



# BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI-620 024

TAMIL NADU, INDIA

**Programme: MSW**

**Course Title : Tribal Community Development**

**Course Code : CC-12a**

**UNIT 1**

**Tribal Community Development**

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# Tribal Community Development

- **Unity – I**
- **Tribes:** Definition, concept, characteristics of the tribal community; nomadic and denotified tribes; History of Indian Tribes and tribes in Tamil Nadu; Regional distribution of tribes and Nehru's Panchsheel Principles of tribes.

# Definition of Tribal Community

- **Definition of Tribal Community**

- 1. Sociological Definition:**

1. A tribe is a social group primarily organized on the basis of kinship and sharing a common culture, language, and geographical area.

- 2. Anthropological Definition:**

1. A tribe is a group of people who live and work together in a close-knit community, often maintaining traditional ways of life and practices.

- 3. Legal Definition:**

1. In India, tribes are recognized as **Scheduled Tribes (STs)** under Article 342 of the Constitution, which lists them based on historical and cultural criteria.

# Concept of Tribal Community

- **Concept of Tribal Community**

- 1. Traditional Lifestyle:**

1. Tribes represent an ancient form of social organization, often rooted in a symbiotic relationship with nature.

- 2. Distinct Identity:**

1. Tribal communities maintain their own unique traditions, customs, and rituals that differentiate them from mainstream societies.

- 3. Collectivism:**

1. They typically follow a collective approach to decision-making and resource sharing, ensuring community well-being.

- 4. Self-Sufficiency:**

1. Tribes often rely on traditional occupations like agriculture, hunting, or handicrafts for their sustenance.

- 5. Adaptation to Modernity:**

1. While preserving their cultural heritage, many tribes are gradually adapting to modern education, technology, and governance.

# Characteristics of Tribal Communities

## 1. Geographical Isolation:

1. Tribes are often located in remote and hilly areas, which limits their interaction with mainstream society.

## 2. Cultural Homogeneity:

1. Tribal communities share a common culture, including language, art, and religious beliefs.

## 3. Simple Economy:

1. They primarily follow a subsistence economy based on agriculture, forestry, and allied activities.

## 4. Kinship-Based Organization:

1. Social relationships and leadership are often organized around family and kinship ties.

## 5. Common Language or Dialect:

1. Tribes often have their own language or dialect, which is integral to their identity.

## 6. Distinct Political Organization:

1. Tribal communities often have their own governance systems, with leaders chosen based on age, wisdom, or lineage.

## 7. Spiritual Connection with Nature:

1. Tribes often consider natural elements like rivers, mountains, and forests sacred and central to their cultural identity.

## 8. Resistance to Change:

1. Many tribes resist external influences to preserve their traditional way of life.

# Nomadic Tribes

## 1. Definition:

1. Nomadic tribes are communities that move from one place to another rather than settling permanently. They typically migrate in search of livelihood, grazing land for animals, or seasonal opportunities.

## Key Features

- **Lifestyle:** Semi-permanent or non-permanent dwellings like tents or huts.
- **Occupations:** Herding, hunting, gathering, and traditional crafts.
- **Economic Activities:** Many are involved in occupations like animal rearing, salt trade, or seasonal labor.
- **Cultural Identity:** Rich traditions of oral storytelling, music, and dance.
- **Challenges:**
  - Lack of recognition of their land rights.
  - Difficulty accessing education, healthcare, and basic amenities.
  - Social marginalization and economic insecurity.
- **Examples in India:**
  - **Banjaras:** Known for their bullock caravans and trade activities.
  - **Gaddis:** Shepherds from Himachal Pradesh.
  - **Gujjars:** Pastoralists in Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan.

## Denotified Tribes (DNTs)

### 1. Definition:

1. Denotified tribes are communities that were previously classified as "criminal tribes" under the British colonial **Criminal Tribes Act of 1871** but were "de-notified" after India gained independence in 1952.

### 2. Historical Context:

1. The British labeled several communities as "criminal" due to their nomadic lifestyle and perceived threat to colonial order.
2. Post-independence, the Act was repealed, but the stigma and discrimination continued.

### 3. Key Features:

1. **Historical Marginalization:** Deep-rooted social prejudice and exclusion.
2. **Employment:** Many have historically faced restrictions on employment and integration into mainstream society.
3. **Current Status:** Often face economic hardships and lack of representation in development programs.

### 4. Challenges:

1. Persistent stigma of being labeled as "criminal tribes."
2. Inadequate access to education, healthcare, and social welfare schemes.
3. Lack of proper documentation and recognition.

### 5. Examples in India:

1. **Lambadas:** Found in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
2. **Nats:** Known for their acrobatics and performances.
3. **Sansis:** Associated with Rajasthan and Punjab.



## **Government Initiatives for Nomadic and Denotified Tribes**

### **1. Development Programs:**

- 1. National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT):** Established to study and recommend measures for these communities.

### **2. Special Schemes:**

1. Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNT students.
2. Venture Capital Fund for economic development of DNTs.

### **3. Policy Focus:**

1. Ensuring social inclusion, access to education, and economic opportunities.
2. Recognition and preservation of their cultural heritage.

## **History of Indian Tribes and tribes in Tamil Nadu**

- Indian tribes have a rich and diverse history that predates recorded history. They form an integral part of India's cultural and social fabric. Tribes in India are often referred to as "Adivasis," meaning original inhabitants. The tribal communities have distinct languages, cultures, and traditions, shaped by their unique interactions with nature and their environment.
- Historically, Indian tribes were self-sufficient, relying on agriculture, hunting, gathering, and forest resources. Their social structures were egalitarian, and they lived in harmony with nature.

## **History of Indian Tribes and tribes in Tamil Nadu**

- However, during colonial rule, their lands and resources were exploited, leading to the disruption of their traditional livelihoods and cultures. Post-independence, the Indian government recognized the need to protect the rights and identity of tribal communities, leading to the formulation of policies and constitutional safeguards, including Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

## Tribes in Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu is home to 36 tribal communities, officially recognized as Scheduled Tribes. Some major tribes in Tamil Nadu include:

### 1. Toda

1. Location: Nilgiri Hills
2. Known for: Unique lifestyle, dairy farming, and embroidery work.

### 2. Badaga

1. Location: Nilgiri Hills
2. Known for: Agriculture and distinct cultural practices.

### 3. Irula

1. Location: Coimbatore, Erode, and Dharmapuri districts
2. Known for: Snake and rat catching, traditional healing practices.

### 4. Kota

1. Location: Nilgiri Hills
2. Known for: Pottery, blacksmithing, and music.

### 5. Paniyan

1. Location: Western Ghats regions in Nilgiris and Coimbatore
2. Known for: Labor-intensive activities, including plantation work.

### 6. Kattunayakan

1. Location: Western and Eastern Ghats
2. Known for: Hunting, honey collection, and forest-based livelihoods.

## Regional Distribution of Tribes in India

- **Regional Distribution of Tribes in India**
- Tribes in India are spread across various regions, with significant populations in:
  1. **North-East India:** Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, and Assam have diverse tribes like Nagas, Mizos, and Khasis.
  2. **Central India:** Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha are home to Gond, Munda, and Santhal tribes.
  3. **Western India:** Rajasthan and Gujarat have Bhil and Garasia tribes.
  4. **Southern India:** Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh have Toda, Irula, and Chenchu tribes.
  5. **Andaman and Nicobar Islands:** Tribes like Onge, Jarwa, and Sentinelese are found here.

## Nehru's Panchsheel Principles for Tribes

- **Nehru's Panchsheel Principles for Tribes**
- The Panchsheel Principles for tribal development, articulated by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, emphasize the protection and progress of tribal communities. These principles are:
  - 1. Respect for Tribal Rights:** Ensure tribes control their lands and resources, with minimal interference.
  - 2. No Imposition:** Avoid imposing alien values or administration on tribal communities.
  - 3. Development Along Traditional Lines:** Integrate modern development with respect for tribal culture.
  - 4. Training and Building Leadership:** Encourage tribal leaders to take charge of development within their communities.
  - 5. Focus on Human Development:** Improve health, education, and economic opportunities while preserving tribal identity.

## **Jawaharlal Nehru's Panchsheel Principles for Tribal Development**

- Jawaharlal Nehru's Panchsheel Principles for Tribal Development outline a comprehensive framework aimed at safeguarding the rights, culture, and dignity of India's tribal communities.
- These principles, rooted in the ideals of non-interference and respect for tribal autonomy, were articulated to guide India's approach toward tribal welfare and development.
- The principles are as follows: Nehru's Panchsheel Principles  
Respect for Tribal Culture and Traditions Tribal rights to their land, forests, and cultural heritage should be protected. Their way of life and traditions should be preserved without imposing external systems.
- Avoid Imposing Unsuitable Schemes Development projects should align with the tribal ethos rather than forcibly introducing alien practices. The administration should avoid disrupting tribal life unnecessarily.
- Development Along Traditional Lines of Strength Modernization should harmonize with tribal strengths and cultural practices.
- Efforts must support their self-reliance, focusing on agriculture, crafts, and traditional knowledge. Leadership Building Among Tribals Encourage tribal leadership to emerge from within the community.
- Tribal leaders should guide development efforts, ensuring inclusiveness and long-term sustainability.
- Human Development Focus Enhance the quality of life through better healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities. Develop resources and infrastructure without compromising tribal autonomy or exploiting their resources.