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PAPER -1

PHYSICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Forensic Anthropology in a Changing Climate

In 2018, a wildfire swept through Northern California. Forensic anthropologists were called in to identify skeletal remains in a devastated recovery scene. The devastating effects of this fire are inextricably tied to both climate change and behavior. The western United States has experienced warmer temperatures and prolonged dry seasons with interspersed winter rain that serves to increase the fuel load through plant growth. These climatic variables coupled with increased development in once rural areas set the stage for wildfires to have a devastating impact, with catastrophic results in California.

Based on lessons learned from the logistical challenges associated with recoveries from these fires, we and other anthropologists are also helping to develop legislation to shape future responses to similar mass disasters, including writing guidelines for wildfire scene recovery, mass fatality management for wildfire-related fatalities, and laboratory identification procedures. As climate change continues to impact cultures and environments, anthropology as a holistic discipline, and the skills and knowledge of anthropologists, will become increasingly important. For example, anthropologists can study the prehistory and history of climate and fire management through archaeological and paleoenvironmental work.

They can also explore the global impacts of climate change on human migration and conflict. Through our combined efforts, anthropologists are in an excellent position to assist in the immediate mitigation of challenges as well as speak to past climate change, biological impacts, and the cultural consequences of this devastating global crisis. Forensic anthropologists are

increasingly being called on for their skills to assist in mass fatality incidents. With escalating devastation related to climate change and human behavior, demand will only continue to grow.

Large wildfires like those seen in California and in Australia over the last several years, are only one component of these disasters. There are also likely to be extreme weather events, droughts, floods, and landslides related to climate change. While forensic anthropologists are prepared to offer their skills in these trying times, the hope is that we will not have to. During recovery operations, anthropologists were deployed as a means of triage to quickly identify human remains from nonhuman remains or other construction debris, and thus identify areas for concentrated recovery efforts.

For example, in some cases animal remains such as pets or other wildlife were found in the same area as cow bones from a kitchen refrigerator or deer antlers used as home decoration. It was important for recovery teams to quickly identify material as nonhuman remains and be able to move to the next area of interest. Once human remains were identified, anthropologists were embedded with coroner, sheriff, or search and rescue units to assist in the recovery. As forensic anthropologists, we are also trained to systematically process, recover, and document the remains and other relevant material to aid in an identification. This material could include surgical implants (a knee or hip replacement) or other personal items on the individual (documentation or jewelry). Each of these skills supports efficient recovery efforts as well as providing necessary documentation to assist in subsequent osteological analyses. Forensic anthropologists were also involved in overall planning and logistics to support recovery efforts, including helping to manage individual teams from the incident command center.

2. Gene Editing: Do We Have The Right to Genetically Enhance Our Children?

Technological advancements have blurred the borders of natural biological processes by giving humans more control. One such area is that of gene

editing that allows us to modify the child's genetic make up to not only prevent diseases, and lead to a healthier life, but also personality traits for a more fulfilling life. However, this raises question on ethics, consent of the child and rights of parents. RAGHAV AHOOJA, addresses this issue with the lens of state involvement in controlling the private realm. E are at crossroads wherein we may be able to customize and design the futures of our future generations.

Lawmakers, thus, need to solve the ethical dilemmas brought about by such giant scientific leaps. Even though it may sound like science fiction, the future is here. Gene editing for therapeutic purposes (namely gene therapy) is being conducted for the removal of diseases in humans and fetuses both. When changes are made to the somatic cells, the modifications aren't hereditary. However, when the changes are made to the sperm, egg, or embryo, the modifications are transferred on to the next generation. It is done through a process called 'germline' gene editing. It seems like German philosopher Nietzsche's post-human concept of Übermensch (translated as beyond-man or superman) might become real. Using a technology known as CRISPR, one can not only treat diseases but also customize a baby in terms of intelligence, athleticism, and so on. This can permanently enhance the lineage of the family.

Law and Gene Editing Somatic gene editing has been approved in countries like the United States, although with restrictions. It is for the Courts and lawmakers to decide whether this right to 'enhance' children for their own welfare falls within the right to privacy of the parents, or whether the state has a right to curtail such an action.

According to American jurisprudence, there is a private realm of family life which the state cannot enter. Yet time and again the state has entered this realm, claiming a legitimate interest in regulating the family, especially for the welfare of the child. Thus, whilst there exists a right to privacy under the Fourteenth Amendment, it is not absolute. In the famous case of Roe v. Wade, the United States Supreme Court held that the right to abortion is embedded in the right to privacy of the parent bearing the child. While the judgment was pro-choice, gene editing doesn't quite fit the bifurcated and antagonistic pro-choice v. pro-life debate.

It gives parents the choice to genetically edit their children, and the aim of such editing inter alia is to eradicate disease and enhance children for their own welfare. Germany, as opposed to the US, recognises the unborn as an individual with a “genetically determined” identity, which is unique and inseparable. According to German courts, as the unborn baby grows, it does not only develop into a human being but develops as a human being and is worthy of human dignity. Such human dignity would also include the right to live a dignified life, which is free of disease. Therefore, a blanket ban on gene editing would be violative of human dignity. It is quite clear that therapeutic gene editing is not violative of human dignity, insofar its aim is to eradicate disease. However, such human dignity also includes the right to free development of personality. A plain reading of the German constitutional text would suggest that non-therapeutic editing for personality factors is violative of human dignity. But to the contrary, heritable gene editing for purposes such as personality building will be permissible for strengthening the autonomy of the child.

Furthermore, it must be for the welfare of the child and must not restrict the free development of their personality. A thumb rule could be – whether the child would subsequently consent to such a modification. In India, guidelines permitting development of therapeutic gene editing products were introduced. Currently, heritable gene editing can only be done for purposes of experimentation and the embryo cannot have a life beyond 14 days. Thus, heritable gene editing is yet not fully permitted in India. However, there is scope as the Indian Supreme Court in *K.S. Puttaswamy* (2017) recognised that the right to privacy encompasses family affairs and childrearing. This would possibly entail the parents’ right to enhance their child as an extension of their right to choose.

Child, State and Parents in Gene Editing It is an established position in law that technology mustn’t be prohibited due to a mere possibility of harm. Rather, a positivist approach must be adopted so as to do the greatest good to the greatest number. In fact, a recent report by a German government-appointed council of experts stated that heritable gene editing is not violative of human dignity. Further, a joint statement by the councils of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany stated that heritable gene editing is

permissible. However, there must be a risk assessment and the risk must be brought down to a minimum acceptable level.

Thus, there is a tripartite relationship of the right of the parents to choose the genetic make-up of their children, the right of the state to regulate such an act, and the right of the unborn baby to consent to such editing. The American Supreme Court in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* has reiterated that the matters involving the intimate choices of a person are central to dignity and autonomy protected under 'liberty' enshrined in the American Constitution. And that at the heart of this liberty lies the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life, without the interference of the state.

Where does that leave us? Ultra-modern technologies such as artificial wombs make one think whether a birth is really an event, or a 'process', and if so then where does the 'process' begin? Partial ectogenesis (the growth of a baby outside the womb) is already happening. But in time, we might be able to carry out full ectogenesis. As the reliability of such technologies increases, so does their capability. The potential to live outside the mother's womb as opposed to the usual 24 weeks would begin right from the stage of development of the foetus, which is at 8 weeks.

Further, with the help of biotech, the ability of an unborn baby to live outside the mother's womb might begin right at fertilisation. The American Courts have held that an individual whether single or married has the right to privacy which the state cannot infringe. Thus, even a single parent, out of wedlock, can bear such a child and the right to genetically edit unborn babies would be extended to them. The mother and father would be on an equal footing while deciding whether to genetically edit the baby or not.

SOCIO – CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Project ELLORA to preserve 'rare' Indian languages with AI

Researchers at the Microsoft Research (MSR) lab in India have been working towards creating Project ELLORA.

Project ELLORA:

- **Aim:** To bring 'rare' Indian languages online.
- It is also known as **Enabling Low Resource Languages** that was launched in 2015.
- It is a **digital resource** for **Indian languages** that do **not** have enough presence **online**.
- Some of the languages that's its researching includes: **Gondi, Mundari, and Idu Mishmi**.

Gondi:

- It is a **South-Central Dravidian** language spoken by **Gond** tribes.
- It is spoken in **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh** and **Telangana**.
- It is written in **Devanagari** and **Telugu** scripts.

Mundari:

- It belongs to **Austroasiatic language** family spoken by the **Munda tribes**.
- It is spoken in **Jharkhand, Odisha** and **West Bengal**.
- **Scripts: Mundari bani**.
- It is written in the **Devanagari, Odia, Bengali,** and **Latin** writing systems.

Idu Mishmi:

- It is spoken in **Arunachal Pradesh** and in **Tibet Autonomous Region, China**.
- It uses the **Tibetan script** and **Idu Azobra script**.
- It is also known as **Sulikata, Midu, Mindri** and **Mithu**.

How is ELLORA creating a language dataset?

- The researchers are mapping out resources, including printed literature, to create a dataset to train their AI model.
- The team is also working with these communities on the project.

- By involving the community in the data collection process, researchers hope to create a dataset that is both accurate and culturally relevant.

2. Adivasis, Dalits, Muslims have lower life expectancy than higher-caste Hindus, study reveals



Difference among Dalits, Adivasis and higher-caste Hindus is comparable to the Black-White gap in the US

Adivasis, Dalits and Muslims are three of India's most disadvantaged groups and they have a lower life expectancy than "higher-caste" Hindus, a new study showed.

The report highlighted the impact of discrimination and social exclusion on health disparities. Adivasis have a life-expectancy over four years lower, Dalits more than three years lower and Muslims almost a year lower than that of upper-caste Hindus, according to the study.

The study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* of the United States of America (PNAS), a peer-reviewed journal, in March 2022, is authored by experts affiliated with the Research Institute for

Compassionate Economics, a non-profit organisation focused on health and well-being in India.

The relatively smaller gap between life expectancy of Muslims and higher-caste Hindus is largely due to lower exposure to open defecation among Muslim children, lower rates of cervical cancers among Muslim women, lower consumption of alcohol and fewer suicide, the report said.

The difference in life expectancy of Dalits and Adivasis in comparison to higher-caste Hindus is “comparable to the Black-White gap in the US in absolute magnitude,” the authors wrote.

The study assessed data from India’s Annual Health Survey, 2010-2011, focussing on nine states – Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand – representing 48.5 per cent of India’s population.

The researchers noted:

Economic status explains less than half of these gaps. These large disparities underscore parallels between diverse systems of discrimination akin to racism. They highlight the global significance of addressing social inequality in India.

The impact of social exclusion as a result of one’s religion, caste or indigenous group on health and access to healthcare is an underexplored topic in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC).

“Patterns of disparities may be distinct in LMICs because population health is poorer, social safety nets are less robust, health care is less accessible and mortality risk-factors differ,” said the report. Thus, bridging the gap is essential, it added.

Life expectancy of upper-caste Hindus in the nine states was higher than the all-India life expectancy in 2010. Moreover, the same indicator for Adivasis and Dalits “are lower than those observed for all of India in 1996-2000, more than ten years before the survey.”

The study also found a marginal difference in life expectancy based on sex. Life expectancy of Adivasi men was five years lower and of Adivasi women four years lower than higher-caste Hindus, the data showed. There was no difference in life expectancy between Dalit women and men.

Among the nine states, Assam recorded the highest life expectancy for the Adivasi population, while Madhya Pradesh recorded the lowest, said the report. “The Dalit population recorded the highest life expectancy in Jharkhand and the lowest in Uttar Pradesh. For the Muslim population, life expectancy was the highest in Rajasthan and lowest in Uttar Pradesh.

“From a policy perspective, these findings suggest that population health interventions that explicitly challenge social disadvantages are essential because addressing economic inequality may not be sufficient,” the study noted in conclusion.

3. Regular climbing behaviour in a human ancestor

A new study led by the University of Kent has found evidence that human ancestors as recent as two million years ago may have regularly climbed trees. Walking on two legs has long been a defining feature to differentiate modern humans, as well as extinct species on our lineage (aka hominins), from our closest living ape relatives: chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans.

This new research, based on analysis of fossil leg bones, provides evidence that a hominin species (believed to be either *Paranthropus robustus* or early *Homo*) regularly adopted highly flexed hip joints; a posture that in other non-human apes is associated with climbing trees. These findings came from analysing and comparing the internal bone structures of two fossil leg bones from South Africa, discovered over 60 years ago and believed to have lived between 1 and 3 million years ago.

For both fossils, the external shape of the bones were very similar showing a more human-like than ape-like hip joint, suggesting they were both walking on two legs. The researchers examined the internal bone structure because it remodels during life based on how individuals use their limbs.

Unexpectedly, when the team analysed the inside of the spherical head of the femur, it showed that they were loading their hip joints in different ways.

The research project was led by Dr Leoni Georgiou, Dr Matthew Skinner and Professor Tracy Kivell at the University of Kent's School of Anthropology and Conservation, and included a large international team of biomechanical engineers and palaeontologists.

These results demonstrate that novel information about human evolution can be hidden within fossil bones that can alter our understanding of when, where and how we became the humans we are today. Dr Georgiou said: 'It is very exciting to be able to reconstruct the actual behaviour of these individuals who lived millions of years ago and every time we CT scan a new fossil it is a chance to learn something new about our evolutionary history.'

Dr Skinner said: 'It has been challenging to resolve debates regarding the degree to which climbing remained an important behaviour in our past. Evidence has been sparse, controversial and not widely accepted, and as we have shown in this study the external shape of bones can be misleading. Further analysis of the internal structure of other bones of the skeleton may reveal exciting findings about the evolution of other key human behaviours such as stone tool making and tool use. Our research team is now expanding our work to look at hands, feet, knees, shoulders and the spine.'

4. Discover Neanderthal footprints at Iran's Do-Ashkaft Cave

There are relics and fossil evidence from Neanderthals in several parts of the Iranian plateau, including Do-Ashkaft Cave, the subject of this note. A Middle Paleolithic cave site, Do-Ashkaft Cave is situated north of Kermanshah, near Taq-e Bostan, about 1,600 m above sea level. Its entrance faces south of Meywala Mount, overlooking the national park of Kuhestan. The main chamber of the cave is 23 meters deep and 15 meters wide. The floor is covered with debris from modern use as a winter campsite by sheep and goat herders. Next to the mouth of the main cave, there is a

small spring with a regular flow even in warm, dry summers, which seems to have played a major role in the geomorphological and archaeological history of the site.

The site was first visited in 1996 by Iranian researchers F. Biglari and S. Heydari-Guran and during the following four years, a series of surface surveys were made at one-month intervals, which resulted in a rich collection of Middle Paleolithic lithic artifacts. Exposed breccia at the entrance and some patches on the walls indicate lateral percolation of water into the cave sediments. In some places, this breccia is about two meters above the present floor. The presence and position of the breccia suggest that a substantial amount of the cave sediments may have been washed away. The breccia at the entrance is rich in fragmentary animal bones, charcoal, and flint artifacts.

Some Middle Palaeolithic artifacts, including a few side-scrapers and a Mousterian point, have been recovered from this breccia. Animal bones are extremely fragmentary and some are burned, suggesting human involvement in their accumulation during the Mousterian occupation. They include a fragment of the right mandible of an adult specimen and an upper third right molar of a sub-adult ruminant, both allocated to wild Caprine (sheep or goat). Thousands of pieces of flint have been collected from the entrance area and the talus slope.

Since there is no sign of later industries, except a few bladelets and an end-scrapers, the surface collection seems to be unmixed and to represent atypical Zagros Mousterian industry. Primary observations indicate that lithic artifacts were predominantly made from raw material procured near the site, a fine glossy opaque red and green material which seems to be jasper. Survey located outcrops of this material and its two other variants along the southern slope of Maiwaleh Mountain. The lithic assemblage at Do-Ashkaft comprises tools, flakes, trimming flakes, shatters, and cores. An emphasis on heavily retouched pieces characterizes the assemblage.

Such heavy reduction and utilization are typical of the Zagros Mousterian assemblages. Single and convergent scraper (including Mousterian points) constitutes the largest percentage of the tools, followed by other scraper

types, retouched pieces, notches/denticulates, burins, and miscellaneous artifacts. To gather information about the distribution of other possible Palaeolithic sites in the vicinity. An area of about seven by one km was surveyed in 1999 and a total of 14 caves and rock-shelters with Upper Palaeolithic and later lithic assemblages were recorded.

The only probable Middle Palaeolithic artifacts found include a convergent scraper from an abandoned limestone quarry and a few artifacts including a Mousterian point in a geological section. This section and another one near Tang-e Kenesht were recorded and sampled by S. Heydari. His study provides a paleoenvironmental sequence for the region with a late Middle Pleistocene to Holocene age.

A study, published in the Journal of Human Evolution in 2019, suggests that Neanderthals were roaming at the Iranian Zagros Mountain sometimes between 40 to 70 thousand years ago, it also refers to a human tooth discovered in 1999 in a cave called Wezmeh near Kermanshah, noting the tooth that previously thought to be modern human belongs to a Neanderthal child. In taxonomy, *Homo sapiens* is the only extant human species. The name is Latin for “wise man” and was introduced in 1758 by Carl Linnaeus (who is himself also the type specimen). Neanderthals are an extinct species or subspecies of archaic humans in the genus *Homo*, who lived within Eurasia from circa 400,000 until 40,000 years ago.

5. Why does racism prevail? Leading scholars apply their minds

Much of what we accomplished was the act of discussion itself. Significant insights emerged from honest discussions – process was as important as the subject matter. All people belong to one biological species and there are no human “races”. So why does belief in race persist? It may be a scientific misconception, but it is real. It defines the lived experience of many people and determines how governments act and how people treat one another. How did race come to have this power and this durability?

A project was undertaken to address these very questions and to get at the heart of the “everydayness” of race in South Africa and elsewhere. Called the Effects of Race Project, it was started at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study in South Africa in 2013 as part of a broader project at the institute called Being Human Today. One of us (Jablonski) along with political sociologist Gerhard Maré organised and convened the project. Our goal was to create new scholarship that could eventually inform outlooks and policy on “race thinking”. Seven years later, we wanted to present a brief summary of some of the outcomes of the project and why they matter.

When we began the project, we couldn't see exactly what the future held in store, but we knew that the poisons of race thinking and racism were killing people. Temporary antidotes were no longer going to work. Soon, the toxic nature of race thinking and racism would be exposed and fully understood so that they could be expelled from the body of humanity. Act of discussion We gathered together scholars from South Africa, the United States and Europe who had years of experience in thinking about race.

They came from sociology, anthropology, geography, law, the humanities and education. Some of them were anti-apartheid leaders and are still engaged in efforts to raise South Africans out of that chasm of injustice. The group met for about two weeks each year from 2015 to 2017, in the cold of the winter in the Western Cape. At the beginning of our work we had little more than hope. We fully appreciated that race-thinking and racism were big and powerful topics that had defied and defeated many previous expectations.

We also recognised that we needed to inspect common misconceptions about race and understand how these continued to exist in public policy ecosystems. The perspectives on race and racism that each of us brought to the group were never the same, but we listened carefully and responded thoughtfully. Through successive discussions, we cultivated the mutual respect and trust that made it possible to venture into the most difficult and sensitive subjects at length without fear of judgment or reprisal. As one of our members, Njabulo Ndebele, put it one afternoon: The elephant is in the room, and we are petting it. We mused over whether we were not just being indulgent academics, failing to respond practically to matters that

affect the lives of ordinary people. But we then realised that much of what we accomplished was the act of discussion itself. Significant insights and realisations emerged from honest, probing discussions among trusted parties. The process was as important as the subject matter. We realised people of all ages and sorts, and especially children and youth, who had long been segregated by the weight of the built environment, needed more opportunities to mix in formal and informal settings, and share their experiences, dreams, and aspirations.

This was not a new insight, but the fact that all of us felt its impact, to our bones, made it profound. Constructive discussion could disable the reflexivity that paralyses much of the discourse about race and racism in South Africa and make it possible for us to grow in our appreciation of common humanity. The questions that need to be asked Through our many discussions, we did not solve many problems, but the exercise of discussing the roots and manifestations of race-thinking gave us such discomfort about the status quo that we are obliged to look for transcendent and transformational alternatives. We cannot in all honesty claim that we met our goal of creating “new scholarship” that will inform public policy as we had stated at the beginning of this project.

The more we examined this age-old matter the more we realised that race-thinking in South Africa and elsewhere was embedded in the consciousness of societies, even more so those societies that are racially mixed. South Africa’s constitution does not command us to live in a race-neutral or colour-blind society. All that it does in the preamble to the constitution is to enjoin us to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

While our work does not provide solutions, it raises the questions that need to be asked, and provides some conceptual tools for understanding the complex dynamics of race in our society. We believe that we can be spared the absurdity of Sisyphus in Albert Camus’s essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* and instead be imbued with the determination to revolt and to overcome dependence on the futility of race. We hope that the sampling of our work will lead you to the same conclusion.

6. Neanderthal children grew and were weaned much like modern humans, new study says

By Francesca Giuliani-Hoffman, CNN Now we know we have one more thing in common with the Neanderthals, our closest evolutionary cousins, who went extinct around 40,000 years ago. Now we know we have one more thing in common with the Neanderthals, our closest evolutionary cousins, who went extinct around 40,000 years ago. Much like we do, Neanderthals introduced their babies to solid foods around 5 to 6 months of age, a new study published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences journal revealed.

Through both geochemical and histological analyses of three baby teeth that belonged to Neanderthal children, researchers have shed more light on the weaning and growth pace of Neanderthal babies. The children lived in a small area of northeastern Italy between 70,000 and 45,000 years ago. The energy demands of Neanderthal children were similar to those of humans, the scientists argued. In fact, Neanderthal and human newborns were likely to be of similar weight and have similar gestational histories.

These findings debunk the theory that a longer breastfeeding process for Neanderthals, which would cause longer periods of postpartum infertility for mothers, could have been a contributing factor to their extinction, co-senior author Stefano Benazzi, a professor in physical anthropology at the University of Bologna in Italy, told CNN. "In this hypothesis, Homo sapiens, who had a shorter breastfeeding period, were able to have larger populations, effectively outnumbering Neanderthals," Benazzi explained.

"This study demonstrates that the way Neanderthals and Homo sapiens raised their children are actually similar, so this hypothesis has to be rejected," he said. "We need to find the explanation somewhere else." Teeth are like trees The Neanderthal-era baby teeth were found in caves between

the provinces of Vicenza and Verona in northeastern Italy. The teeth belonged to three separate children, who lost them naturally as part of the process of growing up, according to the scientists. Much like a tree trunk has growth rings for each year of life, teeth present growth lines, forming on a daily basis until the enamel is fully developed, the researchers explained.

"It's a fitting comparison," said co-first author Federico Lugli, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bologna's department of cultural heritage. "These lines can be studied with noninvasive techniques or through histology, cutting thin sections of the teeth." Combined with chemical analysis looking at the strontium concentration in the teeth, information from these growth lines provided important information about the chronology of weaning in our evolutionary cousins. To corroborate their data, scientists also compared information from the baby teeth of contemporary children with documented eating and weaning histories to their findings on the weaning of Neanderthal children. What baby teeth tell us about Neanderthal moms Even if teething happens later in a baby's life, primary teeth form before birth, and the growth lines associated with the moment of birth have a specific, recognizable shape, Benazzi said. That also allowed scientists to broaden the scope of study from the children to their mothers "Since baby teeth mostly form in utero, what we see in the chemistry in these specimens is partly connected to the behaviors and dietary habits of their mothers," Lugli explained.

Building on the body of evidence from previous studies, Lugli explained that the diet of Neanderthals examined was high in protein. It's possible that pre-chewed meat would have been among the solid foods used while weaning Neanderthal children, Lugli said, but this hypothesis will require further study. What baby teeth tell us about Neanderthal mobility The scientists also used strontium isotope analyses to relate the chemical composition of the Neanderthal baby teeth to that of archaeological rodent teeth found in the same geographic context. This allowed the team to establish that Neanderthals weren't as mobile as previously thought.

A fourth baby tooth analyzed in the study from an Upper Paleolithic modern human was found to be less consistent with the makeup of local

fauna, suggesting that unlike Neanderthals, Upper Paleolithic modern humans actually moved around more, the scientists explained.

Breastfeeding: Physiology and culture How long to breastfeed is a question that many new moms wrestle with today.

From the scientists' perspective, decisions around when to stop breastfeeding are influenced by cultural factors, but weaning is ultimately a matter of physiology. "Weaning is a complex period in the life of both children and mothers," Lugli explained. At around 6 months of age, children have energy demands that require an external source of nutrition to allow them to grow, Lugli argued. Also, once other foods are introduced, mothers can spend less energy producing milk. "Producing breast milk requires a major physiological contribution from the bodies of mothers," Lugli said.

PAPER - 2

INDIAN & TRIBAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Odisha may prove to be first mover on PVTG Development Mission



The Union Finance Minister announced the launch of the **Pradhan Mantri PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group) Development Mission** aimed at filling the gaps in extending basic facilities to the PVTG communities

Odisha which is the home to the highest number of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India is expected to be benefited the most due to the PVTG Development Mission.

Out of the 75 PVTGs identified in the country, 13 such tribes live in Odisha.

According to a 2018 baseline survey, 2,49,609 persons belonging to PVTGs live in 1,679 habitations in 14 districts of Odisha.

The Union Finance Minister has announced that an amount of ₹15,000 crores would be made available to implement the mission in the next three years under the Development Action Plan for the Scheduled Tribes.

Additionally, Odisha has also been a beneficiary of the **Conservation-cum-Development (CCD) scheme**, to which the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs allocates 100% financial assistance to the States with PVTG communities.

The Odisha Government had also launched the **Odisha PVTG Empowerment and Livelihoods Improvement Programme (OPELIP)** at an estimated cost of ₹711 crores, spread over seven years.

The State government was granted 46% assistance for the OPELIP in the form of a loan from the **International Fund for Agricultural Development**. With the experience of handling such PVTG programmes in the past, Odisha is best placed to handle the PVTG Development Mission.

2. Two Tamil Nadu communities get Scheduled Tribe status

Piloting the Bill, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda said there was 'no politics involved'

The Lok Sabha on Thursday passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022, which seeks to grant Scheduled Tribe status to Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran communities in Tamil Nadu.

During the discussion on the Bill, opposition MPs demanded that instead of adopting a "piecemeal" approach, the government should make a comprehensive list of tribes and take "meaningful steps" towards their inclusion and recognition as Scheduled tribes. AIADMK MP P Ravindhranath sought clarification on the status of the ethnography survey conducted on 267 nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes by the Anthropological Survey of India and the Tribal Research Institute.

Piloting the Bill, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda said there was "no politics involved" in the move, and it follows the suggestion of the Tamil Nadu government. Munda said the decision to include the two communities in the ST list will benefit about 27,000 people.

In a written response to a question by Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Irani said in the Lok Sabha that there is no proposal to grant constitutional status to the National Commission for Minorities (NCM).

The NCP was established as a statutory body with the enactment of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, by Parliament.

Simultaneous polls

In a written reply, Union law minister Kiren Rijiju told the Lok Sabha that elections had a "big budget affair and expensive" and holding simultaneous polls to Lok Sabha and state assemblies would result in huge savings to the exchequer.

Simultaneous polls would also curb the adverse effect due to prolonged enforcement of Model Code of Conduct due to asynchronous Lok Sabha and state assembly elections, he said. Elections to Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies were held were held simultaneously in 1951-52, 1957,

1962 and 1967.

However, due to the premature dissolution of some legislative assemblies in 1968 and 1969, the cycle got disrupted.

Govt spent Rs 3,723.38 crore on advertisement in last five years The government spent Rs 3,723.38 crore on advertisements of its policies and programmes over the past five years through the Central Bureau of Communication, Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday.

In a written reply, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said the expenditure on advertisements and publicity has not increased over the past five years. According to the data shared by the government, Rs 1,220.89 crore was spent on advertisements in 2017-18 while expenditure of Rs 1,106.88 crore was incurred in 2018-19, which was ahead of the general elections of 2019.

The government spent Rs 627.67 crore in 2019-20; Rs 349.09 crore in 2020-21 and Rs 264.78 crore in 2021-22, Thakur said. In the current financial year, the government has spent Rs 154.07 crore on advertisements till December 9, he said.

3. MoEFCC refuses to put new forest conservation rules on hold, says do not dilute forest rights act



New rules do away with Gram Sabha consent, National Commission on Scheduled Tribes had flagged last year in letter to ministry

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) said January 3, 2022 it is not legally possible to put the new Forest Conservation Rules, 2022 on hold as demanded by the National Commission on Scheduled Tribes (NCST).

The Forest Conservation Rules, 2022 were notified in the last week of June 2022 to implement the Forest Conservation Act (FCA), 1980.

NCST had written to MoEF&CC in October 2022 saying the new FCA rules will dilute Scheduled Tribes And Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition Of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, also known as the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA). This is because the new rules eliminated the need for

Gram Sabha consent before Stage II clearance of projects on indigenous land, the commission noted.

They urged Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav to put the new rules on hold so that NCST can discuss the details.

The MoEFCC, however, observed January 3 that FCA and FRA are 'parallel statutory processes' and the new rules do not dilute the FRA.

NCST Chairperson Harsh Chouhan said on the same day that the commission's stand on the matter will remain the same and it will continue discussions with the ministry.

The new rules state: The state government or Union territory administration, as the case may be, after receiving the 'final' approval of the central government under Section 2 of FCA and after fulfilment and compliance of the provisions of all other acts and rules made thereunder, as applicable including ensuring settlement of rights under FRA, shall issue order for diversion, assignment of lease or de-reservation, as the case may be.

NCST, in its letter, had said the new FCA rules will have "serious" impacts on the rights of scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwellers (OTFD). The commission had expressed its displeasure at being kept out of such an important decision.

Chouhan wrote in the letter:

The current Rules have done away with the requirement of seeking consent altogether and have left the process of recognition of rights to be carried out after Stage I clearance or even Stage II clearance.

Last year, Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda had accused the Indian National Congress party of "trying to mislead the nation by making frivolous and baseless allegations" on the microblogging site Twitter. "The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is totally committed to the upliftment of the tribal communities and at no point, the provisions of FRA 2006 have been diluted," he added.

To this, Chouhan told news agency Press Trust of India, “The commission is a constitutional body having the powers of a civil court. We are not a political entity and have taken a stand (on the new forest conservation rules).”

The NCST’s objective is to evaluate policies and inform the government about any violations of tribal rights through the President, the NCST chairperson added.

4. Budget 2023: What measures have been announced for tribal welfare

Recently, Finance Minister announced some targeted schemes for tribal welfare in budget speech.

Allocations to Ministry of Tribal Affairs:

- **The overall outlay:** Rs. 12461.88 cr, an increase of 70.69% over the previous year’s Revised Estimate (RE) of Rs.7301.00 crore.
 - It increased from Rs.4295.94 crore (2013-14) to Rs.12461.88 crore (2023-24) an increase of around 190.01 %.
- **Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST):** Earlier known as **Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)**.
 - **Allocations:** Increased about **five and half times** since 2013-14 (from Rs.21,525.36 crore in 2013-14 to Rs.1,17,943.73 crore in BE 2023-24).

Announcements for the betterment of Tribals:

Pradhan Mantri particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) Development Mission

- **Aim:** To saturate the PVTG families and habitations with basic facilities such as safe housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, improved access to education health and nutrition, road and telecom connectivity and sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- **Allocations:** Will be Rs.15,000 cr in the next three years.

National Sickle Cell Elimination Mission

- **Implementation:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Tribal Affairs and ICMR with concerned states.
- It will cover **preventive, curative and management aspects of this genetic disease** in an integrated manner.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)

- **Allocation:** Rs 5943 Crore
- **The Unit cost of EMRS:** Rs 38 Crore (plain areas), Rs.48 Crore (hilly areas).
- t **400 EMRSs** have become functional with over **1,13,000 students**, of whom over **57,000 are girls**.
- EMRSs will have facilities for **nurturing the natural sports talent** of the tribal students.
- There will be provisions for **science and computer labs, skill development, art, craft and music**.
- **Central Recruitment of Teachers for EMRSs:** A total of 38,000 teachers and support staff shall be recruited in the next few years for the Ekalavya Model Residential Schools.
 - It will benefit **3.5 lakh tribal students**.

Livelihood for tribal families:

- A provision of **Rs 288 crore** has been made to be implemented through **TRIFED**, through the formation of **Self-Help Groups and producer enterprises**.
- Special attention will be given to forming more **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras**, to function in **cooperative mode**.
- **Organic farming, medicinal plants, millets and food processing** will be the important areas, to be done through these tribal self-help groups, with **appropriate credit and marketing facilities**.

Scholarship to ST Students:

- **Rs 2531 crore** has been provided for ST students ranging from **class IX up to Ph.D. levels**.

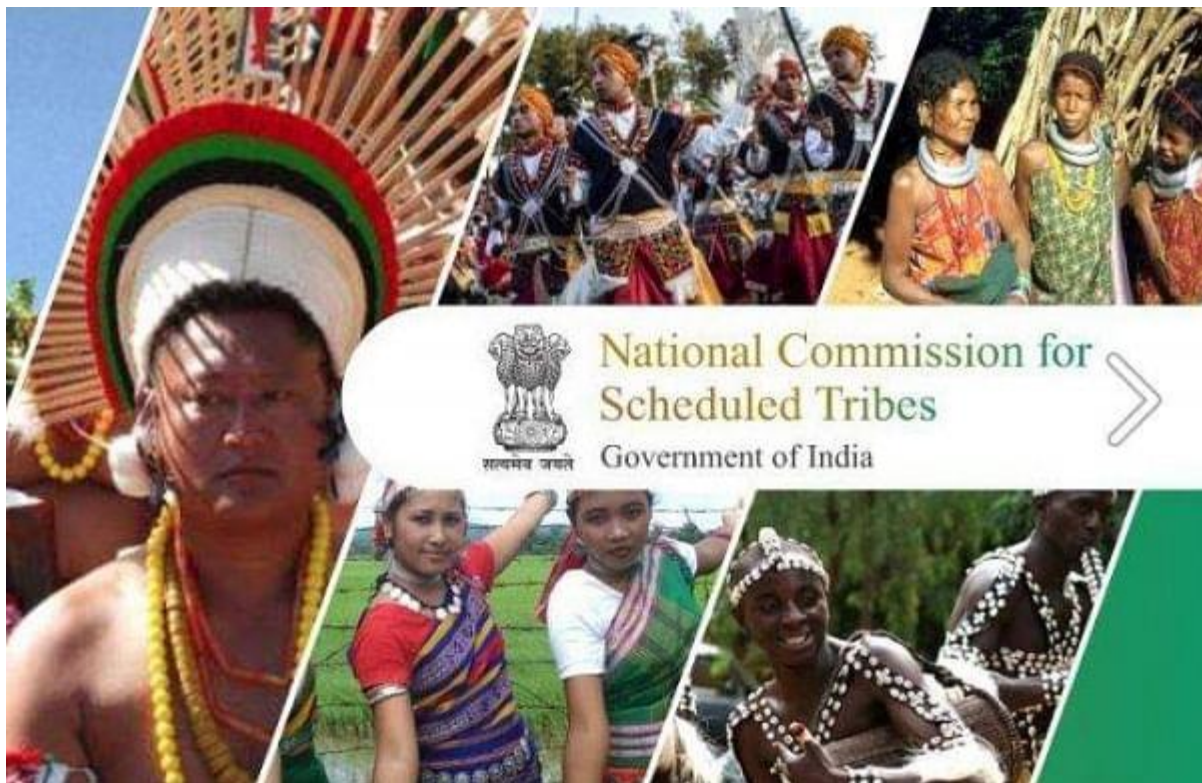
PM Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana:

- Rs 1485 crore provided for the comprehensive **development of villages** with a significant tribal population.

Grant Support to States:

- Rs 1472 crore is provided for giving grants to States with ST population for the **development of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes.**

5. NCST functioning with less than 50% of sanctioned strength: Ministry in LS



Recently, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs revealed that the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) is currently functioning with less than 50% of its sanctioned strength.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

- **Established by:** Amending Article 338 and inserting a new Article 338A in the Constitution through the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003.
- **Composition:** Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson & Three full-time Members

Functions of the Commission:

- To investigate & Monitor matters relating to **Safeguards provided for STs** under the Constitution.
- To inquire into specific complaints relating to the **Rights & Safeguards of STs**.
- To participate and advise in the Planning Process relating to the **Socioeconomic development of STs**.
- To evaluate the progress of their development under the **Union and any State**.
- To discharge such other functions concerning STs as the President may, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by rule specify.

Powers of the Commission:

- **Summon and enforce the attendance** of any person and examine on oath
- **Discovery & production** of any documents
- Receive evidence on **affidavits**
- **Requisition any public record** or copy thereof from any court or office
- Issue Commissions for the examination of **witnesses and documents**
- Any matter which **President**, by rule, may **determine**.

6. Tribal Folks In Andhra Began Laying Road To Their Villages As Authorities Kept Neglecting Their Plea



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- Due to a shortage of roads, tribal people are forced to travel 7 to 15 kilometres on foot while pulling sick and pregnant people in 'dolis' to get to the closest road point where they can be transported in ambulances to hospitals.

The tribal residents of the isolated villages of Pinakota, Jeenabadu, and Peda Kota panchayats of Anantagiri Mandal in the Alluri Sitharama Raju district of Andhra Pradesh have voluntarily undertaken the construction of a 10-kilometre road after the concerned authorities overlooked their plea.

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- The administration has repeatedly misled the tribal people into thinking that the road work will begin, but nothing has happened. As a result, the youngsters gathered and resolved to construct roads independently. Almost 180 tribe members started building the road on Monday (November 7) at seven in the morning.

MNREGS Fund For Road Construction In 2013-14 The tribal people allege that while candidates for public office seek their support before elections, they forget to consider their difficulties once they are in office. As part of the Food For Work (FFW) initiative, a road was also

approved in 2004; however, until 2008, only jungle clearance had been carried out.

In order to build the road from Ballagaruvu to Reddipadu and Palabandha villages via Rachkilam, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) programme approved 9 lakh for the material component and 21 lakh for labour costs in 2013-14.

Leaders from Girijan Sangham said, "The officials had once again given them work of clearance of bushes for construction of the road. The contractor did not pay us for our labour." 'Govt Changed, Officials Transferred But Construction Still Pending' According to the tribal people, though governments were changing and officials were getting transferred, the work is pending, as per a report of The Hindu. Communist Party of India (Marxist) CPI(M) district secretariat member K Govinda Rao stated,

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- "We informed the ITDA Project Officer Ronanki Gopalakrishna about our difficulty when he visited Dayarathi village last year. Later, he directed the MPDO to investigate and create estimates." Rao has often urged the District Collector to go to their village and order the road's early completion so that the tribals won't have to deal with problems, but no actions have been taken yet.
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- Due to a shortage of roads, tribal people are forced to travel 7 to 15 kilometres on foot while pulling sick and pregnant people in 'dolis' to get to the closest road point where they can be transported in ambulances to hospitals.

7. Madhya Pradesh's century-old millet sikiya finds few revivalists

- The Baiga community vouches for protein-rich sikiya but many have lost access. Deepanwita Gita Niyogi travels to Madhya Pradesh to find out what is causing the disappearance
- Baigas, I have heard, are no less than ecologists. People of this tribal community possess the legendary ability to recognise hundreds of species around them and know their usage in myriad ways. Knowing their traditionally rich yet minimalistic ways of life is on the top of my mind as I proceed towards Dhaba village in Madhya Pradesh's Dindori district. Dhaba is among the 52 villages across Dindori whose hills and forests have been home to the primitive tribe for millennia. As I climb the steep slopes of Dhaba, I meet a resident, Rangulal. His face lights up when I mention sikiya, a millet called *Digitaria sanguinalis* in scientific lexicon, grown and relished by Baigas. "It has been a long time since I have eaten sikiya. It is no longer found in my village," he says.

In fact, after a brief inquiry about the millet in Dhaba, I realised that the younger generations have not even heard of sikiya, let alone taste it. And a prime reason for this is the changing agricultural practices of Baigas. Traditionally, this primitive tribal community practise *bewar*, a shifting, slash-and-burn method of farming in which the land is left fallow after three years of growing crops. "Though often derided by forest officials and agriculture scientists, bewar respects the forest ecosystem," says Naresh Biswas, secretary of Nirman, a non-profit in Madhya Pradesh. He adds that Baigas usually burn the invasive lantana bushes to prepare the field. As the rains approach, they simply scatter the seeds of a variety of food crops without tilling the land. This high crop diversity, at times comprising over 20 varieties, has traditionally taken care of their nutritional needs.

However, Jiribai of neighbouring Pauri village says sikiya is rarely sown. "Seeds that drop to the ground during harvest add to the natural growth," Jiribai says.

Discussions with researchers show that sikiya is a perennial wild grass species and easily re-grows from the rootstock as soon as the weather is favourable. According to the Food and Agriculture

Organization Director, Plant Production and Protection Division, Hans Dreyer, "There are several species of millets. Crabgrasses belong to the digitaria genus and there are 60 species, with some being the first cultivated nutritious grains, and others still grown today, for example, Fonio millet or *Digitaria exilis* in Africa, for use as staple grains as well as in porridge and bread. However, many other species of digitaria are now considered weeds with some classified as invasive plants."

- "Though sikiya is yet to be thoroughly studied, Biswas says the crop diversity on bewar plots is crucial for its growth. The millet is disappearing from the food plate of Baigas as more and more families are abandoning multi-cropping and growing *arhar* (pigeon pea). "We have shifted to arhar as it fetches us cash," says Ramlal Rathuria, sarpanch, Bouna village.

Small yet filling

Elsewhere considered a weed, Baigas have for centuries nurtured sikiya as food, which they use to prepare *kheer* (porridge). In appearance, its grains – light yellow in colour – are smaller than those of little millets. "It is more filling than rice. Just 250 gm is enough to carry me through the day," says Hariram of Silpidi village, where the Baiga community still harvests and consumes sikiya. Gawalinbai, another Silpidi resident, says it is easy to cook. "One has to just boil the milk and add the required quantity of sikiya for a delicious kheer. It strengthens the immune system," she adds.

"I have been eating sikiya every morning. It tastes better than other millets. We get around 300 kg of sikiya in a plot of 2-3 hectares," says sexagenarian Ghunthu of Dumar Tola village.



Despite its glorious tradition, sikiya is not known to people outside the Baiga community. It does not even feature in the list of millets being promoted by the Centre as “nutri cereals”. Based on his interaction with Baiga farmers who were showcasing the rare millet at the Using Diversity Seed Festival, organised early this year in Bhopal, Krishna Prasad of Bengaluru-based non-profit Sahaja Samrudha, says, “One of the reasons sikiya has failed to command mass appeal is that processing the millet is arduous. Traditionally, Baiga women use *musar*, a heavy wooden stick, to remove its hard outer covering. Its small size makes the separation of the grain from stones difficult.” He adds that efforts need to be made to design suitable processing machines. Interestingly, sikiya is also called the Polish millet as farmers in Poland grow and eat the millet, and use it as fodder. It is also grown in Germany.

While the government remains ignorant about sikiya, Biswas and several others are trying to popularise it. Biswas has sent grain samples to the Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), Hyderabad, for nutritional analysis. “Sikiya is a crabgrass finger millet. It has always been part of tribal culture. All we know about it

is that the millet has 12 per cent of protein. Analysis of vitamins, calcium, iron and amino acids is still going on,” says Vilas Tonapi, director, IIMR.

To assess if sikiya can thrive outside Baigas’ homeland, Soumik Banerjee, a native seed conservationist from Jharkhand’s Godda district, and researchers at the Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (JNKV), Jabalpur, are growing it on an experimental basis. “Last year, we sowed sikiya in September and harvested it in February,” says Ajay Singh Gontia, who heads the plant physiology department at JNKV. His department plans to grow the millet again this year. But will such efforts ensure the return of sikiya to the Baigas’ food plate?

- However, Dwijendra Guru, a sustainable food system activist based in Bangalore, cautions about mainstreaming *sikiya*. According to him, more than popularising *sikiya* and making it available elsewhere in India, it is more important to ensure that the Baiga tribals continue to get access to it and those who used to eat it once should get back to eating this millet once again. “We should discourage moving out these specialist crops out of their areas where they have been growing for centuries,” he says.

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8. The demand for a Greater Tipraland by the TIPRA Motha

Recently, Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance (TIPRA) in Tripura has created a flutter with its demand for a Greater Tipraland.



- Tripura was a kingdom ruled by the **Manikya dynasty** from the late 13th century until the signing of the Instrument of Accession with the Indian government on October 1949.
- The kingdom's name was derived from the ancient king named 'Tripur'.
- It is **bordered by** Assam and Mizoram to the east and by Bangladesh to the north, south and west.
- Tripura has **19 different tribal communities** with a majority of the Bengali population.
 - **Tribes:** Tripura/Tripuri, Riang, Jamatia, Noatia, Uchai, Chakma, Mog, Lushai, Kuki, Halam, Munda, Kaur, Orang, Santal, Bhil, Bhutia, Chaimal, Garo, Khasia, and Lepcha.
- **Official languages:** Bengali, English and Kokborok.
- **Capital:** Agartala
- **Rubber and tea** are the important cash crops of the state.
 - Second rank in rubber production.
- **Known for** its handicraft, particularly hand-woven cotton fabric, wood carvings, and bamboo products.

What is Greater Tipraland?

- Among the 19 notified Scheduled Tribes in Tripura, **Tripuris are the largest.**
- **Greater Tipraland** is the name of a proposed state in India for the indigenous Tripuri people in the tribal areas of the Tripura state.
- Political parties demanding the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council and some surrounding areas be made into a **separate state from Tripura.**
- The proposed state covers **68% of the total geographical area of Tripura** and is home to over one-third of the total population of Tripura.
- The main objective of political parties is to carve out a new State for the 19 indigenous tribes of Tripura under **Articles 2 and 3** of the Constitution.
 - **Article 2** of the Constitution deals with the admission or establishment of new states.
 - **Article 3** deals with the formation of new States and the alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing States.

9. Chhattisgarh To Be The World Forum For Tribals: CM Bhupesh Baghel



A one-day event to promote the upcoming National Tribal Dance Festival in Chhatisgarh and to showcase the rich tribal traditions of the state was held in the national capital on Friday, October 21. The colloquium, which Chhatisgarh Tourism hosted, featured panel talks and a performance by Padma Vibhushan Teejan Bai—an exponent of Pandavani, a traditional performing art form.

It's important to note that a sizable portion of Chhattisgarh's population is tribal. According to official statistics, the state is home to around 7.5 per cent of India's tribal population. Also, tribal people make up to about 30 per cent of the state's total population.

Aim

Although the National Tribal Dance Festival 2022 was the Conclave's primary focus, it also brought together culture and tourism specialists, officials, and investors to reposition Chhattisgarh as a state with a wealth of tourism potential, including its intangible culture.

Chhatisgarh CM Hosted the Event

Bhupesh Baghel, the chief minister of Chhatisgarh, hosted the event at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in Saket, where he held a press conference to

engage with the media. Shivkumar Dahariya, Minister of Urban Administration and Development, was with him for the occasion.

While discussing the initiatives taken under his leadership in tourism and culture for promoting Chhattisgarh, he said, "Tribal culture is deeply-rooted in Chhattisgarh. Our government has taken several initiatives and started many schemes to ensure the overall development of tribals in the last three years."

"National Tribal Dance Festival is an effort towards preserving the rich cultural heritage of tribals. Today, the tribes are getting good prices for their forest produce. We have created a better market for them by doing value addition in forest produce. Tribals have been given forest rights to help them move forward fearlessly and live dignified lives," he added. CM Baghel also stressed the significance of preserving the fundamental elements of tribal culture while presenting the traditions and customs of the tribe. "This festival aims at bringing the tribals of the world on one platform so that they connect with each other, cherish their culture and strength, and move forward. We are moving towards creating Chhattisgarh as the world forum for tribals."

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10. Significance of Tribal Culture in Sustainable Development



Recently the Prime Minister remarked that the world can learn a lot about sustainable development from Adivasi culture and it can be a solution to global problems like climate change and global warming.

- India comprises **6% tribal population**, has access to an enormous indigenous knowledge which through **recognition, adoption, and mainstreaming** has the potential to **provide sustainable solutions** to concerns related to
 - falling agricultural productivity and soil quality,
 - biodiversity loss,
 - water scarcity, pollution, and
 - Climate Change challenges.

- **Sustainable Development** refers to a way of **achieving economic growth and development** that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

About Constitutional Provisions:

- The **Constitution of India** does not endeavour to define the term 'tribe', however, the term 'Scheduled Tribe' was inserted in the **Constitution through Article 342 (i)**.
- It lays down that '**the President may, by public notification**, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within the tribes or tribal communities or parts which shall, for the purposes of this Constitution, be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes.
- The **Fifth Schedule of the Constitution** provides for the setting up a **Tribes' Advisory Council in each of the States having Scheduled Areas**.

About Tribal Cultures:

- **Communal living:** Many tribal communities in India have a strong emphasis on **communal living and sharing resources**.
 - They live in close-knit communities and often make decisions collectively.
- **Self-Sufficiency:** Tribe is a **synonym for a self-reliant community**, a tribe is a relatively closed society and its openness is inversely related to the **extent of its self-sufficient pursuits**.
- **Connection with nature:** Tribals have a strong connection with nature, with **traditional beliefs and practices** that revolve around the forests and animals.
- **Folk arts and crafts:** Tribals are known for their unique art forms, including **pottery, weaving, and jewellery making**.
 - These crafts often have **spiritual or cultural significance** and are passed down through generations.
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- **Spiritual beliefs:** Tribals often have their own unique spiritual beliefs, which may involve the **worship of ancestors, nature spirits, or deities.**

Tribal Lifestyle and Sustainable development:

- **Respect for the natural environment:** Tribal traditional practices, such as using natural materials for **housing, food, and medicine, and living in harmony** with the cycles of nature.
- **Community-based decision-making:** Collective decision-making considers the needs of the community as a whole and ensures that decisions are made in a **sustainable and equitable manner.**
- **Promotion of biodiversity:** Tribals have developed practices to protect and promote diversity which includes traditional methods of agriculture, such as **intercropping and seed-saving, as well as the protection of sacred sites** that are important for the preservation of biodiversity.
- **Conservation of natural resources:** Sustainable practices involve limiting the use of resources to ensure their long-term availability, such as **rotational farming or allowing forests to regenerate before harvesting timber.**
- **Emphasis on intergenerational knowledge sharing:** Passing down knowledge to the next generation includes **traditional knowledge of the natural environment and sustainable practices for managing resources.**
- **Protection of water resources:** Tribal communities rely on water resources and have developed practices that can help to ensure that **water is available for future generations, and can reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**
- **Regenerative agriculture:** tribal communities have been practicing regenerative agriculture for centuries, which involves practices like **crop rotation, intercropping, and regenerating soils with organic matter.**
 - These practices help to sequester carbon in the soil, which can help to mitigate climate change.

- **Use of renewable energy:** They have traditionally used renewable energy sources like **wind, solar, and hydropower** which can be expanded and modernized to provide clean energy for more people.

Challenges faced by tribals in performing their lifestyle

- **Discrimination:** Tribal communities often face discrimination and prejudice from the dominant society, including **limited access to education, healthcare, and other basic services.**
- **Land rights:** Tribal communities have been displaced from their traditional lands due to industrialization, and mining which has resulted in the **loss of cultural identity, and social and economic marginalization.**
- **Climate change and environmental degradation:** Climate Change, such as changes in rainfall patterns, increased frequency of natural disasters, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, pollution, and loss of habitat, has negatively impacted their traditional livelihoods and ways of life.
- **Socioeconomic marginalization:** Many tribal communities have limited access to **education, healthcare, and economic opportunities,** which can result in poverty and social exclusion.
- **Lack of political representation:** Tribal communities often lack political representation and may not have a voice in decision-making processes that affect their lives.
- **Health challenges:** Tribal communities often face challenges in accessing quality healthcare, which can result in higher rates of disease, malnutrition, and other health issues.
- **Cultural assimilation:** Many tribal communities face pressure to assimilate into the dominant culture, which can lead to the loss of traditional knowledge, language, and cultural practices.

Government initiatives to conserve tribal culture:

- **National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC),** an apex Organization under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in 2001 was brought into existence with the sole aim of economic upliftment of the Scheduled Tribes by way of extending

concessional financial assistance to the target group under its various schemes.

- **TRIFED's Initiatives For Tribal Population:**
 - The Government plans to establish **50,000 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, 3000 Haat Bazaars, etc.**
 - **Central Sector Scheme:** Institutional Support for Development & Marketing of Tribal Products / Produce.
 - **Tribes India Outlets:** The outlets will showcase tribal products from all over the country and the outlets will have a specific geographical indication (GI) and Vandhan corners.
- **Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) and Tribal Festivals, Research Information, and Mass Education**
- **Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana:** It is a **market-linked tribal entrepreneurship development program** for forming clusters of tribal Self Help Groups (SHGs) and strengthening them into Tribal Producer Companies.
- Scholarships for **pre-matric, post-matric, and overseas education**
- Support to **National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation**
- **Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):** The scheme covers activities like housing, land distribution, land development, agricultural development, animal husbandry, construction of link roads, etc.
- **Vocational Training in Tribal Area:** The aim of the Scheme is to develop the skills of the ST youth for a variety of jobs as well as self-employment and to improve their socio-economic condition by enhancing their income.
- **Centrally Sponsored Scheme: The mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through (MSP) and Development of a Value Chain for MFP'** as a measure of social safety for MFP gatherers.

Way Ahead

As India celebrates its **75th year of Independence** with 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahostav', **Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas** would be a thoughtful gift for our tribal community and a recall to Ram Rajya – where the **likes of Guha** are

given due respect, their cultural diversity is respected, and their contributions celebrated.

Tribal lifestyles can **offer solutions to climate change and global warming** through sustainable practices that **protect and preserve the natural environment**. Overall, tribal lifestyles can **provide valuable lessons for sustainable development**, particularly in areas with high levels of biodiversity or where development threatens the natural environment.

11. Tribal Malnutrition In Chhattisgarh And How It Can Be Overcome



Among all the tribes the group that gets mostly affected are women and children. Tribal women with poor intake of protein and energy are likely to give birth to a Low Birth Weight infant.

Among the tribal population of Chhattisgarh, high levels of malnutrition -- with women and children the most affected -- is a major challenge they face, besides those of poor literacy and lack of empowerment. The nutritional and health issues of tribal women and children can be addressed by giving them iron and folic supplements, supplying them with fortified food and through deworming, besides other interventions.

India has a total of 104,545,716 scheduled tribes which constitute 8.6% of the total population (Census, 2011). There are around 700 different state-specific Scheduled Tribes. Of these 700 tribes, 75 are identified as Primitive Tribes Groups (PTG) due to their pre-agriculture level of technology, stagnant or declining population, extremely low literacy and subsistence level of economy. Chhattisgarh has 7,822,902 Scheduled Tribe population. Of this 3,873,191 are males, 3,949,711 are females and 15.3% comprise the child population. The literacy rate among Schedule Tribe population in Chhattisgarh is 59.09%, and **sex ratio is 1020**. Gond, Bhunjia, Baiga, Bisonhorn Maria, Parghi, Muria, Halba, Bhatra, Parja, Dhurvaa, Muriya, Dandami Mariya, Dorla, Dhanwar, Kol, Korwa, Rajgond, Kavar, Bhaiyana,

Binjwar, Savra, Manji, Bhayna, Kamar, Munda and Abujmaria are some of the prominent tribes of Chhattisgarh.

The heterogeneity among the tribes is quite distinct with each tribe being quite different from the other in terms of language and dialect, customs, cultural practices and life style. Despite this diversity, tribal communities do have similarities, though broad generic ones. They are known to dwell in compact areas, follow a community way of living, in harmony with nature, and have a uniqueness of culture, distinctive customs, traditions and beliefs which are simple, direct and non-acquisitive by nature. The tribal population because of their peculiar way of living do face challenges. The major issues are - poor literacy rates, slow pace of development, lack of empowerment and high levels of malnutrition driven by communicable disease, limited livelihood opportunities, high dependency on land and forest produce, improper infrastructure in remote areas.

All these issues in some way or the other affect the health and well-being of tribes. Among all the tribes the group that gets mostly affected are **women and children**. Tribal women with poor intake of protein and energy are likely to give birth to a Low Birth Weight infant. Although malnutrition is prevalent among all segments of the population, poor nutrition among females begins at infancy and continues throughout life time.

Status of Health and Malnutrition among Tribes in Chhattisgarh:

Malnutrition has necessarily to be approached from a life cycle perspective. An underweight, anaemic pregnant teen mother has to contend with early pregnancy, inadequate spacing between successive births and poor prenatal nutrition and healthcare. The resulting low birth weight baby faces poor healthcare, hygiene and nutrition practices and develops into a stunted and underweight adolescent. This pattern is replicated over subsequent generations of mothers.

If a child's dietary intake of protein, carbohydrates, fat and micro-nutrients is inadequate, she/he suffers from malnutrition, adversely affecting his/her health and increasing his/her susceptibility to disease. Equally critical are the underlying determinants that operate at the household level-- food security, nurture-care for the mother and child and a healthy

environment, including safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation, shelter and accessible healthcare. Ultimately, whether these basic rights are available or not to individuals and households depends on the social and economic arrangement that determines access to resources and the ability to effectively use these resources.

As per the National Family Health Survey 4, every district in Chhattisgarh has wasting levels higher than 15 percent (rated as very high).

Rajnandgaon district has the lowest level of wasting (17.2 percent) and Bastar has the highest (33.9 percent). The health scenario of tribes presents a mosaic of various communicable and non-communicable diseases in consonance with socio-economic beliefs and practices in the state. The widespread poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, absence of safe drinking water and sanitary conditions, poor maternal and child health services, focused coverage of national health and nutritional services, etc. are the major contributing factors for the dismal health and nutrition among tribal communities.

The status of health and nutrition indicators among tribes of the state are poor due to multiple factors which are discussed below.

These can be seen as challenges for further strive :-

Real Time Data: The fundamental problem lies in the non-availability of ongoing real-time data on the nutrition status of individual children pertaining to stunting, wasting and being underweight. Effective action under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) to tackle child malnutrition requires reaching out to every child, monitoring her/his growth pattern systematically on a monthly basis from birth to the age of five, and ensuring attention from both the ICDS and the public health machinery to their nutrition and health needs at the project level and below.

Poverty Issue: The Lancet, one of the most authentic medical journals, has come out with a daily dietary recommendation of 2,500 calories from various food items fulfilling caloric requirements, as well as ingredients essential for growth of different body parts and mental faculties. An estimation of the cost of this daily diet based on the present day prices of

food items comes to approximately Rs 130 per person per day. For a family of 5 members this comes to Rs 650 per day or Rs 19,500 per month. This is impossible to meet in the present day economic structure of tribal predominant regions. The minimum wage in India as recommended by the expert Committee, in the name of national minimum wages, ranges from Rs 8,892 to Rs 11,622 per month meant for the unskilled worker. This is unachievable in the tribal region.

The tribal economy can be classified on the basis of their economic pursuits in the following way: 1. Foragers, 2. Pastoral, 3. Handicraft makers, 4. Agriculturists, 5. Shifting hill cultivators, 6. Labourers, 7. Business pursuits. All these professions are directly or indirectly dependent on land. The tribals, due to their poor literacy rates, lack of understanding of the social and judiciary structure, and their inherent shyness remain in the background. The ancient methods of cultivation, lack of use of modern methods, loss of productivity of land, adversely affects their condition, and pushes them into poverty.

Social Issue: Due to the traditional socio-economic practices being adopted by tribals they have limited employment and livelihood opportunities. The difficult living conditions, and hard-to-reach terrain pose problems in the supply chain management of government-supported schemes like Public Distribution System (PDS), ICDS, health care. It also hinders exploring and teaching new livelihood skills to the tribal.

Health Issue: Healthcare is a major problem in the far-flung isolated tribal areas. Lack of food security, sanitation and safe drinking water, poor nutrition and high poverty levels aggravate the poor health status of the tribal. The problem of malnutrition is multi-dimensional and inter-generational in nature. Limited health institutions in vulnerable areas and the tribal's lack of trust in the modern system of medicine creates problems in service delivery.

Societal Issue: Babies born to undernourished tribal mothers face a high risk of restricted foetal growth and death. Those who survive are likely to be stunted with a high probability of transmitting their poor nutrition status to their next generation. The status of girls/women within the household, their agency and decision-making abilities, especially with

respect to their reproductive rights, are important factors which merit a closer look. Facing intra-household deprivations due to their sex and abject poverty, these young girls often forego necessary nutrition, care and rest during their pregnancy period, delivering low birth weight babies. For these babies, the cycle of malnutrition has already begun.

Policy Issues: While food is an essential component, food-based solutions are not sufficient by themselves. Children may receive a diet which is both adequate in quantity (calories) and quality (nutrients). However, if they are already weakened by ill-health and disease, they will be unable to absorb sufficient nutrients from their food. Unfortunately, our singlehanded approach towards addressing under-nutrition has been through food provision.

Second, there is enough scientific evidence indicating the importance of the first 1,000 days (roughly translating to about 2 years) of a child's life. It is estimated that about 80% of the brain development takes place during this time. However, children start coming to the Anganwadi Centres (our primary intervention in this area) after they are 3 years old. By then, precious time is lost and it is already too late. In fact, there is limited contact between the child and the system (barring routine immunization by the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) and visits by the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker in case the child is visibly sick) till the child attains 3 years of age. Thus convergence of schemes and bringing them under one umbrella require deep thought and practice in tribal areas.

Implementation Issue: Considering the multi-dimensional nature of malnutrition, convergence is the key. However, an analysis of the three biggest programmes in this area - ICDS, POSHAN and National Health Mission (NHM) - showed that there were only 39 common high-burden districts among them (NITI Aayog, 2017). The number is likely to be less if we consider the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). Such lack of geographic convergence results in substantial loss of resources as well as sub-optimal results. Convergence and coordination among the frontline workers, especially those delivering health and nutrition services is the key. This, in turn, needs to be supported and supervised by a strong monitoring mechanism. The capacities of the frontline worker to deliver on the field

needs to be enhanced. While all the programmes have in-built components of Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC), counselling and health and nutrition related education, these are generally neglected and receive less priority, mainly due to their intangible nature.

Following are the points that can be envisioned for intervention :

1. Nutrition and Health issues of tribal inhabitants can be immediately addressed by targeting six different beneficiary groups through six different interventions (Iron and Folic Acid supplementation, deworming, intensified Behavioural Change Communication, testing and treatment at the point of care, mandatory fortification and addressing non-nutritional causes of anemia) by leveraging six re-vamped institutional mechanisms. Undoubtedly good health is an essential ingredient for better scope of literacy and livelihood.
2. Improving nutrition and health for women and children requires investment to be made in changing the determinants of poor nutrition and health, using a variety of policy instruments and other efforts. Such policy efforts could be merging of similar schemes and programmes targeting the same beneficiary or redesigning with larger pool of funds and better monitoring structures.
3. Purchasing capacity of people in remote tribal region needs to increase to eradicate and erase malnutrition and health issues in the tribal region. All health, nutrition, livelihood and development schemes have to be dovetailed and converged under a single umbrella to focus on overall development and welfare of tribal inhabitants.

12. The Threatened Future of the Jarawa Tribe



About the Jarawa Tribe

According to scholar George Weber, the Jarawa tribe are Pygmy Negrito people living in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India who are “a remnant population representing perhaps the earliest migration out of Africa of modern Homo Sapiens.” This Paleolithic tribe that still lives a Stone Age hunter-gatherer lifestyle has around 450 members in total. The tribe represents one of the four tribal communities (Great Andamanese, Onge and Sentinelese) living in the region who for the longest time refused contact with modern society. Unlike the Sentinelese tribe who refuse contact violently, the bow and arrow-wielding Jarawa tribe first established peaceful contact with the Indian government in 1997.

The Threats the Jarawa Tribe Faces

While making half-naked women dance is common, poachers similarly lure young tribal women with groceries, alcohol and meat to harm them physically and sexually exploit them. The government-approved “contact” resulted in alcohol and smoking addictions as well as the spread of diseases (the tribes lack the immunity of modern people) with COVID-19 now becoming one of their gravest threats. Additionally, a growing number of settlers is encroaching on tribal land. With one Jarawa for every 1,000 settlers, the wealthier settlers tend to deplete tribal land of resources.

But the most threatening thing to the Jarawa tribe today is “mainstreaming.” Mainstreaming refers to the policy of pushing a tribe to join the country’s dominant modern society. This most notably strips the tribe of its self-sufficiency and identity, leaving them struggling at the margins of society. The Borgen Project spoke with Yash Meghwal, the spokesperson of Tribal Army, a leading organization in India that has been fighting against tribal injustice. According to Meghwal, hunter-gatherer, tribal populations like the Jarawas are “not equipped to survive in a market-based economy.” Elaborating on this, he stated that “to move into the upper echelon of society, one must have proper education and then the adequate business or job opportunity” which governments have failed to provide to the tribes.

The Latest Threat: Human Safaris

Interactions with modern society increased after the construction of the Andaman Trunk Road. The road cuts through the Jarawa tribe’s reserve forests and brought in a large population of refugee settlers. Tour companies now allow “human safari” experiences along this road. This does not just exacerbate abuse, addictions and the spread of diseases from interaction with modern people. It also encourages the treatment of tribes as if they are zoo animals. This cultivates the dehumanization of tribal people. As Meghwal put it, “we are failing if our citizens are equated with wild animals.” Human safaris exist to profit from the poor, powerless tribal population. Thus, the tourism industry has emerged at the expense of their privacy, dignity, health and human rights.

When referring to the road, Meghwal said that “the state is only interested in making new roads as infrastructure. Modern society does not care about the ecological and environmental balance; their focus is more on the extraction from the tribal land.”

Larger Problem of Tribal Discrimination

Discrimination in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is emblematic of a larger problem of tribal discrimination. Unfortunately, this level of discrimination is far bigger than the confines of the Islands. Meghwal claimed that this discrimination comes from conflating the tribal

population with the Dalits. The Dalits are among the Indian lower caste. The Indian caste system is a hierarchal system that ascribes supremacy to one group and untouchability to the other. "Both Dalits and tribes suffer similar nature problems such as deprivation, discrimination and exclusion," Meghwal claimed.

The Borgen Project also spoke with Jarken Gadi. He is a former sociology professor who is now a fellow for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. According to Gadi, this discrimination is a product of "the lack of awareness supplied by educational institutions and media houses."

Tribal Army as a Solution

Hansraj Meena, one of the most prominent tribal activists in India, founded Tribal Army. This organization may hold the solution to the discrimination of the Jarawa tribe and other tribes across the country. Meghwal claimed that people should grant tribes rights in the case of land and forests. He also mentioned that "we should avoid [letting] too many outsiders into tribal territory." Additionally, he stated that there is also a need for constitutional measures to protect tribes as they participate in the market economy. Tribal Army has also called for requirements of "reservation in the private sector and in business," stating "it is the most necessary step for tribal welfare."

Gadi's solution to discrimination and threats is a call for awareness programs which the government initiated. These programs would teach the public about the different tribes and how they should treat them. The education system and media can influence thought, change negative attitudes and stop harmful actions toward the tribal community.

Organizations like Tribal Army constantly advocate for policy change. People are challenging the status quo of tribal discrimination. With advancements like these, positive change can come for the Jarawa tribe and for overall tribal welfare.

13. Polycrisis at a Kanker village: 'With every tree chopped, I became poorer'



Villages in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region enter economic recession as a new railway line brings the world closer to them

Patkal Beda village, Kanker district, Bastar region, Chhattisgarh – It is hard to locate this village from a distance.

A few kilometres away from the state highway connecting Bastar and Kanker districts, the village of 150 members of the Muria tribe is cocooned in dense forests of sal, tendu and Mahua. One can say the village has much more trees than people; one can spot wildlife more often than the residents living here.

Entering the village is even more difficult. One requires a security "clearance". The Border Security Force (BSF) – a central paramilitary force usually deployed to guard international borders, but here to fight armed insurgents popularly referred to as Maoists – has an outpost a kilometre away from the village. One has to seek permission before entering the village, irrespective of whether one is a resident or not.

After half-an-hour of probing my purpose of visit, a sentry pointing an automatic rifle at me through a barbed covering asked: "Do you know anybody in the village? Name please." I said, "No." Following another lengthy procedure – my identity card of being a journalist issued by the

Union Ministry of Home Affairs was sent “inside” (the main barracks of BSF).

After another half-an-hour, a masked person appeared behind the sentry and repeated the same question: “Do you know anybody in the village? If not, why do you want to go?” It is widely known that the masked man is a local resident who works with the BSF for such identification and clearance besides guiding them inside forests and nearby villages.

“I will report on how forests are protected,” I explained my purpose of reportage from the village. I was allowed to walk to the village; and come back. A warning from the sentry as I started: “Don’t go inside the forest. Maoists have been sighted moving around today morning.”

Patkal Beda was just a few weeks away from a landmark development: Getting connected to the world outside. A new railway line was being laid that connects it to the state capital Raipur, which the BSF has been deployed to “protect” from the Maoists.

Like this village, many more villages in the region are now connected to the outer world as the 235 kilometres Dallirajhara-Rowghat-Jagdarpur railway project is functional. On August 13, the first-ever train chugged in, stopping at Antagarh, a small town a few kilometres away from the village.

The new railway line has another purpose, rather the prime one: It would allow the transportation of iron ore from Rowghat Mines, covering villages like Patkal Beda. In September, the first consignment of iron ore was already transported using this line.

But, the local communities have been opposing this railway line and also the opening of the Rowghat Mines for nearly a decade. While many have lost their lands, they allege no compensation has been given. For most, the forests that disappeared for the railway lines were their economic world.

14. Why PM Modi has distributed land title deeds to Banjaras, an SC group in Karnataka

Days before the event, JD(S) leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy questioned the PM's presence at the event. How have such deeds been distributed in the past, and what has changed in the run-up to state elections in Karnataka? We explain.

On Thursday (January 19), **Prime Minister Narendra Modi symbolically distributed Hakku Patra (land title deeds)** to five families of the Banjara (Lambani) community, a nomadic Scheduled Caste group, at an event organised by the state Revenue Department at Malkhed, in the Kalaburagi district of Karnataka.

The five families were among the 50,000-plus families to whom land title deeds were distributed during the programme. Modi hailed this programme as “a big day” for the community, and alleged that previous governments had done nothing when it came to converting Banjara thandas (habitations) to revenue villages. The Lambanis are traditionally nomadic tribes with a large population in the backward districts of the Kalyana Karnataka region in north Karnataka.

What are hakku patras or title deeds?

A title deed is a property ownership document, and the bearer of the document owns the land. The title deeds enable owners to avail of bank loans with the said document. They will also be eligible to buy or sell land to which the title deed is granted by the government.

Was this done for the first time in Karnataka?

In 2017, the Congress government passed a law that granted ownership of houses to agricultural labourers residing in unrecorded habitations, and it was expected to benefit two lakh people living in Lambani thandas and other settlements of different backward communities, such as Kurubarahattis, Haadis, and Palyas. The Revenue Department said that 300 habitations on government land were being converted into revenue villages.

Back in 2009, the BJP government launched the Karnataka Thanda Development Corporation for the development and modernisation of 3,395

thandas and grants were regularly released for the purpose. According to a response tabled in Lok Sabha, more than Rs 430 cr was released for the development of thandas from 2014-15 to 2018-19. In the past too, title deeds have been provided to various landless groups, including the Banjara community in the state.

What was the controversy over PM Modi distributing the deeds?

Days before the event where PM Modi was scheduled to distribute these title deeds, JD(S) leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy raised questions on why this was being done by the PM. "Such title deeds are normally distributed by MLAs," he said. He had also criticised the expenses incurred for the programme, noting that it was funded by the state exchequer.

The decision by the BJP government to have the PM distribute these title deeds is being seen in the context of state elections in Karnataka. Modi is expected to launch more projects in the state in the run-up to the polls due later this year.

The PM has already visited the state twice in January and more visits by him are lined up in the coming months, where he is expected to inaugurate a slew of projects, including the Bengaluru-Mysuru expressway, a new metro line, an airport at Shivamogga, among others.

Many have drawn parallels with the election campaign carried out in Gujarat last year for the 2022 state elections, where the PM was seen distributing appointment letters to candidates selected for government jobs. Opposition parties had said this was usually done by under-secretary-grade government officials.

What do the numbers say about the Banjara community?

The Banjaras are a key scheduled caste sub-group in Karnataka, although they are considered to be a tribal group in terms of the lives they lead. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes together make up nearly 24 per cent of the state population, becoming an important group for political parties like the BJP.

In October last year, the BJP announced a two per cent hike in government reservations for jobs and education for Scheduled Castes, taking the reservations for the group from 15 to 17 per cent in the state. The efforts to woo and consolidate the support of the SC/ST community are seen as part of efforts by the BJP to compensate for a possible division of its Lingayat caste support base in Karnataka and to prevent SC/ST groups from drifting their support to the Congress - which has traditionally enjoyed the backing of Other Backward Classes, the SC/STs and minorities.

Banjara Community

- The word '**banjara**' is derived from **Vanaj** meaning **to trade**, and **Jara** meaning **to travel**.
 - Banjara (sometimes called **Gypsies**) is a **nomadic tribe of India** and were the vital supply chain for villages.
 - They were **commercial nomads**, that is, hundreds of years ago they distributed salt and other essential items to interior villages, but they did have a connection with the land.
- The Banjaras were among many tribes that resisted the British attempt to seize their lands for plantations and enrol them as labour.
- Their constant revolt frustrated the British, and in 1871, the Banjaras and several other tribes were brought under the **Criminal Tribes Act**.
 - The community was denotified in the 1950s but were listed under the **Habitual Offenders Act, 1952**.

