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PAPER - 1

PHYSICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Endogamy in India: A Cultural and Social Perspective

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 2.3 Paper I)

- Endogamy, or the practice of marrying within a specific social, caste, or religious group, has been a long-standing tradition in India. It is deeply rooted in the country's cultural and social structures, particularly within caste and tribal communities.
- While endogamy has historically been seen as a way to preserve community identity, customs, and social cohesion, modern studies have highlighted its significant implications for genetic health. Endogamy has traditionally played a vital role in maintaining social hierarchy and group identity in India. Some of the key factors influencing its practice include:
 - Caste System & Social Structure :The varna (caste) system in Hindu society promotes marriage within one's caste and sub-caste to maintain social status and hereditary occupations.
 - Similar trends are observed among Muslim, Christian, and tribal communities, where intra-group marriages are encouraged to maintain religious and cultural identity.
- Economic & Political Influence:Endogamous marriages help preserve family wealth, political power, and business interests by preventing external influences from diluting family assets and decision-making. Many business families in India, such as those in Gujarat and Rajasthan, prefer marrying within their communities for financial stability.

Genetic Implications of Endogamy

- While endogamy has historically served as a means of cultural preservation, recent genetic research highlights its potential drawbacks. Increased Risk of Genetic DisordersThe CSIR-CCMB study found that marrying within small communities leads to a higher prevalence of genetic mutations, which increase the risk of hereditary diseases.
- Ankylosing Spondylitis (a type of arthritis) is more common among the Reddy community of Andhra Pradesh due to the presence of a specific genetic variant, HLA-B27:04 risk allele.Other population-specific genetic disorders have also been observed, emphasizing the role of genetic screening and counselling.

Conclusion

- Endogamy has been a defining feature of India's social and cultural fabric, shaping identities and traditions across generations. However, its genetic consequences raise concerns about hereditary diseases and drug response variations.

2. Australopithecus

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.6 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.

3. Neanderthals’ blood likely contributed to their extinction; study finds.

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.6 Paper I)

- **Rare Rh Variant:** Researchers from Aix-Marseille University found that Neanderthals possessed a rare and unique Rh variant (RHD) that was fundamentally incompatible with those found in *Homo sapiens* and Denisovans.
- **Hemolytic Disease Risk:** When a Neanderthal female mated with a modern human or

Denisovan male, the resulting pregnancy faced a high risk of **Hemolytic Disease of the Newborn (HDN)**.

- **Immune System Attack:** In these hybrid pregnancies, the mother's immune system would perceive the fetus's red blood cells as a threat, producing antibodies to attack them.
- **Reproductive Success Decline:** HDN typically worsens in second and subsequent pregnancies. This likely led to a significant **drop in birth rates** and high infant mortality over generations.
- **PIEZO1 Gene "Greed":** A study from late 2025 found that a Neanderthal variant of the **PIEZO1 gene** caused their blood to hold oxygen too tightly. In hybrid mothers, this "oxygen greed" could starve the fetus of oxygen, leading to miscarriages.
- **Genetic Stagnation:** While modern humans leaving Africa evolved their blood group systems rapidly to adapt to new environments, Neanderthal blood groups remained **genetically static** for over 100,000 years.
- **Fragile Immune Resilience:** Their lack of blood group evolution meant they did not develop the diverse **antigenic protection** that modern humans used to survive new infectious diseases encountered in Eurasia.
- **Low Population Diversity:** The study confirmed that Neanderthals across Europe and Siberia shared nearly the same blood group profile, a clear signal of **inbreeding and small, isolated populations**.
- **Interbreeding as a Disadvantage:** While interbreeding is often seen as a way to gain new genes, these studies suggest it may have introduced **biological handicaps** that accelerated the decline of an already weakened population.
- **Traces in Modern Humans:** Despite these fatal mismatches, some Neanderthal blood alleles survived and are found today in modern Aboriginal Australian and Papuan populations, proving that some hybrid lineages did successfully mature.

4. Key Genome Sequencing Initiatives

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 9.1 Paper I)

- *Nature Genetics* published findings from the GenomeIndia project, which sequenced the whole genomes of around 10,000 individuals from 85 distinct populations groups (32 tribal and 53 non-tribal), covering major ethnic groups across India.
- The study identified 180 million genetic variants, including 130 million on autosomes (non-sex chromosomes) and 50 million on sex chromosomes (X and Y). Some variants are disease-linked, some are rare, others are unique to India or specific communities. GenomeIndia Project
- Launched in 2020 by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), the Genome India Project aims to map the genetic diversity of the Indian population. Over 20 leading institutions, including Indian Institute of Science's Centre for Brain Research, Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, and National Institute of Biomedical Genomics, collaborated to sequence 10,000 genomes in the project's first phase.
- The core objective is to build a comprehensive Indian reference genome. Significance: The initiative addresses the underrepresentation of Indian genomes in global databases, thereby enhancing India's standing in international genomics research.

What are the Other Key Genome Sequencing Initiatives?

- **IndiGen Programme:** Launched by Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) in 2019, successfully sequenced the whole genomes of 1029 Indians and identified 55.9

million single nucleotide variants, of which 18 million (~32%) were unique to Indian genomes.

- **One Day One Genome Initiative:** Launched in 2024 by DBT, aims to sequence and publicly release one bacterial genome daily to showcase India's microbial diversity.
- **Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH):** Established in 2013, GA4GH is a non-profit international alliance that sets standards to promote the use of genomic data within a human rights framework.
- **Human Genome Project:** It was coordinated by the US and operated from 1990 to 2003, providing researchers with fundamental information about the genetic makeup of the human organism.
- **What is Genome Sequencing :** **Genome:** It refers to the entire set of genetic material (Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) in most organisms; Ribonucleic acid (RNA) in some viruses) present in an organism. **Genome Sequencing:** It is the process of determining the complete sequence of nucleotide bases (Adenine (A), Cytosine (C), Guanine (G), Thymine (T), and Uracil (U)) in an organism's genome.

5. Ancient dna reveals a hidden neanderthal group 'frozen in time' (Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.6 Paper I)

- **Discovery Site:** The remains, including 31 teeth and parts of a jaw, were found in **Grotte Mandrin**, a cave in France's Rhône Valley.
- **The Nickname:** Researchers named the individual "**Thorin**" after the dwarf king in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, reflecting his role as one of the "last of his line."
- **Frozen in Time:** While Thorin lived approximately **42,000 to 50,000 years ago**, his DNA looks much older—it more closely resembles Neanderthals from over **100,000 years ago**.
- **Extreme Isolation:** The group remained genetically isolated for roughly **50,000 years**, never exchanging genes with other nearby Neanderthal populations.
- **Social Fragmentation:** This discovery shatters the theory that late Neanderthals were a single, genetically uniform population. Instead, they lived in small, separate clusters.
- **Geographic Proximity:** Despite their isolation, other "classic" Neanderthal groups lived only about **10 days' walk** away, yet the two groups never intermixed.
- **No Human Mixing:** Unlike some other Neanderthal groups, Thorin's lineage showed **no evidence** of interbreeding with modern humans (*Homo sapiens*).
- **High Inbreeding:** DNA analysis revealed "high genetic homozygosity," a sign of **intense inbreeding** due to the group's small size and total lack of outside contact.
- **Cultural Differences:** The isolation wasn't just genetic; the group also appears to have been **culturally distinct**, maintaining older tool-making traditions while neighbors evolved.
- **Clue to Extinction:** Researchers suggest this extreme isolation and lack of genetic diversity likely made the groups **vulnerable**, contributing to their ultimate extinction

SOCIO - CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. UD anthropology professor rebukes notion that only men were hunters in ancient times (Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 2.2 Paper I)

- University of Delaware anthropology professor Sarah Lacy, with Cara Ocobock from the University of Notre Dame, challenges the traditional view that only men were hunters and women were gatherers in prehistoric times.
- Paleolithic Division of Labor: They reviewed archaeological evidence and literature from the Paleolithic era (approximately 2.5 million to 12,000 years ago).
- Female Physiology: Found that women were physically capable of hunting and that evidence supporting their exclusion from hunting is lacking.

Key Findings:

- No Sex-Based Division: Little evidence of strict gender roles in prehistoric hunting and gathering.
- Equality in Evidence: Ancient tools, diet, art, burials, and anatomy show no significant sex-based differences in roles.
- Anatomical and Physiological Evidence: Women's endurance abilities and estrogen-related advantages suggest they could participate in hunting activities.
- Trauma Patterns: No significant difference in trauma patterns between males and females, indicating similar activity levels.
- Gender Bias: Previous theories were biased towards male-centric views of hunting, dismissing evidence of female participation.

Impact and Future Directions:

- Revising Default Assumptions: Lacy advocates for a shift away from the “man the hunter” paradigm to a more egalitarian view of prehistoric subsistence roles.
- Need for Further Research: Emphasizes the importance of continued research to understand the roles of both sexes in prehistoric societies.

2. Oldest Wooden Weapons

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.8 Paper I)

- **Site and Age Revision (2025):** While traditionally dated to ~300,000 years ago (MIS 9), a major study published in May 2025 using amino acid geochronology suggests the weapons may be younger, approximately 200,000 years old. Identity of Makers: This age revision shifts the likely creators from *Homo heidelbergensis* toward early Neanderthals, highlighting their advanced cognitive and technological capabilities.
- **Discovery of the Throwing Stick:** The assemblage includes a unique 77-cm double-pointed throwing stick (ID 1779), identified as the oldest of its kind, designed for high-velocity rotational throws.
- **Advanced Woodworking Techniques:** High-resolution 3D microscopy in 2024 revealed sophisticated steps: debarking, carving, scraping, seasoning, and sanding. Strategic Raw Material Selection: Hominins specifically selected slow-grown spruce, larch, and pine from high-altitude regions (possibly 40 km away) for their superior density and elasticity.
- **Aerodynamic Engineering:** The spears, measuring up to 2.25 meters, were crafted

from tree trunks with the center of gravity in the front third, remarkably similar to modern tournament javelins. Branch-Based

- **Construction:** Unlike the spears (made from trunks), the throwing sticks were made from spruce branches, utilizing the wood's natural curvature for better flight.
- **Seasoning for Durability:** Evidence suggests the wood was "seasoned" (controlled drying) to prevent cracking and warping, a process that requires long-term planning and foresight.
- **Communal Hunting Model:** Researchers suggest these lightweight weapons enabled participation from the entire community, including children and adolescents, who could use them to hunt small game like hares and birds.
- **Prey Selection:** The weapons were found alongside the butchered remains of at least 20–25 horses (*Equus mosbachensis*), as well as red deer and bovids.
- **"Personal Kit" vs. Expedient Tools:** The presence of use-polish and maintenance marks indicates these were valued personal items used over long periods, not disposable tools. **New Tool Types Identified (2024):** Beyond weapons, the "Spear Horizon" includes **35 split-wood tools** used for domestic activities like hide preparation and vegetal working.

PAPER - 2

INDIAN & TRIBAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Untouchability Cases under the PCR Act

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 5 Paper II)

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's report revealed that over 97% of cases under the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act pertaining to untouchability remain pending in Indian courts, with an alarming acquittal rate.

'Untouchability' Cases Under the PCR Act?

- The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 criminalizes the practice of untouchability, including refusal to serve food, denial of access to religious spaces, schools, and public places. It mandates penalties, special courts, and annual reporting on enforcement status.

Trends in the Government Report:

- Sharp decline in FIRs: Only 13 cases registered in 2022 (vs. 24 in 2021), mainly from J&K, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Himachal Pradesh. High pendency: 1,242 cases pending trial under the PCR Act and 97% pendency rate in courts. Poor conviction rate: In 2022, 30 out of 31 cases disposed ended in *acquittal* and only 1 conviction.
- Low police action: Out of 51 total cases pending with police, chargesheets were filed in just 12. No "untouchability-prone" areas were identified by any State or UT—suggesting administrative neglect.
- By contrast, cases under the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 have risen, indicating differential reporting or awareness. Untouchability refers to social discrimination based on caste, historically excluding certain communities from public, religious, and social spaces. Constitutional Safeguard: Article 17 of the Constitution of India abolishes untouchability

and prohibits its practice in any form.

- **Legal Status:** Any disability arising from untouchability is declared a punishable offence under Article 17. **Nature of the Right under Article 17:** Article 17 is an absolute fundamental right with no exceptions, applicable to both state and private actors.
- **Lack of Definition:** The term “untouchability” is not explicitly defined in the Constitution or in related legislation but is understood as referring to caste-based social discrimination. **Scope of Discrimination:** Untouchability includes denial of access to public utilities, places of worship, public services, education, and market services.

2. Jharkhand PESA rules 2026

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

- **Supreme Authority of Gram Sabha:** The rules designate the Gram Sabha as the supreme institution for decision-making in Scheduled Areas. It is responsible for governing village affairs, including natural resources and cultural traditions.
- **Geographical Coverage:** The rules apply fully in 13 districts (including Ranchi, Khunti, and West Singhbhum) and partially in 3 districts (Palamu, Godda, and Garhwa), covering major tribal-majority regions.
- **Traditional Leadership:** Gram Sabhas will be presided over by traditional heads such as Manki, Munda, or Majhi-Pargana, rather than elected representatives, to preserve customary governance.
- **Resource Sovereignty:** Gram Sabhas have been granted ownership and management rights over minor forest produce (e.g., Mahua, Tendu leaves) and minor minerals like sand and stone.
- **Mandatory Land Consent:** No land in Scheduled Areas can be acquired without the prior consent of the Gram Sabha. They are also empowered to prevent and reverse illegal land transfers.
- **Police Accountability:** Local police must inform the Gram Sabha within 48 hours of any arrest made within its jurisdiction, ensuring community oversight of law enforcement.
- **Gender Inclusion in Quorum:** To ensure a democratic process, the rules mandate that one-third of members must be present for a quorum, and one-third of those present must be women.
- **Traditional Dispute Resolution:** Gram Sabhas are authorized to resolve minor local disputes and can impose fines of up to 2,000 for social or minor offences.
- **Financial Autonomy & Funds:** Each Gram Sabha can establish its own Gram Kosh (Village Fund), consisting of four parts: Food, Grain, Labour, and Cash. This fund is managed through royalties, donations, and penalties.
- **Oversight of Social Welfare:** The community has the right to monitor and manage local institutions like schools, health centres, anganwadis, and PDS shops to ensure they meet the needs of the village

3. Sacred Groves

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.3 Paper II)

- Communal tension between tribal communities and Christians in Kapena village, Odisha, has spoilt the practice and sanctity of the tribal sacred groves.

What are Sacred Groves?

- **About:** Sacred groves are patches of virgin or near-natural forests protected by local communities due to their religious, cultural, and spiritual significance. They are often

associated with deities, ancestral spirits, burial grounds, or water sources. Community-based protection has ensured minimal human interference, resulting in the conservation of rich biodiversity without formal legal safeguards.

- **Extent and Distribution:** India is home to over 1 million sacred forests and approximately 100,000 to 150,000 sacred groves. Sacred groves are found across India especially in the Western Ghats, Himalayas, Northeast, and Central India with high concentrations in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. They are locally known as *Sarna* (Bihar), *Dev Van* (Himachal Pradesh), *Devarakadu* (Karnataka), *Kavu* (Kerala), *Devrai* (Maharashtra), *Law Kyntang* (Meghalaya), and *Oran* (Rajasthan). Unlike the forest-based groves elsewhere, sacred groves often take the form of alpine meadows at the Himalayan foothills.
- **Cultural and Religious Foundation:** Rooted in Hinduism and intertwined with tribal and indigenous belief systems such as animism, ancestor worship and reverence for nature spirits, these groves are conserved not by law but by a powerful moral duty to worship and protect nature. Communities believe in the coexistence of all creatures, a concept mirroring the scientific mechanism of a healthy ecosystem.
- **Ecological Significance:** **Biodiversity Refuge:** Known as the "secret wizards of conservation," these groves serve as refuges for various plant and animal species, resembling small natural forests. **Water Conservation:** These groves maintain high water quality (meeting WHO potable standards) and provide undisturbed habitats for diverse flora and fauna. **Soil conservation:** Dense vegetation and minimal disturbance prevent soil erosion, enhance soil fertility, and support long-term ecosystem stability.
- **Strict Prohibitions:** To preserve sanctity, activities like logging and hunting are strictly prohibited. These areas are typically managed by local religious communities, joint families, or temple trusts.

4. Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs)

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

- Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) are the operational units of the Van Dhan Yojna, a flagship initiative by TRIFED (Ministry of Tribal Affairs) aimed at transforming tribal "gatherers" into "entrepreneurs."
- **Cluster-Based Model:** Each VDVK is a cluster typically composed of 15 Van Dhan User Groups, each comprising 20 tribal members. This brings roughly 300 tribal gatherers together under one Kendra to create economies of scale.
- **Focus on Value Addition:** The primary goal is to shift from selling raw Minor Forest Produce (MFP) to processed goods. For example, instead of selling raw tamarind at low prices, VDVKs process it into tamarind paste or bricks, significantly increasing profit margins.
- **End-to-End Infrastructure:** By March 2026, the 500 operationalized Kendras have been equipped with processing tools, storage facilities, and packaging units to ensure high-quality standards.
- **Skill Development:** TRIFED provides training in areas like hygienic collection, sustainable harvesting, primary processing, and branding, ensuring that traditional knowledge is paired with modern market requirements.
- **Market Access via "Tribes India":** Products from these Kendras are sold through a

network of Tribes India outlets, e-commerce platforms (Amazon, Flipkart), and the specialized Tribes India e-Marketplace.

- Economic Empowerment of Women: VDVKS are a major driver of gender equality in tribal areas, as nearly 60-70% of the members are women, providing them with a steady source of independent income.
- Digital Integration: In early 2026, many VDVKS began using the "Van Dhan Digital Interface" to track inventory, manage sales, and receive direct payments into their bank accounts, reducing middlemen.
- GI Tagging Synergy: There is an ongoing push to link VDVK products with Geographical Indication (GI) tags (like Araku Coffee or Bastar Dhokra) to protect indigenous identity and command premium international prices.
- Diversified Product Portfolio: Beyond food (like honey, amla, and wild nuts), VDVKS have expanded into non-food items such as natural dyes, handmade soaps, and medicinal herbs.
- Sustainable Livelihoods: By ensuring a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for MFPs and adding value locally, VDVKS help prevent distress migration from tribal villages to urban slums.

5. Chenchu Tribe Demand

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

- The situation regarding the Chenchu tribe in the Amrabad Tiger Reserve (ATR) has become a major flashpoint in early May 2026, centering on a conflict between wildlife conservation and indigenous rights
- Demand for Immediate Halt: In early May 2026, advocacy groups like the Chenchu Solidarity Forum (CSF) and the Human Rights Forum (HRF) formally urged the Telangana Governor and Chief Minister to stop the relocation of Chenchu families from the ATR core area.
- PVTG Status: The Chenchus are a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). Advocates argue that as one of India's oldest food-gathering tribes, their survival is intrinsically tied to the Nallamala forest ecosystem.
- Allegations of Coercion: A fact-finding report released on May 3, 2026, alleged that the "voluntary relocation" was actually driven by coercion, intimidation, and misinformation by forest and revenue officials.
- Legal Violations: Activists claim the relocation process violates the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, particularly the rights to "habitat" and "community forest resources," which should prioritize coexistence over displacement.
- Gram Sabha Irregularities: The fact-finding team flagged instances where Gram Sabha resolutions were reportedly pushed through without a legal quorum or by using signatures from non-tribal residents to represent tribal consent.
- "Chenchu Reserve" Proposal: Former IAS officer E.A.S. Sarma appealed to President Droupadi Murmu to declare the Nallamala forests a "Chenchu Reserve," arguing this would protect both the tribe's ancestral rights and the tiger habitat more effectively.
- Coexistence vs. Conflict: Advocates point out that there has been no recorded human-tiger conflict in the region for five decades, suggesting that the Chenchus are "proactive stakeholders" in conservation rather than a threat to it.
- Stalling of Welfare Schemes: Reports indicate that basic welfare works—including

housing and road construction—have been suspended in villages slated for relocation, which activists describe as a tactic to "starve" residents into moving.

- Internal Community Divide: In contrast to the protests, some Chenchu families held a press conference on May 7, 2026, asserting their willingness to move. They cited a desperate lack of schools, clinics, and electricity within the forest as their primary motivation.

6. The Tribal Business Conclave : From "Beneficiaries" to "Business leaders."

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

- Massive Scale: The event brought together over 250 tribal entrepreneurs from 27 states, showcasing a diverse range of sectors beyond traditional handicrafts, including agritech, sustainable fashion, and eco-tourism.
- Focus on "Ethical Branding": A central theme was the global positioning of tribal products. Entrepreneurs were trained on how to use their cultural storytelling as a premium branding tool to compete with mainstream luxury markets.
- Venture Capital Interest: For the first time, a dedicated "Pitch Session" was held where tribal startups presented to angel investors and VCs, focusing on scaling forest-based social enterprises.
- Digital Transformation: The conclave marked the launch of the "Tribal e-Marketplace 2.0," an AI-driven platform designed to connect remote village entrepreneurs directly with international bulk buyers, bypassing middlemen.
- GI Tagging Showcase: Over 50 products with Geographical Indication (GI) tags were featured, highlighting the legal protection of indigenous intellectual property and its role in boosting export value.
- Sustainable Innovation: Many showcased products focused on circular economy principles, such as biodegradable packaging made from sal leaves and high-end textiles dyed with forest-sourced natural minerals.
- Institutional Tie-ups: Major MoUs were signed between tribal cooperatives and corporate retail giants, ensuring that "Tribes India" products get dedicated shelf space in premium urban malls and airports.
- Knowledge Exchange: The event featured "Masterclasses" where successful tribal exporters shared insights on export documentation and international quality certifications (like ISO and Organic certifications).
- Youth-Led Initiatives: A significant portion of the participants were first-generation college graduates from tribal communities who are blending traditional tribal wisdom with modern business degrees to modernize their family trades.

7. The decline of Orans (sacred groves) in Rajasthan

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

- The decline of Orans (sacred groves) in Rajasthan has become a central issue for the Raika and other pastoral communities. The 700 km foot march (Padyatra) in early 2026 marked a historic mobilization to protect these ancient biodiversity hubs from industrial encroachment.
- Ecological and Cultural Hubs: Orans are community-conserved "sacred groves" dedicated to local deities. They serve as critical grazing lands for the Raikas' camels and sheep, acting as the last green lungs in the desert ecosystem.
- The "700 km Padyatra": To draw national attention, herders and environmentalists

marched 700 kilometers across Western Rajasthan in early 2026. The march aimed to raise awareness about the ecological cost of sacrificing Orans for infrastructure.

- Misclassification as "Wastelands": A primary grievance is that the government's wasteland maps include Orans. The Raika argue that these are "living forests" that provide fodder, medicinal plants, and water catchment, not unproductive land.
- Demands for "Deemed Forest" Status: The marchers demanded that the state government officially notify all Orans as "Deemed Forests." This legal status would provide protection under the Forest Conservation Act, making it much harder to divert them for industrial use.
- Impact on Camel Grazing: Camels are browsers that require a variety of desert vegetation found in Orans. The fragmentation of these lands by solar fences blocks traditional migratory routes, leading to livestock malnutrition and death.
- Loss of GIB Habitat: The Great Indian Bustard (GIB), a critically endangered bird, shares these Orans with the Raikas. The community argues that destroying Orans for solar panels also destroys the last remaining breeding grounds of the GIB.
- Constitutional Rights (Article 21): Legal advocates supporting the march argue that the destruction of Orans violates the Raikas' Right to Life and Livelihood, as their entire economic and cultural identity is tied to these groves.

8. Raika community of Rajasthan

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

- The Raika (also known as Rebari) are a specialized pastoral community of Rajasthan, traditionally known as the "guardians of the desert." Mythological Origin: According to tradition, the Raika believe they were created by Lord Shiva specifically to look after the first camel created by Goddess Parvati. This gives their occupation a sacred status.
- Specialized Knowledge: They possess an extraordinary understanding of ethno-veterinary medicine, using desert plants to treat livestock. They are also famous for their "Akal-Dhakal" communication, a unique vocal signaling system used to manage large herds.
- Nomadic Lifestyle: They are semi-nomadic, embarking on long migratory journeys (Dang) during the dry season. They travel hundreds of kilometers across Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Haryana in search of grazing lands.
- Strict Social Codes: Traditionally, the Raika followed a "sacred vow" never to sell camel milk for profit or to slaughter camels for meat. However, economic pressure has forced a shift toward commercializing camel milk in recent years.
- Guardians of the "Orans": They are the primary protectors of Orans (sacred groves). They use these lands sustainably for grazing while ensuring the biodiversity of the desert remains intact.
- Dietary Shift: Historically, the Raika diet relied heavily on camel milk and millet. Today, they are at the forefront of the "White Revolution" for camel milk, which is increasingly popular as a "superfood" for managing diabetes and autism.
- Vulnerability to Climate Change: As the Thar desert experiences more frequent heatwaves and erratic rainfall, the Raika's traditional migration routes are being disrupted by shrinking water sources and disappearing greenery.
- Land Conflict: They are currently engaged in legal and social battles against the diversion of grazing lands for solar and wind energy projects, which are often fenced off, cutting off their ancestral migratory paths.

- Cultural Renaissance: Despite modern challenges, there is a growing movement of Raika youth who are using digital platforms and entrepreneurship (like camel-wool textiles and artisanal cheese) to modernize their heritage while preserving their identity.

9. Tribes Contribution to India's Cultural Heritage and Socioeconomic Progress (Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.3 Paper II)

- Cultural Sentinels of India's Civilizational Identity: Tribes preserve India's intangible cultural heritage through their oral traditions, folk art, spiritual practices, and ecological worldviews. They serve as living links to India's prehistoric past and plural ethos. Their distinct lifestyles showcase India's cultural continuity amid change.
- Original Inhabitants and Natural Custodians of Land: Tribal groups are rooted in India's geography, often in forests and highlands, forming a civilizational bond between land and people. Their territorial affinity defines indigenous sovereignty and natural stewardship.
- Symbols of Resistance and Self-Rule in Indian History: Adivasis have long resisted external domination from colonial rule to resource exploitation — asserting indigenous models of self-governance. Their struggle is central to India's anti-colonial and decentralization narratives. Example: Birsa Munda's Ulgulan movement challenged British land laws; Janjatiya Gaurav Divas commemorates this spirit. Tribals were involved in over 80 anti-colonial uprisings, including the Bhil, Kol and Santhal rebellions.
- Pillars of National Integration in Strategic Borderlands: Tribes inhabiting remote and border regions strengthen India's territorial integrity and cultural unity. Their presence in sensitive zones affirms India's sovereign identity and fosters grassroots national belonging.
- Shapers of India's Local Knowledge Systems: India's indigenous medical systems, agricultural methods, ecological knowledge, and storytelling traditions have deep tribal roots. They enrich local epistemologies and diversify India's intellectual heritage. Architects of Communitarian Social Models: Tribes exhibit egalitarian social relations with collective land ownership, decision-making through tribal councils, and decentralized leadership — reflecting India's indigenous democratic ethos.
- Example: Khasi tribes in Meghalaya follow matrilineal succession and community consensus. PESA Act (1996) constitutionalized such indigenous governance in Scheduled Areas.
- Defenders of Pluralism and Tolerance: Tribal worldviews allow co-existence of animism, nature-worship, and polytheism — reinforcing India's syncretic identity. Their inclusive spiritual ethos strengthens India's secular fabric. Example: The Rabari tribe follows a syncretic blend of Hinduism and animistic beliefs.

10. Bharat Tribes Fest 2026

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.3 Paper II)

- The Bharat Tribes Fest 2026, held in New Delhi, marking a major milestone in transitioning tribal communities from traditional artisans to modern entrepreneurs.
- Duration and Scale: The event was a 19-day celebration (originally 13 days but extended due to demand) that featured over 200 stalls showcasing diverse tribal handicrafts and

- natural products.
- **Attendance and Impact:** The festival witnessed a record footfall of over 1.5 lakh visitors and generated multi-crore sales, reflecting a significant rise in public demand for authentic tribal goods. **Felicitation of Excellence:** Top-performing artisans and sellers were honoured across ten categories, including Pottery, Cane & Bamboo, Jewellery, Textiles, and Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs).
 - **"RISA: Timeless Tribal" Brand:** A major highlight was the launch of the RISA brand, which collaborates with renowned designers like Anju Modi and Manish Tripathi to blend indigenous textiles like Eri Silk and Kotpad Cotton into global fashion.
 - **Forest-to-Plate Initiative:** The festival featured over 30 tribal food stalls with 120+ tribal chefs, offering visitors authentic indigenous cuisines and forest-sourced ingredients.
 - **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs):** More than 75 VDVKs participated, with the TRISSAM brand from Assam notably winning the top award for the highest sales of organic products.
 - **CSR Conclave:** A dedicated conclave was held on March 24 to bridge the gap between corporate institutions and tribal entrepreneurs, leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility for sustainable livelihoods.
 - **Live Craft Demonstrations:** To preserve and promote indigenous knowledge, the fest hosted 17 live demonstrations where master artisans showcased traditional techniques in real-time.
 - **Cultural Immersion:** Evening sessions featured performances by over 400 tribal artists, providing an immersive experience of the diverse music and dance traditions of India's tribes.
 - **Economic Empowerment:** Organized by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED, the event aimed to provide direct market access, ensuring tribal creators receive fair value for their products

11. 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.

12. OIL & NSTFDC Collaborate to Boost Tribal Healthcare in Madhya Pradesh (Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- Oil India Limited (OIL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) — a company under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs — to strengthen and augment healthcare facilities in tribal areas of Rajgarh district, Madhya Pradesh.
- Key Points:
- Funding: OIL has sanctioned ₹86.27 lakh for improving health facilities at Community Health Centres (CHCs) and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in tribal areas.
- Target Beneficiaries: The project will primarily benefit tribal populations and underserved communities in Rajgarh, an Aspirational District, ensuring better access to healthcare services.
- Healthcare Infrastructure Upgradation: Provision of ambulances to improve emergency response. Supply of life-care and diagnostic equipment for better treatment facilities. Advanced life-support machines including ventilators, CPAP/BiPAP machines, and USG machines.
- Public-Private Collaboration: The initiative represents a partnership between a government-owned enterprise (OIL) and a statutory body (NSTFDC), demonstrating an efficient model for regional healthcare development.
- Alignment with National Initiatives: Supports the government's goal of inclusive and equitable development, in line with broader national visions for tribal welfare and the Viksit Bharat Mission.
- Long-term Impact: The initiative is expected to enhance: Health outcomes in tribal regions. Emergency medical response. Overall quality of care, reducing disparities in healthcare access.
- Replication: This model can be replicated in other tribal regions to strengthen healthcare delivery through joint collaboration between public sector organisations and government corporations.

13. Creamy Layer in SC/ST Reservation

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 3.2 Paper II)

- The Supreme Court is examining fresh petitions seeking to apply the “creamy layer” principle to SC/ST reservations, a move that misinterprets the *State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh Case, 2024*. It revives the contentious question of whether economic status can override caste-based social disadvantage.
- What Concerns are Associated with the Application of Creamy Layer Principle to SC/ST

Reservations?

- Caste vs. Class Distinction: The caste-based disadvantage is not a product of poverty, but of social exclusion. Unlike Class (which is fluid), Caste is "enclosed." An increase in income does not automatically result in a corresponding increase in social status or the erasure of untouchability. Even wealthy SC/ST individuals may lack the "social capital" or networking power that their counterparts in the general category possess.
- Creamy Layer Trap: There is a significant risk that the income ceiling for the creamy layer is set too low, creating a "trap" for the emerging middle class within these communities. As seen in the *Union of India v. Rohith Nathan Case, 2026*, treating parental salary as the sole disqualifier ignores the fact that a first-generation officer still carries the burden of historical social subordination.
- Myth of Elite Capture: Research indicates that the positive impact of quota policy is actually most concentrated among less-educated SC members in rural areas, suggesting the current system is reaching its intended targets.
- Constitutional and Legal Deviations: Inclusion in the SC/ST list (Articles 341 and 342) was never conditioned on poverty; it was based on historical "untouchability" (for SCs) and geographical isolation/tribal traits (for STs). Legal experts worry that the Indra Sawhney logic (intended for OBCs) is being incorrectly "grafted" onto SC/STs without acknowledging that the latter face a unique type of systemic discrimination.
- Erosion of Representative Diversity: Reservations in India are intended to ensure representation in the halls of power, not just to act as a poverty alleviation scheme. By excluding the educated and relatively affluent "creamy layer," the State may inadvertently remove the most articulate and empowered voices of the community from the bureaucracy and academia, weakening the community's overall influence.

14. 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.

15. Punjab and Haryana High Court Blocks Tribal Custom of Denying Property

Rights to Widows

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

- **Rejection of "Second Class Heirs":** The court ruled that any custom creating "second class heirs" by denying widows property rights is unconstitutional and unenforceable.
- **The Meo Tribe Custom:** The case centered on the 'Riwaaj-i-aam' custom in the Nuh region, which followed an agnatic (male-line) theory of inheritance to marginalize female heirs.
- **Constitutional Supremacy:** The bench, led by Justice Virinder Aggarwal, held that customary laws must yield to constitutional principles of equality under Articles 14 and 15.
- **End of a 44-Year Dispute:** The judgment resolved a decades-old inheritance battle originating from a 1982 sale deed executed by a widow, which had been challenged by her husband's male relatives.
- **Right to Alienate Property:** The court affirmed that widows are competent to sell or transfer (alienate) non-ancestral property inherited from their husbands without needing consent from male collaterals.
- **Non-Ancestral Property:** It was clarified that if the land is non-ancestral, a widow has absolute rights over it, and patriarchal customs cannot restrict her from dealing with it.
- **Article 13 Application:** The court noted that once the Constitution came into effect, any custom violating fundamental rights became void under Article 13.
- **Burden of Proof:** The ruling emphasized that customary law is often an "aberration" and must be strictly proven; it cannot be assumed to override codified personal or constitutional law.
- **Overturing Lower Courts:** The High Court set aside concurrent findings from lower courts that had originally upheld the tribal custom and restricted the widow's rights.
- **Impact on Gender Equality:** Legal experts view this as a crucial precedent for dismantling remaining patriarchal norms in personal and customary laws across India

16. Row in Madhya Pradesh: 'We are Adivasis, Not Hindus' – Tribal Groups Assert Distinct Identity

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.3 Paper II)

- **Leader's Bold Assertion:** Umang Singhar, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly and a prominent leader of the Bhil community, sparked the

controversy by stating, "I say with pride that we are Adivasi, not Hindus". **Demand for a Separate Religion Code:** Tribal groups are demanding a separate **religion code** in the upcoming national census to avoid being classified under the "Other" or "Hindu" categories.

- **Focus on Nature Worship:** Proponents of this distinct identity argue that Adivasis are **nature worshippers** who revere elements like trees, crops, the sun, and the moon, which they claim is fundamentally different from idol-based Hindu practices.
- **Historical Precedent:** Leaders highlight that separate religious codes for tribal faiths (like **Sarna**) existed under British rule from **1871 to 1951** but were removed in independent India's first census.
- **Threat to Constitutional Rights:** There is a concern that if tribal identity is subsumed into mainstream religions, specialized **constitutional protections**, forest rights, and reservations specifically for Scheduled Tribes could be endangered.
- **Criticism of "Vanvasi" Label:** Singhar and other activists have criticized the RSS and BJP for using the term "**Vanvasi**" (**forest dwellers**) instead of "Adivasi" (original inhabitants), calling it an attempt to assimilate them into the Hindu fold. **Government and BJP Response:** Chief Minister **Mohan Yadav** and other BJP leaders condemned the remarks as "divisive," asserting that tribals are an "inseparable part of Hindu society" and accusing the opposition of trying to divide the country.
- **Mass Mobilization:** Tribal organizations in Madhya Pradesh have urged the community to send **50 lakh applications** to the President of India to formally demand recognition of their separate religious status.
- **Legal Arguments:** Activists often cite **Section 2 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**, which explicitly states that the Act does not apply to members of Scheduled Tribes unless the Central Government notifies otherwise, as legal proof of their distinct status.
- **Symbolic Figures:** The debate has involved mythological and historical figures; for instance, Singhar cited **Shabari** from the Ramayana as an Adivasi to reclaim tribal history within a non-Hindu framework

17. Bharat Tribes Fest 2026

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

- The **Bharat Tribes Fest 2026** (held in March–April) was a pivotal event that showcased the shift of tribal craftsmanship from local "haats" to high-end **global fashion runways**.
- **Direct Market Linkages:** The fest aimed to eliminate middlemen by connecting over **200 tribal artisans** directly with bulk buyers, exporters, and luxury retail chains.
- **Global Branding (RISA):** A major highlight was the branding of **RISA**, a dedicated line of tribal fashion. It showcased how traditional weaves like **Tripura's Rignai** and **Jharkhand's Kuchai Silk** can be adapted for modern, global tastes.
- **Designer Collaborations:** High-profile fashion designers worked alongside tribal weavers to create "Contemporary Tribal" collections. This ensured that tribal textiles met **international quality and sizing standards**.
- **Value-Added Textiles:** The transition emphasized **value addition**—moving from selling raw fabric to finished, "ready-to-wear" luxury garments, which significantly increases the income of the tribal weaver.

- **Focus on Sustainable Fashion:** The fest positioned tribal fashion as the answer to "Fast Fashion" by highlighting **100% organic dyes**, hand-spun yarns, and zero-waste production methods.
- **Eri Silk "Ahimsa" Branding:** Assam's **Eri Silk** (Peace Silk) was a centerpiece. Since it is produced without killing the silkworm, it was marketed to international "vegan fashion" buyers.
- **Tech-Enabled Supply Chains:** TRIFED introduced **QR-code tagging** for products at the fest. When scanned, these codes tell the "story of the maker," providing the **traceability** that global consumers now demand.
- **GI Tagging as a Shield:** Many featured products (like **Kotpad Handloom** and **Idu Mishmi Textiles**) utilized their **Geographical Indication (GI)** status to build trust with international buyers regarding authenticity and origin.
- **Institutional Tie-ups:** Several MoUs were signed during the event with **international e-commerce giants**, ensuring that "Tribes India" products would have dedicated storefronts for global shipping.
- **Skill Upgradation:** Beyond sales, the fest hosted workshops on **trend forecasting** and **export documentation**, teaching artisans how to tweak their traditional designs to match upcoming global fashion seasons.

18. Key points on the Siddi community

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

- **African Ancestry:** The Siddis are descendants of the **Bantu people from Southeast Africa**. They were brought to India primarily as slaves, sailors, and mercenaries by Arab, Portuguese, and British traders between the 7th and 19th centuries. **Geographical Distribution:** They are primarily settled along the western coast of India, with major populations in **Karnataka (Uttara Kannada)**, **Gujarat (Gir Forest)**, **Hyderabad** and parts of **Maharashtra**
- **Dhamal Dance:** Their most famous cultural export is the **Siddi Dhamal**, a high-energy dance form performed to the beat of the *mushira* (drum). It preserves African rhythmic patterns and was recently featured prominently in the 2026 Janjatiya Garima Utsav.
- **Religious Diversity:** Siddis have integrated into local religious structures while maintaining African spiritual undertones. While many in Gujarat are **Sufi Muslims** (venerating the African saint Bava Gor), those in Karnataka are often **Christians or Hindus**. **Scheduled Tribe Status:** While Siddis in Karnataka and parts of Gujarat have **ST status**, those in other regions continue to fight for official recognition to access better education and employment opportunities.
- **"Siddi Sports" Success:** Due to their perceived physical stamina and athletic build, the **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** revived a special talent identification program for the community. Several Siddi athletes have recently excelled in national-level **track and field events**.
- **Linguistic Assimilation:** Most Siddis have adopted local languages such as **Konkani, Kannada, or Gujarati**, though their speech often retains a distinct intonation and a few Bantu-origin loanwords.
- **The Bava Gor Shrine:** The shrine of **Bava Gor** in Gujarat serves as a central pilgrimage

site and a symbol of their "Negroid" identity, where they perform sacred music and dance to maintain community bonds.

- **Socio-Economic Challenges:** Despite their rich heritage, the community often faces **social marginalisation** and poverty. Recent government news highlights 2026 initiatives to include Siddi settlements in the **PM-JANMAN** scheme for basic infrastructure.
- **Global Recognition:** In early 2026, UNESCO-backed researchers began a digital archiving project to document their **oral histories**, recognizing the Siddis as a living link between the African diaspora and the Indian Ocean world.

19. Operationalization of over 500 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- The operationalization of over 500 **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs)** across India has reached a major economic milestone as of early 2026, marking a significant leap for tribal entrepreneurship.
- **Revenue Milestone:** The combined sales from these 500+ operationalized centers reached **130 Crore** by March 2026, demonstrating the commercial viability of tribal-led value-addition businesses.
- **Scale of Impact:** This milestone represents the collective efforts of nearly **1.5 lakh tribal members**, with over 60% of the participants being **tribal women**, fostering gender-focused economic empowerment.
- **High-Growth Products:** The bulk of the revenue was driven by "Superfoods" and organic wellness products, specifically **Wild Honey, Amla juice, Hill Broom grass, and Tamarind cakes**.
- **Assam's Leadership:** The **TRISSAM** brand from Assam emerged as the top contributor, leveraging a sophisticated supply chain to sell organic forest produce at premium prices in urban markets.
- **Digital Marketplace Synergy:** A significant portion of the 130 crore sales came through digital platforms, including the **Tribes India e-Marketplace** and the "Amazon Karigar" initiative.
- **Value-Addition Multiplier:** Raw forest produce that previously sold for minimal amounts saw a **3x to 5x increase in value** after being processed, branded, and packaged at the VDKs.
- **Institutional Procurement:** Bulk orders from government departments and corporate gift-giving during festivals (like Diwali and the Bharat Tribes Fest) provided a massive boost to the total sales figure.
- **Reduced Wastage:** The operationalization included providing **cold storage and solar dryers** at the centers, which reduced post-harvest losses of perishable forest fruits by nearly 40%.
- **B2B and Export Interest:** Following the Bharat Tribes Fest 2026, several VDKs have entered into **export agreements** for items like natural dyes and medicinal herbs, promising higher revenue for the next fiscal year.
- **MSP Support Base:** While the 130 crore represents commercial sales, the VDKs also acted as procurement centers for the **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for MFP** scheme,

providing a safety net for gatherers during market fluctuations.

20. Integration of Tribal Healers

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

- **Bridging the Trust Gap:** In 2025, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched a pilot project to integrate traditional healers (*Vaidyas* or *Gaitas*) with modern Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to increase institutional trust among tribal communities.
- **Recognition as Health Frontliners:** Under the Viksit Bharat 2047 framework, tribal healers are being officially recognized as "community health volunteers" to assist in the early detection of diseases like malaria and tuberculosis.
- **National Registry of Traditional Knowledge:** A 2025 initiative by AYUSH involves creating a digital database of tribal healers and their unique medicinal plant knowledge to prevent "biopiracy" and protect intellectual property.
- **Complementary Medicine Framework:** The government has introduced a "Co-management Model" where modern doctors handle surgery and acute infections, while traditional healers assist in chronic ailment management and post-care.
- **Ethno-Medicinal Research:** In mid-2025, ICMR established collaborations with tribal healers in the Western Ghats to study the pharmacological efficacy of rare forest herbs used to treat skin disorders and snake bites.
- **Referral System Incentives:** To reduce mortality, a new 2025 incentive scheme rewards tribal healers for referring patients with high-risk symptoms (like complicated labor or severe anemia) to the nearest government hospital.
- **Training in Hygiene and First Aid:** Healers are receiving basic training in 2025 on sterilization, wound cleaning, and basic first aid to ensure that traditional practices do not lead to secondary infections.
- **Sickle Cell Screening Partners:** Tribal healers are being trained to identify symptoms of Sickle Cell Anemia and guide community members to government screening camps under the 2047 Elimination Mission.
- **Mental Health and Ritual Healing:** Anthropology studies in 2025 highlight that healers provide essential "psychological safety" through rituals, which are now being integrated into community-based mental health programs.
- **Sustainable Herb Cultivation:** To prevent over-exploitation of forests, the government is helping healers create "Herbal Gardens" in 2025, ensuring a steady supply of medicinal plants while conserving biodiversity.
- **Cultural Sensitivity Training for Doctors:** Conversely, modern medical officers in tribal districts are undergoing 2025 orientation programs to respect the cultural status of healers, preventing professional friction.