Tribes in India

Get in Touch with Tapasvi IAS

Join us on Facebook for daily updates and important material for UPSC
Join Now

Join our Telegram Channel and turn on your notification for daily updates and monthly PDFs.
Join Now

Visit and Subscribe our Channel for daily free videos.
Subscribe Now

To get IAS 2019 Full Video Course share your details with your mobile number and location on
info@upsciasexams.com

Don’t Forget to Read Below Page

Visit our Website and stay connected for daily updates
www.upsciasexams.com
Tribes in India:

Background:

- A tribe is a social division in a traditional society consisting of families linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect. A tribe possesses certain qualities and characteristics that make it a unique cultural, social, and political entity.
- This note is about the major tribes in India. They are also known by the name ‘Adivasis’ in India.
- The nature of what constitutes an Indian tribe and the very nature of tribes have changed considerably over the course of centuries. Constitution of India has recognized tribal communities in India under ‘Schedule 5’ of the constitution. Hence the tribes recognized by the Constitution are known as ‘Scheduled Tribes’. There are around 645 distinct tribes in India.

Key facts:

- Total population of Scheduled Tribes is 84,326,240 as per the Census 2001 which accounts for 8.2% of the total population of country. The share of the Scheduled Tribe population in urban areas is a meager 2.4%.
- Madhya Pradesh, Maharastra, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Karnataka are the State having larger number of Scheduled Tribes. These states account for 83.2% of the total Scheduled Tribe population of the country. Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Jammu & Kashmir, Tripura, Mizoram, Bihar, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, account for another 15.3% of the total Scheduled Tribe population. The share of the remaining states / Uts is negligible.
The scheduled Tribes in India form the largest proportion of the total population in Lakshadweep and Mizoram followed by Nagaland and Meghalaya.

Madhya Pradesh has the largest number of scheduled Tribes followed by Bihar.

Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh consists of largest number of Scheduled Tribes.

There are no Scheduled Tribes in Punjab, Delhi, Chandigarh, Pondicherry, Haryana.

In Lok Sabha there is reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes. Here also census figures are taken into account. Allocation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha are made on the basis of proportion of Scheduled Tribes in the State concerned to that of the total population, vide provision contained in Article 330 of the Constitution of India read with Section 3 of the R. P. Act, 1950.

For Scheduled Tribes, 47 seats are reserved in Lok Sabha. The 1st schedule to R. P. Act, 1950 as amended vide Representation of People (Amendment) Act, 2008 gives the Statewise break up

**Scheduled Tribes:**

Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as “such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution”.

Article 342 in The Constitution Of India 1949:

Scheduled Tribes

(1) The President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this
Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be

(2) Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification

PART XVII
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE
CHAPTER I
LANGUAGE OF THE UNION.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs:

- The Ministry was set up in 1999 after the bifurcation of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment with the objective of providing more focused approach on the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes (STs), the most underprivileged of the Indian Society, in a coordinated and planned manner. Before the formation of the Ministry, tribal affairs were handled by different Ministries at different points in time.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal Ministry for overall policy, planning and coordination of programmes for development of ST’s. To this end, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has undertaken activities that follow from the subjects allocated under the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961.
- Before the formation of the Ministry, tribal affairs were handled by different Ministries as follows:
  - As a Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs named as ‘Tribal Division’ since independence up to September, 1985.
  - National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)
- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) was established by amending Article 338 and inserting a new Article 338A in the
Constitution through the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003. By this amendment, the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was replaced by two separate Commissions namely- (i) the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), and (ii) the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) w.e.f. 19 February, 2004.

Government initiative for tribes:

- The Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) strategy is a Government of India initiative aimed for the rapid socio-economic development of tribal people.
- The funds provided under the Tribal Sub Plan of the State have to be at least equal in proportion to the ST population of each State or UTs. Similarly Central Ministries/Departments are also required to earmark funds out of their budget for the Tribal Sub-Plan. As per guidelines issued by the Planning Commission, the Tribal Sub Plan funds are to be non-divertible and non-lapsable.
- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes is vested with the duty to participate and advise in the planning process of socio-economic development of STs, and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State.

Major Tribes in India: Arranged State-wise

**Andhra Pradesh:** Andh, Sadhu Andh, Bhagata, Bhil, Chenchus (Chenchawar), Gadabas, Gond, Goundu, Jatapus, Kamma, Kattunayakan, Kolawar, Kolam, Konda, Manna Dhora, Pardhan, Rona, Savaras, Dabba Yerukula, Nakkala, Dhulia, Thoti, Sugalis.

**Arunachal Pradesh:** Apatanis, Abor, Dafla, Galong, Momba, Sherdukpen, Singpho.
Assam: Chakma, Chutiya, Dimasa, Hajong, Garos, Khasis, Gangte.

Bihar: Asur, Baiga, Birhor, Birjia, Chero, Gond, Parhaiya, Santhals, Savar.

Chhattisgarh: Agariya, Bhaina, Bhattara, Biar, Khond, Mawasi, Nagasia.

Goa: Dhodia, Dubia, Naikda, Siddi, Varli.

Gujarat: Barda, Bamcha, Bhil, Charan, Dhodia, Gamta, Paradhi, Patelia.

Himachal Pradesh: Gaddis, Gujjars, Khas, Lamba, Lahaulas, Pangwala, Swangla.


Jharkhand: Birhors, Bhumij, Gonds, Kharia, Mundas, Santhals, Savar.

Karnataka: Adiyan, Barda, Gond, Bhil, Iruliga, Koraga, Patelia, Yerava.


Madhya Pradesh: Baigas, Bhils, Bharia, Birhors, Gonds, Katkari, kharia, Khond, Kol, Murias.

Maharashtra: Bhaina, Bhunjia, Dhodia, Katkari, Khond, Rathawa, Warlis.

Manipur: Aimol, Angami, Chiru, Kuki, Maram, Monsang, Paite, Purum, Thadou.

Meghalaya: Chakma, Garos, Hajong, Jaintias Khasis, Lakher, Pawai, Raba.

Mizoram: Chakma, Dimasa, Khasi, Kuki, Lakher, Pawai, Raba, Synteng.

Nagaland: Angami, Garo, Kachari, Kuki, Mikir, Nagas, Sema.

Odisha: Gadaba, Ghara, Kharia, Khond, Matya, Oraons, Rajuwar, Santhals.

Rajasthan: Bhils, Damaria, Dhanka, Meenas (Minas), Patelia, Sahariya.

Sikkim: Bhutia, Khas, Lepchas.
**Tamil Nadu:** Adiyan, Aranadan, Eravallan, Irular, Kadar, Kanikar, Kotas, Todas.

**Telangana:** Chenchus.

**Tripura:** Bhil, Bhutia, Chaimal, Chakma, Halam, Khasia, Lushai, Mizel, Namte.

**Uttarakhand:** Bhotias, Buksa, Jannsari, Khas, Raji, Tharu.

**Uttar Pradesh:** Bhotia, Buksa, Jaunsari, Kol, Raji, Tharu.

**West Bengal:** Asur, Khond, Hajong, Ho, Parhaiya, Rabha, Santhals, Savar.

**North-East:** Abhors, Chang, Galaong, Mishimi, Singpho, Wancho.

**Bhils (derived from bow)-**

- In MP, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and north-eastern part of Tripura
- Popularly known as the bow men of Rajasthan
- They forms the largest tribe of the whole South Asia
- Divided into two main groups: Central or pure Bhils and Eastern or Rajput Bhils
- They speak Bhili, which is an Indo Aryan language
- Religion practice among the Bhils differ from place to place
- The Baneshwar fair is the main festival celebrated during Shivratri

**Munda (means headman of the village)-**

- Mainly in Jharkhand
- Spread across Bihar, WB, Chhattisgarh and Orissa
- They speak Mundari, which is a Austro- Asiatic language
- Complexion is blackish. They have short curly hair.
- Christianity is the main religion.
- They believe in Singbonga, which means the Sun God
- They remained hunters for centuries. But now they have been converted into the settled agriculturist
• Mage, Phagu, Karam, Sarhul, and Sohrai are the few festivals celebrated

Santhals

• West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa Jharkhand and Assam
• It is one of the largest tribe in India
• They wagged war against the permanent settlement of Lord Cornwallis in 1855.
• They speak Santhali, which is a Austro- Asiatic language
• They are engaged in hunting, fishing and cultivation for their livelihood
• They have no temples of their own. They even do not worship any idols.
• Santhals follow the Sarna religion.
• They mainly celebrate the Karam festival to please the God to increase their wealth and free them from all the enemies.

Gonds-

• Widely spread in the Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh, Bastar district of chattisgarh and also in the parts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Orissa.
• They are the largest tribe in Central India
• They speak Gondi language which is related to the Telgu and the other Dravidian languages. In the northern parts Gonds are often seen speaking the local Hindi.
• They are divided into four tribes namely – Raj Gonds, Madia Gonds, Dhurve Gonds, Khatulwar Gonds
• They are largely influenced by the Hindus and for the long time have been practicing the Hindus culture and traditions
• Keslapur Jathra is the important festival of the Gonds

Khasi-

• Mainly found in the state of Assam and the Khasi Jaintia hills in Meghalaya
• Other places are Punjab, UP, Manipur, WB and J&K
They are called by the different names such as Khasi Pahris, Khuchia, Kassi, Khashi and Khasa.

Most of the Khasis follow Christianity.

They speak Khasi-an Austro-Asiatic language.

The property of the Khasis is passed on from the mother to the youngest daughter.

The women wear silver or gold crown on their head and men wear large earrings.

Nongkrem is the major festival celebrated among the Khasi’s.

**Baiga**

Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

They are the forest-dwelling aboriginals from central India.

They do not interact with other tribal, believe in a hand-to-mouth existence.

Do not try to access education, eat outside their community, or associate with others.

Tattooing is an integral part of their lifestyle.

**Birhor (means peoples of jungles)**

Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa.

Known as the hunter tribe.

This tribe is a Proto-Australoid tribe, physically recognizable by their deep, dark-brown skin color and wavy, curly/frizzy black hair.

The tribe is divided into two major sub-tribes,

- the Jaghis Birhor (wandering, practice shift cultivation)
- and Uthalu Birho (settled, follow agro-based economy)

Tanda: The settlement whether permanent or temporary, which consists of usually half a dozen or more huts.

**Chenchus**

Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Odisha.

They live in bee hive shaped tiny huts with wattle walls.
• They speak Chenchu language with the Telgu accent
• They worship number of deities. They mainly believe in Bhagaban taru who lives in the sky and look after them in all their doings
• They are referred to as one of the Primitive Tribal Groups that are still dependent on forests and do not cultivate land but hunt for a living
• Most of them inhabit in the Nallamalai hills of AP

Gaddis

• Himachal Pradesh
• They mainly dwell around Dhauladhar mountain range, Chamba, Bharmaur and the areas near to Dharamshala
• The main occupation is shepherding and they make their livelihood by rearing and selling sheep, goats, mules and horses.
• Most of them are Hindus and a few Muslims
• The most attractive aspect about this tribe is their attire.
• They speak the Gaddi Language but for writing they use Takri and Hindi.

Pangwal

• Himachal Pradesh
• They are the inhabitants of the Pangi valley of Chamba district
• They are known for their charming faces, fine physique and for their love of song and dance.
• They are mostly engaged in farming.

Bhutia

• Sikkim
• They are also known as the Lachenpas and Lachungpas
• They are of the Tibetan origin and migrated to Sikkim around 16th century.
• They form 14% of the total population of Sikkim.
• They usually speak Sikkimese. They also speak Lepcha, Bhutia, Nepali, English and Hindi.
- A traditional Bhutia house is called a “khim” and is usually rectangular.
- Losar and Losoong are the main festivals celebrated

**Limbus/ Limboos**

- Sikkim
- They are one of the indigenous tribe of Sikkim belonging to Nepali stock
- Mongoloid looking by figure having their own language, faith, costume, culture and life style.
- Their traditional group dance called Dhannachis famous usually performed in the marriage, death and any festive celebrations.
- They are farmers by profession and they love enjoying their life more by singing, feasting and dancing.
- The traditional dress of the Limbus is mekhliand

**Lepchas**

- Sikkim
- They are one of the indigenous tribe of Sikkim
- They look fair in complexion, shy in nature wearing generally a kind of set wear of shirt and trousers called Hontaj Gyador.
- They call themselves Rongin their language.
- They speak their own dialect and they too follow the same Tibetan form of Buddhism besides their local faith.

**Buksa**

- Uttarakhand and UP
- They are one of the primitive tribal groups of India
- They are indigenous peoples in the dehradun and nainital in kumaon region
- Major occupation are agriculture and animal husbandry

**Apatani or Tanni**

- Arunachal Pradesh
• They are settled agriculturists inhabiting the valley around Ziro—the headquarters of Lower Subansiri district.
• They practice permanent wetland cultivation in hilly terrain by slicing the hills.
• They are loyal followers of the Donyi-Polo faith, who pray to the Sun and the Moon.
• Men of other tribes would often steal the Apatani women, which led the Apatani men to tattoo the faces of their women and make them wear massive nose plugs, in order to make them less appealing.

Adis/ Bokar Lhoba (meaning hill or mountain top)

• Arunachal Pradesh, Assam.
• Two main divisions the Bogum and Bomis.
• They by nature are democratic and organized village council called Kebang.
• Their traditional dance called Ponungis famous in the whole of Arunachal Pradesh.
• Dances are very popular among them.
• The villages are situated generally on the spurs of hills.
• The women are very good weavers and weave cloth with highly artistic designs.

Nyishis

• Arunachal Pradesh.
• largest groups of people inhabiting the major part of Lower Subhansiri district.
• Their men folks wear their hair long and tie it in a knot just above the forehead.
• They are Indo-Mongoloid group of people and their language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family.
• The tribe as a whole is fond of hunting and fishing in which they perhaps excel any other neighboring tribes.

Kampti
• Arunachal Pradesh
• They are a sub-group of the Shan people Lohit district.
• They posses East Asian features.
• They are followers of Theravada Buddhism
• They have adopted a script of Shan origin, known as Lik-Tai for their language.
• They are renowned for their craftsmanship.

Tagin

• Arunachal Pradesh
• They are main inhabitant of Upper Sunansiri district.
• Their main occupation is agriculture.
• Polygamy is customary among them.
• Their dress is very simple consisting of only one piece of cloth.

Angami

• Nagaland
• Tenyidieis the most common language spoken
• Population is around 12 million.
• Agriculture is the main occupation.
• They are quite popular for their woodcraft and artwork( producer of bamboo work, cane furniture, beds, shawls and powerful machetes)
• Sekrenyiis the main festival celebrated which marks the beginning of the lunar year

Rengmas

• Nagaland
• They are one of the seventeen major Naga Tribes.
• They follow patriarchal system.
• Originally they were animist. They believed in various gods and goddess. The Christianity is also present among the tribe.
• Agriculture is the main occupation. They practices Jhumming. Women are expert weavers.
- Nyada is the main festival celebrated. This is to mark the end of the agricultural years.
- Section of them have migrated to Karbi Anglong districts of Assam

**Sema /Sumi Nagas**

- Nagaland and Assam
- They are one of the major tribes of Nagaland recognized for their martial art skills.
- They mainly inhibit Zunheboto
- They are most united and aggressive tribe.
- Tuluniis the major festival celebrated.

**Zeliang**

- Nagaland
- They live primarily in the south-western part of Kohima district
- The Hegafestival is one of the most important and the biggest festival.
- They inhabit Barrail range of hills in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam.
- They are very famous for their sanitation and hygiene.
- Konyak (means blackhead or human)

**Nagaland**

- They are the largest out of 17 officially recognized tribes in Nagaland,
- They are known as ‘those violent headhunters with tattooed faces.’
- One of the last headhunters, they now practice agriculture and hunt seasonally
- The most important festival is AolingMonyu which is celebrated in spring season and the occasion is related to the sowing of seeds.
- The men wear earrings made out of deer horn, necklace made out of boar tusks and brass heads.

**Garos**

- Meghalaya
• They are the second-largest tribe in Meghalaya and comprise about a third of the local population.
• They are mainly Christians.
• The youngest daughter inherits the property from her mother. Sons leave the parents’ house at puberty, and are trained in the village bachelor dormitory. After getting married, the man lives in his wife’s house.
• They are a matrilinealnot matriarchal society.

**Jaintias**

• Meghalaya
• They are traced in the Jaintia hills.
• They belong to the Proto Autroloid Monkhmer race
• Basically it is a sub tribe of Khasis and since they have been residing in Jaintia hills, they have been named so.
• The men wear Jymphong and dhoti while the women wrap several pieces of clothes so as to give a cylindrical shape.

**Reang**

• Tripura
• They are the second largesttribal community of Tripura.
• They are said to have came first from Shan State of upper Burma.
• Belong to Indo-Mongoloid racial stock.
• Language is known as “Kaubru” which have a tonal effect of Kuki language though broadly it is Kok-Borok (language of men).
• Nomadic tribe and a large numbers among them maintain their livelihood involving Top Hill Jhum Cultivation, food gathering, fishing & hunting.

**Lushais**

• Tripura
• They belong to Kuki-Chin group of tribes.
• They are commonly known as
• They live on Jhum Cultivation and hunting of wild animal. They are also famous as orange producing community.
• Their Bamboo Dance (Cheraw-dance) is very much popular in and outside the country

kuki

• Manipur
• An ethnic tribe spread across vast areas of North-eastern region of India except Arunachal Pradesh, Burma and foot hills of Chittagong hills
• They form a part of the great Mongolian race
• They prefer to live on the hill tops and their villages are cluster of houses closely constructed to protect from alien raiders.

Bodos

• Assam
• They belong to Indo-Mongoloid family. It is believed that their origin was Tibet and China.
• The speak Bodo language that is derived Tibeto Burmese family of language
• Most of them are engaged in rice cultivation, tea plantation and poultry farming. Women engage themselves in weaving
• They are expert in bamboo and cane craft; hence one would usually come across houses fashioned out of bamboo and wood in places where they live in majority

Mishing /Miris

• Assam
• They are the second largest schedule tribe of Assam.
• As per tradition they practice group fishing in winter and group hunting in summer. The women are expert weavers.
• The ‘Ali-Ai-Ligang’ is the most well-known and widely observed festival (festival of sowing seeds)
They have their own language, but no script: hence they use the Assamese language when the written form is required

Karbi/ Mikirs

- Assam
- They belong to the Mongoloid group and linguistically to the Tibeto-Burman group
- They reside in hilly areas of Assam and form the major portion of population of Karbi Anglong. They also inhabit places in North Cachar Hills, Nagaon and Sonitpur districts of Assam
- Their main occupation is agriculture.
- The place of women is same as the men, and women help their men in every step of life
- Dance and Music play an important role in their life
- They are mentioned as Mikir in the constitution of India.

Rahabas

- Assam
- They are widely scattered but mostly concentrated on Goalpara, Kamrup, and Darrang.
- Agriculture is the main occupation
- They like to live in compact blocks having 50-100 families
- Biate (means worshipper)
- Mizoram, Assam and Meghalaya
- They are also one of the oldest living tribes in the NE.

Andaman Tribes:

Jarawa:

- Confined to the western part of the south, middle and north Andamans.
- The Andamanese, who are extremely limited in number, live along the coastal areas.
Onge:

- Inhabit the little Andaman and Rutland Island

Sentinelese:

- They are found in Sentinel Island.

Shorn Pens:

- Confined along the eastern and south-eastern coast of Great Nicobar island.
- They are also reported from the banks of Dagmar, Alexandra and Galathoa rivers respectively.

Nicobarese (Holchu):

- Inhabiting these small islands are highly unevenly distributed and only in the two islands, the Car Nicobar and Chowra.