



YOJANA AND KURUKSHETRA

Webinar Handout

CONTENT

YOJANA (JULY 2022) AND KURUKSHETRA (JUNE 2022)

01	Rural Tourism _____	02-06
02	Rural Tourism for Atma Nirbhar Bharat _____	07-11
03	Tribal Healthcare Challenges _____	12-17
04	Tribal and Sports _____	18-21
05	Tribals and Indigenous Culture _____	22-29



1. Rural Tourism

Context: The Ministry of Tourism has recently prepared a Draft National Strategy and Roadmap for Rural Tourism to develop and promote local products through tourism.

Mains Paper Syllabus

General Studies 2

- Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

General Studies 3

- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Background: Rural tourism as a concept originated in 2002 when UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) launched a pilot initiative to develop rural tourism in India through the Planning Commission.

- Rural tourism was a priority for the government throughout the **11th five-year plan (2007-12)** and in the **12th five-year plan (2012-17)** period.

Details:

The **National Tourism Policy of India** defines **Rural Tourism** as a form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially.

- It also enables interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience.

Significance of Rural Tourism:

- **Socio-Cultural significance:** Rural tourism improves cultural exchange between the guests and the hosts and acts as a platform for building tolerance and mutual respect among different cultures.
 - It also helps in the revitalization of local customs, crafts and culture.
 - It acts as a soft power in international relations and supports the entertainment industry indirectly.
 - It also brings in social benefits in terms of improved standard of living and hygienic public spaces.
 - It provides job opportunities for the locals and prevents their migration to the cities.
- **Economic Significance:** Rural tourism is the significant source of economic growth due to its potential to generate large-scale productive employment.
 - Rural Tourism provides additional income to farmers, women and other backward communities dependent on unskilled and seasonal jobs.
 - It also provides an opportunity to showcase our culture, heritage, handicrafts, etc. at the global level, attracting money even during the off season.
 - It acts as a catalyst for the development of Infrastructure such as power, connectivity, sanitation and health in the rural areas.

Tourism sector: An Overview

- The tourism sector is one of the fastest-growing industries globally, with a growth rate of **3.5 percent in 2019**.
- This sector has contributed around **10.4 percent to global GDP, generated 330 million employees worldwide, and accounted for 27.4 percent of global services exports**.
- However, COVID-19 has had a detrimental impact on this industry which led to decline in the contribution of this sector to global GDP and employment by **49 percent and 19 percent respectively**.

In India:

- In 2019, the tourism sector accounted for **8.8 percent of the total employment, 5.8 percent of the total exports, and 6.9 percent of GDP**.
- However, this sector has seen decline as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and now contributes only **4.7 percent to GDP, 7.3 percent to total employment, and 2.5 percent to total exports**.
- Tourism has been producing significant national income and creating high employment opportunities in India.
- It has become the country's fastest-growing service industry with excellent potential for expansion and diversification.

Benefits of Rural Tourism:

- **Local Community:** The vagaries of weather and the seasonal nature of employment disturbs the income level of rural households which depend on rain fed agriculture. Rural Tourism benefits the local community in the following ways:
 - Rural tourism creates opportunities for **alternate and novel employment opportunities** within the village, particularly for the women.
 - It helps in **weakening the rural-urban divide** by narrowing down the gap in terms employment opportunities available, in turn, reducing the outward migration.
 - It restores a **feeling of pride in the way of life of rural people** by reviving the local cultural heritage such as folk music, dance, drama, handlooms, pottery, wood carvings, etc.
- **Tourism Industry:** Due to limited development of new tourism products in India, there exists an overcrowding of the conventional tourism destinations. In this regard, Rural Tourism as a new product benefits the industry in the following ways:
 - It brings down pressure on **conventional tourism destinations** and benefits tourists by providing low budget tourism destinations.
 - It is expected to **develop 'Rural Tourism hubs'** which will act as the facilitators and service providers in the villages for the tour operators located in the urban places.
 - It will also **provide opportunity to the tourists to buy traditional handloom and handicrafts** products directly from the local people.
- **Society at Large:** It has the potential to mitigate the unrest prevalent in most of the rural areas due to unemployment, low incomes and deprivation of even the basic amenities.
 - It can bridge the **psychological and emotional gap** between the urban and rural populace.
 - The revenue generated from rural tourism can be used to finance conservation activities associated with the environment and cultural heritage.
 - It will **positively impact rural planning and development** with an enhanced focus on environment, community participation, etc.
 - There will be an improvement in infrastructure in terms of connectivity of roads, public transport, etc.

Challenges:

- **Inadequate development of rural areas:** Rural markets are often characterised by rural populations who are less involved in showcasing their culture and heritages.
 - They lack the ability to monetize their cultural assets which can act as an alternative source of earning.
 - In addition, lack of adequate infrastructure for transportation, fooding and lodging, etc., create obstacles in attracting tourists and promote rural tourism.
- **Communication Skill:** It acts as a major hindrance in the promotion of rural tourism. Local people may not be fluent in the language of incoming tourists. Much of the success of tourism marketing depends on the ability to give a warm welcome to the guest, to understand tourists' demand and to provide the right services at the right time.
- **Insufficient Financial Support:** Most of the rural tourism marketers don't receive the financial support of the local banks or local Government bodies which creates obstacles in the scaling of the business of rural tourism.
- **Lack of Trained Human Resource:** The success of rural tourism depends on the quality of hospitality service but in rural areas, lack of trained human resource is a common issue that directly affects the tourism and hospitality industry badly.

Government Initiatives:

- **National Tourism Policy, 1982:** This was India's first tourism policy which aimed to promote sustainable tourism as a means of economic growth and social integration.
 - It also gave an impression of India in foreign countires, as a country with a rich heritage, a dynamic present and a promising future.
- **National Action Plan for Tourism, 1992:** Under the Action Plan, Preservation and enrichment of the environment formed an integral part of tourism development.
 - In this regard, a large number of '**Havelis**' were converted into hotels in order to protect and preserve the cultural heritage.
- **National Tourism Policy, 2002:** Under the policy, 7 key areas were identified for the promotion of tourism, which are as follows: **Welcome, Information, Facilitation, Safety, Cooperation, Infrastructure development and Cleanliness.**
 - This policy promoted the **expansion of cultural tourism** and the active promotion of rural tourism.
 - Under the policy, several areas such as **Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Ladakh, Kutch, Chattisgarh, the North Eastern States**, and the plantation regions were identified as optimum locations for the promotion of endemic tourism.
 - The phrase "**Incredible India**" was adopted under this policy to create an international brand position for India.
- **"Atithi Devo" initiative:** This initiative was **launched in 2008** to teach the local populace about appropriate behaviour and etiquette when dealing with foreign visitors. The objectives of this campaign were twofold:
 - To ensure that the **rural citizenry are all well informed and educated** of the need to preserve India's priceless heritage and culture, and maintain cleanliness at home while extending hospitality and a warm welcome to visitors and tourists.
 - To **stall negative and unfriendly practices in existence**; like the display of resentment towards tourists and the unchecked and endless looting of visitors
- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme, 2015:** It was launched for the integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits in the country.
 - This scheme is envisioned to synergise with other Government of India schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India, etc., with the idea of building synergy with various sectors to enable tourism to realise its potential.
 - Under the scheme, **15 thematic circuits** have been **identified** for the promotion of tourism and the **development of the Rural circuit** is one among them.
 - Recently, the Swadesh Darshan scheme has been revamped in order to promote a **destination and tourist-centric approach** to develop responsible and sustainable destinations.

- **National Mission on Cultural Mapping:** Under this, the cultural mapping of India is done via a running nationwide cultural awareness program called 'Hamari Sanskriti Hamari Pehchan Abhiyan' for the development of all art forms and artists. This will enable policymakers to make quick yet informed policy decisions in the future.
- **Dekho Apna Desh Scheme:** It encourages Indians to travel across the length and breadth of India. To encourage this scheme, a 'Paryatan Parv' was launched with the added intent of spreading the message of 'Tourism for All'.
- **Island Tourism:** NITI Aayog has taken up the holistic development of islands in Andaman and Nicobar (A & N) Lakshadweep to promote tourism.
 - **For example,** Development of Coastal Circuit (Long Island-Ross Smith Island- Neil Island- Havelock Island- Baratang Island-Port Blair) in Andaman and Nicobar under the Coastal thematic circuit of Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
 - Similarly, Lakshadweep offers enormous opportunities to promote ecotourism on the island.

Way Forward:

- The Ministry of Tourism has recognised the immense potential of rural tourism in India and to promote rural tourism at the national level, the Ministry has formulated a **National Strategy and Roadmap for Development of Rural Tourism** in the Country. It focuses on the following key pillars:
 - Model policies and best practices for rural tourism
 - Digital technologies and platforms for rural tourism
 - Developing clusters for rural tourism
 - Marketing support for rural tourism
 - Capacity building of stakeholders
 - Governance and institutional framework
- This strategy aims to create income and job opportunities in rural areas, empowering local communities and addressing issues such as poverty, empowerment of women, etc. Thus the government needs to work on this strategy in order to promote rural tourism and empower rural people which will be a step towards fulfilling the vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

Conclusion:

The immense potential of Rural tourism requires a holistic strategy and consistent policy execution in order to leverage this potential. Thus, Governments should recognize the importance of rural tourism and adopt innovative approaches to boost and promote rural tourism.

Objective Question:

1. Consider the following statements in relation to the tourism sector in India:
 1. The contribution of the Tourism sector is less than 1% of India's GDP.
 2. Rural tourism as a concept originated in 2010 in India due to a pilot initiative by UNESCO to develop rural tourism in India.
 3. Under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, Rural circuit is also being developed as part of 15 thematic circuits to promote rural tourism.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 3 only

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect: In 2019, the tourism sector in India accounted for **8.8 percent of the total employment, 5.8 percent of the total exports, and 6.9 percent of GDP.**

- However, this sector has seen decline as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and now contributes only **4.7 percent to GDP, 7.3 percent to total employment, and 2.5 percent to total exports.**

Statement 2 is incorrect: Rural tourism as a concept originated in 2002 when UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) launched a pilot initiative to develop rural tourism in India through the Planning Commission.

- Rural tourism was a priority for the government throughout the **11th five-year plan (2007-12)** and in the **12th five-year plan (2012-17)** period.

Statement 3 is correct: **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** was launched for the integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits in the country. Under the scheme, **15 thematic circuits** have been identified for the promotion of tourism and the **development of the Rural circuit is one among them.**

Subjective Question:

2. "Rural Tourism in India is still at an early stage of development". Discuss this statement in context of its immense potential to transform the rural economy.

(10 Marks, 150 Words)

2. Rural Tourism for Atma Nirbhar Bharat

Context: The huge potential of rural tourism makes it one of the drivers of Atma Nirbhar Bharat, provided the challenges of rural tourism are addressed and steps are taken up to revive the tourism in the post pandemic era.

Mains Paper Syllabus

General Studies 2

- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

General Studies 3

- Mobilization of Resources
- Employment
- Inclusive Growth
- Issues related to development

Rural Tourism in India

- According to the **United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**, **rural tourism** is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, and sightseeing.
- Rural tourism includes places in **non-urban (rural) areas** which have low population density, landscape and land-use is dominated by agriculture and forestry and people follow traditional social structure and lifestyle.
- Rural tourism showcasing the **unique experiences of Indian villages** and closely related less explored areas of tourism such as eco-tourism, farm tourism, adventure tourism, etc, provides a way to **promote sustainable and responsible tourism** in the country.
- It not only withdraws tourists from overcrowded popular tourist places but also provides an **experience of a healthy and culturally rich life** that can rejuvenate them.
- Apart from it, it has the capability to **revitalise local art and crafts** and prevent viable traditional occupations from being displaced.

India: The hotspot of Rural Tourism

- The **extensive geographical and rich cultural inheritance** of India makes it a unique spot for exploiting the opportunity of niche tourism, with rural tourism as one of them.
- Currently, the **rural economy accounts for 46.1 percent of India's national income, 68 percent of the total population, 64 percent of total expenditure, and 33 percent of savings.**
- This vast expanse of the rural economy and the different geographical features, including **deserts, mountains, plains, plateaus, islands, and coast, and four biodiversity hotspots** of a total of 36 in the world, results in the huge potential for rural tourism in India.

How can rural tourism become a key to Atma Nirbhar Bharat?

- Rural tourism provides ample **opportunities of self-reliance** to the rural sector.
- The villages are repositories of the country's culture, tradition, crafts, heritage and agri-practices.
 - Developing and promoting these local products through tourism **can generate income and jobs in rural areas and empower local communities**, youth, and women, fulfilling the vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.
- This will not only preserve the culture and heritage of the country but will also provide **skill development in tourism-related job roles** such as guides, drivers, cooks, housekeeping, etc to the tourists.
- Rural tourism will provide an **enormous potential for entrepreneurship** in rural areas.
 - It will create the **space for various support activities** like the formation of digital platforms, marketing agencies, tour operators, etc, and hence, generate immense entrepreneurial opportunities for the local population.

- Employment generation within the rural boundaries will **encourage people to stay in the villages and work for the development of rural areas.**
 - This will mitigate their migration to urban areas in the search of job opportunities.
- Rural tourism will also act as a **sustainable source of living** for the rural population.
 - As **rural economies are predominantly agriculture-based**, there is always a risk of seasonality which can affect the income-generating opportunities for rural people.
 - In such a scenario **rural tourism will be a sustainable livelihood option** for rural people.
- Along with this, rural tourism will also act as a **buffer for the potential environmental hazards** which occur due to the tourists in the already overburdened popular tourist destinations.

Steps Being Taken to Boost Rural Tourism:

- The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has **recognised rural tourism as a niche area of tourism** and has been actively working to promote and develop it as the driver of growth for the rural economy.
- Launch of the **Swadesh Darshan scheme** under which the government has identified **Rural Circuit as one of the fifteen thematic circuits for development.**
- **Product Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits (PIDDC)** was the major tourist infrastructure development scheme of the Government of India which specifically focused on the development of rural tourism in India.
- The Ministry of Tourism has recently drafted a **Draft National Strategy and Roadmap for Rural Tourism**, which centres on developing and promoting local products through tourism which will, in turn, the generation of income and jobs in rural areas.
- Apart from schemes of the Ministry of Tourism, **schemes from other departments and Ministries have also contributed to the growth of rural tourism.**
 - The **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**, under their scheme of **Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM)**, has suggested twenty-one components as desirable for the cluster development, and Tourism Promotion is one of the components.
 - Under **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana**, a skill development programme of the Government of India, training is provided in Tourism and Hospitality.
 - Here, rural youth are trained for **job roles such as guide, driver, cook, housekeeping, and other hospitality staff** to the locals.

Challenges Faced by Rural Tourism:

- Rural markets are often characterised by the rural population which is **still poor and less literate** than their urban counterparts.
- The villagers have **less awareness about displaying their culture and heritages** in front of the tourists visiting their places.
- There are lots of **hindrances in the rural markets** which are still at their primitive self.
- **Long-distance from nearby towns, absence of proper mode of surface transportation, lack of basic infrastructure, inadequate lodging, fooding, amusement facilities, inconsistent electricity, telecommunication problem**, etc. are some of the reasons because of which these areas are not able to utilise their tourism resources at best.
- **Marketing is the major problem** of these rural tourism projects.
 - The travellers or tourists have no information about these rural tourism projects. Since, no knowledge exists among the target group, the footfall at these sites is less than expected.
- These projects also face some other problems like **lack of trained manpower, insufficient financial support to start the new facility or business, lack of involvement of the local community**, and maintenance of the project over the time.

Tourism Infrastructure Development-3 'A' Approach: These three A's have to be present in sync for any form of tourism to thrive, including rural tourism. An attempt has been made to co-relate the 'A's with Rural Tourism.

'A'ttraction: It refers to those features that pull or attract tourists to a destination. There is no easy way to enumerate or analyse attraction that a place offers.

'A'ccessibility: It refers to how the tourist destination can be reached, mainly in terms of transportation (different modes). A destination may have all the attractions needed for being popular but if it is not linked properly, it forces the tourists to avoid the destination.

'A'ccommodation: Includes boarding and lodging facilities for tourists to stay at the destination.

Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Tourism:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted all aspects of tourism – a human-centric industry – with a decline in international arrivals of close to 70 percent (UNWTO).
- According to the Ministry of Tourism, foreign tourist arrivals in March 2020 were almost 66 percent lower compared to the tourist arrivals in March 2019.
- The estimated GDP loss in 2020 was about USD 3,435 billion in the baseline scenario as per one study, with Asia being the worst affected region.
- In India alone, it has been estimated that there were around 40 million direct and indirect job losses in the travel and tourism industry, with overall losses to the sector estimated to be to the order of USD 16.7 billion.

Reviving Tourism Post Pandemic:

- **RESPOND approach – Restart Travel, Establish Protocols, Stimulate Demand, Promote Coordination, Operationalise the New Normal, Nurturing New Options, and Develop Digital Solutions** – to combat and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and take concrete steps towards sustainable recovery.
- The **Government of India** has also come up with **new initiatives and programmes for revitalising the tourism industry** in India. In the Union Budget 2022-23.
 - It has also announced that visas would be given for free to the first five lakh tourists,
- Additionally, the Ministry also extended e-visa facilities for travellers from 156 countries.
- Hon'ble Prime Minister's '**Vocal for Local**' and '**Aatma Nirbhar Bharat**' initiatives have been effective in promoting domestic tourism and the local economy.
- The Ministry of Tourism has launched '**Dekho Apno Desh**' under which various promotional activities like webinars, online pledges, and quizzes are undertaken to generate awareness among the public about tourism destinations, local art, and cuisines in the country, including some of the unexplored gems in India.
- The Ministry founded a **National Tourism Task Force** for the revival of the tourism and hospitality sector and released a National Tourism Policy to support tourism, strengthen tourism support functions, and develop tourism sub-sectors.
- The Ministry has **launched a 24/7 toll-free tourist information helpline in 12 international languages to assist domestic and international tourists.**
- The **introduction of 400 new Vande Bharat trains** and the construction of 25,000 km of new expressways will further improve last-mile connectivity to tourist destinations across India.
- In an effort to promote religious tourism, **IRCTC started Shri Ramayana Yatra** special trains in 2021.
 - Other innovative religious tourism packages are also being introduced such as '**Ramayana Trails**', '**Buddhist circle**', and '**Royal Rajasthan tours**'.

Way Forward:

- Instead of creating many rural tourist destinations for development, **a handful of projects can be picked** (like handicrafts, folk or music) which have a popular craft being practised, or a popular culture being present at the destination, which in turn would be a special attraction for tourists to visit the destination.
- **Connectivity** to the rural tourism destination is a major problem and should be the primary focus of the implementing agency.
- It is necessary to introduce segment-based advertising where each and every segment (like millennials) should be treated as the different target group.
- The rural tourism projects should be in the vicinity of famous tourist spots so that it can attract more and more tourists.
- The **destinations should be developed as a whole instead** of just creating partial infrastructure and providing a few pieces of training to the artisans/ beneficiaries.
- Focus should be on creating an experience for the tourists instead of building monuments and hotels which cannot connect to the local vibe of the destination.
- The **Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model** for developing rural tourism destinations may be considered as an enabler for both the developers and investors for boosting tourism in rural areas. As a result, the socio-economic condition of the local population will effectively improve.
- Rural Tourism is in the gambit of many ministries like rural development, culture, environment, and tribal welfare and **hence the convergence of schemes** must be considered for a holistic approach.
- For the successful implementation of rural tourism projects, **the participation of local village Panchayat and local stakeholders is crucial.**

Objective Question:

1. With reference to the Rural Tourism, consider the following statements:
 1. It includes, in general, places in rural areas where landscape and land-use is dominated by agriculture and forestry and the people follow modern social structure and lifestyle.
 2. The Ministry of Tourism has launched '*Dekho Apna Desh*' under which promotional activities are undertaken to generate awareness among the public about tourism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct: Rural tourism includes places in **non-urban (rural) areas** which have **low population density**, landscape and land-use is dominated by agriculture and forestry and people follow traditional social structure and lifestyle.

Statement 2 is correct: **The Ministry of Tourism** has launched '*Dekho Apna Desh*' under which various promotional activities like webinars, online pledges, and quizzes are undertaken to generate awareness among the public about tourism.

Subjective Question:

2. Rural tourism provides ample opportunities of self-reliance to the rural sector. In the light of the given statement, discuss how rural tourism could become the key driver for Atmanirbhar Bharat? Also highlight challenges associated with rural tourism and suggest some measures.

(15 Marks, 250 Words)

Did You Know?

Pochampally, India

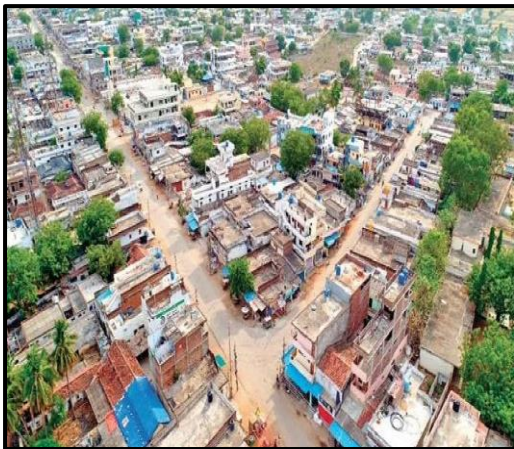


Figure: Pochampally Village
Source: The New Indian Express



Figure: Making of Pochampally Saree
Source: The Hindu

- **Pochampally** village was awarded 'Best World Tourism Village' tag by UNWTO in 2021.
- **Pochampally** is a 28-square-kilometer weavers' hamlet in Hyderabad's outskirts.
- Pochampally is known as the **Silk City of India** because of the gorgeous sarees woven in a distinctive form known as **Pochampally Ikat**, which was designated a Geographical Indicator (GI Status) in 2004.
- The sheer **craftsmanship** that goes into producing each saree is what **draws tourists/buyers to the area**.
- The main street is lined with shops selling Pochampally Ikat and bedspreads that don't seem to end.

3. Tribal Healthcare Challenges

Context: Patterns of **health deprivation** among indigenous peoples remain a **major issue** in developing countries such as India.

Mains Paper Syllabus

General Studies 2

- Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes.
- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Details:

- According to the **United Nations' State of the World's Indigenous Peoples Report**, for indigenous people, **health is a much broader concept**.
 - Health is considered a **harmonious coexistence** of human beings with **nature**, with themselves and with others, aimed at **integral well-being**, in **spiritual, individual, and social wholeness** and tranquillity.
- It also states that **healthcare models** must take into account the **indigenous notion of health and conserve and strengthen indigenous health systems** as a way to increase access and coverage of health care.
- This would necessitate the development of **explicit procedures of collaboration among all stakeholders** to guarantee that human resources are responsive to the epidemiological profile and socio-cultural environment of indigenous communities.

Tribal Health in India:

- In India, there are many hurdles in accessing care as well as moving beyond disease-centred healthcare to integrated approaches to tribal health and development from region to region and tribal community to tribal community.

Health Status:

- **Despite** decades of **emphasis** on reproductive and child health across the country, there are still significant **barriers in access** to prenatal, birth, and postnatal treatments **across all tribal populations**, regardless of area.
- **Child Care:**
 - When compared to non-tribal children, tribal children receive **poor treatment** for **childhood illnesses**;
 - **Newborn and under-five mortality rates are greater** among tribal children in most states.
 - According to a **study which analysed child nutrition across caste group** based on National Family Health Survey - I (NFHS I, 1992-93) and NFHS III (2005-6) datasets indicated that the **decline in the incidence of underweight children** over period 1992–2006 was **least among the Scheduled Tribes**. The decline was highest among children from the Forward/GeneralCaste categories.
 - The reasons range from **less integration into the national mainstream of socioeconomic activities**, eventually leading to **lower education and economic attainment**. These reasons along with **geographically isolated regions** they inhabit lead to **reduced access**. Other reasons for such reduced access can be attributed to **culture and beliefs also**.
 - There is very little information available on how to provide adolescent reproductive and sexual health services in tribal areas.

- **Food And Nutritional security:**
 - Tribal **nutritional** consumption varies by region; in certain tribal communities, **suboptimal protein, calorie, and micronutrient intake is a concern.**
 - Prevalence of **undernutrition among tribal school children** is generally poorer than non-tribal counterparts.
 - **Anaemia** and other **nutritional deficiencies** are more prevalent among tribal mothers and children, resulting in poor pregnancy outcomes and increased vulnerability of tribal children.
 - In most tribal areas, **food security programs are grossly inadequate and of poor quality.**
- **Infectious Diseases**
 - In most tribal regions, **infectious diseases** such as malaria are **more prevalent** and have a **higher morbidity and mortality rate.**
 - The prevalence of **HIV/AIDS** is higher in **northeast Indian** tribal regions.
 - Infectious disease surveillance and epidemiology **data are insufficient.**
 - In tribal communities, there is a **limited systematic approach to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs);**
 - Very **few organisations** work on NCD care.
 - Certain tribal communities have a much **higher frequency of NCDs** (for example, hypertension among Assamese tea-garden tribes).
 - The **epidemiological features** of these conditions appear to **differ** between tribal populations and other areas.
- **Mental health illnesses and substance abuse**
 - In many tribal communities, **mental health illnesses and substance abuse** are **understudied.**
 - **Substance abuse** is emerging as a **serious social concern** in many tribal communities across the country.
- **Environmental health**
 - Environmental health is a **neglected area** in general, yet it is a critical social determinant of health in these communities.
 - Tribal regions are undergoing **fast shifts** due to **mining and resource extraction demands**, as well as the often **negative effects** of other policies; yet, tribal health systems are not prepared to cope with health problems that arise as a result of such transitions.
- **Rare hereditary and genetic diseases**
 - Rare **hereditary and genetic diseases** are more **widespread in tribal societies;**
 - Yet, tribal health facilities **lack formal programs and protocols** to organise care and referral for these conditions.

Health Systems:

- To solve some of the health concerns in tribal regions in India, it is necessary to **recognize and address the underlying causes** that influence the larger socioeconomic determinants.
- In tribal districts, **poor governance** accounts for various **deficiencies in delivery of health programmes, schemes and services.**
- Tribal health services are **severely underfunded** and require increased funding to achieve more equitable growth.
 - In tribal regions, there is a **deficiency** of healthcare infrastructure and equipment, as well as poor access and quality of health services.
- In tribal regions, there is a **disproportionate shortage of health workers.**
 - Furthermore, **tribal presence** in the health workforce is woefully inadequate, limiting the adoption and implementation of health programs in these communities.
 - In tribal places, **restrictive norms** and guidelines hinder health worker retention and performance.
- Tribal communities have a wealth of **traditional health knowledge**, but health systems **could not leverage** the promise of positive traditional health practices.
 - On the other hand, **tribal health research is fragmented**, and disaggregated statistics on health service performance, utilisation, and coverage are unavailable.
- Specific scientific measures are needed in some areas to limit **harmful cultural practices.**

- **Several social determinants**, such as geographical isolation, migration, displacement, and armed conflict, have a **significant impact** on tribal health and necessitate targeted interventions.
- **Comprehensive tribal health information is deficient** at all levels, whether at the district, state, or national levels.
- Tribal health receives **no special or additional attention** in the overall national and state health plans, and so receives no explicit attention in the corresponding policies and programs.

Civil Society Participation:

- **Civil society and non-profit NGOs** play an important role in delivering services and campaigning for tribal-specific concerns in various tribal territories.
- These organizations typically use a **community-based program** or a **facility-based charitable service model** to improve the health and wellbeing of indigenous people in a certain geographical region.



Figure: Mobile clinics in remote tribal hamlet
Source: Yojana

Need for a Special Focus:

- The **demographic health surveys** and their **techniques do not allow for credible local estimates or disaggregation**.
 - For example, for many years, various health problems and health system limitations in reaching indigenous people **remain hidden until the census or national survey reveals large gaps**.
- Wider **socio-political factors** that cause many **tribal people's low reach and access** to health services
 - Much of tribal health neglect can be attributed to a **scarcity of accessible and accurate information** at the hamlet or tribe population levels.
 - As a result, local health systems lack expertise and responsiveness to tribal-specific health problems.
 - Tribal families are mostly **food and livelihood insecure**, which may make child health and education less important than more immediate basic daily needs.
 - These **harsh living conditions** and **chronic lifelong stress** do not appear in conventional measures of **morbidity and mortality**; they **impair** family's **utilization** and **engagement** with health care, **even when** these services are **available** and geographically accessible.
 - Unfortunately, there are **limited analyses** of many critical social variables by health researchers.
 - From hereditary disorders to insect/animal bites or injuries, many of these communities **require screening and care** that goes beyond what local public services can give.
 - A **uniform family welfare approach** across the country prevents adaptation to the family welfare needs of **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)** and other tribal communities;
 - **Current restrictions** impede some groups' reproductive rights, while others require infertility care and/or safe abortion services.

- The term Scheduled Tribes (STs) refers to a **large category of over 700** communities that differ greatly in genetic, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic characteristics.
 - The **categorization does not aid in recognizing the differences in approaches** required to reach the many tribal groups, as well as the major differences in health results from one tribe to another, and from one geographical region to another.

Government Initiatives:

- **National Health Mission, Interventions for Tribals;**
 - As of 31.03.2017, the country had 1,56,251 Sub- Centres, 25,650 Primary Health Centres, and 5,624 Community Health Centres providing primary healthcare services in rural areas.
 - The Ministry recognized 256 High Priority Districts (HPDs), including tribal districts.
 - Relaxed norms for health facilities:
 - Population norms for establishing Health Facilities in indigenous communities have been lowered.
- **Communicable Diseases - Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP)**
 - Since 2015, over 4,00,00 tribal individuals have been diagnosed and treated through the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP).
 - The program has begun additional interventions such as active case finding to increase case detection in difficult-to-reach locations.
- **Vector Borne Diseases - Strategic Interventions**
 - **Early diagnosis and complete treatment**
 - Diagnostic and malaria treatment services are available at doorstep
 - Kala-azar diagnosis and treatment in endemic districts, including tribal areas in Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal
 - **Integrated Vector Management**
- **Reservation of Seats for ST Candidates in Medical/Dental Courses.**
- **National AIDS Control Programme**
 - Ensures universal access to HIV testing for all people, including STs.
 - NACO recently launched Community Based HIV Testing for an underserved community with the assistance of trained ancillary health care providers.

Way Forward:

- The persistent poor health outcomes of tribal people, their particular socio-economic and political scenario and decades of marginalisation necessitate a **special approach towards our tribal people, especially their health.**
 - Such a focus must come from the **grassroots**, which means that **districts and local authorities at the block level** must be sensitive to the need for inclusive tribal health systems.
- A national level synthesis of tribal health can only highlight **recurring themes and gaps in tribal health**, and identify few areas or region-specific problems to be taken up in national and state policies.
 - However, the diversity of geographies and sociopolitical environments in which tribal people live demands the **need for inclusive governance, local-level planning, and sensitization** at the level of health centres and local governments at the district and sub-district levels.
- The need of the hour is to focus on **collaborative partnerships with civil society and community-based organisations to customise and implement local health reforms in collaboration with communities.**

Objective Question:

1. With reference to tribal health, which was recently in the news, consider the following statements:
 1. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is higher in northeast Indian tribal regions.
 2. In most tribal regions, infectious diseases like malaria are more prevalent and have a higher morbidity and mortality rate.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Patterns of health deprivation among indigenous peoples remain a major issue in developing countries such as India.

- In India, there are many hurdles in accessing care as well as moving beyond disease-centred healthcare to integrated approaches to tribal health and development from region to region and tribal community to tribal community.

Statement 1 is correct: The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is higher in northeast Indian tribal regions.

Statement 2 is correct: In most tribal regions, infectious diseases such as malaria are more prevalent and have a higher morbidity and mortality rate.

- Infectious disease surveillance and epidemiology data are insufficient.
- In tribal communities, there is a limited systematic approach to Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs);

Subjective Question:

2. Discuss the necessity for Special Focus in the tribal health sector in India.

(15 Marks, 250 Words)

Did You Know?



Figure: India and IP Rights
Source: legalogy.in

Preserving Tribal Knowledge of Herbal Medicines and Edibles in a Digital Library

- Since 2001, the **CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research)** has been preserving traditional knowledge of Indian herbal medicinal substances in the form of the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**, in collaboration with **AYUSH**.
- To avoid the patenting of India's traditional knowledge, TKDL is **available in a variety of foreign languages**, including Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese.
 - So far, TKDL has prevented other countries from patenting 239 patents.
- Our expertise has been documented by TKDL from ancient literature such as **Charaka, Sushruta, and Siddha**.
- **India also has vast richness of tribal knowledge and the tribal knowledge is believed to be declining in India.**
- This has been attributed to a variety of factors;
 - The indigenous community is less dependent on the forests for survival because of development projects and forest reserves.
- It is necessary to **collect and digitise tribal knowledge** on medicinal plants, foodstuffs, heartwood, plant products such as gums and colouring substances, and so on.

4. Tribal and Sports

Context: In recent times, several sportspersons have emerged from the tribal-dominated belts, who have registered their victory in both national and international level competitions.

Mains Paper Syllabus

General Studies 2

- Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.
- Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes

Details: Most of these tribal sportspersons belong to quite humble backgrounds where they struggle for fulfilling even basic necessities of life.

- In addition, they come from extreme geographical conditions where limited world-class sports facilities are available.
- Despite all the adversities, they have earned recognition and made India proud due to their tireless efforts and an attitude of '**stubborn refusal to give up**'.

Some Important Achievements

- **Jaipal Singh Munda:** He was the captain of the hockey team which won the country's first Olympic gold. He was exceptionally talented and was the only international hockey player to be awarded the Oxford Blue title in 1925.
- **Michael Kindo:** He was one of the finest defenders and a member of the Indian hockey team that won the bronze medal at the Munich 1972 Olympics.
- **Sylvanus Dung Dung:** He comes from the Simdega district of Jharkhand (popularly known as Hockey Hub) and helped India to win gold medal in hockey at the Moscow 1980 Olympic Games.
- **Birendra Lakra:** He was the vice captain of the Indian hockey team which won a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympic Games last year. His entire family is known to be associated with hockey.
- **Dilip Tirkey:** He was the former captain of the Indian hockey team who has represented the country in three Olympic Games and played over 400 international matches.

Challenges Faced by Tribal Sportspersons

- **Policy hurdles:** In tribal dominated states, either there exist no policy on sports (as in case of Odisha) at all or these states lack in proper implementation of existing policy on sports.
- **Lack of Funds:** There is a lot of gap in timely allocation of funds and proper planning for utilisation of funds.
 - It has been found that sometimes the sports offices are flooded with funds and very often they run through severe crises.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Due to limited world-class sports infrastructure, tribal sportspersons don't get adequate sports training. This demotivates them from pursuing sports as a future career option.
- **Lack of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) campaigns:** Due to inadequate awareness and communication on sports promotion programs, these tribal sportspersons fail to benefit from the government schemes on sport promotions meant for them.

Measures to be taken:

- **Policy Framework on Sports:** States should have exclusive sports policies to focus on sports in a much better manner in terms of institutions, infrastructures, operational modalities and regular monitoring for promotional strategies.
 - The sports policy should also involve other stakeholders in setting sports culture in areas that assume high potential.
- **Special prioritisation and categorization of the sports:** There are certain sports disciplines in which tribal sports talents have interest and affinity such as Athletics, Football, Hockey, Archery, etc. In such sport disciplines, states need to develop infrastructure and facilities to create conditions for self-initiated participation of tribal sportspersons.
- **Promotion of sports through Public Private Partnership (PPP) model:** Many industrial houses and mining industries have been working in the promotion of sports in tribal areas.
 - This model will be helpful in tackling the problem of resource crunch by better resource pooling and resource utilisation through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds.
 - For example, Under the Sports Policy of Chhattisgarh, 33 sports disciplines have been assigned to industries and corporate for promotion.
- **Democratisation and Decentralisation of Selection Process:** There remains many doubts and apprehensions regarding selection of sports talents from tribal areas. In this regard, engaging community level sports volunteers to make the selection process more transparent and avoid the apprehensions of failing in the selection would be helpful in scouting sports talent.

Way Forward:

- Governments at both Centre and states are making consistent efforts to identify these talented sportspersons in tribal areas to provide them adequate facilities for their promotion and training, and create a proper environment for better performance at the international level. In this regard, the sport policy of the Government of **Chhattisgarh is worth mentioning.**
- **Chhattisgarh Sports Policy 2017:** It aims to create a sports culture in the State and implement various sports schemes and programmes up to the panchayat level.
 - Its emphasis is on adopting a strategic approach to encourage and develop various sporting activities and players in Chhattisgarh.
 - It aims to undertake innovative efforts to encourage government, private sector organisations, non-government organisations, etc., to adopt one sporting activity and/or one sportsperson to promote sports culture in the state.

Conclusion:

- Stories of sports talent emerging from the tribal-dominated areas are inspiring but it will not yield desired results unless Governments at centre and state streamline the process of identifying talents from these tribal belts and provide them with proper training, state-of-the-art equipment, and facilities for them to realise their full potential.

Objective Question:

1. With reference to the promotion of sports in tribal areas consider the following statements:
 1. Lack of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) campaigns on sports promotion schemes inhibits sports promotion in the tribal dominated areas.
 2. The state of Chattisgarh, despite being one of the tribal dominated states, lacks any policy on the promotion of sports in the state.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

In recent times, several sportspersons have emerged from the tribal-dominated belts, who have registered their victory in both national and international level competitions despite enormous challenges that they face.

Statement 1 is correct: Lack of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) campaigns on sports promotion programs causes tribal sportspersons to lose the opportunity to benefit from the government schemes on sport promotions meant for them. **It thus inhibits sports promotion in tribal dominated areas.**

Statement 2 is incorrect: Governments at both Centre and states are making consistent efforts to identify talented sportspersons from tribal areas to provide them adequate facilities for their promotion and training. In this regard, **Chhattisgarh Sports Policy 2017 is worth mentioning.**

- This policy aims to create a sports culture in the State and implement various sports schemes and programmes up to the panchayat level.
- Its emphasis is on adopting a strategic approach to encourage and develop various sporting activities and players in Chhattisgarh.
- It aims to undertake innovative efforts to encourage government, private sector organisations, non-government organisations etc. to adopt one sporting activity and/or one sportsperson to promote sports culture in the state.

Subjective Question:

2. "Tribal dominated states in India have huge potential to bring a paradigm shift in sports culture in India". Analyse.

(15 Marks, 250 Words)

Did You Know?

- Games have been played in India for **recreation and mental and physical fitness** since **ancient times**.
- Some **indoor** and **outdoor sports** are now played on a **global scale**. **Chess** is one of them.

Chess



Figure: Chaturanga and Chess
Source: The Verandah Club

- **Chess originated in India** and was known as **Ashtapada** (which means 64 squares) at the time.
- Unlike how it is now, the game used to be played with a **dice on a checkered board**, but without black and white squares.
- After a few years, the game was renamed **Chaturanga** (quadripartite).
- It was divided into **four sections** known as **angas**, which represented the four branches of an army.
- It had **elephants, chariots, horses, and soldiers**, just like the genuine ancient Indian army, and was used to design war strategy.
 - This game was termed **Shatranj** by Persians in 600 CE.
- The phrase '**checkmate**' is derived from the Persian expression in the game, '**Shah-Mat**,' which means the **king is dead**.



5. Tribals and Indigenous Culture

Context:

- Indigenous communities around the world are bearers of strong traditional culture, art, craft, and knowledge of the environment. However, they are increasingly under threat owing to a range of factors and need to be recognized and protected urgently.

Mains Paper Syllabus

General Studies 1

- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India
- Social empowerment

Indigenous Peoples:

- According to the World Health Organisation, Indigenous peoples identify as part of a **distinct group or are descended** from people who **originate in areas that were their traditional lands** that existed prior to the establishment of modern-day borders.
- Indigenous Peoples are also known as **First Peoples, Aboriginal Peoples, or Native Peoples**.
- Indigenous populations often share social identities, cultural traditions, political institutions, and economic practices **that are distinct from those of the now dominant culture of the region**.
- Identification:**
 - Indigenous Peoples can be identified according to certain characteristics, such as
 - They **self-identify** as Indigenous peoples
 - There is a **historical link** with those who inhabited a country or region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived
 - They have a **strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources**
 - They have **distinct social, economic or political systems**
 - They have a **distinct language, culture and beliefs**
 - They are **marginalised and discriminated** against by the state
 - They **maintain and develop** their **ancestral environments and systems** as distinct peoples
- Global Population:**
 - It is estimated that there are more than **476 million Indigenous people around the world**, spread across more than 90 countries.
 - Indigenous people make up about **6.2% of the global population** and live in all geographical regions.
 - The vast majority of the indigenous people, **about 70% live in Asia**.
- Indian Population:**
 - In India, roughly **104 million people, which is 8.6% of the national population**, belong to the indigenous communities.
 - Some regions having large concentrations of such communities are the **North Eastern States, Rajasthan, and West Bengal**.

Some Indigenous Communities in India

The 'Adis' of Arunachal Pradesh

- It is believed that the indigenous population of 'Adis' has travelled from the North to settle down in their current region in the districts of **Siang, East Siang, Upper Siang, West Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, Shi Yorni, and Namsai**.
- The Adis are traditionally **nature worshippers** and follow the faith of **Donyi-Polo**.
- One of the well-known age-old skills is their **house-making expertise**, and they take just one or two days to build a house, depending on its size and the number of persons involved in the construction.

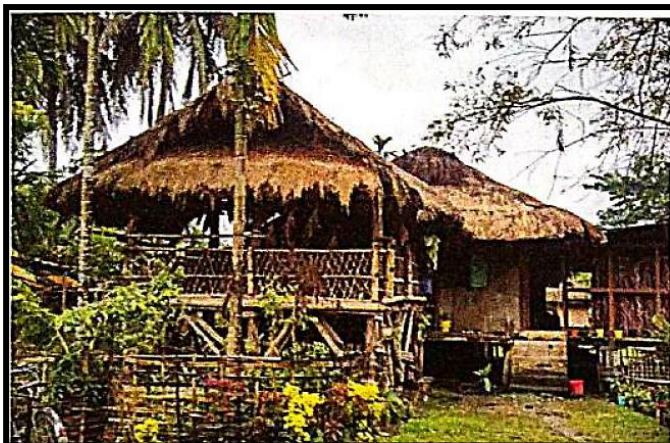


Figure: An Adi house has a tall overhanging double roof covering the upper front portion of the house.

Source: Yojana magazine (July 2022)

- One can identify an Adi house by its **tail overhanging double roof** covering the upper front portion of the house.
 - These traditional houses are constructed with different types of bamboo, woods, canes, leaves, etc., and **no nails are used in their construction**.
 - A traditional Adi house has **no windows**, instead, there are two doors, one at the front and another at the back.
 - The entire inner space of the house is **without any partition**.
- Once a house is complete, the Adis **celebrate it with their traditional rice beer**.

The 'Tangsas' of Arunachal Pradesh



Figure: Tangsa Women Plucking Tea Leaves

Source: The Hindu



Figure: Traditional process of making tea using bamboos by a tribesman of Arunachal Pradesh

Source: The Hindu

- The 'Tangsas' community inhabits the **Changlang district of eastern Arunachal Pradesh**, located in the lap of Patkai hills.
- The Tangsas are the bearers of traditional knowledge and skills of **natural food processing and preservation, sustainable cooking, weaving, architecture, and basketry**.
- But, the practice that they actively continue to date is that of **indigenous bamboo tea-making**.

- The Tangsas, along with the **Singphos**, is believed to be the **original tea-makers in India**, much before the British introduced it commercially.
- At present, Tangsas process tea leaves following their traditional methodology which provides for the natural preservation of the roasted dry tea for many years.

The 'Kalbelias' of Rajasthan

- 'Kalbelia' is a unique community of **traditional snake-charmers** by profession.
- The knowledge of their cultural forms and practices is **completely oral** and is passed down through generations.
- In the local language, '**Kal**' means **snake** and '**Belia**' means **friendship**.
- Since the enactment of the Wildlife Act of 1972 and the subsequent ban on snake handling, the Kalbelias have **lost their traditional profession** and pursued their performing art for their livelihoods.
- **Kalbelia dancers** are known worldwide for their exuberant and energetic dance.
 - The men play music, their main instrument being the **wind instrument called Pungi or Been** that is accompanied by **Dafli** and to the beats and tunes of which the Kalbelia women dance.
 - Kalbelia is inscribed in the **UNESCO 2003 Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.



Figure: Kalbelia Dance
Source: flickr.com

The 'Rajbongshis' of West Bengal

- Rajbongshi is an indigenous community living in **West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya**, and various North Eastern parts of India.
- **Agriculture** is the main pillar of their rural economy.
- Rajbongshis have a diverse repertoire of indigenous art forms such as **Bamboo and Dhokra crafts**, performing arts like **Gomira Dance (Mukha Nach)**, and the satirical folk drama, **Khon**.



Figure: Wood Mask of Gomira
Source: commons.wikimedia.org

- Gomira dance, locally known as ‘**Mukha Nach**’, is a form of ritualistic dance or musical folk theatre, practised by this community by putting on **Gomira wooden masks of different forms of deities**.
 - **Dhokra or jute mat weaving** is an indigenous tradition practised by the Rajbongshi women in the villages of Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts.

- **Difference of Indigenous People from Tribals:**
 - Tribal people are those who are “**not indigenous to the region (they inhabit)**”, but that **share similar characteristics** with indigenous peoples, such as having social, cultural, and economic traditions different from other sections of the national community.
 - The International Labour Organisation (ILO) uses the following criteria for identifying the difference between indigenous and tribal peoples.

	Subjective criteria	Objective criteria
Indigenous People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-identification as belonging to an indigenous people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descent from populations, who inhabited the country or geographical region at the time of conquest, colonisation, or establishment of present state boundaries. • They retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural, and political institutions, irrespective of their legal status.
Tribal People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-identification as belonging to a tribal people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their social, cultural, and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community. • Their status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations.

Tribals in India

- According to the 2011 Census, the tribals account for **109 million and represent 8.6 percent of the country's total population**.
- The **Gonds** are the **largest in number** among other tribes of the country.
- The people of the Gond tribe do not call themselves by that name, instead, they called themselves **Koi or Koithur**.

Gond Tribe:

- **Gondi Language:**
 - The language spoken by the Gonds in their daily life is **Gondi**, a pre-Dravidian language.
- **Social Life**
 - The social structure of the Gonds is one of the oldest and most unique systems established by their chief preceptor **Pahandi Pad Kupar Lingo**.
- **Family:**
 - The Gond family is the smallest social unit.
 - An aggregate of families constitutes the **clan** and they use the term **pari** to express their group.
 - The family is a **unilateral social group** consisting mainly of parents and their children, both male and female.
 - Only unmarried daughters are regarded as members of the family.
 - The Gond family is **patrilineal and patrilocal**.
- **Festivals:**
 - There are several religious festivals of the Gonds such as **Akhari, Jiwati, Pola, Diwali Nawo tindana, and Phag or Shimga**.
- **Songs & Dances:**
 - The Gond songs are **narrations of their life**.
 - The main dances are **Karma, Ri-na, Ri-lo, Re-la, SelaDanda (stick), Mandari, Hulki, and Suwa**, etc. These songs and dances are accompanied by various **musical instruments like drums, kikir, flute, cymbals, and others**.
- **Art & Craft:**
 - Gonds have expertise in beautiful **wall paintings and floral designs** that depict geometric designs and stylistic figures of plants and animals on the walls of their houses.

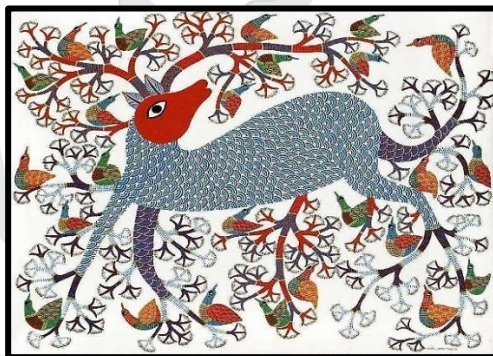


Figure: Gond Art
Source: m.mojarito.com

- **International Recognition:**
 - In 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**.
 - The **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)**, established in 2000, is the central body within the UN system that deals with Indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health, and human rights.
 - Several states in the US have **replaced the national holiday Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day** to celebrate the resilience and cultures of Indigenous peoples across the Americas.
 - Columbus Day has been traditionally celebrated in many countries in the region and elsewhere to mark the **anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival on 12 October 1492**.
- **Indigenous Land Rights:**
 - Indigenous Peoples' land ownership rights are **recognized under international law**.
 - States cannot relocate Indigenous Peoples without their free, prior, and informed consent and without offering them adequate compensation.

Indigenous People's Knowledge:

- **Carbon sequestration:**
 - More than 20% of the carbon stored above ground in the world's forests is **found in land managed by Indigenous Peoples** in the Amazon Basin, Mesoamerica, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Indonesia.
- **Help Fight Climate Change:**
 - Their sustainable land use practices help in fighting climate change and build resilience to natural disasters.
- **Sustainable Path of Development:**
 - Their traditional knowledge and cultural expressions reflect their scientific living, advanced technologies, and their intimate knowledge of the local flora and fauna, seeds, medicines, agriculture, fishing, architecture, textile, food, etc., provides the basis for a truly sustainable path of development.
- **Safeguarding Biodiversity:**
 - A World Bank Report on indigenous peoples states that, "While Indigenous Peoples own, occupy, or use a quarter of the world's surface area, they safeguard 80 Percent of the world's remaining biodiversity".

Concerns:

- Unfortunately, the **traditional ways of life, livelihoods, and practices** of indigenous communities in India are **increasingly under threat** owing to a range of factors, including
 - Lack of recognition and protection of their rights
 - Exclusionary public policies, and
 - The impacts of climate change, etc.
- **Violation of Land Rights:**
 - The land that Indigenous Peoples live in is routinely appropriated, sold, leased or simply plundered and polluted by governments and private companies.
 - Many Indigenous Peoples have been uprooted from their land due to discriminatory policies or armed conflict.
- **Forced to Leave Traditional Lands:**
 - Human rights abuses related to their land rights and culture, have prompted growing numbers of Indigenous Peoples to leave their traditional lands for towns and cities.
- **Community Marginalisation:**
 - Because of being cut off from resources and traditions that are vital to their welfare and survival, many Indigenous Peoples face even greater marginalisation, poverty, disease, violence, and sometimes, extinction as a people.
- **Worsening Situation for Women:**
 - Indigenous women have higher rates of maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases and are more likely to suffer violence.
 - In South-East Asia, most women and girls trafficked across state borders are from Indigenous communities.

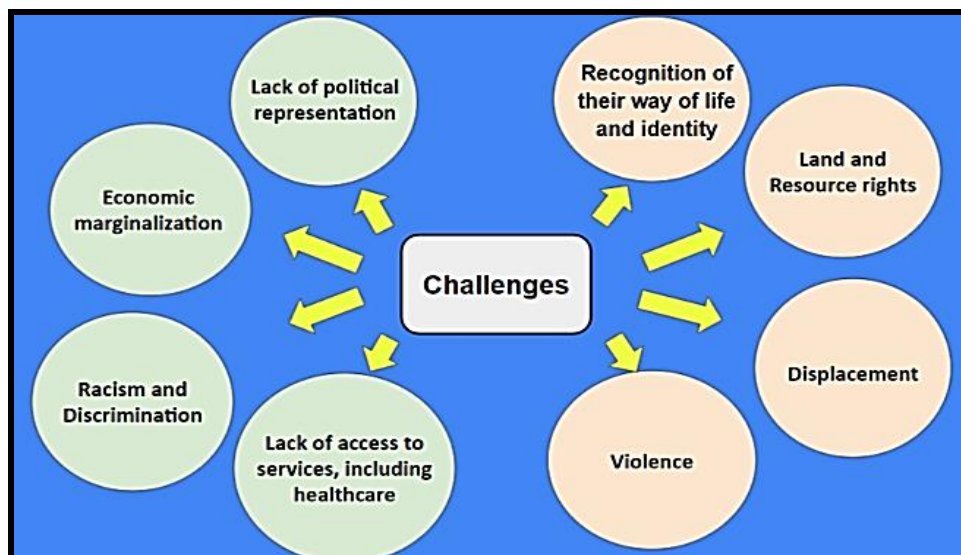


Figure: Challenges faced by Indigenous People

Way Forward:

- Governments around the globe must implement laws and policies that bring the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to life, particularly around:
 - Effectively **consulting Indigenous Peoples** to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent for decisions that affect them
 - **Maintaining** their distinct cultural identities
 - **Living free** from discrimination and the threat of genocide
 - Having **secure access** to the lands and resources essential to their wellbeing and ways of life

Conclusion:

- It is evident that these unique traditional knowledge systems, art, and crafts have a deep-rooted relationship of interdependency and reverence with nature.
- When the world is struggling for solutions and success in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, there are hundreds of indigenous communities across the country which do not have any carbon footprint of their traditional ways of living.
- There is a need to support Indigenous peoples and preserve their knowledge as a vital tool to protect the environment and tackle climate change.

Objective Question:

1. With reference to the Indigenous People, that was recently in the news, consider the following statements:
 1. Indigenous people constitute around 6.2% of the global population.
 2. Indigenous peoples in India comprise an estimated population of 400 million of the national population.
 3. In India, the highest concentration of Indigenous people is found only in the states of Central India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Indigenous communities around the world are bearers of strong traditional culture, art, craft, and knowledge of the environment. However, they are increasingly under threat owing to a range of factors and need to be recognized and protected urgently.

According to the World Health Organisation, Indigenous peoples identify as part of a **distinct group or are descended** from people who **originate in areas that were their traditional lands** that existed prior to the establishment of modern-day borders.

Statement 1 is correct: It is estimated that there are more than **476 million Indigenous people around the world**, spread across more than 90 countries. Indigenous people make up about **6.2% of the global population** and live in all geographical regions. The vast majority of the indigenous people, **about 70% live in Asia**.

Statement 2 is incorrect: In India, roughly **104 million people, which is 8.6% of the national population**, belong to indigenous communities.

Statement 3 is incorrect: The largest concentrations of Indigenous Peoples are found in the **seven states of northeast India**, and the so-called “**central tribal belt**” stretching from Rajasthan to West Bengal.

Subjective Question:

2. Examine the factors responsible for the threat to indigenous peoples' livelihoods and traditional knowledge.

(10 Marks, 150 Words)

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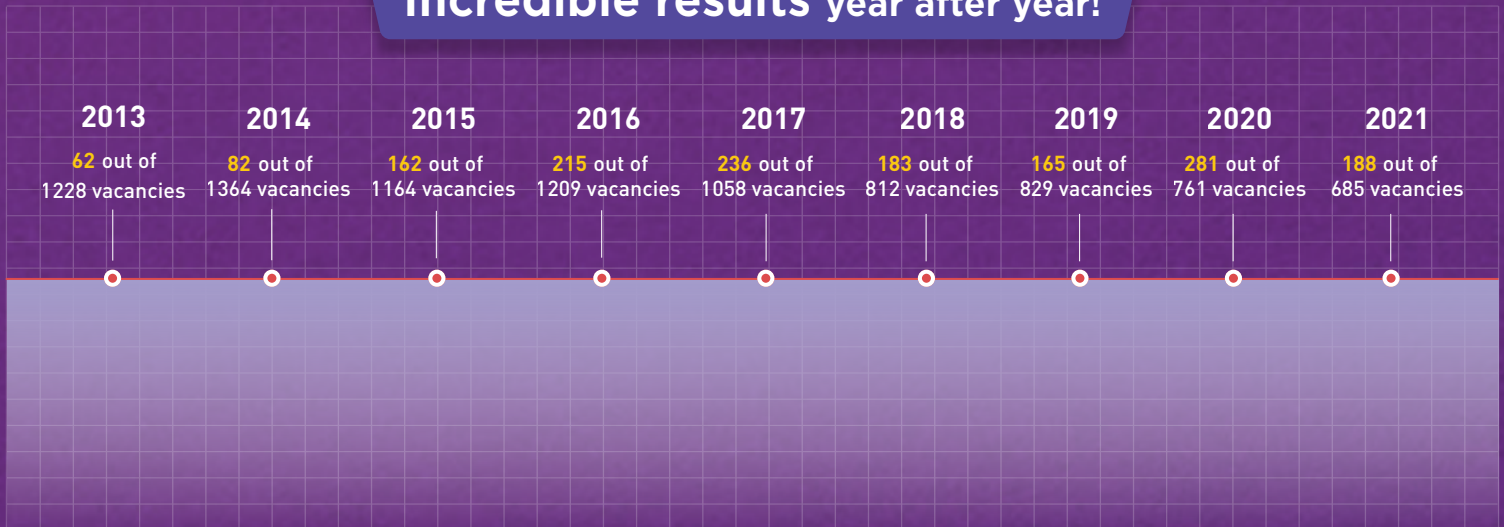


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