of mainstream society.

The DNTs are struggling for their survival. They are the communities which does not have any constitutional rights. Since, laws are absent in this domain, they are equally left without legal entitlements. In this situation, they have hardly anyone to voice their concerns and to seek redressal of their critical plights.

Check Your Progress I

1) The De-notified Tribes of Maharashtra are called by which name?

Ans.

2) Which Committee has recommended the repeal of Criminal Tribes Act of 1971?

Ans.

3) In which year was Renke Commission constituted?

Ans.

4) What is the name of Laxman Giakwad's Autobiography?

Ans.

1.4 WELFARE MEASURES FOR DNTS

The De-notified Tribes as they called recently are previously nomadic tribes, hill tribes and other forest dwelling tribal communities. They have survived in solitude with ecological proximity and distinct cultural attributes. They always remained there in folklore and various types of narratives. Unfortunately, the mainstream has marginalized and subalterns have kept them out of their narratives. With few exceptions in history, we hardly find any genuine policy action made for their growth

and development. One of the key social reformers of India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has taken their issues and made representations in various committees and commission for their welfare. They were:

- Southborough Committee (1918-19)
- Muddiman Commission (1924)
- Simon Commission (1928)
- Hartog Commission (1928)
- Committee to enquire into the grievances of Depressed Classes and Aboriginal Tribes (1929)
- Lothian Committee (1932)

But in post-independence era, there were hardly any initiatives for welfare of DNTs. Even in the sector of Education, which is key to societal growth have limited outreach. It was in late seventies that few scholars started emerging from these communities. They have started writings on their struggles and sufferings primarily in regional languages. In this field, the nomadic tribes of Maharashtra have produced a good number of literatures. Their writings, especially the autobiographies are now rich source of information. They are the firsthand accounts on discrimination, torture and subjugation experienced by the DNTs. Their plight ultimately got a voice which somehow reached to the government. You know that government has constituted Renke Commission (2005) and Idate Commission (2015) to study and recommend over the De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) of India. Of them, the Renke Commission has recommended for reservation to 11 crore people belonging to these communities at par with the SCs and STs. But no action has been taken on those recommendations. And after the submission of Idate Commission Report, government has constituted a Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNTC) on 21 February 2019. It is expected to work for the noble cause of DNTs.

The Constitution of India has mentioned about them in Concurrent List which is also called as List III, of Scheduled VII which flows from Article 246. In entry number 15, it has mentioned about Vagrancy, Nomadic and Migratory Tribes. Major policy recommendations for their welfare and other attributes are mentioned primarily with this entry. An exclusive bill was introduced in year 2008 for inclusion of welfare measures through amendment in the Constitution. It was initiated by the then Member of Parliament (MP) Haribhav Rathod. Unfortunately, it failed to get the majority support and was dropped out.

At present there are three major welfare schemes under operation for DNTs.

Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs: It is a Central government sponsored scheme for welfare of those DNTs who are not covered under SC, ST and OBC community. It was launched in 2014-15 for those families who

have maximum income ceiling of Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum. The scheme is designed to be implemented by State and Union Territory Administration. And the expenditure is shared in a ratio of 75:25 between Centre and State governments.

Nanaji Deshmukh Scheme of Construction of Hostels for DNT Boys and Girls:

This is again a Central government sponsored scheme started in 2014-15, to be implemented by State and Union Territory Administration. It is designed to provide hostel facilities to those DNT students who want to pursue higher education and are not covered under SC, ST, or OBC community. The income ceiling is Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum. In this scheme Central government will provide maximum of 500 seats per year throughout the country for hostels. In that, Rs. 3.00 lakh per seat and Rs. 5,000 for furniture has been fixed under the norms. And the expenditure is shared between Centre and States in a ratio of 75:25.

Central Sector Scheme of Assistance for Skill Development of Backward Classes (OBCs)/De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)/Economic Backward Classes (EBCs):

It was an old scheme under the name of ‘Assistance to Voluntary Organisation working for the welfare of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)’, which was already under function and later extended to DNTs from 2017-18. It is aimed to provide financial support to Voluntary Organization working in the field of developing skills among multiple communities including DNTs. In this way the government has started working for the welfare of DNTs and other nomadic communities.

Efforts for welfare of DNTs were also raised by the intellectuals belonging to their community. In this field Mahashweta Devi was first among the few of torch-bearer who stood for the cause of DNTs. She was a writer and social activist who started working with DNTs in the State of Gujarat in 1998. She has chosen theatre as a powerful medium for voicing dis-contention. For this they have started a Budhan Theatre. From that platform they worked for social awakening and mass mobilization for demanding welfare measures from the government. But still there are certain grey areas which are very much critical for sustenance of DNTs.

1.5 CRITICAL ISSUES OF DNTS

Landlessness

The De-notified Tribes from their inherited attributes are not having any emotional attachment with the land. They are people who migrate from place to place either with short or long term stay. But very few of them have adapted to settled life of agriculturalist. Their mobility is governed primarily with their economy of sustenance. Most of them are traders of utility products from far distant places. They survived on their trading practices. So, they have not adapted to settled form of lives. And since it was an era of very limited mode of transportations, their importance was

recognized in the society. But in modern times when we have immense modes of transportations their importance is not only lost rather became redundant. They left with no jobs.

Unfortunately, they were not having any land ownership. Left with no occupation, people find agriculture and related activities for their survival. India being predominantly an agricultural country still holds that importance for land ownership. But DNTs are not having any of it. The Balkrishna Renke Commission has revealed that about 89 percent of DNTs does not own any land. They are landless people. With land comes many attributes. And since they lack in one they have to suffer from the others also. Like, they cannot have various legal documents required to avail benefits from government schemes like the Public Distribution System (PDS), Mid-Day Meal, MGNREGS, etc. Landlessness makes them vulnerable to the dominant mainstream communities that reside nearby to them. They are also subjected to conditions of industrialist who owns the land. They are frequently forced to evacuate land by industrialist at different sites. Frequent displacement disturbs their natural socio-cultural development and economic occupations. Landlessness also debars them of political benefits. They don't have any settled population for which they don't have any political representative. Failed to have any political representations DNTs does not have any policy transformative benefits for their community. They have very limited policy initiatives from the government end. It has plagued the DNTs.

Categorization of DNTs

Due to lack of political voice the DNTs does not have any categorization of their communities. Since, 1952 they were termed as De-notified Tribes, ascribed to them by the Criminal Tribes Act. It was unlike a constitutional categorization of the SCs, STs and OBCs. They do not have their own categorization. Moreover, many of them are listed by respective State governments under SC, ST or OBC. Few also exist beyond these categorizations. But there is no separate categorization of DNTs. They lack a cohesive community bond. They are unable to voice their concerns. Those who are under SC, ST or OBC are benefited from the schemes which are for these categories not DNTs as a category. It has critical issues of identity.

The De-notified Tribes are not having a uniform umbrella of identity. Being accommodated in different categories of SC, ST and OBC by different States has blurred their identity. Now, it has become difficult to provide them uniform benefit at a common platform. The Renke Commission has advised to include them under the category of Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) elevating their status to constitutional category. Contrarily, there are arguments that they need to have a separate category of their own. Benefitted from different categories the DNTs will lose their own identity. Their special attributes and distinct history will get overshadowed by the other mainstreams. And the worst victims will be those who are beyond any categorization of SC, ST and OBC. Bhiku Ramji Idade Commission

has claimed that over 260 extremely marginalized communities have never been identified or included in any of the reserved categories. And of them, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have the largest number of DNT communities, not included in any list. It is argued that inclusion in any list will hamper their growth in multiple ways. Hence, there is a need to recognize them as a separate community with their own identity.

Reservation for DNTs

Both the Renke and Idate Commission have recommended reservation for DNTs under the Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) category. But many of the States have already accommodates them under three different categories with no uniform law. Few States ahead have constituted a separate category for DNTs within the OBCs. They are either named as Most Backward Communities (MBC) or Backward Communities (BC) etc. In such diversities, with no uniform categorization, it is difficult for government to provide them equal share of benefits.

Political controversies also started surmounting over this categorization. Those DNTs which are sub-categorized in States faced troubles at national level when they share benefits with Other Backward Class (OBC). Similarly, there are fierce demands from DNTs for their inclusion in Scheduled Tribe (ST) category. For example, the Gurjjar community of Rajasthan led an aggressive movement demanding their inclusion in ST category. This was done in wake of Meena Community, a DNT got inclusion in ST category.

It was also recommended by Renke Commission to set up a Permanent Commission for the DNTs. It was at par with other commission already existing for SC, ST and OBC. But there emerged few practical problems. Since, many DNTs are categorized under SC, ST and OBC they were under the mandate of constitutional commissions. They are the National Commission for Scheduled Caste (NCSC), National Commission for Scheduled Tribe (NCST) and National Commission for Other Backward Class (NCOBC). And when these commissions are already functional, an evolution of an entirely new commission will be conflicting. Hence, the government for time being has constituted a Welfare Board for DNTs. It is having a mandate over nearly 227 tribes with estimated population of 56 lakh people who are not listed in any of the three categorizations.

Other Issues of DNTs

In addition to the above, there are issues which are very critical for DNTs. They are as following:

- There is no comprehensive data on DNTs and their various aspects. Efforts were not led to sort out the same since years of independence. This shows a systematic bias against the DNTs.

- Since independence, only two commissions were set up to look into the issues of DNTs. But not a single statutory Permanent Body was set up to look into the matters of DNTs. This proves the marginalization of DNTs from mainstream.
- The two commissions have submitted their respective reports. None of them came into implementation. As a result of which a status quo has been maintained over policies and planning on DNTs. This is a discrimination done to them.
- The National Crime Record Beareau (NCRB) of India does not have a separate data on violence and persecution of DNTs. It is difficult to find out the cases involved subjection of DNTs to caste or race led violence.
- There is wrong perception developed in the mainstream society that most of DNT men are involved in dacoity and women in prostitution. This is sadistic attitude developed against DNTs.
- Condition of DNT women is not good. They are victims of patriarchal customs and institutions. Various conservative practices associated with women chastity were ruthlessly practiced. Reformation through social awakening and legal enforcements are required in this matter.
- Prevalence of dowry and child marriages. This shows that efforts were not initiated to end those practices.

The issues listed above prove that there remained a sheer negligence on part of society and the government which has discriminated DNTs and left them to margins. The vulnerable situation is at extreme level. Recent rape and murder of eight year old girl Asifa Bano who belonged to Bakkarwal Community of the State of Jammu and Kashmir (now the two Union Territories) was a horrific incident which has shaken the whole country. The plights of DNT came in forefront of the whole country. Huge discussions started spurring in various discourses. But positive outcomes with honest efforts at the end of democratic institutions are doubtful.

Check Your Progress II

1) Who has initiated the bill in parliament for addressing issues of De-notified tribal communities of India?

Ans.

2) What was the medium chosen by Mahashweta Devi to present the dis-contention of DNTs?

Ans.

3) Which Article of Indian Constitution has mentioned about the DNTs and other nomadic communities?

Ans.

4) Who has given presentation to various committees and commissions over the matters of nomadic communities in pre-independent India?

Ans.

5) Which States have the largest number of DNTs and nomadic communities of India?

Ans.

6) Which Commission/s has recommended for providing reservations to the DNTs communities?

Ans.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have learnt about the historical evolution of de-notified tribes. We now know that it is an umbrella term used for all those tribal communities who were previously enlisted as criminal tribes by colonial administration got de-notified no more as criminals in post independent India. We understood the significance of these communities working as transporters and communicators for far distant places, which apprehended the colonial administration that they tried to subjugate them. Colonialism not only has harmed them but also restricted their prospects for future growth.

In post-colonial era, when every other community got independent, the DNTs celebrated liberation from the day when the law de-notifying them no more as criminal was passed in year 1952. But we know that the present law also discriminates them while alleging them as habitual offenders. And other such laws enacted for socio-environmental concerns were all having catastrophic impact over them. Modernization and technological revolution has further reduced them to obsolete entities. Been jobless they have entered into occupations which were either unethical like bar dancing or illegal like dacoities. And it is very shocking that our society has built stereotypical attitudes towards them. Rather than extending help we have created troubles for them. They are subjected to multiple discrimination and violence by various institutions of our society. We cannot deny the same expressed in their literary works done in vernacular languages.

We know that India in post independent era has waged limited efforts to ameliorate their plights. All Committee and Commissions which were constituted to look into their matters were proven futile. There remained a sheer lack of political will. We can trace it now that DNTs encircled with critical challenges are not having any

comprehensive plans for survival strategies from the government. Moreover, the level of negligence can be understood from the fact that we do not have any reliable data on population matrix of DNTs in this country. In these circumstances, if positive measures were not implemented in a nutshell, they will definitely perish in the nearby future.

1.7 KEY WORDS

Nomads: People who likes to travels from place to place as a wanderer and do not settle on any land permanently. They use to migrate for the purpose of various traditional occupations and livelihood options.

Agriculturalist: A person who is concerned with all types of activities which are associated with the mode of farming and production of crops. It does include the works of cultivator, grower, raiser, farmer, etc.

Demography: The study of human population and its various attributes like birth, death, income, poverty etc. It is primarily a part of the subject discipline of Human Geography and Population Studies.

Subaltern: Someone who is ranked lower in social, political or other hierarchical arrangements. It also connotes to someone who is either marginalized or oppressed.

Stereotype: An image or idea about a person or thing which get fixed and oversimplified as a normative act. They are the perceptions which are biases against someone demeaning them in various ways.

1.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 2: SCHEDULED AND NON-SCHEDULED CATEGORIES OF TRIBES

Structure

- 2.0 learning objectives
- 2.1 Introduction.
- 2.2 Definition of Scheduled tribes.
- 2.3 Procedure for declaration as Scheduled Tribes (ST).
- 2.4 Scheduling and De- Scheduling of Tribes
- 2.5 The problems of scheduled tribes as well as scheduled tribes.
- 2.6 Tribal Social Movement
- 2.7 The integration of the Scheduled Tribes with the Non – Scheduled Tribes
- 2.8 Conclusion

2.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to define schedule tribes.
- Students will be able to understand the problems faced by the scheduled tribes of India.
- Students will be able to explain about the various tribal social movements.
- Students will be able to justify about the integration of the scheduled tribes with the non - scheduled tribes.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The TRIBES of India are varied in terms of their socio-economic and political development. Some of them have changed through Hinduisation, through conversion to Christianity or through some other route. Some tribal people are in transitional phase, while others are adhering to their old life styles to a large extent. This shows an uneven process of change and development among the tribal people in India. Only a small number of tribal people have been benefited by the policies and programmes meant for their development.

According to the 1971 census, the tribal population is 38,015,162, that is, 7 percent of the total population of India. Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar have 8,387,403; 5,071,937 and 4,932,767 respectively. Gujarat and Rajasthan have over 3 million each. Maharashtra has 8 percent, Assam 6.84, West Bengal 6.81 and Andhra Pradesh 4.39 percent tribal population. Lakshadweep islands have 97.03 percent, Nagaland

93.09, Arunachal Pradesh 88.59, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli 88.43 percent. Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh have a negligible number of tribals.

According to 1981 census, the percentage of Schedule tribe population is 7.7. Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Bihar have the scheduled tribe population ranging from 22.97 percent in Madhya Pradesh to 8.31 percent in Bihar. In the smaller states like Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Meghalaya more than 80 percent of their population is tribal.

L.P. Vidyarthi classifies the tribal people into Himalayan, middle India, western India and southern India regions. These tribes numbering about 450, belong to various racial, linguistic, economic, social and religious categories. There are numerous differences between these tribes because they are at different levels of development and participation in national life. However, in general terms tribes are economically, educationally and politically backward compared to the non-tribal groups.

2.2 DEFINITION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES

G.S. Ghurye, in the revised edition of his book *The Scheduled Tribes (1959)* writes :

“The Scheduled Tribes are neither called the Aborigines, nor the „Adivasis“, nor they are treated as a category by themselves. By and large they are treated together with the scheduled castes and further envisaged as one group of the backward classes.” This is the constitutional viewpoint about the scheduled Tribes.

The Constitution of India, under Article 342, states that the president may “by public notification specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes ...” The tribes of India prior to independence were considered animistic by the census authorities. Distinction was made between those who made were Hinduised and those who follow their own religion. However, some scholars have opined that no sharp line of demarcation can be drawn between Hinduism and animism. There is no uniform pattern of religion among the tribal among the tribal people of India.

Variation among the tribes can be seen in terms of the areas they live in, such as the Aravali Hills, the Vindhyas, the Satpuras, the Mahadev hills, the Chhotanagpur plateau and several other areas. Numerically the most preponderate tribe are : **Gond, Santhal, Bhil, Oraon, Kond, Munda, Bhuiya, Ho, Savara, Kol, Korku, Maler, Baiga and Meena.**

Some of these tribal people share Hinduism along with Hindus, and speak the languages spoken by Hindus. They are not the exclusive groups in spatial terms. Some authors do consider the tribals as autochthons, the earliest and the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, who were pushed to forests and hills by the invaders.

2.3 PROCEDURE FOR DECLARATION AS SCHEDULED TRIBES (ST)

The term “Scheduled Tribes” is defined in the Constitution of India under Article 366(25) as “such tribes or tribal communities or parts of groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution”.

Article 342 prescribes the procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of Scheduled Tribes. In terms of Article 342(1), the president with respect to any state or union territory and where it is state, after consultation with the governor thereof, notify tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribes. This confers on the tribe or part of it a Constitutional status invoking the safeguards provided for in the Constitution, to these communities in their respective States/UTs.

Thus in terms of Article 342(1), only those communities who have been declared as such by the president through an initial public notification will be considered as Scheduled Tribes. Any further amendment in the list is to be done through an Act of Parliament [Article 342(2)]. Parliament may, by law, include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes, any tribe or tribal community or parts of thereof.

It is also worth noting that the above article also provides for listing of Scheduled Tribes state wise/Union Territory – wise and not on an all – India basis. Thus the list of Scheduled Tribes is State – specific. In other words, a community declared as Scheduled Tribe in one State need not be so in another State.

2.4 SCHEDULING AND DE-SCHEDULING OF TRIBES

The first specification of Scheduled Tribes in relation to a particular State/ Union Territory is by a notified order of the President, after consultation with the State Governments concerned. The above Article also provides for listing of Scheduled Tribes state wise/Union Territory – wise and not on an all – India basis. The order can be modified subsequently only through an Act of Parliament.

The Criteria generally adopted for specification of a community as a Scheduled Tribes are:

1. Indication of primitive traits;
2. Distinctive culture;
3. Shyness of contact with the community at large;
4. Geographical isolation i.e. backwardness.

These are not spelt out in the Constitution but have become well established. They take into account the definitions in the 1931 Census, the reports of the first Backward Classes Commission (Kalelkar) 1955, the Advisory committee on revision of SC/ST lists (Lokur Committee) 1965 and the Joint Committee of Parliament on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Bill, 1967 (Chanda Committee) 1969.

There are over 600 tribes (with many of them overlapping in more than one state) as notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India, spread over different States and Union Territories of the country. It is worth noting that no community has been specified as a Scheduled tribe in relation to the States of Haryana and Punjab and the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry.

2.5 THE PROBLEMS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES AS WELL AS NON – SCHEDULED TRIBES

The tribes were alienated from their own lands. The landlords or the moneylenders of the plains gradually replaced the tribal landlords. There were a number of movements against the British Raj and the Hindu moneylenders and landlords. The tribes were given protection, in view of such an oppressive situation. Ghurye lists a number of socio – cultural and economic problems of the tribes in view of their distinctions. Some tribes represent aristocracy, landlords and noblemen; others consist of the Hinduised sections of tribes men ; and thirdly, there are tribes and some sections from among them who are still largely isolated from the non- tribal population.

Ghurye mentions three views on the solution of the problem of the tribal people:

1. No change and revivalism – This has been supported by Elwin.
2. Isolationalism and preservation – This has been advocated by Hutton.
3. Assimilation – the famous anthropologists S.C. Roy was an assimilationist.

One finds a sort of problem in the present – day situation. Protective discrimination isolates the tribal people from the non- tribesmen, but in course of time this due very policy would bring the tribals at par with the non-tribals. The dominant thinking today is in favour of assimilation of the tribal people into the national mainstream without any disruption.

Since tribal people are at different social, political, economic and ecological levels, their problems also differ in degree from each other. These differences can be seen in terms of hill tribes and plain tribes; and those engaged in forest – based economic pursuits and the ones who are employed as settled as agriculturalists; or those who are Hinduised or converted to Christianity and those who are adhering to an unadulterated tribal way of life. Despite these distinctions some common problems of the tribal people are:

1. Poverty and exploitation
2. Economic and technological backwardness
3. Socio – cultural handicaps
4. Problems related to their assimilation with the non-tribal population.

S.C. Dube's five-fold classification of the Indian tribes provides a clear picture of the problem of tribes in India:

1. Aborigines living in seclusion
2. Tribal groups having an association with the neighbouring non – tribal society and also maintaining their distinctiveness
3. Tribes living in villages along with caste groups, sects and religious groups maintaining their identity
4. Tribes who have been degraded to the status of untouchables
5. Tribes who enjoy high social, economic and political status.

Such a classification is basically based on the nature of the culture contact of the tribals with the non – tribals.

The U.N. Dhebar Commission recommended that an area be declared „tribal“ where more than 50 percent of the people were tribals. Economic criteria have also been suggested such as dependence upon forests for food, primitive agriculture, agriculture and forests both as source of livelihood, and modern occupations, particularly employment in industries.

Tribal people had a strong sense of community life before the British rulers and Hindu zamindars and moneylenders intruded into their lives. Exchange of goods and transactions at weekly markets and fairs were the basic mode of economic relations. However the British took over the forests on which they depended for their livelihood. Moneylenders brought them under their control by extending loans, at exorbitant interest rates and then by mortgaging their lands, alienating them from land they cultivated. Indebtedness led to exploitation; as the rituals adopted Hindu ways of life and rituals which forced them to spend as the Hindus did. Tribals occupied a very low rank in Hindu society.

At some places the tribals have been made to serve as bonded labourers. The Doms and Koltas in Uttar Pradesh, serve the upper caste families even today. In Rajasthan, the *Sagri* system, in Andhra, the *Vetti* system, in Orissa the *Gothi*, in Karnataka the *Jetha* and in Madhya Pradesh the *Naukrinama* are the examples of the bondedness of the tribals. They have borrowed money from the moneylenders, but have not been able to pay it back and are bound to work till they return the loan. A situation of emancipation does not arise, as a tribal is not able to repay the loan completely and quickly.

K.S. Singh points out those agrarian issues are basic to tribal development in India. The tribal agrarian problem cannot be treated in isolation. Tribal people have to be treated in isolation. Tribal people have to treat along with other weaker sections of Indian society. Keeping the situation of Bihar in view Singh observes that the concept of aliens (*dikku*) is crucial to the understanding of an agrarian situation where non – tribals outnumber tribals. The class of moneylenders has arisen due to several factors including the agrarian legislation. Alienation of land has resulted from tribal backwardness and indebtedness. Integrated Tribal Development Blocks have not produced the desired results in the tribal areas. Famine and drought has become a recurrent feature. The tribal sub – plan has been introduced to combat problems of famine, drought, illiteracy, indebtedness, exploitation, etc., by taking up special schemes for the development of tribal areas.

A study of the impact of the decentralisation of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) trade on the tribals of Bihar shows that the dominant causality is economic (MFP trade takeover) rather than political and ideological. The study refers to the control of forests produce like bamboo, Kendu leaves, Mahua, Kusum, Karanj and sal seeds, being taken over by the government of Bihar. The MFP contributes about 35 percent of the states revenue from forests. The takeover has adversely affected the institution of *Hat* (weekly market), where the tribals carried out economic transactions and also performed several social and cultural activities. Forests provided a collective life to the tribals, and this was being denied to them as a result of the MFP trade takeover. The tribals have been agitated over this step taken by the government of Bihar.

Per capita landholding has decreased among the tribals due to three reasons:

1. Alienation of land due to indebtedness and socio – economic backwardness
2. Increase in tribal population
3. Takeover of the tribal land by the government for establishing industries.

Land was alienated much before legislations were passed by the state governments. Today even after passing such legislations, the tribal elite are alienating the tribals from their lands. The tribals have been displaced in parts of Bihar, Orissa and some other states by the taking over of their lands for establishing industries. However, the tribals have not been provided with alternative avenues of employment. The

compensation paid to them for their land was quickly spent by them without making any investment in productive and remunerative enterprises.

Some tribals even today are engaged in *Jhum* (shifting) cultivation which is not only uneconomical, but also causes deforestation and soil erosion. Since the tribals have no alternative source of livelihood, they continue to use shifting cultivation and forest cutting for their basic livelihood necessities. The tribals in protest against the government's policy of MFP takeover in Bihar cut down forests on large scale in Singhbhum and other districts. Forest cooperatives can do a lot to ameliorate the pitiable plight of the tribals but unfortunately the benefits from these societies have reached only to the well off sections of the Bhils, Meenas, Oraons etc.

The dilemma for the tribal people in India is the choice between isolation and contact. Isolation keeps the tribals away from forces of change and development; and contact with the wider society creates problems of adjustment, cultural shock and disintegration of tribal social organisation and community living. The intrusion of outsiders into tribal life, for example, has adversely affected the institution of weekly markets, dormitory and reciprocal relationships. The institutions of untouchability that is pollution – purity and high and low status have made inroads into tribal life. The tribals to a large extent become a „caste“ or „pseudo – caste“ by this process of cultural contact. Ignorance, illiteracy, superstition and poverty are the major problems of the tribal people in the Indian subcontinent.

2.6 TRIBAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Social movement among tribes aim at collective action to alter, reconstitute, reinterpret, restore and protect social structure, with a view to improve their social, cultural, economic and political conditions. Hinduism, Christianity, British rule, modern education and post – independence legislations have generated a level of consciousness among the tribals, which has in turn encouraged several movements. There have been movements to assert their tribal identity and political solidarity. Ecological – cultural isolation, economic backwardness and a feeling of frustration have been responsible for these movements. Those tribals who are either too isolated or too integrated with the Hindu society are not involved in these socio – cultural movements.

The Unnati Samaj, an organization established in 1912 for socio – cultural reforms, and the Adivasi Mahasabha established in 1938, aimed at revivalism in Bihar. The Jharkhand movement in 1950 was, however, started to fight land alienation, exploitation and for political solidarity among the tribes of Bihar and the adjoining states of Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. This movement ultimately made a demand for the formation of a separate state for the Adivasis of these four states.

Tribal movements encompass a very wide arena. The unique geopolitical situation and historical background need to be taken into consideration while analysing movements in the North – East, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram. Movements in these areas generally refer to cultural and political revivalism. Political autonomy, control over the forests, socio – religious, cultural and linguistic considerations have been the key factors in other tribal movements. For example, in case of the Jharkhand movement of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and M.P., the main points are related to historicity, ideology, structure, leadership and sub-regional identity. Socio – cultural movements have given primacy to status – elevation through sanskritisation.

S.M. Dubey provides a classification of tribal movements in North-East India:

1. Religious and social reform movements
2. State formation movements
3. Insurgent movements
4. Culturological movements

K.S. Singh has given detailed accounts of 36 tribal movements in India out of which 14 were in the north-east region alone. Singh classifies the various movements into:

1. Movements for political autonomy
2. Agrarian and forest based movements
3. Sanskritisation process
4. Cultural movements.

A given region may have a particular type of movement because of its specific geographical and political situation in the wider context. An all – India tribal movement has not emerged because of the diversity and unevenness among the tribe of India.

2.7 THE INTEGRATION OF THE SCHEDULED TRIBES WITH THE NON – SCHEDULED TRIBES

Today, integration of the tribals with the non – tribals is the cornerstone of the policy of the government of India. The constitutional provisions are as follow:

1. **Article 46:** “The state shall promote with special care the educational and economical interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them for social injustice and all forms of exploitation.”

2. **Article 244:** “Empowers the president to declare any areas, where there is a substantial population of tribal people, as scheduled area under the 6th schedule.”
3. **Article 275:** “ There shall be paid out of the Consolidated Fund of India as grants-in-aid of the revenues of a state such capital and recurring sums as may be necessary to enable that state to meet the costs of such schemes of development as may be undertaken by the state with the approval of the Government of India for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in that state or raising the level of administration of the Scheduled areas therein to that of the administration of the rest of that state.”

The Governors of states have been given powers to reserve seats in educational institutions and jobs in government departments and public sectors undertakings. A sum of Rs. 19.83 crores was spent in the First Five Year Plan for the welfare of scheduled tribes. This was raised to Rs. 43.00 crores and 60.43 crores in the second and the third plan respectively. This was a really meagre allocation in the plans for the welfare of the tribal people. The Fifth Year Plan made a separate sub – plan for the tribals to promote Integrated Tribal Development. Tribal Development blocks have been entrusted the responsibility of tribal welfare in Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and in other states. These provisions have certainly created social and political consciousness among the tribals and have also improved social and economic positions of some sections of the tribal population. A tribal consciousness has emerged; hence a number of tribal movements all over the country.

The tribals have come under the impact of the dominant cultural stream of India. New divisions have been created among the tribals due to cultural change in their ranks. The Bhils in Rajasthan are divided into Bhagats and non – Bhagats. The Bhagats are further divided into the Kabir – panthis and the Shambu Dal. The Non – Bhagats strive to maintain their traditional way of life. The Bhagats have adopted a Brahmanical way of life such as vegetarianism and teetotalism. The Bhagats consider themselves superior to the non –Bhagats and the Kabir – panthis consider themselves superior to the Shambu Dal. The notions of untouchability, pollution- purity and the rules of marriage such as caste endogamy, clan exogamy, hypergamy, etc have been adopted by Bhagats. Thus there are levels of integration as there are layers of tribes in India. Industrialisation in the tribal areas of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh has apparently reduced the gap between the tribals and the tribals but it also created new problems. The tribals who have been uprooted from their lands have not been absorbed in the new system. Hence, they are facing a new form of pauperisation without a traditional support base.

2.8 CONCLUSION

The constitution of India has scheduled tribes as a weaker section of the society. Tribes in India are not a monolithic lot of people. They have differences in terms of their historical backgrounds, socio – economic and cultural problems and levels of advancement. Some tribes live in forests and on hill tops, whereas others live in the plains. Some are settled agriculturalists whereas others depend upon forest produce. Some have been in close contact with wider society and have adopted the life styles of Hindus, Christians and other communities. Several provisions have been made for their overall upliftment. Efforts have been made to bring about socio – economic change to make them a part of the national mainstream by putting checks on land alienation, exploitation, indebtedness and by ensuring their increased participation in the socio – economic and political life of India. Protective discrimination isolates the tribal people from the non- tribesmen, but in course of time this due very policy would bring the tribals at par with the non-tribals. The dominant thinking today is in favour of assimilation of the tribal people into the national mainstream without any disruption.

UNIT 3 : PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS (PVTGs) IN INDIA

Structure

- 3.0 Learning objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 The Life and Livelihood Patterns of PVTGs
- 3.3 Health and Nutrition Aspect of PVTGs
- 3.4 Development Initiative for PVTGs
- 3.5 The Forest Rights Act 2006 and the PVTGs
- 3.6 Other Provisions for PVTGs
- 3.7 Challenges for PVTGs
- 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9 Key Words
- 3.10 Suggested Readings

3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit provides you the understanding about Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of India. Knowledge about their livelihood patterns including occupational structure, health and nutrition scenario and information about policy initiatives of government of India for their welfare. At the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- Locate the occupational structures of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in different parts of the country. The correlation of ecology and culture with the type of occupation they profess and the compulsions attached with it.
- Understand the real time situation of PVTGs health, including various diseases which they have developed by the passage of time and interactions with the outside world. The factors that cause under-nutrition among PVTGs.
- Find out the important developments that started taking after the enactment of Forest Rights Act, its impact over PVTGs and the present scenario.
- Learn about the major challenges that PVTGs encounter in their daily lives and how they adversely affect their survival.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) is a classification done by Indian government to identify those tribal groups who left in the realm of development.

They are the tribal communities who were socially and economically backward than the rest of tribal communities in India. They have limited accessibility to resources for development, a very low rate of literacy, and relatively small size of population varying in number to the one who are at the margins to extinction.

The government of India has constituted Debar Commission (1960-61) to study the inequalities of development among tribal communities. The Commission has submitted that few tribal communities are extremely lacking in economy, education and growth of population. Considering the recommendation, during late Five Year Plan, in year 1975, the government has identifies 52 such communities and categorized them as a sub-group within the Scheduled Tribes to be known as 'Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)'. The identification was based on recommendations of their respective States where they originally inhabited. On submissions of various State governments, the list was further expanded to include 20 such groups during Sixth Five Year Plan, 2 during Seventh Five Year Plan and 1 lastly during Eight Five Year Plan, making a total of 75 groups to be termed as PTG. The last group was Maram from Manipur which got inclusion in the list during 1993-94. Aftermath of that, no further group was added in the list.

In year 2006, the government while considering their vulnerability has rechristened their groups name to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Since then, they are known as PVTGs. The Ministry of Home Affairs, government of India has mentioned certain criteria for their identification, they are:

- Relative Physical Isolation
- Stagnant or Diminishing Population
- Very Low Level of Literacy
- Low Level of Technology associated with tradition Agricultural Stage (Hunting, Food Gathering and Shifting Cultivation) of Economy

On these bases, they are now inhabited in 18 States and Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar group of Islands.

3.2 THE LIFE AND LIVELIHOOD PATTERNS OF PVTGS

As per the census of 2001, total number of PVTGs originally residing in India are 27,68,322. Of them, mostly are located in four States of Bihar, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. But still their habitations are not confined to political boundaries. Rather their existence is trans-boundary and limited to natural environment of forests and fauna. But due to political boundaries, few groups are having status of PVTGs in one State and not the others.

Similar variations lie in their habitation patterns, where Odisha and Andhra Pradesh are having largest number of PVTG groups while Rajasthan, Manipur and Tripura

are having only one PVTG group. So, is their population, where they account in lakhs when it comes to Saharia tribe in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to a countable number of people in Senteneles, Great Andamanese and Onge tribe of Andaman Nicobar Islands. Similarly, numbers in population are visible among many PVTGs, like the one of Toda in Tamil Nadu and Toto in West Bengal.

There are immense variations in ecological proximity, subsistence patterns, technological development and living patterns of PVTGs. There are PVTGs in Andaman and Nicobar who are still surviving in pre-agricultural patterns of hunting and food-gathering while contrarily in Uttaranchal PVTG Buksa are at modern agricultural stage of evolution. The variation also lies in their interactions with other communities of the society. There are PVTGs on Andaman Nicobar who hardly interact with the people outside their tribal affinity and are apprehensive over outsiders perceiving them as intruders or probable threats to their survival. This exclusion of other communities is profound in most of PVTGs. There are few PVTGs who are having regular interactions with people outside their community.

Occupational Patterns

There are salient variations among the type of occupation PVTGs perform. Though they are conditioned due to ecological environment but socio-cultural factor do impact on the type of occupations.

The PVTGs of Andaman and Nicobar are still in the pre-agricultural existence. They usually perform hunting and gathering for their survival. Though few PVTGs like Jarwas have acquired technical skill to build metal tools and arrows, but most of them are still in primitive stage. Few Andamanese have shifted to horticulture and poultry while Nicobarese to occupation of pig farming.

The PVTGs of Andhra Pradesh are having diversified occupations. The PVTGs who reside in hilly tract are usually performing shifting cultivation as their prime occupation. They are Samanths, Gadabas, Konda Reddis and Savaras. On the other side there are PVTGs like Chenchus and Khonds who do hunting and gathering of natural products like, honey, tuber, mahua flower, tamarind etc.

In Bihar, most of PVTGs have adopted to agriculture and cultivation methods. Tribes like Birijia do agriculture with few of them engaged in hunting, fishing and food gathering. Savar tribe usually collects forests produce and honey. Asurs who were iron smelters are now doing shifting agriculture while Birhors still perform hunting gathering and manufacturing of primary products like ropes and traditional wines.

The PVTGs of Jharkhand are primarily occupied in agriculture and related services. Tribes like Dudh Kharia are performing agriculture while Dhelkis are agricultural labourers. The Kharia tribe does occupation of cottage industry while Hill Kharia and

Korwas still gathers food, do hunting and labour supply. Munda-Santhal is having occupation of labour supply in mining fields.

The PVTGs in Gujarat are associated either with sailing, fishing or in supply of labour to small or large scale industries. Prominent among them are Padhar and Siddi tribe. While Kotwalia and Kolghas who were engaged in bamboo work and frog catching have now shifted to cottage industries producing craft products like Topla and Baskets.

The two PVTGs of Karnataka, Jenu Kuruba and Koraga are food gatherers and labourers respectively. Though Jenu Kuruba are having expertise in elephant taming and Koraga in basket making but still both of them are at underdeveloped stage.

In South India, most of PVTGs were primarily food gatherers engaged in primitive occupations like fishing and hunting. They later started farming and cultivation of crops for personal and commercial purposes. Few have joined government services as peon and helper too. Among them were Cholanaikan, Kadars, Irulas, Paniyan, Toda, Kota and Kurumbas.

Tribal communities of Sahariya, Baiga, Bharia and Kamar whom except Sahariya who are found in Rajasthan, are located in Madhya Pradesh. They have not progressed much as most of them are still in food gathering stage and few have opted for agriculture and cultivation. Similarly, the primitive tribes of Maharashtra, the Katkaria, Kolam and Maria Gond are all at early stage of evolution to agriculture occupation.

The Toto tribe of West Bengal does multiple occupations ranging from agriculture to horticulture, poultry, animal husbandry and pig farming. They also supply labour to paddy farming, bamboo production and porters for fruit gardens.

The agrarian tribe Reang is having a status of PVTG in Tripura. It does perform shifting agriculture in the hill tracts called Jhum cultivation. In addition to that, they do carpentry, basket making, fishing, hunting and cattle rearing. Many of them got educated and now occupied with government positions including higher posts in beauracracy. While the only PVTG from Manipur, Marram tribe cultivate paddy in terraced fields of foothills.

The PVTGs of Odisha who were forest dwellers like Lodha and Didayi tribe have adopted agricultural practices of shifting cultivation. While other PVTGs like Kharia, Dongaria Khond and Paudi Bhuiyan were also adopting agriculture in meantime.

Most of PVTGs are in transitional phase of agriculture and cultivation with few of them is still continuing with gathering forest produce and primitive methods of production. Except few PVTGs who are now having access to education and are

entering in government jobs, most of them still lack accessibility to modern education and employment.

3.3 HEALTH AND NUTRITION ASPECT OF PVTGS

In the present era of globalization, we are witnessing fourfold development in various sectors. The developmental race has resulted in many serious outcomes for the society to pay in a longer run. It has adversely affected the lives of people in various sectors in different intensities. Health is one of such areas which got negatively affected by this pattern of development. Tribal health particularly got infested due to over interferences of people from mainstream in their lifestyles and because of their shrinking ecological landscapes. This has resulted in survival threats for tribal people and extinction for PVTGs.

Outside influences has brought alien diseases to the anatomy of PVTGs. For example, Great Andamanese have developed Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), as a result of their interactions with the outsiders. It is also found that they were consuming dangerous drugs like Smack, which was introduced to them by outsiders. It has resulted in serious outcomes for PVTGs. Jarwas, a PVTG of Andaman has encountered several epidemics like the Measles outbreak in 1999 and Mums epidemic in 2001.

The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has reported about poor condition of health and nutrition among tribal people. They are affected with numerable diseases like, malaria, tuberculosis, respiratory tract infection, diarrheal disorders and skin infections including leprosy and iron deficiency like anaemia. The diseases also vary according to the ecological habitation of the PVTGs. Like, in Madhya Pradesh, Baiga Community does have highest infant mortality rate and severe infectious diseases with considerable population been goitre affected. While in Bihar and Jharkhand Asurs are reportedly affected with malaria, dysentery, stomach-ache, bronchitis, and skin diseases. Similarly, the PVTGs of Paharias are having prevalence of foetal and infant deaths. Various scientific explanations are given to understand the plight of tribal health. The most viable explanation for these diseases lies in their genetics. Most of them are hereditary diseases carried in their genes since generations. This is due to the practice of endogamy, i.e. marriage in the same community. That is why they carry it for generation without developing any antibodies to prevent them further. A classic example is Thalassemia which is profound among PVTGs.

The PVTGs are also facing critical issues of nutrition, as they are either suffering from under-nutrition or malnutrition. This is due to retention of subsistence economy with traditional way of life and irregular eating habits. The food consumption by PVTGs is critically less which leads to under-nutrition of most of them. The ICMR

has reported that Khonds are severely underweight due to their customary practices of low level of food consumptions. Other PVTGs like Bondo, Didayi, Juang, Khutia Gonds etc. are also facing the same issues. Interesting, the PVTGs in Andaman Nicobar are now having issues of overweight. This is caused due to their less height and composite physical stature with improved consumption habits due to governmental supports.

When it comes to health and nutritional factors of PVTGs, intervention at any level itself falls into a dichotomous situation. If government intervenes to ameliorate their plight, their habitation get adversely affected and result in harmful impact on them. And if no intervention is done and PVTGs are left like the same, it will be injustice on them. So, a middle path is required to be fulfilled. An approach of limited intervention without disturbing their surroundings will be beneficial for them. It must be a people centric and bottom-up approach respecting their culture and habitat. Community based efforts to control diseases among tribal community while improving their nutritional health will also be effective in a longer run.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE FOR PVTGS

The government of India while considering the socio-cultural milieu of PVTGs has started taking initiatives for the development of PVTGs. On April 1, 2008 a Scheme for Development of Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) was came into effect. Under the scheme a holistic approach for socio-economic development of PVTGs was undertaken with full autonomy given to States. They are the agencies for deciding core areas of initiatives for PVTGs. Major Priority areas were housing for PVTGs, sustainable agricultural, cattle production, access of non-conventional energy resources and connectivity through roads.

The Scheme for Development of Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) is a centrally funded independent scheme. It does not overlap with other governmental schemes. It requires State initiatives, to draft Conservation-cum-Development (CCD) Plan, with defined core areas, financial costs involved and the agencies responsible for execution of the plan. The proposed plan is for average five years period, to be sanctioned by an independent Expert Committee, appointed under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

The Conservation-cum-Development (CCD) Plans are left entirely to the State governments as they know better about the problems of PVTGs residing in their territorial boundaries. Central government funds these initiatives after thorough scrutiny. But the allocations of funds are not static and hence there lies confusion. At times proposal does not get funds which it required for implementation of a plan and many times there left abundance of funds in balance with shortage of proposals from the State governments.

The government of India has adopted CCD strategy for upliftment of PVTGs. In its holistic approach to conserve population and other attributes of PVTGs, States are working for conservation of their ecological habitat and cultural heritage. The PVTGs has evolved a rich cultural heritage nurtured through many generations. It is an asset to keep cultural diversity, traditional knowledge systems and sustainable development secure for future generations. So, the bottom up approach to facilitate development without disturbing ecological habitat and natural surroundings is prioritized. This will help in survival of PVTGs with inclusion of quality attributes like medicinal treatment, technological tools and energy resources. But it is not left without criticism. There are critics who contradict government over its strategies of preserving ecological and cultural heritage of PVTGs. They argue against the preservation strategy, claiming that preservation in longer run will result in isolation of these communities. This will hamper their growth and bring them into margins of the mainstream. Disparities will widen in their standards of living and lifestyles which ultimately make them dependent on the mainstream. Further, the State failure in preserving ecological habitat will ultimately isolate these communities from the mainstream, which will increase their miseries. Another argument is that preservation of cultural attributes of PVTGs is like keeping them as exhibits of live museums. Preservation of their art and artefacts as tools of cultural identity will enable only the dominant to claim their supremacy over the tribal obsolete. This leads to cultural subjugation of tribal communities in general and PVTGs in particular.

But government is actively promoting policies and programmes for PVTGs. A National Advisory Council (NAC), under the leadership of Congress president Sonia Gandhi has given numerable recommendations for holistic development and protection of socio-cultural heritage of PVTGs. Following were the major recommendations of NAC:

- To provide all legal rights to PVTGs as enshrined under Forest Rights Act (FRA). This will prevent any violation to their rights to natural habitat and other unethical intervention by the outsiders.
- Social Audits of all Developmental Plans. This will ensure that public policy measures are reaching to lowest section of the society. It will further help in measuring efficacy and accountability of the programmes.
- Special Census to ascertain the number of PVTGs. This will help in accessing real time situation of the PVTGs population, the urgency of efforts needed and to find out ways for steady implementation of policies for their health, education and housings.
- Efforts should be laid down to recognize the customary rights of PVTGs over their habitat. This will empower them from any fear of displacement and relocation of their settlements.

- To ensure that no development can take place on PVTGs land and habitat without their free, prior and informed consent.
- To make a Vulnerable Index for each PVTG. This will help in evaluating development needs of one group vis-à-vis the others. It will also help in finding specific nature of their vulnerability.
- To study the factors causing drastic decline of PVTGs population and to find out ways to control the decline. This will include all strategies for preventing diseases and malnutrition among them.
- To conserve traditional skills and indigenous knowledge of PVTGs. This will help in conserving sustainable development without harming ecological surroundings.
- To find out if PVTGs are having any debt due from moneylenders and actions must be taken to make them debt free.
- Determined efforts should be made to ensure that several States which have not yet recognized the habitat rights of PVTGs do so in a time bound manner.
- Institutionalize participatory process within existing structures and programmes placing PVTGs at higher priority.

The recommendations are under implementation to bring out positive results for the PVTGs.

Check Your Progress I

1) Which PVTG has abandoned the traditional works of bamboo making and frog catching?

Ans. _____

2) What is the traditional occupation of Toto Tribe in West Bengal?

Ans. _____

3) Which PVTG is facing the problems of overweight among their community?

Ans. _____

3.5 THE FOREST RIGHTS ACT 2006 AND THE PVTGS

One of the landmark developments for PVTGs is the enactment of The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act in year 2006. It is first time in the legal history of India that PVTGs were entitled with forest and habitat rights. Section 2 (h) of Forest Rights Act defines habitat, as ‘the area comprising the customary habitat and such other habitats in reserved and protected forests of primitive tribal groups and pre-agricultural communities and other forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes’. This has broadened the definition

encapsulating all manifolds of tribal communities, scheduled, non-scheduled, de-notified, pre-agricultural and the PVTGs under right to habitat. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has confirmed that all customary rights of tribal people over ecological habitat remain intact, without intervention. The rights will continue to exist even in case of conflict over habitats where forest and non-forest areas converge. It has ensured following major rights to tribal household and community:

- Right to live and to cultivate forestland
- Right to forest produce, water bodies and grazing land
- Right to protect, regenerate, conserve forest and forest resources
- Non-transferable customary land rights

With these entitlements, successful efforts were laid down for tribal communities in general and PVTGs in particular. The Act has established democratic forest governance while transferring forest rights and management authority to the forest dwellers. It has also empowered Gram Sabha in reclaiming forest rights for the tribal communities. They are empowered to take decision over any development plans to operationalize in tribal habitat or forest areas. They are made key institutions in ensuring that no tribal communities get displaced or relocated for any unauthorized developmental project. This is a historic initiative that has empowered Gram Sabha for local community participation.

The FRA has flooded Gram Sabha with numerable applications reclaiming tribal land and habitat in various parts of the country. This has resulted in transformative changes for PVTGs in selected States of India. Maharashtra and Odisha were two major States where positive changes were witnessed. Tribal communities of the two States evolved in forest production, preservation and commercial activities like selling Bamboo, Tendu Leave etc. They have helped in preserving ecological balance, controlling forest fires and prohibition of destructive activities in natural habitats. A major share of these transformative practices goes to the initiatives of civil societies and non-governmental organizations which have worked tirelessly in past few years. But in short span of time, the FRA itself underwent criticism from various fold of society. It was alleged of failure in accomplishing mandate of providing various rights to the tribal communities.

First, it is alleged of policy failure in executing the provisions of FRA over coordination of various governmental departments. When tribal communities submitted claim for land or habitat rights, they were essentially required to get clearances and certification from various agencies. These agencies are not having any common database. In absence of that, many claims got into conflict and overlapped. Second, the feudal mindset of dominant communities previous residing in forest and rural areas has restricted PVTGs to legally occupy the ownership of land and habitat. They prevented vulnerable people to occupy the resources which were under their illegitimate control.

Third, the bureaucratic structure has further brought challenges for PVTGs, as most of them are uneducated and not aware of the procedural paper work. This has debarred many of them to apply for their entitlements.

Fourth, the FRA does not have provision for redressal mechanism. In absence of any redressal agency PVTGs found themselves vulnerable to fight against the dominant communities.

Fifth, the Act has not provided provision for transfer of ownership to women. This has restricted women to become legal heir of property. Hence, FRA defeated the purpose of equality and gender justice.

Sixth, it was difficult to recognize land rights to PVTGS who perform shifting agriculture. Mobility of tribal communities from one place to another has made it difficult to associate them with a specified habitat.

Seventh, is reluctance in recognizing tribal land rights in Protected Areas of Wild Life Sanctuaries and National Parks. Law enforcing agencies hesitated in sanctioning rights in those protected areas to the PVTGs.

So, overall the provisions of FRA were not universally implemented in spirit and action. Except Maharashtra and Odisha, PVTGs hardly got their entitlements to land and habitat.

3.6 OTHER PROVISIONS FOR PVTGS

The Government of India has various plans and policies for welfare of tribal communities including PVTGs. Education is one of the priority areas. For empowering tribal people, government has launched National Scholarship Scheme, National Fellowship, Hostels, Free Coaching, Eklavya Model Residential School and educational loans at subsidized rates.

The vulnerability of tribal people is due to poverty factors. Addressing these, it has been initiated to provide easy loans and support through various schemes and subsidies. Stand-up India, Mudra Scheme, Land Purchase Scheme, etc. are few launched for their support.

Infrastructural support is through development of irrigation facility, safe drinking water, accessibility of electricity and connectivity through roads. Health and social security are also in priority areas.

The PVTGs are in special focus wherein they were provided support through Special Central Assistance under Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), Grants provided under Article 275

(1) of Indian Constitution and various grants-in-aid to voluntary organizations working for the cause of tribal welfare. A National Scheduled Tribes Finance & Development Corporation (NSTFDC), a non-profit organization was also set-up to provide financial assistance for educational and economic development.

Similarly, the policy initiative of government does have special mention of tribal welfare, wherever they come into the picture.

3.7 CHALLENGES FOR PVTGS

The government of India is employing various strategies to uplift PVTGs from their poor state of affair. There are key challenges to those initiatives, which have to be addressed positively. Following are the major challenges for PVTGs to face them in near future.

Poverty

The PVTGs were pre-agricultural communities engaged in hunting and gathering. They have recently shifted to agricultural and cultivation. Hence, they are having subsistence economy. Their earnings are limited. Their consumption habits are also limited. But other necessities do require monetary support. PVTGs are economically very poor and surviving in the minimal. Poverty is rampant among them. This has prevented them from having access to other resources like education, housing and medical treatment. Lacks of resources have further restrained them from growing and coming out of their primitive stage.

Population Growth

The PVTGs are having erratic population growth. Among the various reasons, the dominant one is high mortality rate among them. Due to lack of medical care there is high infant mortality rate both pre and post-natal condition. Poor medical care has also resulted in unnatural death before time. Drastic decline of population is alarming for PVTGs. Many tribal communities are at the verge of extinction.

Education

The education status of PVTGs is very grim. Except few tribal groups who are having resources to educate their children most of them are extremely poor and cannot afford education for their children. Their remoteness is also a barrier in having accessibility of education. Though government has built schools in every part of the country, still few geographical terrains are having limited schools. Another factor is distinctness of their language. Most tribal populations are having their own language. They find it difficult to cope with Hindi or other languages enforced on them through the curricula. Government intervention has resulted in increased number of PVTGs enrolment in school education. But still their presence is negative in higher educational system.

Employment

From illiteracy to less educated, PVTGs are in the stage of learning. They have entered in the basic structure of education. Since their numbers were less in higher education, they were unable to enter in the employment sector. Recent government interventions in providing vocational and skill based education has helped in producing technical and skilled people. This has transformed the situation. Now, they are entering into employment sectors. Many are empowered enough and are self-employed. But employment remains a critical challenge for these communities.

Extinction of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices

The initiatives for development of PVTGs were based on the philosophy to bring them in the mainstream. This ultimately results in breaking barriers lying between tribal and the mainstream which further result in cultural interaction among the two different communities. At the end acculturation will happen and the dominant culture will overtake the tribal non-dominant one. In a longer run, indigenous knowledge systems and practices of the tribal communities will become obsolete. There will be an end to diversity of culture and sustainable development. It will harm both the human and ecological diversity and environment. Acculturation will eat the indigenous knowledge systems and practices.

Endangered Languages

One major drawback of acculturation process will be end of diversified languages. Since the population of PVTGs is drastically declining, the number of people speaking tribal languages will also vanish. With no speaker, the languages will die their own death. We are already at the verge of losing many tribal languages. Languages encompass rich heritage of any society in a given period of time. It is true heritage of mankind. Nothing can compensate the loss of language.

Displacement, Relocation and Survival

Various large scale developmental plans and industrial setups have already encroached the tribal landscape. There are reported incidences where tribal communities were forcibly displaced from their land and resettled to a new place. Tribal communities are emotionally attached with their land and habitat. Moreover, PVTGs, who are still surviving in various stages of primitive culture, are deeply connected with their land and habitat. Any displacement and relocation to new place will only bring survival threats to these communities. It is very difficult for them to adapt to new unfamiliar surroundings and ecological environment. It is a direct assault on their survival.

With these challenges, it is very critical for PVTGs to sustain survival. Government interventions are expecting positive outcomes through its holistic efforts. Still more efforts are required to develop PVTGs in India.

Check Your Progress II

7) What is the purpose of Vulnerable Index (VI) proposed under recommendations of National Advisory Council (NAC)?

Ans. _____

8) Which institution is entrusted for claiming legal entitlements for PVTGs under Forests Rights Act 2006?

Ans. _____

9) Which two States in India have resulted in positive outcomes after the implementation of Forest Rights Act 2006?

Ans. _____

3.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have understood about various aspects related to PVTGs, including their lives and livelihood patterns. We got to know about the challenges and hardships of their lives, including health and nutritional aspects and their occupational structures. Though FRA has granted legal entitlements for land rights to PVTGs but still it's a difficult task to accomplish.

Tribal people do have customary rights over land and habitation. They have sustained them for decades in their traditional knowledge systems. Their way of life is based on the practices of sustainable development. We have many things to learn from them. But that can be done when we should take care of them. Rather than leaving those on themselves struggling with various challenges, our policies must help them for development. We must also not keep them as living museums of art and artefacts. They are part and parcel of our society. Our society has harm them in past. It is our duty to rectify the same. The bottom-up approach is the best way to draw positive results. Government has already initiated various plans to facilitate developmental initiative for PVTGs. The need of hour is to implement them in full spirit and in transparent manner.

3.9 KEY WORDS

Jhum Cultivation: A type of agriculture practice where cultivation is done while clearing an area of land for few years and then shifted to another land by clearing the same. The land is left vacant to get recharge naturally. And shifting is done with entire livestock called transhumance.

Endogamy: A marriage practice where an individual marry only in his/her clan, caste or ethnic community in their close relationship. In this practice individuals from other communities are exclusively rejected for marriage.

Protected Areas: Those areas which have valuable ecological wealth of flora and fauna and which require conservation under law are recognized as protected areas.

Acculturation: It is a process where an individual undergo cultural exchanges where he encounters new cultural attributes in a new place while preserving his own values and traditions with him. In this process he adopts, acquires and adjusts to a new and dominant cultural setting. Here he tries to balance between the two cultural composites.

3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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