

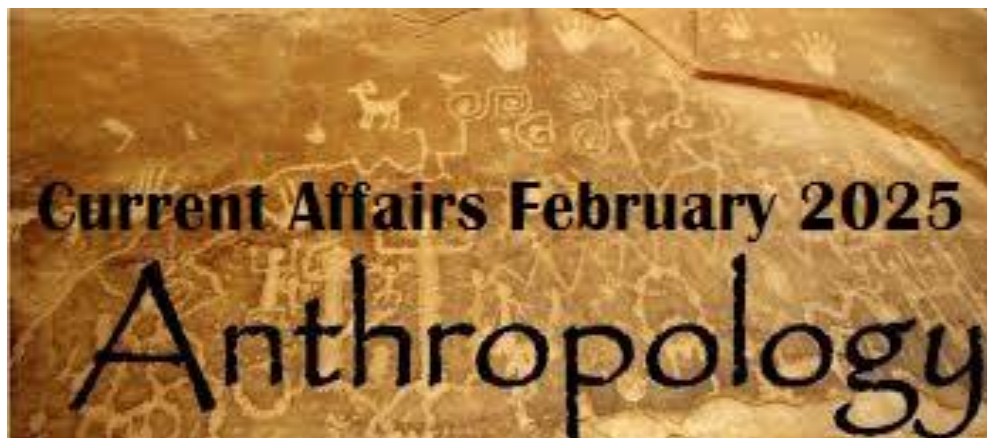
**ANTHROPOLOGY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE
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CONTENTS

PAPER -1

PHYSICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. 300,000-Year-Old Weapon Reveals Early Humans Were Woodworking Masters
2. Australopithecus

SOCIO – CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. 'Animism' recognizes how animals, places and plants have power over humans – and it's finding renewed interest around the world
2. Shattering the myth of men as hunters and women as gatherers

PAPER - 2

INDIAN & TRIBAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Key Findings of the Study on Nicobarese Tribe
2. Sacred Grooves
3. Bridging the Gap in Tribal Welfare
4. Nagoba Jatara
5. Mannan Community
6. Tribal Welfare Measures in Budget 2025-26
7. Gotti Koya Tribe
8. NCST Survey on Tribal Displacement
9. Konda Veduru Bamboo in the Godavari Valley
10. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2006.
11. SC/ST Act to Include Intellectual Property
12. Mising Tribe
13. Food Insecurity and Malnutrition in Tribal Communities of India
14. Tea Tribes and Jhumur Dance
15. Soliga Tribes
16. Dhimsa Dance
17. Challenges and Developments Related with Denotified Tribes

PAPER - 1

PHYSICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. 300,000-Year-Old Weapon Reveals Early Humans Were Woodworking Masters (Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 2 Paper I)

- New research on a 300,000-year-old throwing stick reveals advanced woodworking techniques among early humans, suggesting communal hunting practices involving the whole community. The artifact, demonstrating high craftsmanship, indicates early humans' deep knowledge of wood properties. Newly conducted research has revealed that early humans were proficient masters of woodworking.
- The creation of lightweight weapons such as this throwing stick potentially enabled communal hunts of medium and small animals. It is thought that the use of throwing sticks as hunting tools could have been a community-wide activity, even including children.
- These early humans demonstrated an ability to plan well in advance, a strong knowledge of the properties of wood, and many sophisticated woodworking skills that we still use today.
- This insight came from the detailed analysis of a 300,000-year-old double-pointed wooden throwing stick, discovered three decades ago in Schöningen, Germany. Research indicates that the stick was meticulously scraped, seasoned, and sanded before being used for hunting, suggesting a more advanced level of early human woodworking skills than previously believed.

Intimate Connection Between the Tool and Its User

- The fine surface, carefully shaped points, and polish from handling suggest this was a piece of personal kit with repeated use, rather than a quickly made tool that was carelessly discarded.
- Principal investigator Thomas Terberger said: "The systematic analysis of the wooden finds of the Schöningen site financed by the German Research Foundation provides valuable new insights and further exciting information on these early wooden weapons can be expected soon."

2. Australopithecus

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper I)

- Australopithecus had a variable but plant-based diet, according to an analysis of stable isotope data from seven hominin specimens dating back 3.5 million years from Sterkfontein in South Africa.

Australopithecus:

- Australopithecus, (genus Australopithecus) is a **group of extinct primates** known from a series of fossils found at numerous sites in eastern, north-central, and southern Africa.
- They are the **closest known relatives of our genus, Homo**.
- The various species of Australopithecus lived **4.4 million to 1.4 million years ago** (mya), during the Pliocene and Pleistocene epochs (which lasted from 5.3 million to 11,700 years ago).
- The genus name, **meaning “southern ape,”** refers to the first fossils found, which were discovered **in South Africa**.
- Perhaps the **most famous specimen** of Australopithecus is **“Lucy,”** a remarkably preserved fossilized **skeleton from Ethiopia** that has been dated to 3.2 mya.

Features:

- As characterized by the fossil evidence, members of Australopithecus bore a **combination of humanlike and apelike traits**.
- Members of this species had **apelike face proportions** (a flat nose, a strongly projecting lower jaw) and **braincase** (with a **small brain**, usually less than 500 cubic centimeters - about 1/3 the size of a modern human brain), and long, **strong arms with curved fingers** adapted for **climbing trees**.
 - They also had **small canine teeth like all other early humans**, and a body that **stood on two legs** and regularly **walked upright**.
 - They were roughly 1.2-1.5 m tall and probably weighed about 30-50 kg.
 - **Males** were almost **twice the size of females**, a level of difference, or **sexual dimorphism, greater than modern chimpanzees or humans** but less than gorillas or orangutans.
 - They had mainly a **plant-based diet**, including leaves, fruit, seeds, roots, nuts, and insects.

SOCIO – CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. 'Animism' recognizes how animals, places and plants have power over humans - and it's finding renewed interest around the world

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 5 Paper I)

- A movement known as “**new animism**,” which seeks to secure personhood rights for nonhuman beings through legal means, is gaining a following around the globe.
- **New animist** environmental activists are not the only ones using the term. Animism itself has become fashionable. Some spirituality bloggers talk about animism as a way to deepen one’s spiritual relationship to nature.

A history of the term

- The term animism was coined by an early anthropologist, Edward Burnett Tylor, in 1870. Tylor argued that Darwin’s ideas of evolution could be applied to human societies; he classified religions according to their level of development.
- He defined animism as a belief in souls: the existence of human souls after death, but also the belief that entities Western perspectives deemed inanimate, like mountains, rivers and trees, had souls.
- Animism is not a religion one can convert to but rather a label used for worldviews and practices that acknowledge relationships between nature and the animal world that have power over humans and must be respected.
- These practices can be religious rituals, but they can also be forms of environmental care, farming practices or protests, such as those conducted by the water protectors at Standing Rock, known as the No Dakota Access Pipeline, also called by the hashtag #NoDAPL.
- Additionally, when Indigenous practices are labeled animist religion, it is easy to overlook the very real biological and ecological scientific knowledge of these communities.
- Animist practices are as variable as the peoples and places engaging in such relationships. Indigenous and animist perspectives illustrate that there are many different relationships possible between humans and the world around

them, and many environmentalists are finding these alternatives instructive, despite the troubled history of the term.

2. Shattering the myth of men as hunters and women as gatherers

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 1.5 Paper I)

- Analysis of data from dozens of foraging societies around the world shows that women hunt in at least 79 percent of these societies, opposing the widespread belief that men exclusively hunt and women exclusively gather.
- A common belief holds that, among foraging populations, men have typically hunted animals while women gathered plant products for food.
- However, mounting archaeological evidence from across human history and prehistory is challenging this paradigm; for instance, women in many societies have been found buried alongside big-game hunting tools.
- Some researchers have suggested that women's role as hunters was confined to the past, with more recent foraging societies following the paradigm of men as hunters and women as gatherers.
- The analysis also revealed that women are actively involved in teaching hunting practices and that they often employ a greater variety of weapon choice and hunting strategies than men.
- These findings suggest that, in many foraging societies, women are skilled hunters and play an instrumental role in the practice, adding to the evidence opposing long-held perceptions about gender roles in foraging societies.
- The authors note that these stereotypes have influenced previous archaeological studies, with, for instance, some researchers reluctant to interpret objects buried with women as hunting tools.

PAPER - 2

INDIAN & TRIBAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Key Findings of the Study on Nicobarese Tribe

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- A study published in the **European Journal of Human Genetics** has revised the timeline of Nicobarese migration to the Nicobar Islands.
- **Key Findings of the Study on Nicobarese Tribe Revised Migration Timeline:** Previous studies estimated that the Austroasiatic ancestors of the Nicobarese arrived to Nicobar Islands over 11,000 years ago.
- The new study, using advanced Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) analysis, corrected this estimate to approximately 5,000 years ago.
- **Genetic Link:** The study found that the Nicobarese share ancestral ties with the Htin Mal community (ethnic group native to Laos-Thailand region).
- This supports the idea that their ancestors migrated from Southeast Asia, rather than South Asia.
- **Preservation of Genetic Identity:** Due to their geographical isolation, the Nicobarese have maintained their genetic identity with minimal external influence. This has allowed researchers to trace their ancestry more precisely.
- **Linguistic Continuity:** Despite their genetic ties to Southeast Asia, the Nicobarese have retained their Austroasiatic language roots (Khmuic branch), linking them to other Southeast Asian populations.

Key Facts About the Nicobarese Tribe

- **Geography:** The Nicobarese live on the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, part of India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands Union Territory. The Nicobar Islands consist of 19 islands, the major islands are Car Nicobar, Kamorta, Nancowrie, and Great Nicobar, which have both hilly and flat terrains. Great Nicobar is the southernmost and largest of the Nicobar Islands.

- **Ethnic Group:** The Nicobarese belong to the Mongoloid ethnic group and have a population of over 27,000. While not divided into tribes, they are classified into six territorial groups: Car Nicobar, Chowra, Teressa with Bompoka, Central Group, Southern Group, and the Shompen (inland tribe of Great Nicobar). **Social Structure:** Patriarchal joint family system known as Tuhet. With no individual ownership, the Tuhet collectively owns land, coconut trees, and pigs.

2. Sacred Grooves

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 3.3 Paper II)

- The Supreme Court's December 18, 2024 ruling directs Rajasthan to map and classify sacred groves as forests under the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA), 1972. This contradicts the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, which upholds community ownership over forest lands instead of government control.

Sacred Groves:

- **Community-protected Forest patches** with cultural and ecological significance, conserved through **traditional customs and religious beliefs**. Found across **India**, these groves serve as **biodiversity hotspots and water recharge zones**.

Significance of Sacred Groves:

- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Home to rare and endemic species, acting as genetic reservoirs.
- **Water Conservation:** Many groves are associated with springs, ponds, and rivers, ensuring aquifer recharge **E.g.** Sarpa Kavu groves in Kerala are crucial for maintaining local water tables and streamflow.
- **Soil Conservation & Climate Regulation:** Dense vegetation prevents soil erosion and stabilizes ecosystems. **E.g.** Sarna forests in Jharkhand, conserved by tribal communities, prevent land degradation and desertification.
- **Cultural & Religious Importance:** Integral to local traditions, rituals, and spiritual beliefs across tribal and rural communities. **E.g.** Mawphlang sacred forest in Meghalaya is central to Khasi tribal rituals and remains untouched for centuries
- **Disaster Mitigation:** Helps prevent floods, landslides, and droughts, supporting climate resilience.

Challenges to Sacred Groves:

- **Urbanization & Encroachment:** Rapid development, land conversion, and infrastructure projects threaten sacred groves. **E.g.** Sacred groves in Gujarat's Dahod region are shrinking due to road expansion and real estate projects.

- **Decline in Traditional Beliefs:** Modernization and loss of indigenous knowledge weaken community-driven conservation.
- **Invasive Species:** Exotic species like *Lantana camara*, *Eupatorium odoratum*, and *Prosopis juliflora* degrade native flora. E.g. *Lantana* invasion in Madhya Pradesh's sacred groves has displaced indigenous medicinal plants.
- **Way Forward: Recognition Under Forest Rights Act (FRA):** Sacred groves must be recognized as community forest resources under gram sabhas. **Inventorization & Mapping:** Conduct a nationwide survey to document sacred groves and their ecological significance. **Strengthen Community-Based Conservation:** Empower local communities, elders, and tribal groups in grove management.

3. Bridging the Gap in Tribal Welfare

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 6.2 Paper II)

Significance of Tribal Communities for India

- **Custodians of India's Biodiversity and Forest Conservation:** Tribals play a crucial role in **preserving forests, wildlife, and biodiversity** through their traditional knowledge and sustainable practices.
- **Rich Cultural and Linguistic Heritage:** India's tribal communities **preserve diverse languages, art forms, folklore, and indigenous knowledge systems**, enriching national identity.
- **Vital for India's Economic and Agricultural Diversity:** Tribals contribute significantly to **agriculture, minor forest produce (MFP) collection, and traditional crafts**, strengthening India's rural economy. **Significant Political Influence in Indian Democracy:** With a population of **over 104 million (Census 2011)**, tribals form a crucial voting bloc, impacting state and national elections.
- **Essential for Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Development:** Tribals possess deep traditional knowledge of **climate adaptation, water conservation, and sustainable agriculture**, which is crucial in combating climate change.
- **Backbone of India's Traditional Medicine and Ayurveda:** Tribal communities hold **vast knowledge of herbal medicine, Ayurveda, and ethno-botanical practices**, contributing to India's healthcare system. **Critical for Sustainable Tourism and Eco-Tourism:** Tribal regions are home to **some of India's most biodiverse landscapes**, making them key players in sustainable and eco-tourism.
- **Key Issues Faced by Tribal Communities in India**

- **Land Alienation and Displacement:** Tribal communities face large-scale displacement due to industrial projects, mining, and conservation efforts, leading to loss of traditional livelihoods.
- **Poor Health and Malnutrition:** Tribal populations suffer from **higher mortality rates, malnutrition, and lack of healthcare access**, worsened by poor infrastructure in remote areas.
- **Lack of Quality Education and EMRS Implementation Gaps:** Tribal students face **language barriers, poor infrastructure, and high dropout rates**, especially in higher education.
- **Loss of Indigenous Culture and Linguistic Marginalization:** Tribal languages and cultural heritage are fast disappearing due to **urbanization, lack of institutional support, and mainstreaming policies**. **Human Rights Violations and Security Issues:** Tribals often become victims of **state-led displacement, police excesses, and Maoist insurgency**, caught between the government and extremist groups.
- India's **enhanced budgetary** focus on tribal welfare marks a pivotal step toward inclusive development. However, challenges like **land displacement, poor healthcare, and educational deficits** persist.

4. Nagoba Jatara

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Nagoba Jatara, the eight-day holy pilgrimage event of Mesram clan Adivasi Gonds, is slated to start at Keslapur village in north Telangana's tribal heartland of Indervelli mandal in Adilabad district.

Nagoba Jatara

- Nagoba Jatara is a **tribal festival** held in January/February in Keslapur village, Adilabad district, **Telangana**.
- It is the **second biggest tribal festival** in India, **after the Sammakka Saralamma Jatara, held in Telangana** itself.
- It is celebrated for 10 days by the **Mesaram clan of Gond tribes**.
- Tribal people from Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh belonging to the Mesaram clan offer prayers at the festival.
- The chief deity at the festival is the 'Nagoba' (Sri Shek – Cobra).

Nagoba Jatara Rituals

- Few **elder members** of the **Mesram clan** go barefoot to the river Godavari a few days before the Jatara, **bring holy water**, and keep it near the Banyan Tree in front of the Nagoba Temple.

- The Jatara includes a '**Bheting**' ceremony, where **new brides are introduced into the clan**. New brides come in possession wearing white saris and are led by the elder women to worship the Nagoba, after which they are recognized as a full-fledged member of the clan.
- The **Gusadi Dance** performance by dancers from the **Gond tribe** is a major special attraction of the event.

5. Mannan Community

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Raman Rajamannan, the king of the Mannan community and the only tribal king in Kerala, will participate in the Republic Day parade in Delhi.

Mannan Community:

- The Mannan is a **scheduled tribe (ST) of Kerala**.
- It is the **only Adhivasi tribal dynasty with a kingship currently existing in South India**.
- The life of the Mannan Community is **closely related to Tamil** culture.
 - They **speak a dialect similar to Tamil** but without a script.
 - It is believed that they were **originally from Tamil Nadu** and later migrated to Idukki during the period of Poonjar Rajavamsham (kings).
- Nearly **97 percent** of the Mannan community's population **reside in Idukki District**.
 - Though they **used to stay in remote forests**, they were **forced to migrate** to plots allotted by the government at the **outskirts of the Periyar Tiger Reserve**, a few decades back, following a government ban on deforestation in the preserved area.
- They follow a **matrilineal system of descent**, and their ruler, the **Raja Mannan**, is elected by community headmen from among those eligible by heredity.
- Their **primary occupation is agriculture**, including coconut harvesting, cultivation of herbs, etc.
- They practice **Hinduism**.
- Their main **celebrations include the Kalavoot, Meenoot and Mutthiamman Festival**.
- **Mannankoothu** is a **unique ritual art form** performed by the Mannans. The art form is staged mainly during worship, harvest times and weddings.

6. Tribal Welfare Measures in Budget 2025-26

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- The **Union Budget 2025-26** has increased the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs'** allocation by **45.79%** from 2024, emphasizing **education, infrastructure, and socio-economic development.**

Key Highlights of Union Budget 2025-26 for Tribal Welfare

- **Increased Budgetary Allocation:** The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)** received Rs 14,925.81 crore in Budget 2025-26, a **45.79% increase** from 2024-25. The **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment** received **Rs 13,611 crore** (35.75% increase).
- The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)** focuses on the welfare and development of **Scheduled Tribes (STs)**, while the **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE)** works for the welfare of **SCs, STs, OBCs, PwDs, the elderly, and the transgender community.**
- **Expansion of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS):** The **Budget 2025-26** allocates **Rs 7,088.60 crore** for EMRS, with the aim to operationalize 728 schools by March 2026, benefiting **3.5 lakh tribal students** with quality education and residential facilities.
- **DA-JGUA:** The **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DA-JGUA)**, originally named the **PM Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PM-JUGA)** received **Rs 2,000 crore**, a **fourfold increase** from **Rs 500 crore**, to enhance **infrastructure, education, and livelihoods** in tribal regions.
- **Expediting PM-JANMAN:** The **Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)** allocation has doubled to **Rs 300 crore** in **Budget 2025-26** to enhance healthcare, education, and livelihoods for **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).**
- To expedite the **PM-JANMAN Housing Scheme**, the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** revised the approval process for **PM-AWAS homes**, aiming for **4.90 lakh houses** for PVTGs.

7. Gotti Koya Tribe

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Gotti Koya are one of the few **multi-racial and multi-lingual tribal**

communities in India. They live in the forests, plains, and valleys on **both sides of the Godavari River**, in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha.

- They are said to have migrated to central India from their original home in **Bastar, northern India.**

Language:

- The Koya language, also called **Koyi, is a Dravidian language.** It is closely **related to Gondi** and has been strongly **influenced by Telugu.**
- Most Koyas speak either Gondi or Telugu, in addition to Koyi.

Occupation:

- **Traditionally, they were pastoralists and shifting cultivators,** but now-a-days, they have **taken to settled cultivation** supplemented by **animal husbandry and seasonal forest collections.**
- They grow Jowar, Ragi, Bajra, and other millets.

Society and Culture:

- All Gotti Koya belong to one of **five subdivisions called gotrams.** **Every Gotti Koya is born into a clan,** and he cannot leave it.
- They have a **patrilineal and patrilocal family.** The family is called "Kutum". The nuclear family is the predominant type.
- **Monogamy** is prevalent among the Koyas.
- They practice their **own ethnic religion,** but also worship a number of **Hindu gods and goddesses.**
- **Many Gotti Koya deities are female,** the most important being the "mother earth."
- They **maintain community funds and grain banks at the village level** to help the needy families and provide food security.
- They either bury or **cremate the dead.** They erect menhirs in memory of the dead.
- Their main **festivals are Vijji Pandum** (seeds charming festival) and **KondalaKolupu** (festival to appease Hill deities).
- They perform a robust, **colourful dance called Permokok (Bison horn dance)** during festivals and marriage ceremonies.

8. NCST Survey on Tribal Displacement

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.1 Paper II)

- **The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)** has directed the governments of **Telangana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha** to conduct **surveys to identify the exact number of tribal people displaced**

from Chhattisgarh due to Maoist violence and now living in difficult conditions in neighboring states.

Key Points

- **Identification of Displaced Tribal People:** The panel emphasized the need to **determine the exact number and locations of displaced tribal people** in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Maharashtra to plan the next course of action effectively.
- **Coordination for Survey and Data Compilation:** The NCST directed the Chhattisgarh government to **appoint a nodal officer to coordinate with the governments of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Maharashtra** for conducting the surveys. After collecting data from these states, the **Chhattisgarh government must compile a consolidated report and submit it to the NCST** for further action.
- **Petition Highlighting the Issue:** The commission received a **petition in March 2022**, stating that members of the **Gottikoya community**, who fled Chhattisgarh in 2005 due to violence between Maoist guerrillas and **Indian security forces**, are facing severe hardships in their new locations.
- **Estimated Number of Displaced Tribals:** Tribal rights activists **estimate that around 50,000 tribals were displaced** from Chhattisgarh due to **left-wing extremism**. They are **currently residing in 248 settlements in the forests** of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra.
- **Land Reclamation and Displacement Concerns:** Reports indicate that the Telangana government has reclaimed land from **internally displaced people (IDPs)** in at least 75 settlements, endangering their livelihoods and making them more vulnerable.
- The commission, citing the petition, noted allegations that forest department officials demolished IDPs' homes and destroyed their crops.

9. Konda Veduru Bamboo in the Godavari Valley

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 7.1 Paper II)

- The **Konda Veduru bamboo variety** (*Dendrocalamus strictus*), often referred to as the '**Green Gold**', plays a significant role in the cultural, nutritional, and economic practices of the **Konda Reddi tribe**.
- **Konda Veduru Bamboo:** Native to the **Eastern Ghats**, primarily found in the Godavari river valley (spreads across **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha and Chhattisgarh**).
- Konda Veduru bamboo shoots is a staple food for the Konda Reddi tribe. Known for its nutritional benefits, rich in proteins, amino acids, vitamins,

and iron, with women traditionally harvesting the Bamboo shoots.

Konda Reddy Tribe

- It is **one of the most backward tribal groups** in the states of **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**.
- They inhabit on both the banks of the Godavari River (East and West Godavari districts), in the hilly-forest region of Khammam (Telangana) and Srikakulam (Andhra Pradesh).
- They live in the **interior forest areas largely cut-off from the mainstream**. Traditionally, they were **shifting cultivators** and recently, some of them have adopted **settled agriculture and horticulture**.
- Collection of non timber forest products and basket-making supplement the sources of their livelihood. Their mother tongue is Telugu with a unique accent.
- Konda Reddis have also been recognized as **Primitive Tribal Group** (now **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups**)
- The Konda Reddis are known for their **eco-friendly practices** such as use of household articles made of bamboo, bottle gourd, and seed.

10. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2006.

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 9.1 Paper II)

- Sixteen years since The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (also known as FRA) was introduced in January 2008, forest dwellers continue to face significant hurdles.
- Only three states in India have recognised a notable number of Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights, with Maharashtra being the only state where these rights have been operationalised, an analysis has noted.
- **Key takeaways:** The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, commonly known as the Forest Rights Act (FRA), is a significant piece of legislation in India aimed at recognizing and vesting forest rights in forest-dwelling communities.
- **Recognition of Forest Rights:** The Act grants legal recognition to the rights of Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) who have been living in forests for generations but lacked legal ownership. It acknowledges both individual rights (e.g., land rights) and community rights (e.g., rights over common resources).

Eligibility Criteria:

- **Scheduled Tribes (STs):** They must be residing in the forest land before 13th December 2005 and depend on forests for livelihood. **Other Traditional Forest Dwellers:** Non-tribal communities who have been living in forests for at least three generations (75 years) prior to December 13, 2005, and depend on forests for their livelihood.
- **Land Ceiling:** The Act sets a ceiling on the extent of land that can be recognized under individual rights, typically up to 4 hectares, subject to state-specific variations.

Types of Rights Recognized:

- **Individual Rights:** Rights to land and resources that have been traditionally accessed by individuals or families.
- **Community Rights:** Rights over common property resources, including grazing grounds, water bodies, and traditional seasonal resource access.
- **Right to Protect and Conserve:** Rights to protect, regenerate, conserve, or manage any community forest resource traditionally protected and conserved by the community. **Right to Intellectual Property:** Rights over traditional knowledge related to biodiversity and cultural diversity. **Right to Rehabilitation:** If eviction is required for conservation, proper rehabilitation must be ensured.
- **Gram Sabha's Role:** The Gram Sabha (village assembly) plays a crucial role in initiating the process of determining forest rights. It is responsible for receiving claims, consolidating and verifying them, and then passing resolutions to be forwarded to higher authorities. No forest rights can be acquired or transferred without the consent of the Gram Sabha.

11. SC/ST Act to Include Intellectual Property

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 7.1 Paper II)

- In the **Principal Secretary Government of Maharashtra v. Kshipra Kamlesh Uke Case, 2024**, the **Supreme Court** upholds the **Bombay High Court's** ruling, expanding the definition of "**property**" in the **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989** to include **intellectual property**.
- The aggrieved sought compensation for the theft of their **research data, laptops, and intellectual property** under the provisions of the **SC/ST Act, 1989**.
- The **Bombay High Court** ruled that the term "property" should be interpreted broadly to include **intellectual property** such as **data, electronic material, and intellectual rights**, whether **tangible or intangible**.
- **Patents, copyrights, and designs**, are property, even though they lack

physical existence, and are capable of being valued for **compensation under the SC/ST Act, 1989**.

- The SC/ST Act, 1989 defines **specific offenses** against SC/ST members, including **physical violence, harassment, and social discrimination**.
- The SC/ST Act, 1989, **does not allow anticipatory bail**, unless a **prima facie case** is made against the accused.
- It mandates **special courts for swift trials** and **SC/ST Protection Cells** at the state level, led by **senior police officers**, to oversee its implementation.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

- The SCs and the STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, also known as the **SC/ST Act 1989**, was enacted to safeguard the members of SCs and STs from caste-based discrimination and violence.
- Rooted in **Articles 15 and 17 of the Indian Constitution**, the Act aims to ensure the protection of these marginalised communities and to address the inadequacies of previous laws.
- **Rules and Implementation:** The **Central Government is authorised to frame rules** for the Act's implementation, while **State Governments and Union Territories administer** it with central assistance.
- **Key Provisions:** The Act defines specific offenses against SC/ST members, including **physical violence, harassment, and social discrimination**. It recognizes these **acts as "atrocities"** and prescribes stringent penalties for perpetrators.

12. Mising Tribe

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Assam's largest tribal community, the Mising tribe, celebrated the Ali Ai Ligang festival recently.

Mising Tribe

- The Mising people are an indigenous tribe from **Northeast India**. They are **part of the Tani people**, who **speak Tibeto-Burmese languages**.
- They live in parts of **Assam** and **Arunachal Pradesh** in India and **Tibet** in China.
- **Tibetans call them "Lhobhas,"** which means "southerners" because they live in South Tibet and areas now in Arunachal Pradesh.
- They are one of the **largest tribal groups in Assam**. According to the census of India 2011, the total population of Mising is 680,424 in Assam.
- They have a **life closely related to rivers**, and therefore they can be described as the only riparian tribe of Northeast India.

Life and culture of Mising people revolve around agriculture and fishing.

- The agriculture practice of the Mising people was **originally 'Jhum'** or slash & burn method.
- However, after settling down in the plains of Assam, they have mastered the art of wet paddy cultivation, and at present they are good settled cultivators.
- Drawing their origin in Jhum cultivation, the **main festival** of the Mising people is '**Ali-Aye-Ligang**'. Ali means edible root, Aye means seed, and Ligang means sowing festival.
- **Religion:** The Mising people practice the **cult of 'Do-nyi - Po:lo'** which literally translates into **worshipping the Sun and the Moon**.

13. Food Insecurity and Malnutrition in Tribal Communities of India

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 6.2 Paper II)

- Food insecurity and undernutrition are ongoing issues in tribal communities in India, even with government welfare programs in place.

Recent Findings in Malnutrition regarding Tribal Communities

- **National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) report** - It reveals the alarming poverty rates and malnutrition among Odisha's tribal population. **Severe impacted districts** - Kandhamal, Rayagada and Koraput.
- **Kandhamal district** - Due to mango kernel (a waste product of mango fruit canning industry) consumption the dire state of food insecurity among Odisha's tribal communities.
- It reminds the earlier incidents of illnesses and multiple deaths in Kashipur, Rayagada in 1987, 1995 and 2001 due to the consumption of mango kernels.

Features of the Koraput Model

- **The Koraput Model** - It is a community-based Approach to Food Security.
- To address these issues, the MSSRF implemented a community-driven intervention from 2013 to 2022 in Koraput, focusing on nutrition literacy, sustainable farming, and collective decision-making.
- **Community Nutrition Literacy** - Training programs educated villagers on dietary diversity and balanced diets.
- Women and children received priority in access to better nutrition.
- Local champions were trained to promote healthy eating.
- **Diversified Agriculture** - Villagers were encouraged to grow a variety of crops which enhanced food security.
- Successful initiatives included home gardens, mushroom production, vermi-composting, and crop diversification.
- **Government Initiatives related to Tribal Communities Food Insecurity and**

Malnutrition

- **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) Development Program** – Targets the most vulnerable tribal communities on improving access to healthcare, education, clean water, and electricity.

What lies ahead

- The Koraput model illustrates that a community-driven approach, combined with sustainable farming and nutrition education, can effectively address food insecurity and malnutrition.
- This model can serve as a valuable blueprint for improving food security and health outcomes in other tribal areas across India.

14. Tea Tribes and Jhumur Dance

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Prime Minister witnessed the **largest-ever Jhumur dance performance** in Guwahati, to commemorate the **200th anniversary of Assam's tea industry**.

Tea Tribes/Tea Garden Communities of Assam

- The **Tea Tribes or Tea Garden Communities** of Assam are descendants of laborers brought by the **British in the 19th century** to work in **tea plantations**. These workers were mainly from **Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh**.
- Many were brought through **forced migration**, and even voluntary migration occurred under **exploitative conditions**. They were subjected to **poor wages, inhumane working conditions, and restricted mobility**. The community is concentrated in **Upper Assam districts like Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Sonitpur, and Sivasagar**, and in the **Barak Valley**.
- They currently have **Other Backward Classes (OBC) Status** but demand **Scheduled Tribe (ST) status**, as many of their sub-groups, like **Munda, Santhal, and Oraon**, hold ST status in their original states.
- Despite adversity, the Tea Garden Communities **preserved their cultural identity**, with **distinct festivals, music, and dance forms**. Their major festivals include **Tushu Puja** and **Karam Puja**, celebrated with the **traditional Jhumur dance**.

Jhumur Dance

- **Jhumur (also spelled Jhumoir or Jhumair)** is a **folk dance** of the **Sadan ethnolinguistic group**, mainly practised by **Assam's Tea Garden Communities**.
- It originated in **Chotanagpur Plateau (Jharkhand, Odisha, Bengal, and Chhattisgarh)** and was brought to Assam **during the British colonial era**.

Over time, it **blended with Assamese culture**, incorporating Assamese **musical and linguistic influences**.

- **Performance and Style:** Women are the primary dancers, standing **shoulder-to-shoulder in synchronized formations**. Men accompany them with **traditional instruments like madal, dhol, dhak (drums), cymbals, flutes, and shehnai**. **Attire:** Women wear **red and white sarees**, while men wear **kurta-dhoti with gamocha (traditional Assamese cloth)**.
- Jhumur songs depict **both celebration and hardship**, narrating: **Love and Nature** – Seasonal changes, harvest, and romance. **Hardships of Tea Workers** – Struggles, migration, and exploitation. **Festivals and Community Life** – Unity, faith, and social cohesion. It serves as a **cultural bridge**, helping **retain their traditions and forge a unique identity in Assam**.

15. Soliga Tribes

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India made a reference to the Soliga Tribal people of BRT Tiger Reserve in the 119th edition of Mann Ki Baat and appreciated their contribution to tiger conservation.

Soliga Tribes

- They are a group of **indigenous, forest-dwelling people** found mostly in **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**.
- The term "**Soliga**" **literally translates to "children of bamboo"**, which reflects the tribe's relationship with nature and their belief that they too have emerged from it.
- They reside in the peripheral forest areas near **Biligiri Rangana Hills and Male Mahadeshwara Hills**.
- Soligas was the **first tribal community living inside a tiger reserve** and getting their forest rights recognised by a court in a judgment in 2011.
- **Language of Soliga Tribes** : The Dravidian language sholaga is spoken by the Soliga. They also speak Kannada and Tamil.
- The Soligas live in single-room huts, built of bamboo and mud.
- They **believe in coexisting with the environment** and have indigenous ways of using nature to make unique utility products, such as the 'jottai', which is a cup made out of leaves.
- **Religion of Soliga Tribes** : Along with adhering to Hindu customs, the Soliga people **practice naturism and animism**.

Economy of Soliga Tribes

- The traditional economy of the Soliga is mostly **based on shifting cultivation**

and collection of **minor forest produce**. Honey is an important part of the diet for the Soliga people, who still forage large parts of their food from the biodiversity-rich Ghats.

16. Dhimsa Dance

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- For the first time since India's Independence, **tribal families in Neelabandha**, a remote hilltop hamlet in **Arla Panchayat of Rolugunta mandal, Anakapalli district**, have been connected to the power grid.
- The momentous occasion brought immense joy to the four households residing there, prompting them to break into a spontaneous performance of **Dhimsa**, a traditional tribal dance, celebrating the newfound brightness in their lives.

About Dhimsa

- It is a **traditional tribal dance form primarily associated with the Porja caste** in the **Araku Valley of Andhra Pradesh**, India. It is characterised by its **vibrant movements, rhythmic footwork, and communal participation**, reflecting the cultural heritage and daily life of the tribal communities in the region.
- **Origin and Cultural Significance**
- Dhimsa dance has its roots in the **Koraput district of Odisha** but has become emblematic of tribal culture in the Visakhapatnam area. The term "**Dhimsa**" translates to "**sound of footsteps**," which highlights the dance's focus on rhythmic movement. **Traditionally, it was performed by young, unmarried women but has evolved to include participants of all ages and genders.**
- The dance is **performed during various occasions, including festivals, weddings, and community gatherings**. It serves **not only as a form of entertainment but also as a means of fostering unity and cultural identity** among the tribes. The dance movements often emulate daily activities such as farming, gathering leaves, and rituals associated with marriage and wildlife protection.

Dance Style and Features

- Dhimsa is typically performed in a **circular formation by groups of dancers**, often consisting of **15-20 women** who move their feet in sync with the rhythm created by traditional instruments like the **dappu (drum), tudumu, mori, kiridi, and jodukommulu**. The attire worn by performers is colourful and adorned with tribal ornaments, enhancing the visual appeal of the dance.

- The dance consists of several variations, each with its unique theme and purpose. Some **notable types include:**
- **Boda Dhimsa:** A worship dance honouring village deities. **Gunderi Dhimsa:** A duet inviting male and female dancers to perform together. **Goddi Beta Dhimsa:** Involves swinging movements. **Bhag Dhimsa:** Depicts escaping from a tiger's attack. **Natikari Dhimsa:** A solo performance during festivals like Diwali.

17. Challenges and Developments Related with Denotified Tribes

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 9.1 Paper II)

- The **Denotified Tribes (DNTs), Nomadic Tribes (NTs), and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SNTs)** in India face numerous challenges, including **denial of caste certificates** in most states.
- Despite the Indian Government launching the **Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs scheme (SEED)** for their upliftment, various other issues have led to growing discontent among these communities.

Major Challenges faced by DNTs, NTs, and SNTs

- **Historical Injustice:** These tribes were labeled **criminal tribes** under the **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871** during British rule, stigmatizing them for generations.
- Despite being denotified in 1952, the stigma persists, impacting their social and economic inclusion. Historically, Nomadic Tribes and De-notified Tribes **never had access to private land or home ownership.**
- **Unclassified Communities:** The **Idate Commission (2017)** identified a total of **1,526 DNT, NT and SNT** communities. Out of these 1,526 identified communities, **269 communities** are still **unclassified** under the categories of **either SC, ST or OBC.** Similarly, many individuals from these communities are unable to obtain **caste certificates in 29 states**, limiting their access to welfare schemes.
- **Several estimates** suggest a significant population of **over 25 crore** individuals, yet many lack basic identity recognition.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Recommendations of the **Idate Commission**, including a **permanent commission and caste-census inclusion**, remain unaddressed. The **SEED scheme** has seen limited success due to delays and lack of outreach. Overlapping benefits with **SC/ST/OBC** schemes lead to difficulties in beneficiary identification.

SEED

- **About:** The **Scheme for Economic Empowerment Denotified, Nomadic,**

Semi Nomadic communities was launched in **February 2022** by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

- **Aim and Components:** It aims to provide free competitive exam coaching to these students for Civil Services, entry to professional courses like medicine, engineering, MBA, etc.
- To provide health insurance to families, to uplift clusters of these communities through livelihood initiatives, and to provide financial assistance for housing.