

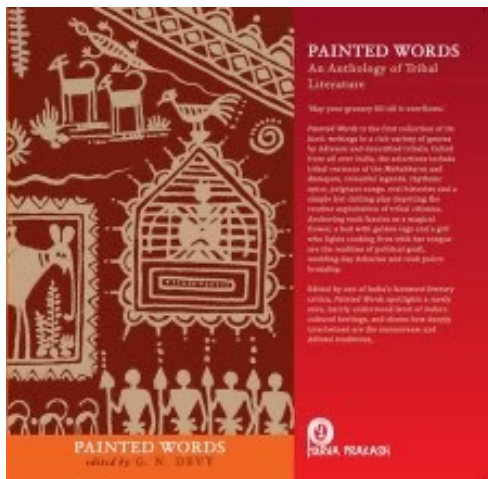
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# Tribal Cultural Heritage in India

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A background guide for education  
*towards a world-expanding vision of the future*





“It is almost impossible to characterize all of India’s tribals in a single ethnographic or historic framework.” – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in his Introduction to *Painted Words: An Anthology of Tribal Literature*

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# Tribal Cultural Heritage in India

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A background guide for education



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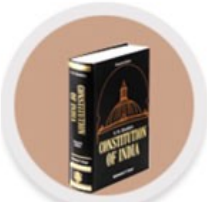
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Dedicated to the memory of Nicolaas Nobel (1933-2016) and Baba Amte (1914-2008) whom 'Nico' regarded as compassion personified, this background guide aims at helping teachers, students, researchers and media persons to approach *Tribal Cultural Heritage in India* in a forward looking, balanced and unbiased manner. It takes cognisance of the fact that India – a vast country with over 1.3 billion inhabitants – is home to over 700 *Scheduled Tribes* (104.5 million, accounting for 8.63 percent of the total population according to the Census of 2011).

*As a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic with a parliamentary system of government* made up of 28 States and 8 Union Territories with overlapping communities in more than one State, India is also signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

From this follows that all members of her so-called "tribal" or *Ādivāsi* communities are entitled to the same rights as "mainstream citizens" irrespective of creed, caste or language in accordance with principles laid down in the Constitution of India.

 **Constitution of India**



## Constitution of India

India, also known as Bharat, is a Union of States. It is a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic with a parliamentary system of government. The Republic is governed in terms of the Constitution of India which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November, 1949 and came into force on 26th January, 1950. The Constitution provides for a Parliamentary form of government which is federal in structure with certain unitary features. The constitutional head of the Executive of the Union is the President. As per Article 79 of the Constitution of India, the council of the Parliament of the Union consists of the President and two Houses known as the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the House of the People (Lok Sabha). Article 74(1) of the Constitution provides that there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as its head to aid and advise the President, who shall exercise his/her functions in accordance to the advice. The real executive power is thus vested in the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as its head.



National development and the development of tribal  
communities are linked to each other.

If women are empowered, there is more development in society.

The President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu

We are so much more than that.

We follow a tradition rich in music, dance and love.

Irula writer and social worker Swarnalatha

To have faith in the possibility of love  
as a social and not only exceptional-individual phenomenon,  
is a rational faith based on the insight into the very nature of man.

Erich Fromm

Only the collaboration between the children and the adults will be able to  
solve the problems of our time.

Maria Montessori

He who has not surrendered his free will and abdicated his  
intelligence and independent thinking ... so as not become a tool  
in the hands of others, I call him a free man.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (Chief architect of India's Constitution)

We are considering everything around us, and I think  
we should do the same throughout the world.

Traditional Knowledge Keeper Linda Young (Canada)

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## Acknowledgements

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This reference work reflects the ideals of **Nicolaas Nobel** (1933-2016) who founded the Tribal Cultural Heritage in India Foundation in 2008 supported by architect **Jowa Imre Kis-Jovak** and cultural anthropologist **Jet Bakels**.

Cultural anthropologist **Elisabeth den Otter** made it possible to continue their efforts from 2010 until 2022, initially as Treasurer, and from 2016 as President and Treasurer. Art historian **Mieke Beumer** joined the foundation in 2016 and served as Board Member until 2022. **Ludwig Pesch** (the present editor and website administrator), was its Secretary from 2010 until 2022.

Special thanks are due to **Arun V.C., Swapan Bhattacharjee, Ranjith Henry** and **Pitchaimuthu Yesudoss** for drawing attention to sources and nuances that would otherwise have been missed.

## Disclaimer and suggestions for further research

The information found in this background guide solicits reflection and verification with the help of the hyperlinks provided here in addition to alternative sources. It has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable as well as inspiring to educators and students without laying claim to comprehensiveness. Readers will encounter deeply held beliefs and conflicts of interest that may have arisen from involuntary assimilation, displacement, migration, rural poverty, and climate change that affects indigenous communities all over the world.

Issues as sensitive as these call for fact-checking with the help of books and (open access) journals from reputed publishers listed on [Archive.org](https://archive.org) and [WorldCat.org](https://worldcat.org) ("the world's largest library catalog") and recommended for being "a great resource for locating unique, trustworthy materials that you often can't find anywhere except in a library". On similar lines, consider exploring *Shodhganga* ("a reservoir of Indian theses, a platform for research students to deposit their Ph.D. theses and make it available to the entire scholarly community in open access"). Please note that hyperlinks such as these do not constitute an endorsement or authorization of products and information found on third party websites, nor of their respective privacy policies.

Several custom search engines have been compiled to facilitate fact-checking and in-depth study of sensitive issues (e.g. access to education, health care and proper nutrition just as biodiversity, ethnobotany/ethnomedicine or media coverage). Each custom search engine focuses on a set of specific web portals including those maintained by the Indian government, India-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations like the United Nations in order to shed light on *Human Rights* in general, and the *Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in particular. This contextualizes the information and commentaries gathered from news portals, theses, eJournals and blogs curated by (Indian) scholars, publicists, educators and citizen journalists committed to a better future for members of India's "tribal" (*Ādivāsi*) communities.

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## How to conveniently use the hyperlinks embedded in this PDF-file

- \* Explore any topic of special interest by clicking on a heading or page number
- \* Within this document, all headings contain hyperlinks to corresponding posts offering longer excerpts, backups of documents and interactive maps
- \* To verify and contextualize a particular quote, click on the hyperlinks provided
- ➡ For more insights into the aspirations and needs of tribal communities, jump to the top of the same main section (labelled *Regions of India*, *Nature and wildlife*, *Resources*, *Topics and issues*, or *Tribal identity*)
- ➡ Table of Contents – a convenient way of returning here

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Wayand children >>

Photo by courtesy © Arun V.C.

## Introduction

The founding fathers of "the world's largest democracy" adopted a carefully worded constitution in the hope that this would end the system of violent dispossession and exploitation colonial rulers had inflicted on rural populations and "hunter-gatherers" all over the world, often abetted by local collaborators. In the words of Amitav Ghosh, "in India, as elsewhere, colonialism is first, foremost and always about land" and "legal protections for Adivasis were never very strong". (*The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis*)

The following assurance by the *National Commission for Scheduled Tribes* continues to stand in marked contrast with the reality minorities face on a daily basis: "All Rights available to the Citizens of India, enshrined in the Constitution or any law of the land or any order of the Government are equally available to the Scheduled Tribes also." The stark reality is that India's "Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups" still need protection from torture, unjustified imprisonment, summary execution, enforced disappearance, persecution and unjust discrimination in order to get *fair access to education, economic opportunities, and adequate resources and health-care* in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Historical wrongs cannot be undone. As a remedy, the National Human Right Commission calls for preventing *atrocities against vulnerable sections of society*. This goal will remain elusive until we cherish the wealth of shared experience and values that *brings us together across cultural or religious divides*. In the words of renowned linguist Ganesh Devy, what makes us human and indeed unites us beyond India's borders is our *love for songs*: "The greatest makers of songs ... had her or his peculiar philosophy and, yet, all of them live in India's memory as singers of love, devotion and humanity."

Such insights not merely serve to counter misconceptions but bring home the fact that today, as in the distant past, India's "tribal" communities contribute to sustainable development by preserving linguistic diversity just as biodiversity. Both are needed in order to share knowledge about ethnobotany and ethnomedicine more widely.

It is in this context that the present document highlights success stories and issues around India's diverse "tribal" or "indigenous" peoples. It includes communities referred to as Ādivāsi (Ādibāsi) in contexts like cultural identity, democracy, ecology, or social justice.

Cultivating "respect for diversity, solidarity and a shared sense of humanity" means bringing Unesco's Global Citizenship Education initiative alive.

Doing justice to the above-mentioned issues and opportunities requires lifelong learning. Over a century ago, one of India's founding fathers – the poet and pioneering social reformer Rabindranath Tagore – wrote:

**A most important truth, which we are apt to forget, is that a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. – Visva-Bharati and its institutions– Santiniketan (1961)**

He inspired a kind of social competence that sets learners and teachers free:

**The goal is to prepare some model students in our villages, so that others will be inspired to follow them.** – Educationist and Santali translator Boro Baski

This approach has succeeded because children bond with their elders. By using their mother tongue their cultural roots remain intact thus benefitting modern society as well:

**Adivasi people have an alternative world view, which has rarely been acknowledged or recognized. All of us can learn from them.** – Writer-activist Mari Marcel Thekaekara

Mutual learning can only succeed if those concerned are being read and understood:

**We have to write our own stories, about our issues, from our own perspectives. It is better late than never.** – Scholar-activist Abhay Xaxa

Reading and writing in both, one's mother tongue and in translation matters, be it to

**non-tribal people who are sincerely interested in helping the tribals** – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak

or members of the communities concerned who want others to know that

**ours has been one of a long, ongoing call for justice – for our rights of restitution and repatriation. Is anyone listening?** – Ruby Hembrom, Founder-director of *Adivaani*

Showcasing, acknowledging and spreading new as well as time-proven insights is bound to make a difference:

**With the ability to recognise over a thousand plants and know the medicinal uses of each one, the level of nature knowledge is far beyond what most major world languages have ... Indigenous languages have wisdom that can save us from climate crisis.** – Lexicographer David Harrison

This "discovery" raises a serious question, namely how the benefits accruing from such knowledge may be shared more fairly, especially with those affected by issues beyond their control. Yet paradoxically, "the colonial model of plantation development was in totality adopted by the nation-state" after achieving Independence. (Anu Krishnan in *Tribes in Transition*). In other words, a combination of structural neglect and collective indifference to suffering results in deprivation – even lifelong damage – to this very day; and this on a scale so massive as to defy description:

**About 40 per cent of under five tribal children in India are stunted, and 16 per cent of them are severely stunted.** – Unicef India's Programme report on Tribal nutrition

What more do we need to *know* or *deplore* before we shed once and for all the "hardheartedness of the educated"? (Vinay Lal in the context of Gandhian values) To begin with, by committing ourselves and supporting *new initiatives in education*; after all, long-term success requires a whole range of efforts. Some of these are already implemented by a school run by and for rural communities:

**We realise that the only way a culture gets conserved is when it is promoted. Each year we can decide on some topics (like medicinal plants and honey**

**collection). As and when such information is gathered we would immediately introduce them into the curriculum at the various levels. – Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust**

So there is already a widely shared consensus irrespective of age or social background: "One of the first steps to developing any community is education". It goes without saying that tangible and lasting success depends on many factors. And while exploring "new ideas" or suggesting "time-proven solutions" we always need to consider the aspirations of those concerned with an open mind.

In the absence of written records, members of the younger, formally educated generation know that the insights of tribal elders are worth taking into account, be as a source of inspiration or to understand the nature of resilience in the face of adversity past and present.

Deprivation, malnutrition, exploitation – even enslavement – may be issues hard to tackle in the classroom; harder still than environmental degradation or climate change. But as concerned citizens worldwide have learned from other fields, keeping silent is no option. On the positive side, stopping this "massive waste of talent" (Nobel Awardee Amartya Sen) is more than just *avoidable* because – to cite the Right Livelihood Award bestowed on eminent personalities from all over India – this is really about "peace, justice and sustainability for all".

Ludwig Pesch (editor)

## Tips for teachers, students and researchers

This interactive document has been prepared for offline and online use. It encourages readers to explore and discuss topics of special interest by accessing a wide range of resources.

Headwords are chosen and arranged in alphabetical order as to facilitate fact-checking and proper citations, each hyperlink leading straight to the original source and/or to a corresponding post available on the *Tribal Cultural Heritage in India* website:

<https://indiantribalheritage.org>.

### How to put this document to best use

Click any page number in the Table of Contents to go directly to that page; in the PDF-version of this document, all page numbers seen of the *Table of Contents* are hyperlinked.

Find useful insights without being connected to the internet; brief excerpts from many sources are included in the present document.

For the purpose of classroom activities and fact-checking, access the original sources whenever you are connected to the internet:

- media contents (audio and video channels including Community Collections)
- eBooks (publications from renowned Indian and international publishers in addition to free publications such as Community Texts)
- eJournals and ePapers (research summaries including official reports)
- background interviews from reputed periodicals and platforms
- expert comments and much more



Photo © [Adivasi Academy Tejgadh](#) >>  
[Find publications](#) >>



## Fact checking, updates and book search (Custom Search & Worldcat.org)

For up-to-date search results on issues of special interest, and to verify the accuracy of information cited (facts and figures), the following links may prove useful:

1. [Search select websites: Govt. of India, NGOs, Indian universities and international organisations](#)  
**Public URL** <https://cse.google.com/cse?cx=013915946162963447659:psbdlqqxnqu>
2. [Indigenous knowledge: biodiversity, ecology, health, nutrition, nature, wildlife](#)  
**Public URL** <https://cse.google.com/cse?cx=013915946162963447659:qyubhlnhjeq>
3. [Indian magazines and web portals – news coverage and analysis](#)  
**Public URL** <https://cse.google.com/cse?cx=013915946162963447659:gho2kbhd86s>
4. [Indian press coverage of tribal culture: online editions of daily newspapers in English](#)  
**Public URL** <https://cse.google.com/cse?cx=013915946162963447659:imlkbxkvs28>
5. [Find educational and children's books on tribal culture published in India](#)  
**Public URL** <https://cse.google.com/cse?cx=013915946162963447659:eafynimt-zq>
6. [Find scholarly books, fiction and poetry relating to tribal culture: Indian publishers](#)  
**Public URL** <https://cse.google.com/cse?cx=013915946162963447659:wrkulhia4a>

For books incl. Open Access eBooks & eJournals in libraries near you, [visit worldcat.org](http://worldcat.org) where you also find a simple [tutorial](#) to "learn basic and advanced search techniques".

**Please note:** (1) Custom Search engines rely on "[Google's SafeSearch technology to filter explicit search and image results](#)" (Date verified: 18 September 2022)  
(2) The above headings are hyperlinks that direct you to posts on the *Tribal Culture in India* website ([indiantribalheritage.org](http://indiantribalheritage.org)), each listing the websites searched with your keywords.

## Interactive maps



**Explore India's tribal cultural heritage with the help of several interactive maps, specially created for visitors to this website:**

1. [An alphabetical journey across India: from Andaman to West Bengal](#)
2. [Northeastern India: the "Seven Sister States" & Sikkim](#)
3. [Visit a museum in India: Indigenous art, anthropological & ethnographical collections](#)
4. [A virtual journey across time and space: from Gondi-Harappan to present & future](#)
5. [Locations for video documentaries & external media contents](#)
6. [Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups \(Govt. data\) & Endangered languages \(PLSI data\)](#)
7. [Places associated with press reports and blogs about India's tribal cultural heritage](#)
8. [A virtual journey across India: from Ladakh to Gujarat](#)

## Regions of India – Tribal heritage and indigenous knowledge

"The Indian subcontinent boasts of a rich and diverse history involving multi-ethnic origins, and this has been established by in-depth scholarship on linguistics, mythology, folklore and anthropology, archaeology, geology, big-history and genetics." – Manuraj Shunmugasundaram in "The Dravidian movement and Aryan illusions" (The Hindu, 23 July 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-dravidian-movement-and-aryan-illusions/article65672119.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26937>

### **The Ministry of Culture maintains *Zonal Cultural Centers* among other "Autonomous Bodies" (*Akademies*, museums and libraries):**

Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, Kolkata

North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Allahabad

North East Zone Cultural centre, Dimapur

North Zone Cultural centre, Patiala

South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur

South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur

West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur

<http://indiaculture.gov.in/about-us/autonomus-bodies/zonal-cultural-centers>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13904>

(accessed 15 July 2022)

"Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep are not members of any of the Zonal Councils. However, they are presently special invitees to the Southern Zonal Council."

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Administrative\\_divisions\\_of\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Administrative_divisions_of_India)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13904>

Section 15 of the States Reorganization Act 1956 provides that there shall be a Zonal Council for each of the five zones of the country. The present composition of each Zonal Council is as under:

**Northern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi, Union Territory of Chandigarh, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh.

**Central Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;

**Eastern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal;

**Western Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.

**Southern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

Source: Government of India in "Zonal Councils" ["Page last updated on: 13/02/2020"]

<http://interstatecouncil.nic.in/genesis/>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=20801](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=20801)

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- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**



(access [this interactive map](#) online)

"The entire Nicobar islands is a tribal reserve and is key for the survival of a number of species of rare and endemic flora and fauna. Unlike the rest of India, tribal rights and conservation are not at the opposite ends of the spectrum in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Yet, there are challenges." – Pankaj Sekhsaria in "An intricate web" (The Hindu, 4 February 2012)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine//article59800934.ece>

"Geologically the A&N Islands are the submerged southwards extensions of the ArakanYoma mountain range of Myanmar. The Islands have a total land area of 8,249 km<sup>2</sup>, of which the northern Andaman group constitutes 6,408 km<sup>2</sup> and the southern Nicobars 1,841 km<sup>2</sup>. [...] The Islands have been home to indigenous tribal communities for over 20,000 years." – Government of India report "Bulwark Against Falling off the Map: State Action Plan on Climate Change, Andaman and Nicobar Islands 2013" (Draft – November 2013), p. 11

<http://moef.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Andaman-and-Nicobar.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26863>



"Andaman and Nicobar islands, union territory of India were inhabited by 14 aboriginal tribes. Some of these tribal populations have already become extinct, and the numbers of the existing ones are also dwindling. Across India, most of the tribals have made the shift to agriculture. Only tiny groups like Jarawas remain hunter-gatherers. This makes them culturally different." – Surabhi Sinha in "Save Jarawa" (Times of India, 2 June 2021)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/phases-of-life/save-jarawa-32818/>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14820>

"The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a chain of 572 islands of which a little more than 30 are inhabited. They constitute 0.2 per cent of India's land mass but provide for 30 per cent of the country's 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ). [...] The government aims to acquire 60 small and large passenger and cargo ships [and] buy luxury cruise ships for wealthier visitors, to replace the ageing, basic vessels that are available." – Rajat Arora (Economic Times, 26 September 2015)

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/modi-governments-rs-10000-crore-plan-to-transform-andaman-and-nicobar-islands/articleshow/49111067.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26863>

"These people are some of the most ancient remnants of human race still surviving. [...] Very little can be done now to save the Andamanese proper who have paid for their friendliness by being driven to the verge of extinction and it now is a question of time before they would completely disappear." – B.S. Guha in "Report of a Survey of Inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands During 1948-49" (Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology, Government of India, 1952); quoted by R.K. Bhattacharya in "The Holistic Approach to Anthropology: B.S. Guha's Vision of the Anthropological Survey of India" (*Journal of the Anthropological Survey of India*, 2012-2013, ANSI journal 2012-13.pdf), p. 368

<https://indianculture.gov.in/reports-proceedings/journal-anthropological-survey-india>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26863>

"The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, closer to Indonesia than to India, hardly ever feature in the national consciousness. [...] This remoteness has allowed extraordinary impunity on the islands. Bureaucrats rule like kings." – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"[I]n the Great Andamanese language, it is the human who was created first – a male one, then a female and the children. All the humans were transformed into birds aka Jiro Mithe, an interesting story of the birth of avian diversity. It also informs us why Great Andamanese people do not eat birds; it is because birds are considered to be their ancestors. [...] The five elements of life of which our Vedas talk about was first mentioned in the creation myth of the Great Andamanese people, which symbolizes the culture of the first settlers of South and Southeast Asia, implying thereby that it is universal and recognized by the oldest civilization on earth. These five elements are water, earth, fire, sky and space." - Anvita Abbi (B.B. Borkar Chair of Comparative Literature, Goa University, formerly Professor of Linguistics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) in "Adivasi Creation Myths: An Enquiry into Our Beginnings" (*The Johar Journal*, Issue 01, July-Dec 2020)

<https://joharjournal.org/adivasi-creation-myths-an-enquiry-into-our-beginnings/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22274>

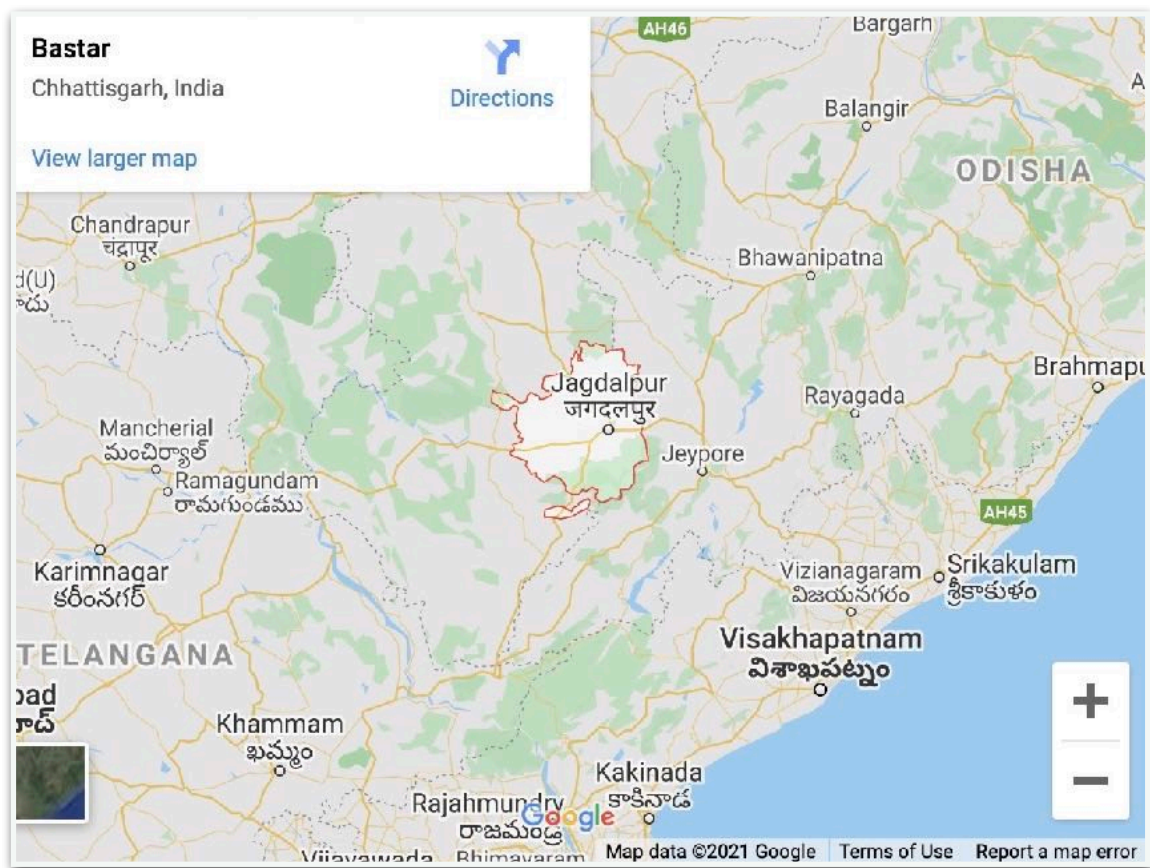
➡ Regions of India – Tribal heritage & indigenous knowledge

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[Find these books and related tiles >>](#)

- **Bastar**



(access [this interactive map online](#))

"The greater part of Bastar is a tilted peninsular plateau, varying in elevation between 284 and 1,200 m. [...] The principal rivers of the region are Indravati and Sabari, both tributaries of the Godavari in the south, the largest of the rivers flowing from west to east in the region. Winter nights can be extremely cold and most Adivasi homes get by with a fire to sleep beside. Summer is hot, sometimes sufficiently so to cause stands of sal trees to dry up and die. [...] Most agriculture is rain-fed, depending upon the south-west monsoon." – Madhu Ramnath, Preface to *Woodsmoke and Leafcups* (HarperCollins India, 2015), pp. xviii

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/930839347>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20305>

"Bastar, a part of Dandakaranya in ancient time, is both a district as also a division in Chhattisgarh. Till 1997, it was a single district division in Madhya Pradesh. Bastar today is a division with five districts namely Bastar, Kanker, Dantewada, Narayanpur and Bijapur. This is a heavily forested, tribal-dominated area. The entire division is a notified scheduled area." – Uma Ram (Professor & Head Department of English, Kakatiya PG College, Chhattisgarh) in "Issues in Tribal Education in Bastar, Chhattisgarh" (Folklore Foundation, Lokaratna, Volume IV 2011)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14683>

"Bastar, the land of tribes and about 70% of the total population of Bastar comprises tribals, which is 26.76% of the total tribal population of Chhattisgarh. [...] The tribes of Bastar region are known for their unique and distinctive tribal culture and heritage in all over the world. Each tribal group in Bastar has their own distinct culture and enjoys their own unique traditional living styles." – Visitors information, Chhattishgarh State Government (District-Bastar, 2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25751>

"Chhattisgarh is rich in its cultural heritage. The State has a very unique and vibrant culture. There are over 35 big and small colourful tribes spread over the region. Their rhythmic folk music, dances and dramas are a treat to watch and also provide an insight into the culture of the State." – Culture & Heritage | District DURG, Government of Chhattisgarh

<https://durg.gov.in/culture-heritage/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7922>

"People are poor and are rapidly losing control of natural resources like forests that they have depended upon for generations. This exacerbates the poor status of health in that area.' – Healthcare worker Sulakshana Nandi quoted by Rajni George in "Lord of the jungle and the magic potion" (*OPEN Magazine*, Profile, 25 July 2014)

<https://openthemagazine.com/features/india/lord-of-the-jungle-and-the-magic-potion/#all>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20340>

"The homeland of the Muria, Muria Gond, Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria, Halba, Dhurwa, Bhatra and Dorla tribes, it differs from other tribal enclaves in that there were, concurrently, other diverse traditions from surrounding civilisations and those who ruled the area. For Bastar has a history as varied as that of the rest of India. [...] Unlike other tribes who lived in splendid isolation, those of the Bastar region had constant interaction with the ruling powers." – Nanditha Krishnan reviewing *Bastar Folk Art – Shrines, Figurines And Memorials* by Michel Postel and Zarine Cooper in "When tribes co-exist with kingdoms" (*The Hindu*, 6 February 2000)

<https://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/2000/02/06/stories/1306032k.htm>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/44475758>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16409>

"[Brahma Dev Sharma] realised it was best to ask the tribals what they needed and make plans accordingly rather than thrust one's own ideas upon them." – Vijay Lapalikar in an obituary titled "Mahatma of the tribals", describing B.D. Sharma's contribution to the emancipation of the tribals, his "dogged fight against the usurpation of tribal resources by the government and private entities." (The Indian Express, 28 December 2015)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/mahatma-of-the-tribals/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22132>

"Bastar bronze is unique because of the casting technique and because each craftsman brought his own vision and desires to the figure unlike say, the Chola bronzes which followed an established model. [Yet] their 'living tradition' is slowly moving to the realm of 'folklore'." – Cornelia Mallebrein, Guest-Curator of the exhibition titled "Street Parade of the Gods", interviewed in "Tribal tryst" (The Telegraph, 22 July 2012)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16409>

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Bronze Art from India's Villages © Museum Rietberg (Zurich) in  
Elefanten, schaukelnde Götter und Tänzer in Trance:  
Bronzekunst aus dem heutigen Indien >>



- **Central region – Central Zonal Council**

"Besides North-east India, the highest concentration of Scheduled tribes is in Central India. Additionally, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand are among the top ten states with respect to forest areas." – "Action Research and Policy Support on Community Forest Resource management in Central India" by Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)

<https://www.atree.org/projects/action-research-and-policy-support-community-forest-resource-management-central-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18987>

Zonal Cultural Centres

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13904>

"Central Zonal Council, comprising the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh" – Government of India in "Zonal Councils - Genesis" (accessed 3 April 2021)

<http://interstatecouncil.nic.in/genesis/>

The total population of MP is 7.26 crore [72.6 million]. Of this, the Scheduled Tribe comprises 1.53 [15.3 million] crore people, which is 21 per cent of the total state population. It is the highest tribal population in the country. Officials said the government plans to provide exposure to their talent." – Ankur Sirothia in "Madhya Pradesh government to promote artwork of all tribes, eyes Rs 100 crore revenue" (Times of India, 16 October 2019)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhopal/madhya-pradesh-government-to-promote-artwork-of-all-tribes-eyes-rs-100-crore-revenue/articleshow/71611674.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25701>

"The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1956 [...] 'to develop the habit of cooperative working' among these States." – Government of India in "Zonal Councils" (accessed 3 April 2021)

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710\\_0.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710_0.pdf)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=20801](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=20801)

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- **Chotanagpur**

"The Chotanagpur region of Jharkhand has many tribal groups living close to each other. A unique phenomenon of this region is the emergence of a hybrid language called 'Nagpuri' or 'Sadri', which is used as lingua franca. [...] In Santal Parganas (Dumka) region, there are two main tribal groups – the Santal and the Paharia. [...] There are other small groups also in Chotanagpur like the Birhor of Netarhat and the Chik Baraik." – Ivy Hansdak (Jamia Millia Islamia University New Delhi) in "Santali and related tribal languages of the Chotanagpur region: Mundari, Ho and Birjiya"

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21807>

"A plateau accounting for half of the country's mineral wealth comprising coal, iron-ore, copper, bauxite, chromite, dolomite, limestone, manganese and mica in erstwhile Chotanagpur area deserves to be studied in depth not only for the minerals but for its human endeavour to liberate itself from exploitation by greedy industrialists and insensitive rulers, be it colonialists or Indian, from time to time." –

K.R.A. Narasiah reviewing *Colonial and Contemporary Bihar and Jharkhand* by Lata Singh & Biswamoy Pati (eds.) in "Bihar's past struggles reconstructed" (The Hindu, 22 September 2014)

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/bihars-past-struggles-reconstructed/article6436022.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15699>

According to Jaipal Singh, a Munda from Chotanagpur, "the tribals were the 'original inhabitants' of the subcontinent – hence the term 'adibasi' or 'adivasi', which means precisely that. Jaipal formed an Adibasi Mahasabha in 1938 which asked for a separate state of 'Jharkhand', to be carved out of Bihar. To the tribals of Chotanagpur, he was their marang gomke, or 'great leader'. In the Constituent Assembly he came to represent the tribals not just of his native plateau, but of all India." – Ramachandra Guha in *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (New Delhi: Picador India), p. 115

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/179807214>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15375>

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- **Eastern region – Eastern Zonal Council**

"Eastern Zonal Council, comprising the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal" – Government of India in "Zonal Councils - Genesis" (accessed 3 April 2021)

<http://interstatecouncil.nic.in/genesis/>

Zonal Cultural Centres

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13904>

"The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1956 [...] 'to develop the habit of cooperative working' among these States." – Government of India in "Zonal Councils" (accessed 3 April 2021)

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710\\_0.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710_0.pdf)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=20801](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=20801)

"The largest number of main tribal communities (62) has been specified in relation to the State of Orissa." – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, Government of India (Ministry of Tribal Affairs), accessed on 14 September 2021

<https://www.ncst.gov.in/content/frequently-asked-questions>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22095>

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- **Gadchiroli**



(access [this interactive map](#) online)

"Gadchiroli is situated in the south-eastern part of Maharashtra and is known for its dense forests. The district has seen sporadic violence due to the presence of left-wing extremism, which affects access to official development programmes in some parts." – Radhika Udas in "Tata-Centre deal to boost development in Gadchiroli" (The Hindu, 10 August 2018)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/tata-centre-deal-to-boost-development-in-gadchiroli/article24647650.ece>

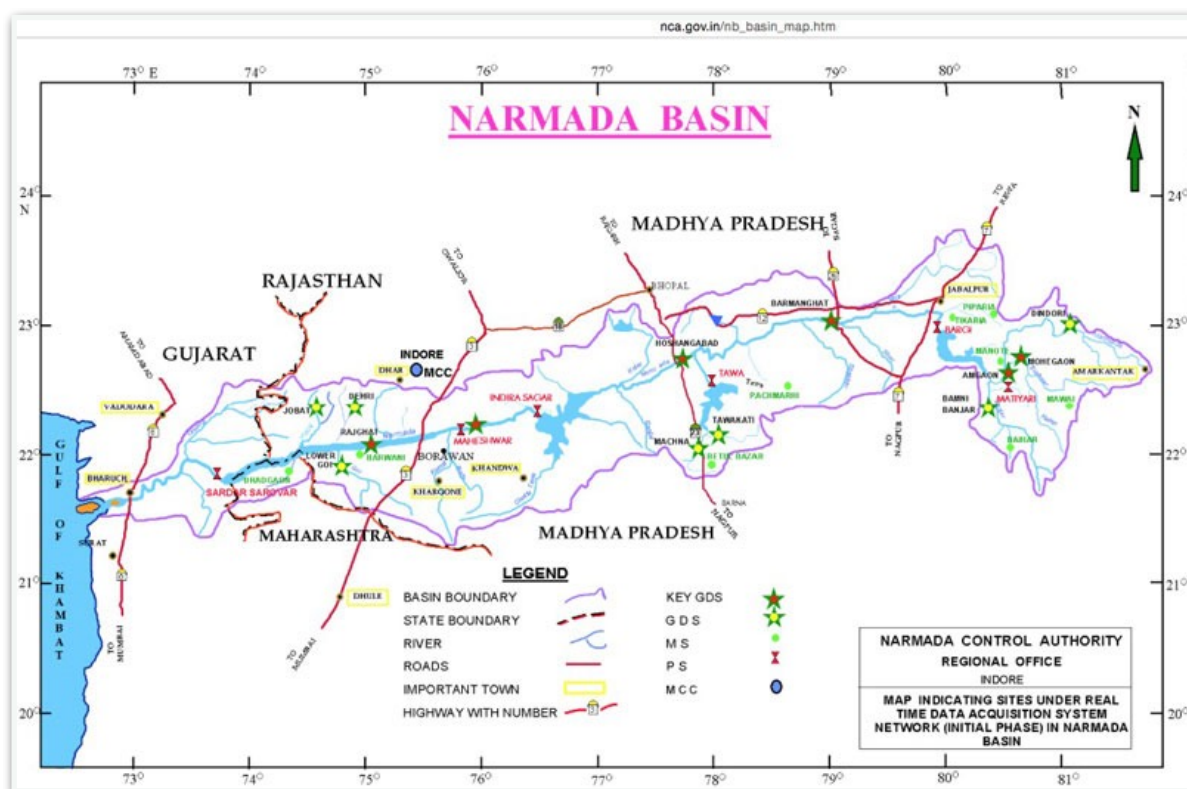
"Madia are a Gondi tribe, of Dravidian race, descended from the Abhujmad hills to the plains of Gadchiroli, originally hunter-gatherers and now doing crude rice-farming. They are indigenous people, predominantly oral, largely monolingual, with minimal culture contacts." – Samiksha Godse-Amte in "Nurturing one's own tongue" (The Hindu, 3 April 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/nurturing-ones-own-tongue/article4575333.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16208>

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- **Narmada**



Online map © Narmada Control Authority

States along the Narmada river's course (source to Arabian Sea):

Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra & Gujarat >>

"The Narmada and its 30 big dams, the Sardar Sarovar in particular, have for long been a matter of prestige for the government [even though] increasing the height will affect villages in Madhya Pradesh more than the other States." – Lyla Bavadam in "Height of controversy" (*Frontline Magazine*, 19 September 2014)

<https://www.frontline.in/the-nation/height-of-controversy/article6364780.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

"Study at Narmada Basin is important because of its geographical location which is very strategic for migration of animal population from North to South and East to West. It is not only rich in fossils and archaeological sites, but it has a long history of human occupation and this region is facing submergence due to dam construction" – Parth Chauhan (Co-director, Stone Age Institute, Narmada Basin Paleoanthropology Project NBPA) on efforts to collect all the paleoanthropological evidence within the last two million years; quoted in "Was Narmada valley the centre of human evolution?" (*Times of India*, 14 August 2012)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vadodara/Was-Narmada-valley-the-centre-of-human-evolution/articleshow/15485975.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22575>

"The mute nature and powerless inhabitants of the Valley never were among the parties [...] while 150 000 people are recognised as 'the oustees', not less than another 200 000 to be affected by canals, infrastructure or sanctuary and afforestation." – Acceptance speech by Medha Patkar and Baba Amte (Narmada Bachao Andolan), Laureates of the 1991 *Right Livelihood Award* ("a courage-powered community for social change committed to peace, justice and sustainability for all")

<https://rightlivelihood.org/speech/acceptance-speech-medha-patkar-and-baba-amte-narmada-bachao-andolan/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

"Baba [Amte] moved out of his ashram to violence-hit Punjab, the dam-hit Narmada valley and to communal riots-affected bastis in Mumbai. [...] We in India are often guilty of eulogizing people, but it can be said without doubt that Baba exemplified the humanitarian politics of Gandhiji." – Medha Padkar in "The inspiring gardener" (DownToEarth, 15 March 2008)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/baba-amte-the-inspiring-gardener-4264>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21404>

"[T]heir opposition to the dam was futile and [the Bhils in the Narmada region] must have known that, like thousands of other tribals displaced in the name of 'development', they might soon have to flee their homes once the dam came up [...] sunk deep in the swirling waters of the Narmada, its denizens being reduced to manual labourers in some dusty, nondescript Indian town." – Yoginder Sikand in "Simple ways of life" (Deccan Herald, 23 December 2012)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/300193/simple-ways-life.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

"The social characteristics of those displaced by the Sardar Sarovar Dam are not unique, either to India or to the rest of the world. Of the 200,000 to 250,000 who have been displaced by the Sardar Sarovar Dam, 60–70 per cent, are the Scheduled Tribe populations, i.e., those defined by the Indian Constitution to live primarily by pastoralism, subsistence-oriented slash and burn agriculture, and/or hunting and gathering. [...] Those displaced, who are the Scheduled Tribes, belong to the Bhil, Bhilala, Pavra, Tadvi, and Vassawa ethnic groups and are located at the boundaries between the three states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Their rates of education and literacy are low by the all-India standards." – Judy Whitehead (University of Lethbridge) in "Development and Dispossession in the Narmada Valley" (Pearson, New Delhi 2010), pp. 6-7

<https://www.academia.edu/442943/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1713>



"[O]ver the last three decades, successive governments in the state have pushed the Narmada dam as a lifeline for the drought-prone areas of Kachchh, Saurashtra and North Gujarat. In practice, however, these regions are given the lowest priority. They receive only the residual water after the requirements of urban areas, industries, and farmers in central Gujarat are met. [...] The programmes of well-charging and check dams adopted in the past must be revived." – Namita Waikar quoting Himanshu Thakkar of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (2018 report titled "Gujarat's water crisis rooted in years of misplaced priorities") in "Counting sheep as grasslands shrink in Gujarat"

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/articles/counting-sheep-as-grasslands-shrink-in-gujarat/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22575>

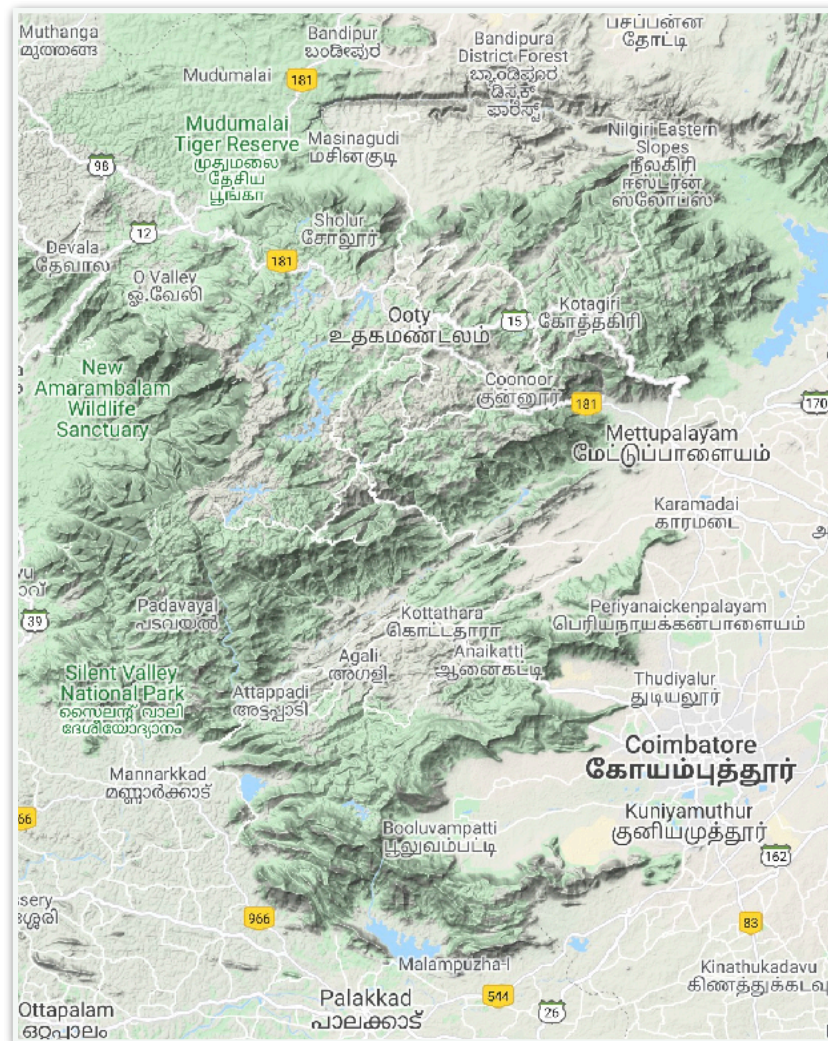
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Web images: Baba Amte and the Narmada river  
Find items in libraries near you on [worldcat.org](http://worldcat.org) >>

- **Nilgiri Biosphere**



(access [this interactive map online](#))

"Despite the restitution of community rights under the Forest Rights Act of 2006, the Adivasis are not able to supplement their diet with resources gathered from the forest as they did before." – Priti David in "In the Nilgiris, an inheritance of malnutrition" (*People's Archive of Rural India*, 1 May 2020)

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/in-the-nilgiris-an-inheritance-of-malnutrition/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30029>

"In the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve non-timber forest products (NTFPs) have helped to sustain the lives and cultures of indigenous communities for centuries. The Reserve hosts several tribes such as the Todas, the Paniyas, the Irulas, the Kurumbas, the Kuruchiyans, the Mullukurumbas, the Adiyans and the Alyars [Alar]. The Chola Naikans in the New Amarambalam area are the only surviving hunter- gatherers in the Indian subcontinent. One of the most popular NTFPs among these indigenous groups is honey, which is gathered from the wild and has been a major source of income for more than 500 groups of Kurumbas, Irulas, and other tribes. Overextraction of a marketable forest product can result in depletion of the resource

and ecosystem deterioration." – Julian Gonsalves (Main author) in "Rich Forests: Making a living under the canopy" (*Both ENDS Amsterdam*, 2015), p. 51

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20362>

"The Toda tribals have their own language, which does not have a script. Over the last century, their numbers have been dwindling. The sharp decline in their population is largely related to the decline in agriculture land, much of which has been lost of afforestation. With their dwindling numbers, their art, craft and traditions are facing a slow death. If not preserved, the day is not far when their unique embroidery, for instance, is lost forever. The Todas are an extremely closed community, barely connected to the rest of the world and, thus, deprived of the opportunities connectivity offers." – Osama Manzar in "Preserving our vanishing tribes, their heritage, language and wisdom" (Livemint, 8 September 2017)

<https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/AhrviHfdlAluJ6ffBBpUQN/Preserving-our-vanishing-tribes-their-heritage-language-an.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3203>

"It is a matter of grave concern that 18 human deaths were reported in a year [2017] in the Nilgiris due to man-animal conflict. The situation should be thoroughly analysed. Most of the tribal communities live inside forest areas. But they don't seem to fall prey to animals as they know how to live in harmony in the wild. It is the people who live in the fringe areas who fall prey due to lack of awareness." –

Commentary "Land use pattern need to be changed to resolve man-animal conflicts" (Times of India, 5 March 2017)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/coimbatore/land-use-pattern-need-to-be-changed-to-resolve-man-animal-conflicts/articleshow/57471535.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22634>

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- **Northern region – Northern Zonal Council**

"Northern Zonal Council, comprising the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi, Union Territory of Chandigarh, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh" – Government of India in "Zonal Councils - Genesis" (accessed 3 April 2021)

<http://interstatecouncil.nic.in/genesis/>

Zonal Cultural Centres

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13904>

"The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1956 [...] 'to develop the habit of cooperative working' among these States." – Government of India in "Zonal Councils" (accessed 3 April 2021)

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710\\_0.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710_0.pdf)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=20801](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=20801)

"Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state of the country but has a small tribal population [namely] five major Scheduled Tribes and about 18 other tribal groups." – Mohammad Awais in "An analytical study of socio-economic conditions of tribal farmers in Bijnor district of U.P. State" (PhD thesis, 2013)

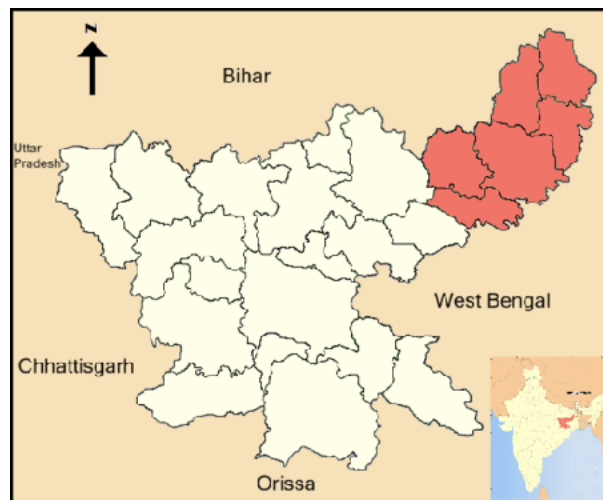
<https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/jspui/handle/10603/11218>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=44003>

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- **Santal Parganas**



"Santal Pargana division" © Wikipedia  
(access [other interactive maps](#) online)

"A separate district was created by Act XXXVII of 1855 and it was given the name of Santhal Pargana, perhaps to appease the Santhals. Steps were taken to redress the grievances of the Santhals and to give them a homeland with a sense of security. Later on Santhal Pargans Tenancy Act 1949 was enacted after independence for the safety and special identity of this area. [...] Santhal Pargana has the distinction of having the largest number of Sub-Divisions in old Bihar. They are Dumka Sadar, Deoghar, Jamtara, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal. After independence in the year 1981 Santhal Pargana divided into the four districts i.e. Dumka, Deoghar, Godda and Sahibganj. Pakur being attached with Sahibganj as a Sub-Division was upgraded as district in the year 1994." – History of District Pakur (Government of Jharkhand, Last Updated: 9 July 2022)

<https://s3df877f3865752637daa540ea9cbc474f.s3waas.gov.in/about-district/history/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5076>

"The cultural mosaic of Jharkhand was dreamt about, shaped and polished by generations of communities, which have inhabited this land since time immemorial. From the legendary Asurs and Santhals, to the Banjara, Bihor, Chero, Gond, Ho, Khond, Lohra, Mai Pahariya, Munda, Oraon, Kol or Kavar-over thirty-two tribal groups (28 % of the total population of the state), have left their impression on the culture of the region." – Department of Tourism, Jharkhand

<https://jharkhandtourism.gov.in>

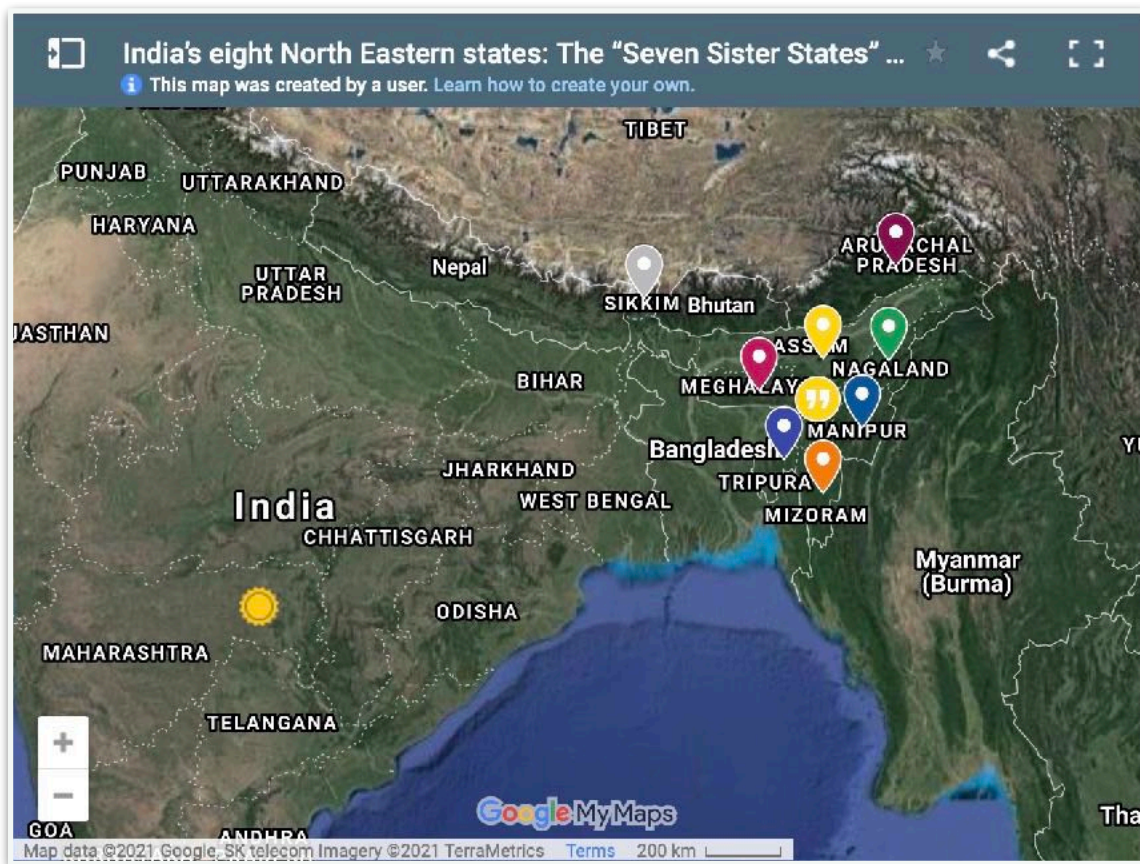
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23907>

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- **Seven Sister States & Sikkim – North Eastern Council**



(access [this interactive map online](#))

Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura are commonly referred to as India's (eight) "North Eastern States" or "Northeast India"; they are popularly known as the "Seven Sister States" (i.e. without Sikkim).

Please note: The Inter-State Council Secretariat is headed by a Secretary to the Government of India; today, neither the "North Eastern Council" nor any of the above "North Eastern States" are mentioned on its official website under "Zonal Councils - Composition" & "Zonal Councils - Genesis" "last updated on 04/08/2016" (accessed 4 May 2021)

<http://interstatecouncil.nic.in/composition-2/>

<http://interstatecouncil.nic.in/genesis/>

Zonal Cultural Centres

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13904>



"The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1956 [...] 'to develop the habit of cooperative working' among these States. [...] The North Eastern States i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya (vii) Nagaland and (viii) Sikkim are part of North Eastern Council, set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972." – Government of India in "Zonal Councils" (accessed 3 April 2021)

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710\\_0.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710_0.pdf)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=20801](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=20801)

"The uniqueness of northeast states of India lies in their cultures. Each state stands out in terms of its practices." – Arka Roy Chowdhury (Times Travel, 18 June 2018)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/destinations/northeast-tourism-reasons-why-you-should-definitely-visit-the-seven-sister-states/as64634582.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25942>

"There is undoubtedly ample evidence to lay claim upon the fact that the North East Indian region has never been an isolated backwater even during prehistoric times. To perceive life, culture and politics of the region in terms of just Euro-centric dogmas would simply be facile." – Dhriyoti Kalita reviewing *Prehistory and Archaeology of Northeast India* by Manjil Hazarika (Scroll.in, 3 March 2019)

<https://scroll.in/article/915071/this-essential-book-on-the-prehistory-of-no>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=45657>

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- **Southern region – Southern Zonal Council**

"Southern Zonal Council, comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and the Union Territory of Puducherry" – Government of India in "Zonal Councils - Genesis" (accessed 3 April 2021)

<http://interstatecouncil.nic.in/genesis/>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=20801](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=20801)

Zonal Cultural Centres

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13904>

"The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1956 [...] 'to develop the habit of cooperative working' among these States." – Government of India in "Zonal Councils" (accessed 3 April 2021)

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710\\_0.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710_0.pdf)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=20801](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=20801)

"Megaliths are spread across the Indian subcontinent, though the bulk of them are found in peninsular India, concentrated in the states of Maharashtra (mainly in Vidarbha), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana." – Rajat Ubhaykar in "Exploring India's megalithic culture, a riddle set in stone" (Livemint, 3 July 2016)

<https://www.livemint.com/Sundayapp/ah8MIN3mwHQjlpmbZBhcXJ/Exploring-Indias-megalithic-culture-a-riddle-set-in-stone.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=38630>

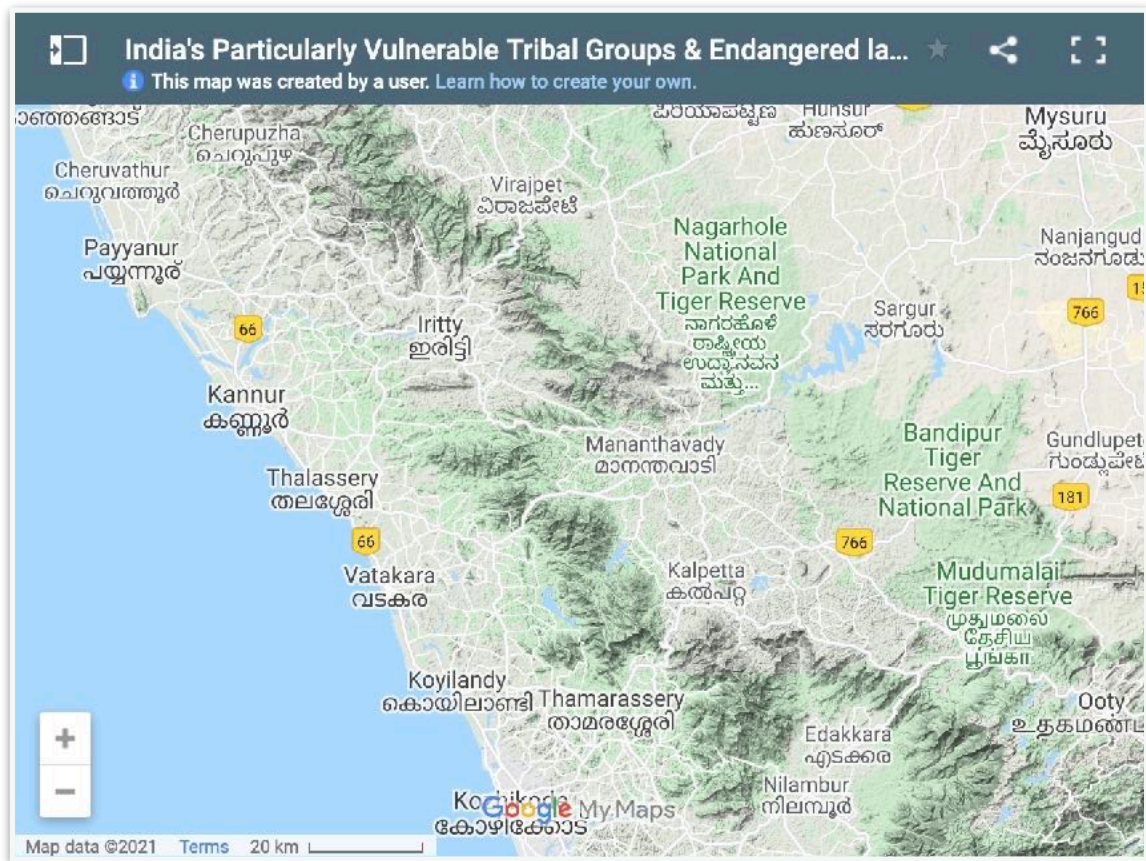
"Tamil Nadu has 7.21 [721000] lakh tribal populations as per 2011 census which constitutes 1.10% of the total population. There are 36 tribes and sub tribes in Tamil Nadu. Literacy rate of the population is 27.9%. Most of the tribals in Tamil Nadu are cultivators, agriculture labourers or dependent on forests for their livelihood. There are six primitive tribes in Tamil Nadu." – "Tribal Development" (Government of Tamil Nadu Forest Department, 29 May 2018)

[https://www.forests.tn.gov.in/pages/view/Tribal\\_Development\\_on-going](https://www.forests.tn.gov.in/pages/view/Tribal_Development_on-going)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10767>

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- **Wayanad**



(access [this interactive map online](#))

"Tribals in Kerala are living on the hill ranges, mainly on the Western Ghat, bordering Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. [...] Wayanad has the highest number." – "Tribals in Kerala" KIRTADS (Kerala institute for Research Training & Development studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes)

<https://kirtads.kerala.gov.in/tribals-in-kerala/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20362>

"Wayanad is quite rich in species that are important for food security, which, over the years, have fallen into disuse due to a multitude of reasons. Wayanad is also well-known for a high degree of endemism and species richness of the flora which is also at great stress. The landscape of Wayanad is an interspersing of valleys and hills with forests, coffee and tea plantations, paddy fields, vegetables and other crops." – "Biodiversity-Wayanad", MSSRF (M S Swaminathan Research Foundation)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15198>

"Unscrupulous, aggressive utilisation of resources for mass-production of a few staples and monocropping has led to long-term impact on the environment and farmers." – Shakeela V (Director, M S Swaminathan Research Foundation MSSRF Community Agrobiodiversity Centre, Wayanad, quoted in "Kerala's attempt to revive traditional farm practices puts tribal women at the forefront" by Mahima Jain (Scroll.in, 19 April 2020)

<https://scroll.in/article/959378/keralas-attempt-to-revive-traditional-farm-practices-puts-tribal-women-at-the-forefront>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20778>

"Set in Wayanad, in South India, [award-winning documentary film] 'Have you seen the arana?' is a journey through a rich and bio-diverse region that is witnessing drastic transformation in the name of 'development'." – Sunanda Bhat (Songline Films)

[www.songlinefilms.com](http://www.songlinefilms.com)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12941>

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Wayand tribal elder explaining the purpose of local craft items and demonstrating his archery technique

More about [indigenous archery](#), [crafts](#) and [games](#) >>

Photos by courtesy © Arun V.C.



- **Western Ghats – Tribal heritage and ecology**

A mountainous region biologists describe as "one of only nine hottest hotspots" in the world while seeking support for listing it as Unesco World Heritage Site. – Raviprasad Kamila in "Support Unesco tag to save Western Ghats (The Hindu, 11 August 2012)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Mangalore/article3753612.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7495>

"The Kaani indigenous people live in the South Western Ghats, which is a global Eco-region and are a rich repository of eco-knowledge. [...] Researchers are exploring not just the parallels, but the links between the world's biodiversity and linguistic, cultural diversity, as well as the causes and consequences of diversity loss at all levels. This connection is significant in itself, because it suggests that the diversity of life is made up of diversity in nature, culture, and language." – Sargunam Davidson in "The indigenous Kaani dialect needs documentation" (by email, 23 January 2018)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24271>

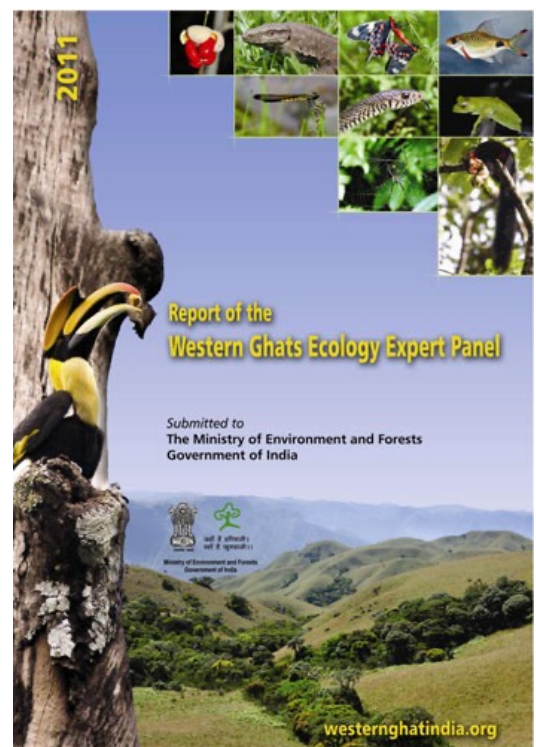
"The land is rich with organic top soil with all kinds of nutrients. As the forests form the tail-end of the Western Ghats, it receives both the Monsoons, South West and North East." – Sargunam Davidson (by email, 10 June 2019)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29223>

"Once, I was walking with this young tribal girl through the forest and we stumbled upon a tuber. She plucked it, cut the eye of the tuber and buried it in the mud before taking it to be cooked. I asked her why she did so and she replied 'If I don't put it back, how will it grow again?' and that moment made me realise how sensitive tribals are towards environment and nature. For them, putting back what they take is inherent in their culture and lifestyle." – "Writer Mari Marcel Thekaekara says the tribal communities are a standing example of how women play a major role in preservation of eco historic cultural heritage in India" (The Hindu, 27 January 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/A-messenger-from-the-mountains/article17102329.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22373>



Report of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel >>

"UNESCO adds India's Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve [resting half in Kerala and half in Tamil Nadu along the Western Ghats] to its list of perfect biospheres: Tribal settlements within the reserve rely on the forests and its 14 rivers for their livelihood. Kanikkarans, the area's indigenous tribe, rely on agriculture, fishing and hunting. They live in huts made of bamboo and are known for medicinal healing through plants. However, while most of them have moved out of forests, there is still a small population that lives around the Agasthyamala region. To promote sustainability, several programs have been setup to reduce the 3000-strong tribal population from using up all the resources, according to the UNESCO. Some of them also take up employment with the government as guides for tourists coming to the sanctuaries." – Neeti Vijaykumar in "Agasthyamala Part of UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve Network" (*The Better India*, 21 March 2016)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/49714/agasthyamala-unesco-biosphere-reserve-network/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20921>

"Recently, there were discussions on whether the loss of tradition and culture is irreversible. [...] Unanimously and very vehemently, the children declared that 'the adivasi way of life is better'. Their reasons: we try to find work close to our houses and villages, but non-advasis go far away for jobs and money. The poor things have to leave their families and villages." – Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD-Nilgiris) in "Glad to be adivasi!" (*New Internationalist*, 13 June 2014)

<https://newint.org/blog/2014/06/13/adivasi-indigenous-culture/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15283>

"Earlier the Halakkis resided at the foothills of the Western Ghats and were known to practice a system of agriculture similar to that of the Thodas of the Nilgiris. They also depended on forest produce and were known to hunt. When a ban was imposed on hunting and their traditional system of agriculture they began migrating to the flatlands, seashores and riversides. At present agriculture is still the predominant occupation. [...] Despite their contact with the mainstream world both in terms of people and access to television and other media, I saw Halakki women more often than not in traditional attires." – Vicky Lakshmanan in "The Halakki people of Uttara Kannada district"

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14801>

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- **Western region – Western Zonal Council**

"Western Zonal Council, comprising the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu" – Government of India in "Zonal Councils - Genesis" (accessed 3 April 2021)

<http://interstatecouncil.nic.in/genesis/>

Zonal Cultural Centres

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13904>

"[With a tribal population of 10.5 million or 9.35 percent of the total population according to the Census of 2011, Maharashtra] has the second largest tribal population in the country, next only to Madhya Pradesh, with 10 percent of the total ST population of India. Numerically, Maharashtra state has the largest number of tribal population in the country." – Foreword to "Tribal Sub-Plan in Maharashtra: A Diagnostic Study" (TATA Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai supported by Unicef Maharashtra, December 2015)

<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3c8758b517083196f05ac29810b924aca/uploads/2019/11/2019112971.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31354>

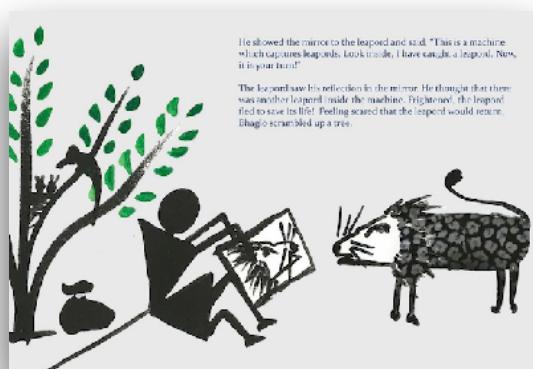
"The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1956 [...] 'to develop the habit of cooperative working' among these States." – Government of India in "Zonal Councils" (accessed 3 April 2021)

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710\\_0.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ZCS-CitiCharter-130710_0.pdf)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=20801](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=20801)

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Goth: Adivasi Stories from Gujarat | [Free eBook >>](#)  
Art © Bhasha Research (Vadodara)

## Nature and wildlife

"We – forest-dependent communities, supported by others – declare: The natural forests are a nurturing mother to us. Our very identities, cultures and world-views are closely linked to the forests that provide our primary needs. [...] Our cultures discourage greed, the root of scarcity, harm and sorrow." – An appeal for a new consciousness of empathy and wise governance to protect our rich natural heritage, culture, and harmonious collective future by Kavitha ("Forest Foods & Ecology" Festival, December 12 to 14, 2014 at Sri Aurobindo Society, New Delhi)

[www.kisanswaraj.in/2014/12/31/forest-foods-and-ecology/](http://www.kisanswaraj.in/2014/12/31/forest-foods-and-ecology/)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16371>



"We can do things differently to reinvent growth without pollution. But only if we have the courage to think differently." – Sunita Narain in [Down To Earth](#) >>

"There is a need to explore the tribal consciousness in the backdrop of climate change, development, and deforestation." – Deepanwita Gita Niyogi in "India's Adivasi Identity in Crisis" (Pulitzer Center May 27, 2021)

<https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/indias-ativasi-identity-crisis>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17554>

"The increasing politicisation and commercialisation of the rural areas, the breakdown of traditions, and demands made by the growing human and livestock populations have all contributed to the present situation. The net result: wildlife, wildlife habitats, and the resource base of rural and tribal communities continue to be destroyed." – Pankaj Sekhsaria and Ashish Kothari in "For a natural balance" (*Frontline Magazine*, 27 May 2000)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1719>

"Indigenous languages are connected to nature. With the ability, for instance, to recognise over a thousand plants and know the medicinal uses of each one, the level of nature knowledge is far beyond what most major world languages have." – Lexicographer David Harrison interviewed by Srijana Mitra Das in "Indigenous languages have wisdom that can save us from climate crisis" (Times of India, 23 January 2021)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/indigenous-languages-have-wisdom-that-can-save-us-from-climate-crisis/articleshow/80411082.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46777>

"First and foremost, people, particularly indigenous or tribal groups that number in millions live inside or at the periphery of protected areas, and rely on biodiversity for sustaining their livelihoods. Such people have been largely disenfranchised and have no role in management. In fact, in many cases, centralised management of biodiversity has created conflicts between people and managers of protected areas. These conflicts have endangered rather than enhanced conservation." – Kamaljit S. Bawa (President of the Bangalore-based Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment) in "Our biodiversity, our life, our future" (The Hindu, 2 August 2010)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/article547960.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5026>

"Irrespective of differences in lifestyle, all tribals possess an unconditional love for nature." – Tribal scholar writer K. Vasamalli on the occasion of a two-day meet organised by Sahitya Akademi in association with Jharkhandi Bhasha Sahitya Sanskriti Akhara to commemorate the birth centenary of Alice Ekka, the country's first acclaimed woman tribal writer (The Telegraph, Jharkhand, 8 September 2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22856>

"Historically, India's environmental movement has revolved around wildlife conservation — tigers, leopards, elephants — yet there was little inclusion of sustainability in our models of development. [...] We'll teach about edible landscaping, butterfly gardens, sensory gardens, vertical landscapes, and urban bee keeping. We'll need these concepts as the population rises and the land area shrinks. " – Rashneh Pardiwala in "Why It's Hard to 'Change Mindsets' on Environmental Protection Among India's Elites"; interview on environmental education at her Centre for Environmental Research and Education (CERE) in Mumbai (Asia Blog, 27 July 2015)

<https://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/interview-why-its-hard-change-mindsets-environmental-protection-among-indias-elites>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

"For centuries tribals have lived peacefully with nature. In this period of ecological catastrophes like climate change, the tribal way of life shows the alternatives we need to promote peace, sustainability and justice. Precisely at the time when we need to learn from tribals, to defend the future of our civilisation, and humanity the future of the tribals is itself under threat." – Declaration on Adivasi Swaraj by Navdanya (a network of seed keepers and organic producers across 16 states in India)

<https://navdanya.org/index.php?>

[option=com\\_content&view=article&id=79:declaration-on-adivasi-swaraj&catid=12:earth-democracy](https://navdanya.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=79:declaration-on-adivasi-swaraj&catid=12:earth-democracy)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6068>

"The hermitage [asrama] is set so deep in the forest that it is almost another world, enveloped in a translucent green of sun and trees. [...] The asrama is at one level an intrusion into the forest by the people of the grama [village], an intrusion sought to be stemmed by those living in the forest. [...] Was the threat to forest dwellers a way of preventing the illegal clearing of forests and of curbing shifting cultivation?" – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) in "Perceiving the Forest: Early India Studies" (History, February 2001)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/025764300101700101>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5851>

"India has arguably had the technology to wipe out most animals for centuries, but more that half of the world tigers and two-thirds of the worlds Asian Elephants continue to live alongside people, themselves packed in at about 450 in every square kilometre. Should the Indian conservation ethos build on this long religious and cultural 'tolerance' to wildlife or should we completely ignore it and copy everyone else in the world?" – Tarsh Thekaekara (Director, Shola Trust) in "The Human Elephant (Wildlife) Relationship" (May 2014)

[www.thesholatrust.org/elephants/](http://www.thesholatrust.org/elephants/)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22634>

"There are two species of crocodiles, the smaller and more common, generally six or seven feet in length, and not ordinarily dangerous to human life; the larger reaching the length of eighteen or twenty feet. The latter are more dangerous; still, one does not often hear of lives being lost by them in this part of India". – Achuthsankar S. Nair in "Guardian angels of the river" (The Hindu, 12 October 2012)

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-metroplus/guardian-angels-of-the-river/article3989657.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14167>

"The Centrally Sponsored Umbrella Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats [...] would result in resource generation through tourist visits, thereby fostering in securing tiger source areas and other areas important for wildlife conservation, besides being helpful in sustaining life support systems as well as ensuring the food, water and livelihood security. The implementation of the schemes would be done through the respective States in designated Tiger Reserves, Protected Areas and Elephant Reserves." – Government of India's Umbrella Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats beyond 12th Plan (Press Information Bureau, 5 September 2018)

<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1545068>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4226>

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- **Bees and honey**

"Without [bees] there would be no pollination. Without them there would be no future food. And the small farmers are the primary source of food." –

Video message by Vandana Shiva in support of The "Save Bees and Farmers!" European Citizens' Initiative (28 February 2020)

[https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/w/files/videos/200219-vandana-supports-the-eci\\_smaller.mp4](https://www.savebeesandfarmers.eu/w/files/videos/200219-vandana-supports-the-eci_smaller.mp4)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12161>



The Jennu Habba (Honey Festival): Sharing a tradition with children >>

"Living in the Nilgiris, the Kattunayakans are one of the last few remaining honey gathering communities of the world. Over many generations they have mastered the skills required to tap honey and they take great pride in their knowledge and expertise. For the tribal community, honey gathering is of social, cultural, economic and spiritual relevance. [...] With their lives in the forest being steadily pulled away from under their feet, communities like the Kattunayakans are losing their sense of culture and meaning. Without the ritual of tapping honey, a rich history of song and dance associated with the practice will have no place in their lives." – Priyashri Mani in "Home is where the forest is...." (At the Edge of Existence, 29 August 2013)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12436>

"[D]eforestation and landscape change [have] negatively impacted communities [and resulted in] unavailability of gum karaya *Sterculia urens*, kunkudukaaya *Sapindus emarginatus*, and honey as the larger gum and nut yielding and beehive preferred trees like *Adina cordifolia* and *Dalbergia sissoo* have been cut down." – Vikram Aditya in "Displaced from the hills: Livelihoods of tribal communities in Eastern Ghats under threat" (*Down to Earth*, 24 February 2021)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/forests/displaced-from-the-hills-livelihoods-of-tribal-communities-in-eastern-ghats-under-threat-75657>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29829>

"Constructing these bamboo-ladders [used to extract honey from beehives] is an architecture itself. Building them is a secret. It is done only at night. Non-community people will not be allowed to be present when tribals build them. These ladders can be sometimes 200 feet tall." – K.T. Gandhirajan quoted by T.S. Subramanian in "Ancient rock art dating back to 1500 B.C. found in Tamil Nadu" (The Hindu, 28 September 2016)

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/Ancient-rock-art-dating-back-to-1500-B.C.-found-in-Tamil-Nadu/article14769223.ece>

- **Biodiversity**

"While collecting tubers, we take only what we need and we will cover the rest with mud again. Usually the main root is not taken because we need it for next year." – Wildlife conservationist Ramesh in "Bomman thatha and his forest", a conversation with his grandfather on "bonding between adivasi people and the forest" (At the Edge of Existence, 29 October 2014)

<https://cultureandconservation.wordpress.com/2014/10/29/bomman-thatha-and-his-forest/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=8262>

What is the Biodiversity Act? "An Act [law] to provide for conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the use of biological resources, knowledge and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." – The National Biodiversity Authority in "The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Biological Diversity Rules, 2004" (promulgated by the Government of India, 5 February 2003)

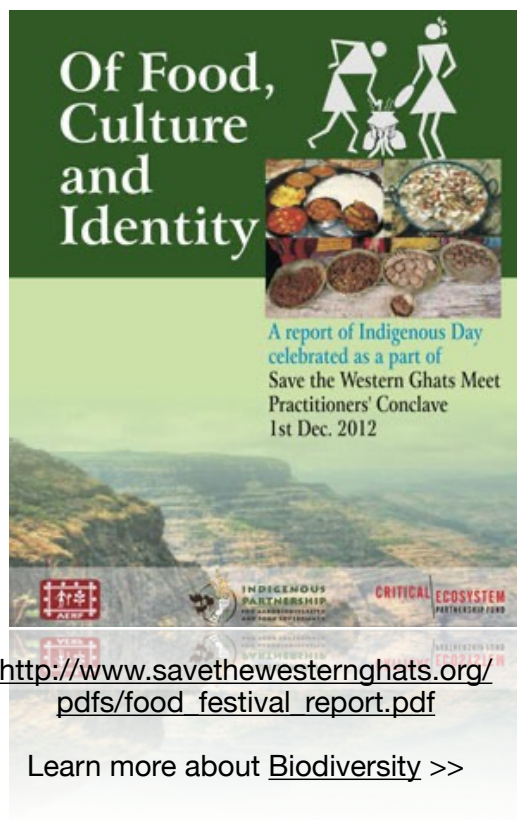
[http://nbaindia.org/uploaded/act/BDACT\\_ENG.pdf](http://nbaindia.org/uploaded/act/BDACT_ENG.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

"The community, when consenting to the access [i.e. knowledge of tribal healers], can charge fees for access to the register and collection of biological resources. Decisions on how to disburse the funds are to be made through village community meetings. There is concern about the Biodiversity Registers in case the process has the effect of placing knowledge hitherto regarded as secret by communities in the public domain, and that once this is done it would open the way for corporate and research interests to freely access and use the local knowledge about the biodiversity resources." – Kerala Forest Department in "Medicinal Plants", 8 January 2010

<http://old.forest.kerala.gov.in>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18372>





"Biodiversity is under threat from a range of sources [...] The question now is whether India is going to honestly identify what this underlying driver is and make a serious effort to balance the development versus nature battle." – Tarsh Thekaekara (Director, Shola Trust) in "Red marks in India's green report card" (The Hindu, 17 October 2012)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/Red-marks-in-India's-green-report-card/article12560107.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7891>

"Into the 90s, the Andamans, one of the most biodiverse parts of India – with rich, ancient rainforests – saw lots of logging. In the guise of extending 'development' to the tribes, the infamous Andaman Trunk Road was built as well, cutting through the forests where the Jarawas lived." – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"[D]eforestation and landscape change [have led to] unavailability of gum karaya *Sterculia urens*, kunkudukaaya *Sapindus emarginatus*, and honey as the larger gum and nut yielding and beehive preferred trees like *Adina cordifolia* and *Dalbergia sissoo* have been cut down." – Vikram Aditya in "Displaced from the hills: Livelihoods of tribal communities in Eastern Ghats under threat" (*Down to Earth*, 24 February 2021)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/forests/displaced-from-the-hills-livelihoods-of-tribal-communities-in-eastern-ghats-under-threat-75657>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5629>

"Cultivating and conserving diversity is no luxury in our times: it is a survival imperative." – Physicist Vandana Shiva (co-founder of Navdanya and the Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Natural Resource Policy (RFSTN))

<https://www.rightlivelivelihoodaward.org/laureates/vandana-shiva/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6068>

"Indigenous economics is one of the keys to climate action." – Equator Initiative of the United Nations which recognizes outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity Global Programme on Nature for Development

<https://www.equatorinitiative.org/equator-prize/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46483>

"The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) is set to tell the National Green Tribunal that it created 243,499 biodiversity management committees (BMC) and 95,525 people's biodiversity registers (PBR) as of January 2020, a source said. The green bench is hearing a case on the full implementation of the Biodiversity Act, 2002. BMCs are created for "promoting conservation, sustainable use and documentation of biological diversity" by local bodies across the country, according to the NBA." – Ishan Kukreti in "Most biodiversity panels now in place, National Biodiversity Authority to tell NGT" (*Down to Earth*, 18 February 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/india/most-biodiversity-panels-now-in-place-national-biodiversity-authority-to-tell-ngt-69334>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

"Sharing stories that make use of overlaps with indigenous beliefs may, therefore, be a valuable approach in conservation education and wider conservation communication. Sacred natural sites occur in protected areas throughout the world and are not confined to one faith, culture or levels of economic development." – Nazir A. Pala, Ajeet K. Neg and N.P. Todaria in "The Religious, Social and Cultural Significance of Forest Landscapes in Uttarakhand Himalaya, India" (*International Journal of Conservation Science*, Vol. 5, Issue 2, April-June 2014)

<https://www.academia.edu/32265911>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24271>

"Our task is to retain urban biodiversity and augment it." – Rashneeh Pardiwala in "Why It's Hard to 'Change Mindsets' on Environmental Protection Among India's Elites"; interview on environmental education at her Centre for Environmental Research and Education (CERE) in Mumbai (Asia Blog, 27 July 2015)

<https://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/interview-why-its-hard-change-mindsets-environmental-protection-among-indias-elites>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

"We need that biodiversity to survive." – Julia Watson, architect and assistant professor at Columbia University, whose work revolves around nature-based technologies of indigenous knowledge in "The ingenious living bridges of India" by Zinara Rathnayake (BBC, 18th November 2021)

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20211117-how-indias-living-bridges-could-transform-architecture>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18841>

"Today, some scientists estimate that we are living in a '10 percent world' — a world reduced to just 10 percent of its past abundance of nonhuman life. And a recent paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences estimates that just four percent of the planet's biomass is now made up of wild animals — Humans account for 36 percent and their livestock for an additional 60 percent." – Alexandra Kleeman in "Bolder Reimagining" (55 Voices for Democracy: "Bolder Reimagining" by Alexandra Kleeman, 31 December 2021)

<https://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/55-voices/55-voices-democracy-bolder-reimagining-alexandra-kleeman/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23900>

"Living infrastructure can support incredible biodiversity and species, not just humans." – Julia Watson, architect and assistant professor at Columbia University, whose work revolves around nature-based technologies of indigenous knowledge in "The ingenious living bridges of India" by Zinara Rathnayake (BBC, 18th November 2021)

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20211117-how-indias-living-bridges-could-transform-architecture>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18841>

"In general, the sustainability, productivity, resilience and stability of socio-ecological ecosystems usually found in indigenous and rural communities are dependent on the cultural values exhibited by its indigenous peoples. [...] The [formerly semi-nomadic hill tribe known as the 'Kaani'] are an ethnic group with their own unique social institutions and organizations with self-rule, who prioritised harmonious relationships with their ecology through cultural and religious observations and beliefs." – Danesto B. Anacio & Davidson Sargunam in a UNESCO report, "Knowing our Lands and Resources: Indigenous and Local Knowledge and Practices related to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Asia" (*Knowledges of Nature* 10.: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Paris 2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24265>

"In Search of Biohappiness deals with methods of converting agro-biodiversity hotspots into happy spots. This involves concurrent attention to conservation, and sustainable and equitable use. [...] Concrete examples of how local tribal families have taken to the establishment of gene, seed, grain and water banks in villages – thus linking conservation, cultivation, consumption and commerce in a mutually-reinforcing manner – are provided in this book." – Summary for In search of biohappiness: biodiversity and food, health and livelihood security by M.S. Swaminathan (World Scientific, 2015)

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/910845554>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

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*Kansari katha* story telling about human ancestors, heroes, and the origin of the earth in [South Gujarat](#) >>

Story telling by Jeevalbhai Pandubhai Chaudhari in honour of [Kansari](#) the goddess of food accompanying himself on the *ghangali*

Screenshots © Video documentary by [Bhasha Research and Publication Centre Tejgadh](#) >>

- **Ecology and environment**

"In Central India, individual plant species figure in the first fruit ceremonies of the adivasi (indigenous) communities. During certain periods of the year, their fruits, flowers, leaves or seeds are not collected or consumed. This allows those species to rest for a few weeks or months during crucial periods for their growth or regeneration. The norms around these practices or methods are often embedded within the cultural-religious traditions of communities. As a knowledge system being transferred between generations, seldom are they explained or discussed in terms of ecology or conservation." – Madhu Ramnath in "How culture threatens species A note on *Caryota urens* in South India" (*Current Conservation* 16.3, accessed 4 December 2022)

<https://www.currentconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/16.3.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20305>

"As we are looking for ways of sustainable development, these [tribal] groups can teach us lessons in sustainable development." – M. Venkaiah Naidu (Vice President of India) in the First Foundation Day Lecture of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) titled "Constitution and Tribes" (Press Information Bureau, 19 February 2019)

<https://ncst.nic.in/sites/default/files/2019/Media/2.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=36256>

"The understanding of the adivasis about ecology, its protection and importance in their daily life is amazing. What is learnt by us either by way of academic curriculum or choice, is innate in them. [...] They only take what is necessary for their sustenance." - Nandan Saxena (co-director of National Award-winning documentary "I Cannot Give You My Forest") quoted by S. Ravi (The Hindu, April 24, 2015)

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/on-national-award-winning-documentary-i-cannot-give-you-my-forest/article7137681.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17768>

"While the traditional ways of harvesting among tribal people have been sustainable by default, market demand has made them veer away from the tradition and adopt unsustainable practices. The APPCL [Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company] intervened here and encouraged farmers to go back to traditional ways and convinced them that it was possible to market their products better and earn enough without compromising their traditional methods." – Arathi Menon in "Aadhimalai, winner of UN Equator Prize from Nilgiris, offers a lesson in indigenous economics" (Mongabay Series: Eco Hope, 20 December 2021)

<https://india.mongabay.com/2021/12/aadhimalai-winners-of-un-equator-prize-from-nilgiris-offer-a-lesson-in-indigenous-economics>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46483>



"Indians are truly rooted in an ethos of living in harmony with their land. There was a time when the Indian subcontinent was carpeted in green... watered by glacial rivers, blessed by rolling hills and productive grasslands, lush rainforests and wave-kissed mangroves. All creatures, great and small, found niches here and thrived. Varied cultures were spawned and people in awe of nature lived by its rules. This happy situation has changed. The wondrous green has long-disappeared [and] what little remains is being systematically eroded by a population caught in the crossroads of a development paradigm borrowed from the industrial North that systematically devastated colonies for centuries." – Lakshmy Raman and Bittu Sahgal in "Daft National Policy 2018" (Sanctuary Nature Foundation)

<https://sanctuarynaturefoundation.org/article/daft-national-policy-2018>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17557>

"We can do things differently to reinvent growth without pollution. But only if we have the courage to think differently." – Sunita Narain in "India's twin environmental challenges" (*Down To Earth*, 15 December 2013)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/indias-twin-environmental-challenges-42835>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13490>

"Sometimes, it is assumed that during early ages the forest and the landscape were untouched and unmanipulated, and so the forests remained pristine. [...] However, the truth is even more complicated than it appears. The Adivasis of Manbhum [...] did change and manipulate their surrounding landscape. However, because of low population pressure and less per capita consumption, they did not generally cause large-scale ecological damage." – Nirmal Mahato (University of Gour Banga) in "Adivasi (Indigenous people) Perception of Landscape: The Case of Manbhum", *Journal of Adivasi and Indigenous Studies* (JAIS), Vol. II, No.1, February 2015, pp. 52-53

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315799935>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5844>

"The traditionally preferred [tribal] life style was to live in harmony with god, humanity and nature however, their strong attachment to natural environment was lost due to displacement." – Sophia J D (Principal Scientist, M S Swaminathan Research Foundation MSSRF, Chennai) in "Diversification of Livelihoods in Transforming Socio Economic and Gender Relations: A case study of Yanadi Tribes in AP" (accessed 11 January 2019)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27249>

"Dredging beaches for sand (for construction) resulted in silt settling on corals, which reduced local fish population, and weakened fisherfolks' livelihoods.[...] People in archipelagoes take boats, and know how to swim. The settlers, said Acharya again and again, needed to adapt to the islands instead of coming in with

mainland thinking." – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"The science is clear that if we keep exploiting wildlife and destroying our ecosystems, then we can expect to see a steady stream of [zoonotic] diseases jumping from animals to humans in the years ahead. [...] To prevent future outbreaks, we must become much more deliberate about protecting our natural environment." –

Inger Andersen (Under-secretary general and executive director of the UN Environment Programme), quoted in "Coronavirus: Fear over rise in animal-to-human diseases" (BBC News, 6 July 2020)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-53314432>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22575>

"The Harappans invite us to ponder the deepest questions about human nature and culture. Facing ecological challenges as we do today, Dholavirans responded with immense creativity and resolve. Perhaps it is their vulnerability and struggles that make them more endearing to us. Given the looming climate crisis, will our modern age last longer than their mature period of 700 years?" – Namit Arora in *Indians: A Brief History of a Civilization* (India Penguin, 2021), p. 39

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1235947581>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5629>

"We have to act now. It is not too late. Otherwise, our children and grandchildren will curse us because we will leave behind a polluted, degraded and unhealthy planet." – Elizabeth Maruma Mrema (Executive secretary, UN Convention on Biological Diversity), quoted in "Extinction: Urgent change needed to save species, says UN" (BBC News, 15 September 2020)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-54120111>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30944>

"The inclusion of local people's needs and interests in conservation planning is increasingly accepted as essential, both to promote the well-being of human populations, and to ensure that biodiversity and conservation needs are met in the long-term." – Nazir A. Pala, Ajeet K. Neg and N.P. Todaria in "The Religious, Social and Cultural Significance of Forest Landscapes in Uttarakhand Himalaya, India" (*International Journal of Conservation Science*, Vol. 5, Issue 2, April-June 2014)

<https://www.academia.edu/32265911>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24271>

"Boys and men have a dormitory club in the village called Moshup and, in some villages, the girls have a separate club called Raseng. These dormitories used to be where young Adi would learn about their traditions and duties, but most children now attend government schools. The curriculum they study ignores the intricacies of tribal knowledge and culture, and this is having an increasing impact on the self-esteem and identity of the young Adis. Today, few young Adi want to work in the fields in the same way as previous generations." – *The Adi*, BBC2 (Archived 29 October 2014)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tribe/tribes/adi/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12568>

"There was at that time [i.e. the Buddhist reign of Asoka ruling in the third century B.C.] enough forested land for there to be no fear of the disappearance of forests. Shifting cultivation, therefore, may not have been viewed as a disaster, for it also permitted the growth of a secondary forest." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) in "Perceiving the Forest: Early India Studies" (*Studies in History*. 2001;17(1):1-16)

<https://doi.org/10.1177/025764300101700101>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5851>

"This is all of our country. This is our mother. You've heard the earth referred to [as] 'Mother Earth.' It's difficult to not feel obligated to protect this land and I feel that every Indigenous person in this country understands that." – Debra Haaland, a 35th-generation New Mexican from the Pueblo of Laguna, who became the first Native American ever to be confirmed as a Cabinet secretary quoted by Cara Korte (CBC News, 15 March 2021)

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/deb-haaland-native-american-confirmation-interior-secretary/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4540>

"We are on borrowed time, because we are not looking after our soil properly'. You can call it neo-liberalisation, corporatisation, fertilising or short-sighted irrigation policy, but, ultimately what is happening is that the soil is losing all its nourishment. Any civilisation that doesn't understand this basic truth is going to face the grave danger of just not being able to survive any more. The day after this conversation, we were at a meeting in Jalgaon and there experts were talking about greater productivity through more chemicals into the soil and how we needed to increase the number of crops we grow. What they do not understand is that only four companies dominate 75 per cent of the global trade in grains and only 17 plant species (out of 3,00,000) are providing the human race 90 per cent of its food." – Playwright Ramu Ramanathan interviewed by Dipanita Nath in "I know people who have chosen to be silent, some out of fear and others just out of being deadened" (Indian Express, 28 October 2020)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/i-know-people-who-have-chosen-to-be-silent-some-out-of-fear-and-others-just-out-of-being-deadened-6902500/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5576>

"Movements of farmers and farm labourers [...] are headed for serious trouble if they do not factor in the problems of climate change (which have already devastated agriculture in India); if they do not locate themselves in, and link their battles to, an agroecological approach." – P. Sainath (Founder, *People's Archive of Rural India* PARI) in "We Didn't Bleed Him Enough: When Normal is the Problem" (counterpunch.org, 12 August 2020, first published in *Frontline Magazine*)

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/12/we-didnt-bleed-him-enough-when-normal-is-the-problem/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20419>

"We are currently facing a crisis that threatens not only the survival of our civilisation and humans as a species, but that of life on our planet as a whole. [...] 'Buen vivir' provides a unique opportunity to devise new ways of living collectively" – Mateo Martínez Abarca in "The Climate Crisis: South African and Global Democratic Eco-Socialist Alternatives (2018)

<https://www.academia.edu/38962736/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=28966>

"Nature is a reward in itself. It is there, to be understood, to be lived and loved. And in its way it gives us everything – the bounty and goodness of the earth, the sea, the sky. Food, water, the air we breathe. All the things we take for granted. [...] Nature gives. And takes away. And gives again." – Ruskin Bond in *The Book of Nature* (India Penguin, 2016)

<https://penguin.co.in/book/the-book-of-nature/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5036>

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- **Eco tourism**

"There is very little evidence that ecotourism in its present form is sustainable [...] Tourism is inherently an exploitative industry, both ecologically and socially and we need to accept that. But the ill-effects of tourism on biodiversity conservation can be contained. What conservation needs today is a robust model, which restricts ecological and carbon footprint through a much more nuanced policy. We need participation and governance by the local communities in order to legitimise their local knowledge while empowering them economically. And we need wider discussion and debate about this among the general public." – Smrity Ramavarapu in "Ecotourism-a yay or a nay for conservation?" (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bengaluru)

<https://www.atree.org/news/ecotourism-yay-or-nay-conservation>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=33299>

"The wider conservation fraternity and media are alive with debate. Some argue that good 'eco-tourism' initiatives provide important funding for tiger conservation and are hugely beneficial to forest-dwellers; others say there is no such thing as eco-tourism that benefits local communities and the crass commercial exploitation of tigers is harmful to them and their habitat." – Tarsh Thekaekara (Director, Shola Trust) in "What does it take to save India's tigers?" (Info-change News & Features, August 2012)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7826>

"We work on tourism in natural spaces such as forests, coasts, and hills and mountains. These natural spaces, are primarily home to people who have an interdependent relationship with their environment, and these natural resources support innumerable livelihoods in such regions. With this perspective, we critically examine the effects of tourism and related policies on the environment and the local communities." – Ecosystems by Equitable Tourism Options (EQUATIONS)

<https://beta.equitabletourism.org/focus-area/ecosystems>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14529>

"Under the pressure to address the problems of conventional tourism, a great number of 'new tourisms' were introduced in the 1980s and 90s – ecotourism, sustainable, community-based, fair-traded, responsible and others. [...] Evaluations of pro-poor tourism projects that take a holistic and grassroots-oriented approach are very rare." – Anita Pleumarom in "The Politics of Tourism, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development" (Third World Network, Penang, Malaysia 2012)

<https://www.twn.my/title/end/pdf/end17.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14554>

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- **Elephant**

"The Kattunayakans, for example, a traditional hunter-gatherer tribe, would never plant a cash crop like bananas, since 'elephants would eat it, of course'. They think it's perfectly natural for elephants to come through their land and eat whatever they find. But for many of the newer immigrants into the region this is completely unacceptable, and they think elephants are a huge problem. Such nuances are frequently lost on biologists, conservationists and the media." – Tarsh Thekaekara (Director, Shola Trust) in "Can elephants and humans live together?" (The Guardian, 6 March 2017)

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/mar/06/can-elephants-and-humans-live-together>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22634>

"The Centrally Sponsored Umbrella Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats consists of Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger (CSS-PT), Development of Wildlife Habitats (CSS-DWH) and Project Elephant (CSS-PE) [...] strengthening/ consolidation of tiger, elephant and wildlife conservation in the country [and] address the human wildlife conflict effectively." – Government of India's Umbrella Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats beyond 12th Plan (Press Information Bureau, 5 September 2018)

<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1545068>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4226>

"People have been killed by elephants and yet tribals do believe that the land belongs to the animals as well. They understand this much more than anybody else and this is no romanticising the issue." – "Writer Mari Marcel Thekaekara says the tribal communities are a standing example of how women play a major role in preservation of eco historic cultural heritage in India" (The Hindu, 27 January 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/A-messenger-from-the-mountains/article17102329.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22373>

"A Greenpeace report states that human-elephant conflict in Chhattisgarh started in the late 80's with the migration of wild herds from the neighbouring states of Odisha and Jharkhand, prompted by the devastation of forests due to mining." – Sanctuary Asia (2019)

<https://www.sanctuaryasia.com/conservation/news/10931-hec-death-toll-continues-to-rise-in-chhattisgarh>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5761>

"Every pachyderm has bullet wounds festering and hurting the animal; injuries that have driven the once-docile beasts to regard humans as the enemy. Adivasi elders tell us that they walked among the elephants without fear 50 years ago. Those days are long gone." – Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD- Nilgiris) in "Who will bell the big cat?" (The Hindu, 14 April 2012)

<https://www.thehindu.com/arts/magazine/article3314376.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5761>

"The spread of invasive species, lead to a scarcity of herbaceous fodder, forcing the herbivores to modify their foraging behaviour and seeking new pastures. Consequently, elephants, Indian gaur, spotted deer, sambar and wild boar raid crops in indigenous people settlements, and fringe villages for food that lead to a chain of human versus animal conflict." – Davidson Sargunam in: Sivadas, D., Dhyani, S. Basu, O. & Karki, M. (2020, June). Harnessing Nature 2(3), 48pp.

[https://harnessingnatureblog.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/hn\\_vol\\_2\\_issue\\_3\\_red.pdf](https://harnessingnatureblog.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/hn_vol_2_issue_3_red.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34181>

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Photo © Tarsh Thekaekara  
[The Shola Trust \(Nilgiri\) >>](#)

Learning from the Kattunayakan community:  
How to live with elephants

"Can elephants and humans live together?"

Read the full story in [The Guardian >>](#)

[Forest Rights Act \(FRA\) >>](#)

More about elephants in relation to India's tribal  
cultural heritage, [wildlife tourism and  
conservation policies >>](#)

- **Ethnobotany and ethnomedicine**

"Tribal languages are a treasure trove of knowledge about a region's flora, fauna and medicinal plants. Usually, this information is passed from generation to generation. However, when a language declines, that knowledge system is completely gone." – Ayesha Kidwai (Centre for Linguistics, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) quoted by Abhijit Mohanty in "Seven decades after independence, many tribal languages in India face extinction threat" (*Down to Earth*, 26 August 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/seven-decades-after-independence-many-tribal-languages-in-india-face-extinction-threat-73071>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6879>

"Convention on Biological Diversity aims to conserve and use biological diversity in a sustainable manner. It mandates that its signatories respect, preserve and maintain knowledge [about lesser-known wild plants for various medicinal uses], innovations and practices of local or indigenous communities and encourage the equitable sharing of benefits." – Kerala Forest Department in "Medicinal Plants", 8 January 2010

<http://old.forest.kerala.gov.in>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18372>

"Research on ethnomedicinal uses of a given plant can provide suggestive information on possible migrations or contacts and exchange of information between indigenous communities and in the process make valuable contributions to both medicinal as well as anthropological literature." – Sophia Hossain, Shahnaz Rahman, Md. Tanvir Morshed, Mahbuba Haque, Sharmin Jahan, Rownak Jahan, Mohammed Rahmatullah in "Tribal Cross-Talk as an Effective Way for Ethnobotanical Knowledge Transfer - Inference from *Costus speciosus* as a Case Study" (*American-Eurasian Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*, 15 February 2014)

<https://www.academia.edu/6090970/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2243>

"[The Jarawa's] knowledge of indigenous plants, herbs, diseases, and creatures of the jungle is immense and needs no schooling. No one can really educate them further. It is we, who need to be educated because soon all this knowledge will evaporate, with the immanent danger of the extinction of the tribe." – Anvita Abbi (Professor of Linguistics, Jawaharlal Nehru University) in "Why Proud, Not Primitive?" (*Survival International*, accessed 21 September 2022)

<http://notprimitive.in/not-primitive-info>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22274>

"[Let us] use and share resources in a more sustainable and equitable manner" – Distinguished scientist M S Swaminathan in a video message on "Biodiversity"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaugUomFXIQ&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaugUomFXIQ&feature=emb_logo)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

"'Ethnomedicine', as defined by George Foster and Barbara Anderson in their 1978 essay Medical Anthropology, is the totality of health, knowledge, values, beliefs, skills and practices of members of a society, including all the clinical and non-clinical activities that relate to their health needs. According to an estimate of the World Health Organization, approximately 88 per cent of people in developing countries rely chiefly on traditional medicines, mostly plant extracts, for their primary health care needs. [A]bout 74 per cent of the 121 biological active plant-derived compounds currently in use worldwide, have been discovered through follow-up research to verify the authenticity of information concerning the folk or ethnomedical uses of the plants." – Dibyendu Chaudhuri, Parijat Ghosh, Temba Oraon, Vivek Sinha in "How Adivasis of one Jharkhand village are trying to preserve ethnomedicine" (*Down to Earth*, 22 December 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/health/how-adivasis-of-one-jharkhand-village-are-trying-to-preserve-ethnomedicine-74747>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16621>

"Over all, more than 86 health-related issues are being cured utilizing ethnomedicinally important tree species. It has also been observed that the majority of youth in Tharu tribe are very less aware of their ethnic knowledge and are also not so much interested in such learning. Thus, a precise documentation of these information with traditional knowledge base from the ethnic people has great relevance for the human welfare." – Omesh Bajpai in "Ethnomedicinal Uses of Tree Species by Tharu Tribes in the Himalayan Terai Region of India"

<https://www.academia.edu/19861074>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2267>

"Irulas are specialists in traditional herbal medicine and healing practices. Irula vaidyars, mostly women, practice traditional healing systems, which use over 320 medicinal herbs. They treat several new-age diseases with a high success rate. People around the world realize that traditional healing practices must have a place in modern medicine. The Irula Tribal Women's Welfare Society (ITWWS), established in 1986, focuses on this traditional science. A centre with training facilities and a medicinal garden has been established." – "Irula's tribal secrets unraveled" (Times of India, 29 March 2005)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Irulas-tribal-secrets-unraveled/articleshow/1064853.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23336>

"Irulas are very knowledgeable about medicinal plants." – Zai Whitaker quoted by Soma Basu in "The Naturalist" (The Hindu, 21 February 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/the-naturalist/article4439332.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16322>

"The plant diversity of western Madhya Pradesh is reducing at the fast rate due to anthropogenic disturbances and environmental degradation. [B]etter management and protection are important for the conservation of plant diversity in the region and also for the benefit of indigenous tribes of the state." – *Inventory of ethnobotanicals and other systematic procedures for regional conservation of medicinal and sacred plants* (Article, 2015)

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/5790792440>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=19510>

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*Have you seen the arana* - Image from the award-winning documentary by [Sunanda Bhat](#) | [Songline Films](#) >>



- **Forest Rights Act (FRA)**

"[I]t is unimaginable to think of tribes as landless, as land and forest have been traditionally their life support system." – Virginius Xaxa, excerpt from *Being Adivasi* (India Penguin, 2021)

<https://scroll.in/article/1014436/being-ativasi-autonomous-existence-or-integration-nehru-had-proposed-a-third-way>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1290015863>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27829>

"Our forests are ours again. In 2006, the government finally accepted the historical injustice meted out to Adivasis and passed the Forest Rights Act thus recognizing our rights to forests." – Adivasi Munnetra Sangam (photo caption, 2017 calendar)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21811>

"In 1860, the [East India] Company withdrew all access rights for using the forests (food, fuel, medicine and selling forest products) since the forests and forest-dwelling communities provided refuge to the rebels during the Sepoy Mutiny." – Research Team, Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation in "Revisiting the Forest Rights Act" (12 July 2019)

<https://www.academia.edu/41756309>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14402>

"The forests were 'wastelands' that needed to be tamed, settled and developed. [...] It did not matter that ancient tribal peoples were living here for centuries, neither that they were physically and spiritually sustained by these forests." – Pankaj Sekhsaria in *Islands in Flux: The Andaman and Nicobar Story* (Harper Litmus, 2017), pp. 4-5

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1122742858>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10151>

"Though it is commonly called, the 'Forest Rights Act', the actual name is the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. [...] Through this act, there are three major rights on forests to be transferred to the forest-dwelling tribal people [including] Title for Forest Land Under Occupation, right of ownership, access to collect, use, and dispose of minor forest produce, [i.e.] all non-timber produce of plant origin, including bamboo, brush wood, stumps, cane, tussar, cocoons, honey, wax, lac, tendu or kendu leaves, medicinal plants and herbs, roots, tubers." – Azim Premji University Team, Initiative for Effective Implementation of FRA

<https://practiceconnect.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/the-implementation-of-forest-rights-act-towards-an-informed-collective-action-by-stakeholders/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10087>

"The Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (also known as the FRA) is a revolutionary tool in forest governance. [...] It further has the potential to bring about a transformative change in the economic and social conditions of the local people, and improve the management of the forests." – Project description "Action Research and Policy Support on Community Forest Resource management in Central India" by Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)

<https://www.atree.org/projects/action-research-and-policy-support-community-forest-resource-management-central-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10151>

"The Act makes concrete provisions to allow adivasis to enter the forest and continue using forest produce, on which they have depended for generations [like] the basket that was once woven in bamboo that was collected from the forest is now being replaced by plastic ones bought from the market." – Priyashri Mani in "Home is where the forest is", illustrated story for Accord (Gudalur)

<https://cultureandconservation.wordpress.com/2013/08/29/home-is-where-the-forest-is/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12436>

"There are indigenous people who have lived in the forests for a long time. [...] They should be models for sustainability in the future. Indigenous people can show us what forest products to use and how to use them properly. They deserve to continue their ways of life." – Manoj Kumar Hazarika in "Deforestation in Garo Hills and its impact", *The Echo: An Online Journal of Humanities & Social Science*, Volume I, Issue IV, April 2013 (Karimganj College, Assam)

<https://www.thecho.in/files/Deforestation-in-Garo-Hills-and-its-impact.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14246>

"The Forest Rights Act, 2006, though is laudable in its intent but it only furthers the same isolationist policy." – Indian Police Service (IPS) officer M Nageswara Rao in "Scheduled Tribes: Who are they? How to mainstream them?" (Times of India, 16 May 2020)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/scheduled-tribes-who-are-they-how-to-mainstream-them/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10151>

"Forest Law and monopolization of forest wealth severely restricted the availability of forest for fulfilling their needs. Commercialization and exploitation displaced the tribals from the tracts they had been occupying for generations. Traders, money lenders and revenue farmers took advantage of British land settlement policies to exploit the simple-minded people. The forest produce became a source of government revenue. Not able to comprehend the government policies, the tribal

people saw the penetration of “outsiders” into their territories as threat to their survival and a series of spontaneous uprisings occurred at various places in the country.” – Subha Johari in "Tribal Dissatisfaction Under Colonial Economy of 19th Century"

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1040271311>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11961>

“[We need] a change in the colonial outlook that has existed from the pre-Independence period towards forests, tribal forest dwellers and life forms living in forests.” – Minister Anil Madhav Dave while inaugurating a conference; quoted in “Forests, tribals and wildlife are not rivals, says environment minister” (*Down To Earth*, 21 October 2016)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21343>

"Protecting forests is often a deadly risk for indigenous peoples and local communities." – Forest Peoples Programme

<https://www.forestpeoples.org/en/about>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6023>

"Legal protections for Adivasis were never very strong in India; since colonial times, officially designated forest lands—which cover no less than a fifth of the country’s surface area—have formed an internal 'state of exception' where the normal functioning of the laws of the land are suspended. This realm is controlled by the Forest Department (an immense bureaucracy with vast powers) and an army of forest guards that functions like a paramilitary force." – Amitav Ghosh in *The Nutmeg’s Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis* (book excerpt in *The Print*, 14 October 2021)

<https://theprint.in/pageturner/excerpt/congress-left-bjp-india-striving-to-remake-itself-as-settler-colonialist-amitav-ghosh/750429/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=44650>

"Some 150 years ago, the first Indian Forest Act in 1865, promulgated by the British government, had usurped the traditional ownership and management power of forest-dwelling communities. [...] In a country which boasts of one of the top 10 forest covers in the world, it is ironic that the forest departments and the Union government have not followed its own law for over 90 years." – Ishan Kukreti in "Inside ad hoc forests: Government failure, both at the Centre and the states, is hurting communities and forests alike" (*Down To Earth*, 18 January 2021)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/forests/inside-ad-hoc-forests-75051>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10151>

"The passage of the Scheduled Tribes and other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (2006), recognizing both the individual and community rights over forest and forest resources is an attempt to redress the 'historical injustice' meted out to [200 million] tribals and OTFDs [other forest dwelling communities]." –

Research team (Sayantani Satpathi, Shambhavi Singh & Subhdeep Basu) in "Revisiting the Forest Rights Act: Status of Implementation with respect to Land Tenures and Collection of Minor Forest Produce" (Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation New Delhi, 12 July 2019)

<https://www.academia.edu/41756309>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10151>

"Under the [FRA] law, forest dwellers can apply to state governments for either individual or community forest rights – which means they can take ownership of the process of protecting and conserving forests in their areas. They can also gather and sell minor forest produce such as tendu leaves or bamboo, which was an illegal activity before the law was enacted. However, states have not been particularly proactive about implementing these rights. [E]ven as Maharashtra is foremost in implementing community forest rights, it is also slowly attempting to reverse this with new forms of forest management." – Mridula Chari in (Scroll.in, 9 July 2017)

<https://scroll.in/article/843046/ten-years-of-forest-rights-act-maharashtra-tops-in-implementation-but-credit-goes-to-one-district>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23920>

"There are three important stakeholders on whom rests the successful implementation of the Act [Forest Rights Act (2006)]. Apart from this an institutional framework has been created at different levels of checks and balances, management and redressed structures from the village to the state level. This involves the Forest Rights Committee at the village level, the Sub-Divisional and District level Committees and a final appellate authority of the State Level Monitoring Committee." – Rebecca S . David in "An analysis of the impact of the Forest Rights Act (2006) in three states of India" (MPhil University of Cambridge, UK, 2014), p. 1

<https://www.academia.edu/30648733/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=28027>

"Though the institution of Forest Rights Act is a policy action on the part of governments, local mobilisation among Tribal population, and non-governmental organisations have played an important role in its effective implementation. This area [the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra] has witnessed different forms of social mobilization under leaders coming from tribal communities." – V. Santhakumar (Azim Premji University in "It is possible to have a better life for Scheduled Tribes in India!", 4 May 2018)

<https://vsanthakumar.wordpress.com/2018/05/04/it-is-possible-to-have-a-better-life-for-scheduled-tribes-in-india/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24803>

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[Western Ghats in Kerala](#) >>

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More about [tourism](#), [eco tourism](#) >>

[Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) >>



- **Hyderabad Biodiversity Pledge**

"The [South Asia] region has many mega biodiversity hotspots, key wetlands and shares several hydro-geological features in important topographic regions and ecosystems. South Asia is home to many traditional and indigenous communities dwelling in remote as well as sensitive and fragile ecosystems. These communities have helped in shaping the conservation and management of natural resources of these sensitive and fragile ecosystems. Many of these sustainable practices are still relevant in this changing world." – Angela Andrade (Chair, IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management) in "World Environment Day 2020 Special Issue" (*Harnessing Nature Magazine*, June 2020)

[https://harnessingnatureblog.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/hn\\_vol\\_2\\_issue\\_3\\_red.pdf](https://harnessingnatureblog.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/hn_vol_2_issue_3_red.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34181>

"India has committed US \$50 million towards strengthening the institutional mechanism for biodiversity conservation in the country during its presidency of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). Called the Hyderabad Pledge, the amount was announced by Prime Minister [...] The funds will be used to enhance technical and human capabilities at the national and state-level mechanisms to attain the CBD objectives." – *Down To Earth* (4 July 2015)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/us-50-million-to-protect-biodiversity-in-india-39358>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1719>

"If we take action, the right action – as the report [on Biological Diversity] proposes – we can transition to a sustainable planet." [...] Many good things are happening around the world and these should be celebrated and encouraged [...] We have to act now. It is not too late. Otherwise, our children and grandchildren will curse us because we will leave behind a polluted, degraded and unhealthy planet." – Elizabeth Maruma Mrema (Executive secretary, UN Convention on Biological Diversity), quoted in "Extinction: Urgent change needed to save species, says UN" (BBC News, 15 September 2020)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-54120111>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30944>

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- **Sacred grove**

"The practice of religious rituals, ceremonies and sanctions by specific cultural groups allow such sacred landscapes to be maintained, emphasizing that humans are intrinsically part of the ecosystem. Taboos, codes and customs specific to activities and community members restrict access to most sacred groves." – Nazir A. Pala, Ajeet K. Neg and N.P. Todaria in "The Religious, Social and Cultural Significance of Forest Landscapes in Uttarakhand Himalaya, India" (*International Journal of Conservation Science*, Vol. 5, Issue 2, April-June 2014)

<https://www.academia.edu/32265911>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24271>

"Our kaavus (sacred grounds) are central to our culture. But many have been encroached upon and disappeared. Adivasi Munnetra Sangam has done a survey of all Kaavus and burial grounds and is petitioning the government to officially recognize them." – Adivasi Munnetra Sangam (photo caption, 2017 calendar)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21811>

"Sacred groves are patches of forest, water bodies, grasslands considered to be inhabited by gods and hence, strictly prohibited from resource extraction. – "Role of Sacred Groves and their current status in adivasi society" (Adivasi.net Newsletters, No. 31 2011)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1987>

"One of the finest examples of traditional practices in India based on religious faith which has made a profound contribution to nature conservation has been the maintenance of certain patches of land or forests as 'sacred groves'." – Dr S.M. Nair (former Director of the National Museum of Natural History) in "Report of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel"

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20948>

"When women from the household would work at the loom, their designs would emerge from their world view, understanding of oral traditions, folktales, the surrounding sacred groves, and more." – Meeta Deka (Professor and former Head, Dept. of History at Gauhati University), quoted by Avantika Bhuyan (livemint.com, 1 December 2017)

<https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/FR23TDZqwz1hDYOlB5mRSN/Folklore-myths-and-handloom.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23691>

"Sacred natural sites may well be some of the last strongholds for building resilient networks of connected landscapes." – Manjusha Misra (School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal & *International Journal of Environmental Studies*), reviewing *Sacred Natural Sites: Conserving Nature and Culture* (Routledge, 2010)

<https://www.routledge.com/Sacred-Natural-Sites-Conserving-Nature-and-Culture/Verschuuren-Wild-Mcneely-Oviedo/p/book/9781849711678>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/606770196>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=37222>

"Many small towns across India also have sacred groves. The kaavus of Kerala are managed by the government, temple trusts, local community, or even privately. [...] These kaavus are tiny oases rich in floral and faunal biodiversity, many less than an acre in area. They contain rare trees such as the south Indian kanak champa, which is categorized as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. They also host a number of birds, bats, butterflies and insects. [...] To stand amidst the towering trees draped with creepers, allowing little sunlight even at noon, lit by a lone lamp under the snake shrine, can leave anyone with a sense of awe. The character of these kaavus is, however, changing. Some are being used as garbage dumps by city dwellers, while others are converted to modern temple structures with the trees eventually surrounded by concrete or even cut down." – Harini Nagendra & Seema Mundoli in *Cities and Canopies: Trees in Indian Cities* (India Penguin, 2019), p. 109

<https://penguin.co.in/book/uncategorized/cities-and-canopies/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31803>

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Drawings by schoolchildren from Kanyakumari District (Tamil Nadu)  
Image by courtesy [Davidson Sargunam](#) >>

- **Tiger**

"If tribals were the real enemies of the tigers then the only tigers left would not have been in tribal areas." – Indian social workers Pushpanjali Sathpathy & Gunjan Jain (report on the way tribal communities displaced by "Project Tiger" authorities in the Simlipal Biosphere Reserve, part of UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3624>

"India has more than 70% of the world's tiger population. Tigers play an important role in maintaining the delicate balance in our biodiversity [...] Destruction of the environment for development and invasive tourism has to be stopped. By preserving the diverse ecosystems which tigers inhabit, we can ensure they never fall prey to extinction again." – Greenpeace India "The tiger has earned his stripes, but will he keep them?" (Newsletter 29 July 2020)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18406>

"The combination of grace, strength, agility and enormous power has earned the tiger its pride of place as the national animal of India. [...] To check the dwindling population of tigers in India, 'Project Tiger' was launched in April 1973. So far, 27 tiger reserves have been established in the country under this project, covering an area of 37,761 sq km." – National Animal - National Symbols (Know India: National Portal of India, 3 September 2011)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4226>

"A total of 18 tiger range States, distributed in five landscapes of the country would be benefitted under the Project Tiger scheme [and] address the human wildlife conflict effectively. [...] It will generate direct employment of about 30 lakh mandays annually which shall include many local tribes besides non-tribal local workforce." – Government of India's Umbrella Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats beyond 12th Plan (Press Information Bureau, 5 September 2018)

<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1545068>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4226>

"From being tiger worshippers to guardians of the wildlife, the Baiga tribe of Madhya Pradesh are playing a vital role in tiger conservation by helping forest officials in providing protection to the big cats and other wild animals living in the Kanha National Park." – "Tribals Join in Tiger Conservation in Kanha National Park" (*Outlook Magazine*, 19 June 2016)

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newswire/story/tribals-join-in-tiger-conservation-in-kanha-national-park/943927>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22282>

"The spread of invasive species, lead to a scarcity of herbaceous fodder, forcing the herbivores to modify their foraging behaviour and seeking new pastures. [...] Seeking and following their prey, big cats as tiger and leopard follow the herbivore trails and enter into human settlements, which escalate into additional conflicts. All these are due to the sheer anthropogenic activities, the primary driver of forest ecosystem modifications." – Davidson Sargunam in: Sivadas, D., Dhyani, S. Basu, O. & Karki, M. (2020, June). Harnessing Nature 2(3), 48pp.

[https://harnessingnatureblog.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/hn\\_vol\\_2\\_issue\\_3\\_red.pdf](https://harnessingnatureblog.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/hn_vol_2_issue_3_red.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34181>

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More about tigers in relation to India's tribal cultural heritage, [wildlife tourism](#) and conservation policies >>

- **Trees**

"When we [members of the Bettakurumba tribal community in the Nilgiri Biosphere] have to cut trees, we won't cut all the trees; we will cut only what we need." –

Wildlife conservationist Ramesh in "Bomman thatha and his forest", a conversation with his grandfather on "bonding between adivasi people and the forest" (At the Edge of Existence, 29 October 2014)

<https://cultureandconservation.wordpress.com/2014/10/29/bomman-thatha-and-his-forest/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=8262>

"[T]rees were being felled, and poaching rose considerably, threatening the delicate ecosystem of the tribe. The developmental authorities turned deaf ear to the protest of environmentalists, anthropologists and the Jarawas themselves." – Surabhi Sinha in "Save Jarawa" (Times of India, 2 June 2021)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/phases-of-life/save-jarawa-32818/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14820>

"We also have to get rid of the mistaken notion that complex natural ecosystems, once destroyed at one place can be easily created elsewhere. Such a notion is evident in government's compensatory afforestation programmes that implicitly assume first that natural ecosystems such as forests can often be created de novo. Policy makers need to distinguish between a stand of trees and a natural forest with diversity of species, and a myriad of ecological interactions and processes, evolved over millions of years." – Kamaljit S. Bawa in "Our biodiversity, our life, our future" (Survey of the Environment, The Hindu, Sci-Tech / Energy & Environment, 2 August 2010)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/Our-biodiversity-our-life-our-future/article16148419.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5026>

"She, in tribal myth, lives in palmyra fruit trees. To the tribals, palmyra juice is the breast milk of Tallur Muttai. She, therefore, is the earth mother. But then there is the massive Hindu-isation of the tribal myth and the earth mother is made to sit on a tiger as Hindus prefer their goddesses on the tiger. I have a problem with this makeover. If the tribal gods are comfortable on the trees, let them be...why make them a Hindu?" – Niranjana Mahawar, author of a book titled Bastar Bronze, interviewed by Suvojit Bagchi (The Hindu, 24 October 2012)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16409>



"[D]eforestation and landscape change [have] negatively impacted communities [and led to the] death of toddy palm trees, because toddy tapping was no longer practiced." – Vikram Aditya in "Displaced from the hills: Livelihoods of tribal communities in Eastern Ghats under threat" (*Down to Earth*, 24 February 2021)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/forests/displaced-from-the-hills-livelihoods-of-tribal-communities-in-eastern-ghats-under-threat-75657>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29829>

"Small community harvesting has given way to large scale commercial cash crop cultivation. Teak has replaced traditional trees in the jungle and resorts are coming up along the river bringing tourists and plastic. The natives of Wayanad feel uncomfortable with the change around them; however, they seem to be in little control of the situation." – Bikas Mishra about Sunanda Bhat's award winning documentary feature film on Wayanad's treasure trove of flora and fauna "Have you seen the Arana?" (DearCinema.com, 21 April 2013)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11104>

"The Small and Marginal Tribal Farmers Mutually Aided Cooperative Society of Paderu (SAMTFMACS), formed in 2007 as a coffee processing and marketing enterprise, has successfully changed the socio-economic and geographic landscape of the region by creating a steady source of income to its members apart from greening the forests [...] The best part is the community is following up on the plantation and taking care to nurture the sapling till it grows into a full-fledged tree. In case any plant withers away it is replaced by another one and its growth monitored." – "Citibank award for Paderu tribal coffee collective" (The Hindu, Visakhapatnam, 29 January 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Visakhapatnam/citibank-award-for-paderu-tribal-coffee-collective/article4356508.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10704>

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## Resources

- **Anthropology**

"[I]ndigenous people in India also feel the claustrophobic confines of their identity which has been imposed on them by others, be it the colonial administrator, the colonial anthropologist." – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak in "Is tribal identity relevant in today's world?", Inaugural Speech, National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23032>

"[F]olklorists, anthropologists and sociocultural experts have intensified efforts to trace the imprints of myths, legends, ballads, songs and folk narratives in the weaves of the North-East. Each pattern is a little capsule of information—containing tales of ancestors, social values, clan practices, and more. Sangma cites the example of the dakmanda, a modern Garo wrap." – Ramona Sangma quoted by Avantika Bhuyan (Livemint, 1 December 2017)

<https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/FR23TDZqwz1hDYOIB5mRSN/Folklore-myths-and-handloom.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23691>

"From the early modern period till today, then, caste has been an intrinsic feature of Indian society. It has been common to refer to this as the 'caste system'. But it is debatable whether the term 'system' is appropriate here, unless we simply take for granted that any society is a 'social system'. First, and this is quite clear when we look at the history of distinct castes, the 'system' and the place various groups occupy within it have been constantly changing. Second, no hierarchical order of castes has ever been universally accepted [...] but what is certain is that there is no consensus on a single hierarchical order." – Harald Tambs-Lyche (Professor Emeritus, Université de Picardie, Amiens) in "Caste: History and the Present" (Academia Letters, Article 1311, 2021)

<https://www.academia.edu/4996345>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6771>

"[E]ngaging with the writing of anthropologists writing about tribes is a call to tribal conscience to address these [writers] head-on, without fear, as a way of setting records straight and challenging the primitivism they've thrown at us as exotic uncultivated people. This is finally exercising our agency to assert our true identities; a way to liberate the image and reputation of our ancestors and ourselves that has been chained to dehumanization by these writings' imposed impressions of us." – Ruby Hembrom (founder-director of Adivaani—a publisher of Adivasi writing), quoted by Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=8415>

"[I]t is very important for anthropologists and other social scientists in contemporary world to study understand and explain the status of tribal youth with respect to its participation and acceptance to the wave of development and modernization and further related changes." – Subhendu Kumar Acharya & Gautam K Kshatriya in: "Social Transformation, Identity of Indian Tribes in Recent Time: An Anthropological perspective" (*Afro Asian Journal of Anthropology and Social Policy* Volume-5, Issue-2 2014)

<https://www.academia.edu/9963906>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20371>

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Santal ritual © photo by courtesy

Elisabeth den Otter

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Village mural in West Bengal  
"Santals celebrate the seasons" series >>



Palmyra trees in Tamil Nadu  
 Photo by courtesy Davidson Sargunam >>

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- **Archaeology**

"The existence of a unique, preAryan [sic] populace with a distinct cultural heritage and evolved literary traits has been fortified by archaeological evidence collected from the discovery of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro in the early 1920s, and further substantiated by the ongoing Keezhadi excavations in Tamil Nadu. With modern day advancements in handling fragile biodegradable material from excavation sites and also high-throughput genomic sequencing, we now understand how the Indian subcontinent was populated through waves of migration." – Manuraj Shunmugasundaram in "The Dravidian movement and Aryan illusions" (The Hindu, 23 July 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-dravidian-movement-and-aryan-illusions/article65672119.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26937>

"India has about 5,000 rock art sites, next only to Australia and South Africa, where prehistoric people have recorded life as they saw it, in paintings, engravings and carvings. [...] hollow cup-impressions created on rock surfaces using hammer stones, have also been categorised as rock art." – T.S. Subramanian in "Discovering & deciphering rock art" (*Frontline Magazine*, 27 November 2015)

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/arts-and-culture/heritage/discovering-amp-deciphering-rock-art/article7858593.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21555>

"If the discovery [of 19 pictographs from a cave in Hampi] stands the scrutiny of experts in the field, it would mean that the Gonds living in central and southern India could have migrated from the Indus Valley civilisation." – S. Harpal Singh in "Gonds may have migrated from Indus Valley" (The Hindu, Telangana, 16 December 2014)

Address: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/telangana/gonds-may-have-migrated-from-indus-valley/article6698419.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20315>

"The Neolithic is an important time frame for North East India given the many changes in culture that occurred during this transitional period. This shift from food procurement to food production was solely based on the local domestication of plants and animals, rather than knowledge imported from neighbouring regions. Hence, the popular term 'Neolithic Revolution' aptly suits this stage." – Dhriyoti Kalita reviewing *Prehistory and Archaeology of Northeast India* by Manjil Hazarika (Scroll.in, 3 March 2019)

<https://scroll.in/article/915071/this-essential-book-on-the-prehistory-of-no>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=45657>

"Historians have often claimed that large-scale town life in India first developed in the Greater Magadha region of the Gangetic basin. This was during the 'second urbanisation' phase, believed to have begun around the mid-first millennium BCE.

(The 'first urbanisation phase' refers to the rise of the Harappan or Indus Valley Civilisation, lasting from 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE.) Tamil Nadu was thought to have urbanised at this scale only by the third century BCE. The findings at Keeladi push that date back significantly. Now, it is arguable that this part of the subcontinent urbanised around the same time as the Gangetic plains." – Sowmiya Ashok in "The Dig" (Fiftytwo.in, 2 April 2021)

<https://fiftytwo.in/story/the-dig/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=38630>

"A spectacular feature of the site [near Mavadaippu tribal village in Tamil Nadu] is that the rock surface is an admixture of ancient rock art and contemporary tribal paintings, showing continuity of tradition as it were." – K.T. Gandhirajan quoted by T.S. Subramanian in "Ancient rock art dating back to 1500 B.C. found in Tamil Nadu" (The Hindu, 28 September 2016)

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/Ancient-rock-art-dating-back-to-1500-B.C.-found-in-Tamil-Nadu/article14769223.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21555>

"Rock art is a term used to define several types of artistic examples in the form of paintings, bruising, pecking, and engravings etc; in the bare rock surfaces of caves, rock shelters and isolated rock boulders, executed by our ancestors. [...] Since majority of this form of rock art occurs in caves and rock shelters and which cannot be moved from place to place, it is also known as 'parietal art'. [...] In the history of mankind no work of fine art other than rock art has such a wide distribution lasting for such a long time." – Kunja Bihari Barik in "Rock art in Orissa an ethnoarchaeological study" (PhD thesis, Sambalpur University, 2008), p. 2

<https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/202775>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21555>

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[Rock art](#) >>

[Edakkal Cave in Wayanad](#) >>

Photo © editor



- **Figures, census and other statistics**

"India is home to nearly 20 Cr. [200 million] traditional forest-dwelling Adivasis and OTFDs [other forest dwelling communities], who derive their subsistence and livelihoods from forest and forest resources over several generations and thousands of years." – Research team (Sayantani Satpathi, Shambhavi Singh & Subhodeep Basu) in "Revisiting the Forest Rights Act: Status of Implementation with respect to Land Tenures and Collection of Minor Forest Produce" (Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation New Delhi, 12 July 2019)

<https://www.academia.edu/41756309>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10151>

[W]ith the Union cabinet approving a Constitution amendment on September 14 for the inclusion of 15 groups of tribals in Himachal, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh in the ST category, the total number of tribes to be notified under Article 342 of the Constitution will increase, when the amendment is through, to 720 from 705 as of now." – Rabindra Nath Sinha in "Tribal Outfits Gearing up to Restart Stir on Sarna Religious Code Issue" (Newsclick.in, 15 September 2022)

<https://www.newsclick.in/tribal-outfits-gearing-restart-sarna-religious-code-issue>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22095>

"The latest available data reveals that 4.7 million tribal children of India suffer from chronic nutrition deprivation affecting their survival, growth, learning, performance in school and productivity as adults." – Unicef India "What we do: Tribal nutrition" (accessed 26 July 2022)

<https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/tribal-nutrition>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"As per 2011 census, the total ST [Scheduled Tribes] population is 10.42 crores [104 million], of which more than 50% or in excess of 6 [60 million] crores live in 5th Scheduled Area in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Jharkhand and Himachal Pradesh. The 5th Schedule forbids monetization of land by STs in Scheduled Areas." – Indian Police Service (IPS) officer M Nageswara Rao in "Scheduled Tribes: Who are they? How to mainstream them?" (Times of India, 16 May 2020)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/scheduled-tribes-who-are-they-how-to-mainstream-them/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5576>

"Unlike in the West, people are not frequently changing jobs. In the villages, most people know each other. So [historically speaking] it isn't surprising our census figures for rural areas are more dependable than those in urban areas. But the extent of underenumeration is disturbingly high in urban areas." – Population expert

Sumanta Pal interviewed by Ashish Bose in "Censuses mean little" (*Down To Earth*, 15 December 1993)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/interviews/censuses-mean-little-31796>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"There are over 700 tribes (with overlapping communities in more than one State) which have been notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India, spread over different States and Union Territories of the country. The largest number of main tribal communities (62) has been specified in relation to the State of Orissa. The Scheduled Tribes have been specified in relation to all the States and Union Territories except Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Pondicherry." – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, Government of India (Ministry of Tribal Affairs), accessed on 14 September 2021

<https://www.ncst.gov.in/content/frequently-asked-questions>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22095>

"Over the past three years, the quality of inequality data released by the government has seriously deteriorated, making it particularly difficult to assess recent inequality changes." – Country Appendix, World Inequality Report 2022

<https://wir2022.wid.world/country-appendix-glossary/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5547>

"Among the 75 listed [Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups] the highest number are found in Odisha (13), followed by Andhra Pradesh (12), Bihar including Jharkhand (9) Madhya Pradesh including Chhattisgarh (7) Tamil Nadu (6) Kerala and Gujarat having five groups each. The remaining PVTGs live in West Bengal (3) Maharashtra (3), two each in Karnataka and Uttarakhand and one each in Rajasthan, Tripura and Manipur. All the four tribal groups in Andamans, and one in Nicobar Islands, are recognised as PVTGs. [...] Smallest population size among the PVTGs are the Sentenelese (as per the last contact effort on March 9, 2005, groups of 32 and 13 persons were sighted at different places). They still shy away from others. The Great Andamanese (57 persons) and the Onge (107 persons in 2012 as per Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti) are the dwindling populations. In main land, the Toto of West Bengal (314 families with 1,387 persons as per 2011 census) and the Toda of Tamil Nadu (1,608, inclusive of 238 Christian Todas as per TRC, Udagamandalam [Ooty], 2011) have population less than 2000 persons. The Saharia people of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are the largest among the PVTGs with population more than 4 lakhs." –

"The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of India — Privileges and Predicaments" (published by the Anthropological Survey of India AnSI), quoted by Shiv Sahay Singh in "Vulnerable tribes: lost in a classification trap" (*The Hindu*, 8 April 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/vulnerable-tribes-lost-in-a-classification-trap/article17894997.ece>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=22029](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=22029)

"These communities/tribes [the erstwhile aborigines] account for nearly 10 per cent of community's population as has been mentioned in some writings and there are nearly 820 communities and tribes in India, although some of the community leaders assess that their number would be more with 198 denotified tribes and nearly 1,500 nomadic tribes and their population may be even more than 10 per cent." – Bibek Debroy quoting a 2016 Report of the National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes NCDNT (Indian Express, 5 January 2017)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/crime-criminal-act-racial-discrimination-non-bailable-offence-criminal-tribes-act-an-unfortunate-legacy-4459258/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12284>

"Historically speaking, there were political and social reasons for declaring such large number of whole communities criminal, and it needs to be put on record as to how such a process with long-term consequences was put into action. [...] Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes [...] constitute about 3/4th of the population of the country and almost the entire physical labour force of the country is drawn from them. It is the failure to tackle their problems so as to remove their disabilities and secure their full potential for national development that lies at the root of the many weaknesses faced by post-Independence India to this day." – "Recommendations of the Technical Advisory Group" [TAG], New Delhi, 2006

<http://www.bhasharesearch.org/Reports/TAG%20Report.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=32139>

"The tribal population in Maharashtra in 2011 was 10.5 million constituting 9.35 percent of the total population of the state. The state has the second largest tribal population in the country, next only to Madhya Pradesh, with 10 percent of the total ST population of India. Numerically, Maharashtra state has the largest number of tribal population in the country." – Foreword to "Tribal Sub-Plan in Maharashtra: A Diagnostic Study" (TATA Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai supported by Unicef Maharashtra, December 2015)

<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3c8758b517083196f05ac29810b924aca/uploads/2019/11/2019112971.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31354>

"Local politicians push migration to the [Andaman and Nicobar] islands in the hope of adding to their votes. The local officials collude by understating population in the archipelago – as I found in 2004, the number of folks with names on ration cards is higher than what the census reported." – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"Walk Free Foundation has used figures from household surveys to produce their 'Global Slavery Index', which estimated that on "any given day in 2016, an estimated 24.9 million men, women, and children were living in modern slavery in Asia and the Pacific." – Anna Tsalapatanis (Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford) in "An uncertainty of terms. Definitional and methodological concerns in human trafficking" (IIAS The Newsletter 87 Autumn 2020)

<https://www.iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/uncertainty-terms-definitional-and-methodological-concerns-human-trafficking>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=36150>

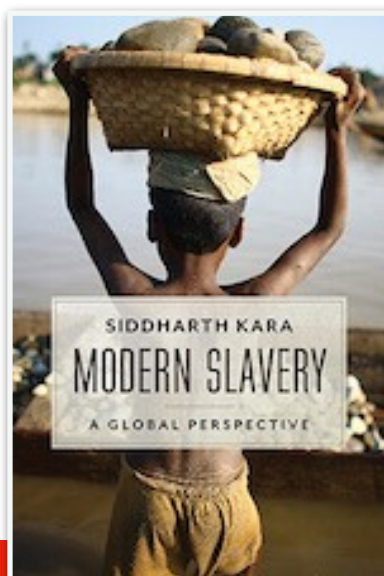
"The highest numbers of trafficking victims are detected in the countries in which they are citizens. [...] Walk Free Foundation has used figures from household surveys to produce their 'Global Slavery Index', which estimated that on 'any given day in 2016, an estimated 24.9 million men, women, and children were living in modern slavery in Asia and the Pacific'." – Anna Tsalapatanis (Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford) in "An uncertainty of terms. Definitional and methodological concerns in human trafficking" (IIAS The Newsletter 87 Autumn 2020)

<https://www.iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/uncertainty-terms-definitional-and-methodological-concerns-human-trafficking>

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- **Government of India**

"National development and the development of tribal communities are linked to each other." – The President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu (The Hindu, 15 November 2022)

<https://www.presidentofindia.gov.in/press-release.htm>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=52591>

"India, a union of states, is a Sovereign, Secular, Democratic Republic with a Parliamentary system of Government. The President is the constitutional head of Executive of the Union. In the states, the Governor, as the representative of the President, is the head of Executive. The system of government in states closely resembles that of the Union. There are 28 states and 8 Union territories in the country. Union Territories are administered by the President through an Administrator appointed by him/her. From the largest to the smallest, each State/UT of India has a unique demography, history and culture, dress, festivals, language etc." – States and Union Territories (knowindia.india.gov.in)

<https://knowindia.india.gov.in/states-uts/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18443>

"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." – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (accessed 31 May 2020)

<https://www.ncst.gov.in/index.php>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=33998>

"Despite the many honours bestowed on Birsa Munda at high places, there has not been much change in the situation of tribal people at the grassroots level. The basic motivations behind tribal rebellions, i.e., Jal, Jangal aur Zameen (water, forest and land) remain the same. Hence, the fight by the tribal people of India will probably continue until a radical change is made in the government's policy towards them." – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak in "Presidential elections: An Adivasi in high office" (Indian Express, 16 July 2022)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/an-adivasi-in-high-office-8032126/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=51060>

"There are many anomalies in terms of identification of these communities [the erstwhile aborigines], from state to state. Many people also do not know what is denotified tribe and which authority is looking after their grievances." – Bibek Debroy in "An unfortunate legacy" (Indian Express, 5 January 2017)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/crime-criminal-act-racial-discrimination-non-bailable-offence-criminal-tribes-act-an-unfortunate-legacy-4459258/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12284>

"To an administrator, the term 'tribe' means a group of citizens who are the special responsibility of the President of India." – Thulasi Brinda in *Museum's Journal*, Chennai Museum (October 2003 – September 2004)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35377>

"Few bureaucrats have the cultural calibre or the intellectual curiosity to try to understand the nature of the societies over which they rule." – Guest Column titled "Hands off tribal culture" (*India Today*, 9 January 2014)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/guest-column/story/19800915-hands-off-tribal-culture-821415-2014-01-09>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11460>

"The British Raj enacted the Criminal Tribes Act 1871 through which a tribe, gang, or class of persons addicted to the systemic commission of offences were notified. The Criminal Tribes Act was later repealed in 1949 once our Constitution was enacted, and the tribes were 'de-notified'". – D.Y. Chandrachud (Chief Justice of India since 9 November 2022) quoted in "Members of De-Notified Tribes Picked Up to Cover Up Shoddy Investigations" (*The Wire*, 7 December 2021)

<https://thewire.in/rights/members-of-de-notified-tribes-picked-up-to-cover-up-shoddy-investigations-justice-chandrachud>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"The STs [Scheduled Tribes] in Scheduled Areas do not get quality education, healthcare and other services [and remain] excluded, isolated and captived to become moths to the flames of the deep state." – Indian Police Service (IPS) officer M Nageswara Rao in "Scheduled Tribes: Who are they? How to mainstream them?" (Times of India, 16 May 2020)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/scheduled-tribes-who-are-they-how-to-mainstream-them/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>



"We [the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights] are extremely concerned about the pattern of events: individuals allegedly being abducted or arrested before their killing, and their bodies bearing injuries indicative of torture." – Scroll Staff on Fake Encounter Cases in "Uttar Pradesh encounters: UN human rights experts concerned about killings" (Scroll.in, 12 January 2019)

<https://scroll.in/latest/909219/uttar-pradesh-encounters-un-human-rights-experts-concerned-about-killings-call-for-investigation>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"When law enforcement agencies become perpetrators of violence, it becomes an ominous case of abuse of authority. [...] Heads of all national commissions, such as, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Minorities and National Commission for Women are represented on the board of NHRC to strengthen and ensure standards of human rights of all strata of people. Despite that there is no improvement in human rights of citizens, pointing out public institutions, though existing on paper with all lofty ideals as defenders of human rights of the people, are ineffective or defunct for all practical purposes." – MY Siddiqui in "Time to tame torturers" (tehelka.com, 29 October 2020)

<http://tehelka.com/time-to-tame-torturers/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"The natural wealth with which much of tribal India is endowed is also its bane. The erstwhile Bastar district, one of the largest in the country, was first divided into three, and later into seven parts, each with a separate administrative system. In the guise of bringing governance closer to the people – let us, for convenience, assume that the Adivasi people crave government – corporate and bureaucratic channels have been efficiently established, and lead to the mineral-rich hinterlands. [...] The Adivasi is wedged between the state programme for development, meaning mines, dams, steel plants and roads, and a private agenda for quick money, which is currently termed 'real estate'." – Madhu Ramnath, Preface to *Woodsmoke and Leafcups* (HarperCollins India, 2015), p. xxix

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/930839347>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20305>

"Our authorities have shown us their claws... is not ashamed to use its machines of destruction to terrorise a population completely disarmed." – Rabindranath Tagore in a letter to Mahatma Gandhi responding to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar (13 April 1919); quoted by Arnab Ganguly in "Bengal Assembly polls 2021" (The Telegraph online, 12 April 2021)

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/bengal-assembly-polls-2021-mamata-modi-make-firing-deaths-the-cornerstone-of-campaign/cid/1812345>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jallianwala\\_Bagh\\_massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jallianwala_Bagh_massacre)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"The philosopher-poet [Rabindranath Tagore] wanted a multi-cultural country rooted in egalitarianism, secularism and the right to dissent." – Meghalaya-based women's and democratic rights activist Angela Rangad in "Beyond Har Ghar Tiranga: Why Indians must plant Tagore's vision of nationalism in every home" (Scroll.in, 9 August 2022)

<https://scroll.in/article/1029979/beyond-har-ghar-tiranga-why-indians-must-plant-tagores-vision-of-nationalism-in-every-home>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35584>

"What is becoming clear is that the current Indian state seeks to turn common Hindu citizens into enforcers of its majoritarian vision at the neighbourhood level [...] This is most certainly a dangerous path for India because mass political and social radicalisation does not come with power-steering." – Vasundhara Sirnate Drennan (political scientist and journalist) on Mass indoctrination in "Haridwar's hubris of hate must be stopped" (The Hindu, 30 December 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/haridwars-hubris-of-hate-must-be-stopped/article38066548.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

"By bringing religion in as a criteria in the determination of citizenship through the recently legislated Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), the government has egregiously undermined the considerable applicability of India's historic ideals and the domestic roots of India's foreign policy, including pluralism and secular values." [...] The sharp contrast that India's recent domestic policies pose vis-a-vis the spirit of liberal democracy is telling." – Muhsin Puthan in "Is India Still a Rising Superpower?" (The Diplomat, 26 February 2020)

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/is-india-still-a-rising-superpower/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13546>

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- **Literature – fiction**

"While the danger of extinction looms large over some languages, many other languages have been thriving. For example, Gondi (spoken in Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra), Bhili (Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat), Mizo (Mizoram), Garo and Khasi (Meghalaya) and Kokborok (Tripura) are showing an upward trend because educated people in these communities have started using these languages for writing. They publish poems, write plays and perform them. In some of the languages, even films are being made." – Abhijit Mohanty in "Seven decades after independence, many tribal languages in India face extinction threat" (*Down to Earth*, 26 August 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/seven-decades-after-independence-many-tribal-languages-in-india-face-extinction-threat-73071>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6879>

"Some educated tribal writers from the North Eastern states have recently managed to enter the national discourse (such as Temsula Ao who writes in English and used to teach at NEHU Shillong) but most tribals from eastern, central and southern India [...] use languages that are inaccessible to the mainstream. The well-known Santal poet from Jharkhand, Nirmala Putul, started writing in Santali and remained unknown until she was translated into Hindi by Ashok Singh. [...] This has to be a collective effort and will take many years. I also know many non-tribal people who are sincerely interested in helping the tribals so I think their contributions should be accepted and acknowledged." – Scholar-publicist Ivy Hansdak (*The Johar Journal*), email 20 October 2020

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11376>

"Narayan's tale refuses to romanticise tribal ways of life — the pure, noble savage, Narayan shows, does not exist except as myth. He maps, of course, their intimate eco-vision, but also shows how disease ravages them due to their ignorance, alcoholism and the uneven gender relations. But he also points the finger at the economic exploitation that proves, finally, to be the bane of the community in the 'new India'." – Pramod K. Nayar in "Cultures in transformation", reviewing *Kocharethi* by Narayan, the first tribal novelist of South India (*The Hindu*, 3 April 2011)

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/Cultures-in-transformation/article14669586.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1459>

"Tribals are currently reeling under the influence of urbanisation. Still we are trying to preserve our culture through our writings, even when many of us do not speak the language." – Streamlet Dkhar (writer and professor of North East Hill University, Shillong) during the first-ever all-India tribal women writers' meet, quoted in "City platform for tribal women writers" (*The Telegraph*, 8 September 2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22856>

"Can we produce knowledge that is emancipatory for tribal and adivasi realities?" – Ruby Hembrom (founder-director of Adivaani—a publisher of Adivasi writing) interviewed by Madhuri Karak (Fiftytwo.in, 20 August 2022)

<https://fiftytwo.in/story/title-deeds/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=51851>

"Memory plays a significant role in unfolding and revealing the tribal literature [being] collectively owned by the community and every member has the right and authority to interpret and translate as per one's ability and genius to the best to make it accurate and appropriate. [I]nterpreting and translating from memory that has been handed down from generation to another [is] the only way to obtain accuracy as there is no written text." – Abstract by Athikho Kaisii, National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25096>

"Several indigenous authors—Easterine Kire, Jacinta Kerketta, Dolly Kikon, Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, Temsula Ao, Joy Pachuau, Senganglu Thamei, Gladson Dungdung, Veio Pou, Kham Khan Suan Hausing, Ngamjahao Kipgen, Hoineilhing Sitlhou and many more—are writing stories foregrounding their perspectives, concepts, and theories about tribes. This is a step towards undoing tribes' invisibility in literature. Yet, discrimination against tribes continues." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16601>

"Tribal literature, be it songs, arts or crafts, do not have written scripts, when any literature, in order to stand the tests of time, needs to be preserved in print." – Vaharoo Sonvane (tribal scholar-writer from Maharashtra) in a conference paper titled "Future of tribal literature" (The Telegraph, 29 April 2005)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1825>

"It's high time we recognise the contributions of tribal women in Indian literature." – Devendra Kumar Devesh, National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22856>

"The Ahoms ruled Assam for 600 years until the British took over in 1826. [...] Modern history writing in Assam has also maintained a silence about these smaller kingdoms with fascinating, dramatic histories and intriguing royal families." – Introduction to Indira Goswami's novel, *The Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar* (quoted in The Hindu, 2 March, 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-authors/a-literary-bridge/article4465234.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10674>

"[T]here is a group of tribal writers, who, through their literature, are giving an answer to the questions raised on their identity. This is a phase of revolt for tribal writers, who are trying to showcase the tribes in the same light. It is only after this that the tribal writers can write about the beauty of their world." - Jitendra Vasava (lecturer at Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh), "Symposium held on Gujarat tribal literature, culture" (Indian Express, 28 February 2010)

<http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/symposium-held-on-gujarat-tribal-literature/585310>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6304>

"The rights of tribal people, the lives of ordinary workers and the depiction of female desire were amongst the themes explored by the writer Mahasweta Devi. [Her] writing offers a way of using language to explore ideas about power, freedom and feminism." – Introduction to novelist Preti Taneja's radio programme "Books to Make Space For on the Bookshelf: Sindhubala" (BBC Arts & Ideas 17 March 2021)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p099jckg>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20816>

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- **Literature and bibliographies**

"The whole body of writings on the tribes has been marked by i) Orientalist stereotyping ii) nationalism, because of which they were largely misrepresentations." – Joseph Bara, on the need to critique the existing narratives and knowledge systems about the tribals in India, *Report on the National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative"* (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23050>

"[M]ost studies of adivasi society tend to focus on their culture (the more exotic the better) and very little is available on the economy and politics of this much maligned and marginalised nine per cent of India [whereas] Kela challenges the emerging but current opinion of revisionist anthropologists." – Stan Thekaekara (Co-founder, Just Change India) reviewing *A Rogue and Peasant Slave* by Shashank Kela (Indian Express, 5 January 2013)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10961>

"By the 1940s in India, when considering how to incorporate tribal populations into the nation state, there was a division between two camps—one promoted 'isolation' and 'protection' against assimilation, while the other was for 'intervention' and 'assimilation.' Verrier Elwin and Ghurye broadly represent these opposite poles. Elwin, at least initially, supported protectionist policies and recommended the 'partial isolation' of tribes from non-tribal society." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6911>

"If a man cannot enjoy the return of spring, why should he be happy in a labour-saving Utopia?" – George Orwell in his posthumous volume of essays *Shooting an Elephant*, quoted by E.M Foster in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London: Penguin, 1976), p. 76

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/805143625>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34514>



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"Western epistemology has considered oral societies as being devoid of histories, while they do appropriate these histories in different ways. The binaries on which these studies are premised are unfair – such as those of oral/written, civilized/ uncivilized, subjective/ objective. They consider documentation as authentic and deride the authenticity of oral cultures. They are unmindful of the fact that the documentation is also not free from subjective ideological interventions. [...] Therefore, it is necessary for tribal studies to counter the epistemologies from outside and develop an epistemology with a perspective from within." – Bipin Jojo, Report on the National Conference National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23050>

"In West Bengal, most Santal children attend state schools where Bengali is the language of instruction. In the neighbouring states, other languages are prevalent. At the same time, Latin letters are still in use as well, not least because some of the books prepared early on by the missionaries are still in print. They are indeed very useful." – Boro Baski in "The pros and cons of Ol-chiki" (*D+C Development and Cooperation*, e-Paper April 2021)

[https://www.dandc.eu/sites/default/files/pdf\\_files/dc\\_2021-04.pdf](https://www.dandc.eu/sites/default/files/pdf_files/dc_2021-04.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21581>

"In the highlands of the former Hyderabad State (now Andhra Pradesh) concentrations of Gonds persisted in their traditional lifestyle until the middle of the twentieth century: feudal chiefs continued to function as tribal heads and hereditary bards preserved a wealth of myths and epic tales.[...] In 1979 the Gonds were once again being subjected to the pressure of outside forces and Professor von Fürer-Haimendorf lays special emphasis on the analysis of the process of social change forced upon the Gonds by settlers from outside." – Publisher's description of *The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh Tradition and Change in an Indian Tribe* by Christoph and Elisabeth von Fürer-Haimendorf (Routledge, December 2021)

<https://www.routledge.com/The-Gonds-of-Andhra-Pradesh-Tradition-and-Change-in-an-Indian-Tribe/Furer-Haimendorf-Furer-Haimendorf/p/book/9781032156484>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11872>

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- **Museum collections – general**

"As far as the representation of their cultural heritage abroad, small communities have realized that this 'sometimes happens in a very adverse socio-cultural and political situation.'" – Report by Boro Baski on “Transnational Custodianship of Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century” (a conference held at the University of Copenhagen in 2018)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25739>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25739>

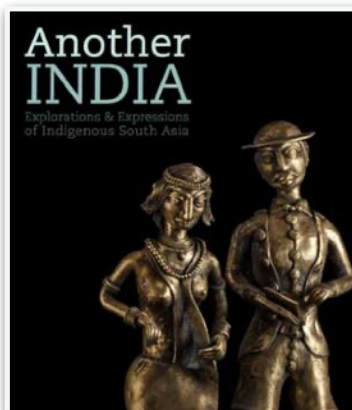
"As the world's first museum dedicated to human rights, we are centred around the idea that respect and understanding of human rights can serve as a positive force for change in the world." – "Mandate", Canadian Museum for Human Rights

<https://humanrights.ca/about/mandate>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24574>

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- **Museum collections – India**

"A museum can be a motivation for the community to move forward towards modernity without abandoning one's Santal mentality." – Boro Baski, co-founder, Museum of Santal Culture Bishnubati village (West Bengal)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21279>

ePub | Free catalogue: Banam: One of the ancient musical instruments of the Santals

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30075>

ePub | Free catalogue: Museum of Santal Culture (Bishnubati)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24245>

<https://archive.org/details/Catalogue-Museum-of-Santal-Culture-Bishnubati>

The interactive Museum Movement in India works for national integration, "to celebrate the 'simultaneous validity' of various valuable cultural patterns evolved over thousands of years." – Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, featuring the Bastar band on World Environment day- June, 2011

<https://youtu.be/1kjPS3rNj-M>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4300>

"It becomes necessary to privilege the oral over the written, and myth over history [and] the established institutions of managing memory stand to gain by the theoretical complexities posed by the Adivasi heritage to the current museum practices in India." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy, founding member of the Adivasi Academy at Tejgadh and BHASHA Research and Publication Centre Baroda (Gujarat)

"The Academy is devoted to the study of Adivasi history, folklore, cultural geography, social dynamics, economy, development studies, medicine, music, arts and theatre. With its multidisciplinary approach and related interventional measures, the Adivasi Academy constantly strives to create new approaches to academics and social, cultural and developmental interventions." – Adivasi Academy & Museum of Adivasi Voice at Tejgadh (Adivasiacademy.org)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6304>

"There is an intimate connection between the historical process of the creation of 'Adivasi' as a social category and the construction of the knowledge about the Adivasi communities as well as the popular imagery of Adivasis." – The Future of Anthropology's Archival Knowledge: an International Reassessment

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6335>

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Museum of Santal Culture (Bishnubati)

Photos by courtesy Boro Baski (below) and editor

Read or download two bilingual catalogues

on [archive.org](https://archive.org):

eBook | Free catalogue: Banam: One of the ancient musical instruments of the Santals

eBook | Free catalogue: Museum of Santal Culture (Bishnubati) – West Bengal



- **Musicology**

"It is by now common knowledge that Adivasi artistic-creative traditions have been organically interwoven into a total way of life, which has, over generations, been developed on the basis of an eco-centric world view that considers the human world and nature as parts of the same continuum. Such traditions, whether wall/floor decorations, iconography, fine and/or performing arts, are deeply related to one another, and all of them are related to the everyday Adivasi way of life." – Jayasri Banerjee in "Adivasi music and the public stage" (Indian Folklife, January 2002)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6448>

"[G]reeting songs, lullabies, love and courtship songs, ballads, and humorous songs [...] might well be completely unaccompanied, or accompanied by just a drum. Sometimes the male musicians play one-stringed, long-necked lutes, which provide a drone. Certain tribes, however, have stringed melody instruments, either a small fiddle or a stick zither with attached resonators, and these may be used to accompany the songs. This stick zither may well have been the prototype of the vina depicted in miniature paintings during the Muslim period." – NA Jairazbhoy, "Tribal, Folk and Devotional Music" in: *A Cultural History of India* (London: Oxford University Press 1975)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3488>

"Ethnomusicology can be considered as the holistic and cultural study of music existing in various folk, tribal and other ethnic societies. Ethnomusicology is an approach to the study of any music not only in terms of itself but also in relation to its cultural context. [...] In India, not much attention was paid to study folk music before independence. The first Indian scholar who took an interest in studying the folk songs was Rabindranath Tagore." – Bisakha Goswami (Assistant Professor in Musicology, Rabindra Bharati University) in "Emergence of Ethnomusicology: As Traced in Indian Perspectives", *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach and Studies* (Volume 01, No.6, Nov-Dec 2014)

<https://www.academia.edu/10205543/> x

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3488>

"Ethnomusicologists [...] look at each musical culture from a viewpoint that relates it to the world of music, a world comprised of a multitude of musical cultures that are alike in some ways and different in others, and they believe that insight can be gained from comparison." – Bruno Nettl in *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* (PDF, p. 20)

<https://www.academia.edu/4049835/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2310>



“Cultural music and dance forms among the adivasis have evolved over centuries. Beautified by elements and nuances of their surroundings, these forms depict their very lifestyles. Played for hours together in the same tempo, music is an integral part of celebrations and mourning. [...] Each instrument has a purpose and belief related to it and they call for agile fingers, sturdy nails and strength of breath. Chaudhari who hails from Padamdungri, mentioned how the playing of Dera – exclusively a woman’s art – is now almost non-existent.” – Vikram Chaudhari interviewed by Ashleshaa Khurana for Times Of India (30 January 2014)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13780>

“Tribal and folk music is not taught in the same way that Indian classical music is taught.” – David Courtney

[https://chandrakantha.com/articles/indian\\_music/folk\\_music.html](https://chandrakantha.com/articles/indian_music/folk_music.html)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13574>

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“A rich oral tradition and music”  
Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures (Shillong) >>  
[Find publications on India's tribal music >>](#)



- **Networking**

"It is their community, so they should take responsibility for it and direct the enterprise in a way they think will benefit their development." – B. Ramdas, co-founder of Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust (VBVT) in "The story of YouTube channel Kaathadi and how it's empowering tribal communities in TN" by Megha Kaveri (thenewsminute.com Education, 18 July 2020)

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/story-youtube-channel-kaathadi-and-how-its-empowering-tribal-communities-tn-128968>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34846>

"Sanjeevani, an NGO working among Girijans [hill dwelling communities], with the help of another NGO Samata and CRYNET, a network of rural youth organisations, organises the old seeds festival every year at different villages." – P. Devullu (Secretary, Sanjeevani) interviewed by G Narasimha Rao (The Hindu, 29 April 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/amazing-variety-of-seeds-protected-by-tribal-people-of-agency/article4665741.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13727>

"In this period of ecological catastrophes like climate change, the tribal way of life shows the alternatives we need to promote peace, sustainability and justice." – Declaration on Adivasi Swaraj by Navdanya (a network of seed keepers and organic producers across 16 states in India)

[https://navdanya.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=79:declaration-on-adivasi-swaraj&catid=12:earth-democracy](https://navdanya.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=79:declaration-on-adivasi-swaraj&catid=12:earth-democracy)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6068>

"The new system [people's biodiversity registers (PBR) with 'comprehensive information on availability and knowledge of local biological resources'] will also protect intellectual property rights over traditional knowledge; information will not be shared without consent." – Ishan Kukreti in "Most biodiversity panels now in place, National Biodiversity Authority to tell NGT" (*Down to Earth*, 18 February 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/india/most-biodiversity-panels-now-in-place-national-biodiversity-authority-to-tell-ngt-69334>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

"The nation's 'primary conservers' – often tribal farmers – are now seen as 'guardians of biological diversity'." – Video message by scientist M.S. Swaminathan whose research foundation (MSSRF) was founded with proceeds from the First World Food Prize (1987) and remains committed to the livelihoods of rural communities.

<https://www.mssrf.org>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

"To have faith in the possibility of love as a social and not only exceptional-individual phenomenon, is a rational faith based on the insight into the very nature of man." – Social psychologist Erich Fromm in *The Art of Loving* (New York, 1956), p. 133

<https://archive.org/details/TheArtOfLoving/page/n147/mode/1up>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31882>

"By and large, the middle class and the educated are changing and becoming an important voice. They are the voice demanding change and action from the government." – Rashneh Pardiwala in "Why It's Hard to 'Change Mindsets' on Environmental Protection Among India's Elites"; interview on environmental education at her Centre for Environmental Research and Education (CERE) in Mumbai (Asia Blog, 27 July 2015)

<https://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/interview-why-its-hard-change-mindsets-environmental-protection-among-indias-elites>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

"Bring your know-how from your countries and communities. Air, water, earth... They have no borders." – Carlo Petrini, co-founder of the Slow Food Youth Network (SFYN), quoted in "Eat, pray, love" (The Hindu, 10 November 2012)

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine//article59815973.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=8166>

"[A] local community radio channel called 'Asur Mobile Radio' in Jharkhand launched cultural programmes in the Asur language, which has only 7,000-8,000 speakers." – Abhijit Mohanty in "Seven decades after independence, many tribal languages in India face extinction threat" (*Down to Earth*, 26 August 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/seven-decades-after-independence-many-tribal-languages-in-india-face-extinction-threat-73071>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6879>

"PARI is not only archiving invaluable materials about rural India, but also developing a cadre of knowledgeable reporters who can report from rural India about its realities. [...] It will strengthen its efforts to have subalterns speak for themselves; for instance, adivasi women shoot their own videos that are posted on the site." – Jael Silliman in "Voices from the countryside" (The Telegraph, 12 November 2016)

[https://www.telegraphindia.com/1161112/jsp/opinion/story\\_118705.jsp](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1161112/jsp/opinion/story_118705.jsp)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21398>

"It has also been observed that the one thing common to most weaves and motifs is the role of women as creators." – Avantika Bhuyan (interviewing members the North East Network) in "Folklore, myths and handloom" (Livemint, 1 December 2017)

<https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/FR23TDZqwz1hDYOIB5mRSN/Folklore-myths-and-handloom.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23691>

"Video Volunteers is made up of excluded people – Dalits, Muslims, Adivasi and women. All of them come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. [...] It's a bold innovative campaign. Surely a few steps forward in this decades old fight for a human existence." – Stalin K. interviewed by Mari Marcel Thekaekara (Video Volunteers, 11 May 2012)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6129>

"Government-NGO partnership models by PRIA and Gram Vikas have helped communities and Gram Panchayats to work together in Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Jharkhand for creation and maintenance of water and sanitation structures and activating their district planning committees." – "UNICEF's efforts to support the tribal population, especially children who suffer from malnourishment" (*Programme report on Tribal nutrition*, accessed 12 September 2022)

<https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/tribal-nutrition>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"People record their messages in Hindi and Chhattisgarhi, and some in Kuduk and Gondi dialects. Sahu files her reports in Chhattisgarhi. The system — called CGnet Swara — is fairly simple. [...] It's the voice of the tribals in an area where issues related to them are hardly mentioned in the mainstream media." – Story on CGnet Swara and the Chhattisgarh Network website [www.cgnet.in](http://www.cgnet.in), The Telegraph (Calcutta, 30 May 2010)

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/7-days/by-the-tribal-for-the-tribal/cid/516741>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=9489>

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- **Organizations**

Call Shakti Vahini or the national helpline Childline to report human trafficking of tribal girls and women:

Shakti Vahini on +91-11-42244224, +91-9582909025 or the national helpline Childline on 1098.

Learn more: [https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=21889](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=21889)

"Rural communities certainly need education, but their life is interwoven with many social and cultural issues that must all be taken into account. UNESCO is right to argue that an integrated approach with a holistic view is appropriate." – Santal educationist Boro Baski in "India's rural primary schools still have room for improvement" (Development + Cooperation, 22 May 2016)

<https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/indias-rural-primary-schools-still-have-room-improvement>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20429>

"The Adivasi Academy is founded by Bhasha at Tejgadh in Chhotaudepur district of Gujarat as an institute to combine the functions of the national academies, museums and literary bodies in the country, with respect to Adivasi culture, arts and literature. Over the years, the Adivasi communities with whom Bhasha has been actively involved, have voiced themselves through various spaces and mediums as arts, theatre, publishing, journalism and cultural activism." – Bhasha Research Archival Website

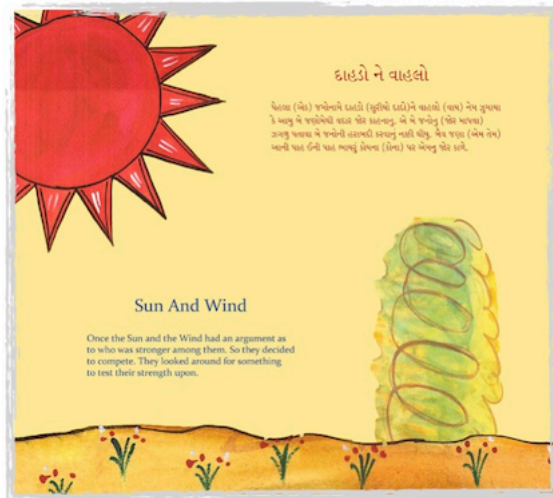
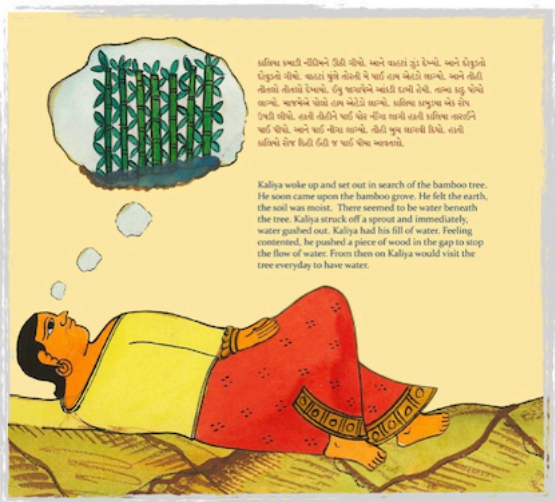
<https://www.bhashaarchival.org/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23324>

"New texts will arise from the tribes; narratives of our survival through millennia, ancestral songs of identity and resistance, the richness of our lifeways; of ploughing through collective memory for this collective resurgence against the (inherited and internal) colonialism of the present. Its time has come. Our time has come." - Ruby Hembrom (founder-director of Adivaani—a publisher of Adivasi writing), quoted by Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6911>



Goth: Adivasi Stories from Gujarat | [Free eBook >>](#)  
Art © Bhasha Research (Vadodara)  
[Adivasi literature and translations >>](#)

"Since independence, multiple government policies and programmes sought to develop tribal communities by focusing on their livelihood, education and health. Despite six decades of special treatment, even today, tribal peoples continue to be the most undernourished segment of the Indian society. [...] In January 2015, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs held a national conclave on 'Nourishing India's Tribal Children'." – Unicef India "What we do: Tribal nutrition" (accessed 26 July 2022)

<https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/tribal-nutrition>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"Our aim is for all the adivasi institutions to be owned, governed and managed by the adivasis through their own representatives. The day-to-day administration of these institutions is already in the hands of trained adivasis. The leadership governing these institutions are adivasi village leaders and youth." – Action for Community Organisation, Rehabilitation and Development (ACCORD)

<https://www.accordweb.in>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1992>

"In every country around the world, people are working for little or no pay, controlled by threats, debt, and violence. We call it by many names, but it amounts to the same thing: modern slavery. Slavery is illegal everywhere, but it continues to thrive because so many of us. [...] By joining Freedom United, you become part of the solution." – Freedom United

<https://www.freedomunited.org/>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=21951](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=21951)

"The significance of human rights, more so their realization, remind us of the necessity to place the human being at the centre of our overall development had stated that all human rights for all people in all countries should be the goal of the 21st century whereby everybody lives a life of dignity and enjoys freedom from fear and want, without discrimination. [...] The Workshop took stock of the implementation of its recommendations made [in 2009] with the objective of strengthening the mechanism of protecting human rights defenders and valuing their work towards good governance [including a demand that] India must ratify the International Convention against Torture and bring in a domestic legislation against Torture on priority in accordance with the International Convention." – National Human Right Commission, "Annual Report - 2014-2015" (National Workshop on Human Rights Defenders in New Delhi, 19 February 2015), pp. 8 & 229

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC\\_AR\\_EN\\_2014-2015\\_27022019.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC_AR_EN_2014-2015_27022019.pdf)  
[www.nhrc.nic.in](http://www.nhrc.nic.in)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>



"PARI [People's Archive of Rural India] is not only archiving invaluable materials about rural India, but also developing a cadre of knowledgeable reporters who can report from rural India about its realities. This digital archive has already received some significant awards for its work, including the Praful Bidwai Memorial Award (June, 2016). PARI seeks to "continue its efforts to push the borders of digital multimedia and take journalism, arts, crafts, and literature out of the hands of corporations and hand it back to people." It will strengthen its efforts to have subalterns speak for themselves; for instance, adivasi women shoot their own videos that are posted on the site. [...] It has just launched "Cover Your Country", and is determined to report stories from all of India's 95 regions; the mainstream media today covers just seven or eight of these regions." – Jael Silliman in "Voices from the countryside" (The Telegraph, 12 November 2016)

[https://www.telegraphindia.com/1161112/jsp/opinion/story\\_118705.jsp#.WEK2-JIkLUN](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1161112/jsp/opinion/story_118705.jsp#.WEK2-JIkLUN)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21398>

"[P]eople, particularly indigenous or tribal groups that number in millions live inside or at the periphery of protected areas, and rely on biodiversity for sustaining their livelihoods [while] centralised management of biodiversity has created conflicts between people and managers of protected areas. These conflicts have endangered rather than enhanced conservation. [...] Overall, India is blessed with unique and an enormous amount of biodiversity that sustains many of our economic endeavours, and provides aesthetic, cultural and spiritual values. This biodiversity is declining, and this decline is threatening our survival. [...] Meeting this responsibility will entail a fundamental shift in the ways we describe, assess changes, and conserve biodiversity." – Kamaljit S. Bawa (President of the Bangalore-based Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment) in "Survey of the Environment (2010 published by The Hindu")

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/article547960.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5026>

"Visva Bharati was established [...] as part of a unique experiment to have classes not indoors but outside in nature. [...] About religion, [Tagore] wrote, 'Those who in the name of faith embrace illusion, kill and are killed.'" - Atanu Mitra in "Why the decision to cancel historic fairs at Tagore's university sparked violence and vandalism" (Scroll.in 17 August 2020)

<https://scroll.in/article/970959/why-the-decision-to-cancel-historic-fairs-at-tagores-university-sparked-violence-and-vandalism>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35639>

"Tribal and indigenous peoples' education must be under their control; it must be rooted in the people's own land, language and culture; and instil pride in themselves and their people. Help us put indigenous education back under indigenous control."  
– Video post by Survival International on Factory Schools where being indigenous is seen as "wrong"

<https://www.survivalinternational.org/factoryschools>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34514>

"Video Volunteers (VV) is working to create an alternative media landscape in which thousands of people around the world, living in slums and villages, are producing high quality video content that brings awareness to communities and empowers them to take action. We create models of sustainable, locally owned media, and devise training programs that give communities the journalism, critical thinking and creative skills to run them." – About VideoVolunteers

<https://www.youtube.com/c/videovolunteers/about>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6129>

"[T]he Tharu community, a Scheduled Tribe that lives in the largest numbers in Udham Singh Nagar, a fertile district on the outer foothills of the Himalayas [counted] among Uttarakhand's earliest settlers and among its most disadvantaged. [Since its inception in 2007] Bhoomi Adhikar Manch (BAM), a network of village-level organisations [has been] working on tribal rights in around 40 villages of Uttarakhand." – Puja Awasthi (*People's Archive of Rural India*, 4 October 2018)

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/this-land-is-mine-i-will-get-it-back/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4156>

"The General Assembly [...] Recognizing the value and diversity of the cultures and the forms of social organization of the world's indigenous people [...] Mindful of the relevant recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the International Conference on Population and Development, in particular chapter 26 of Agenda 21 2/ on recognizing and strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities [...] Determined to promote the enjoyment of the rights of indigenous people and the full development of their distinct cultures and communities [...] Decides that the Decade will have an operational focus to implement its goals and that its theme will be "Indigenous people: partnership in action" – Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations during its 94th plenary meeting on 23 December 1994

[https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/49/214](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/49/214)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=20487](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=20487)

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- **Poetry**

"The mountain child—a fragment of the mountain—plays in the lap of the mountain / Toddling up the mountain / he plants his feet in the mountain soil / to rise like a mountain / in the land of mountains" – Excerpt from "Mountain Child", a Santali poem by Nirmala Putul who questions 'development' and 'progress' in modern civilization

[https://www.poetrytranslation.org/poems/18/Mountain\\_Child](https://www.poetrytranslation.org/poems/18/Mountain_Child)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11376>

"My poetry is firmly rooted in Kerala. It talks about trees unique to our landscape, fish that can only be found in our ponds, and tribes that carry ancient memories of Malayalam. There are many amidst us who are despised, humiliated and oppressed by human conditions such as caste, colour and gender. They shouldn't be apologetic but assert themselves. My poems celebrate the beauty of blackness and ugliness. Such poetry cannot be performed, or composed. It lacks music, it has to be read." – S. Joseph, who introduced Malayalam poetry to hitherto unexpressed human conditions in "Joseph and his brothers" (blog by John Cheeran, Times of India, 23 January 2016)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/Arrackistan/joseph-and-his-brothers>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4413>

"You tell me, screaming / That this nurtured plot of land / this pond, this farmhouse / you tell me, these are not mine? [...] The land of thick jungles / a desolate land of trees and vines / We worked hard to clean it up / to make it liveable / and lived happily / I must reach for my bow and arrow." – Excerpt from a Santali poem by Parimal Hembram who recites poems in both Bengali and Santali, translated by Antara Dev Sen (*The Little Magazine*, Vol. VII, Issue 3 & 4.)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23529>

"My voice is for freedom, for people, against injustice, against colonialism and neo-colonialism. [...] I disagree with the naming of our community as "Tea-tribe". Is there any community in this world named after a commodity?" – Kamal Kumar Tanti in "Ashley Tellis" (*The Hindu*, 31 July 2010)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4667>

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- **Santali language and literature**

"Santali is not a dead language in the first place so it does not need to be 'revived'! [...] Santali (Santhali) is one of the two tribal languages that have been recognized as official languages." – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak (Jamia Millia Islamia University New Delhi, 13 January 2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21604>

"Santali language and the music are the two important life lines for the existence of the Santal tribe in the modern world, and it has helped me to reconnect with the socio-cultural life of my village and retain my Santal mentality." – Boro Baski in "Gai Gupi Kada Gupi: The story behind the song" (April 2021)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SyRGJHepbc>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=42269>

"Mostly, these tribals have been portrayed as the objects of analysis, hunger-stricken and uncivilized. Consequently, the socio-political mainstream that is unaccustomed to accept them as civilized human beings, tries to subjugate them. They agree to accept them as their ally only at the cost of their betrayal to their identity. The available literature of Santhals is the demonstration of the voices of the people struggling to liberate themselves from the clutches of varied suppressions that problematize the very essence of their identity. Taking characters from every stratum, Santhali writers are enriching Tribal literature and foregrounding the unmapped realm of Santhal community." – Abstract by Teresa Tudu ("Tribes In Transition" conference 2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25135>

"For decades, the Ol-chiki alphabet, which was invented [by Raghunath Murmu in 1925] to represent the Santali language, was largely irrelevant. That changed in the late 1970s. [...] In 2004, Santali became one of India's 22 official languages. [...] As more teachers are trained to teach in Santali and more textbooks with Ol-chiki writing appear, educational results will improve. Moreover, there is scope for publishing the same Santali text in more than one script." – Boro Baski in "The pros and cons of Ol-chiki" (*D+C Development and Cooperation*, e-Paper April 2021)

[https://www.dandc.eu/sites/default/files/pdf\\_files/dc\\_2021-04.pdf](https://www.dandc.eu/sites/default/files/pdf_files/dc_2021-04.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21581>

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- **Storytelling**

"Having grown up within the largely oral Khasi community in Meghalaya, whose creative expressions mainly comprised song and "iathoh khana" (storytelling), it puzzled me that, in none of the canonical creative writing textbooks, had I come across a discussion on the influences of oral storytelling on craft." – Janice Pariat in "Decolonising creative writing: It's about not conforming to techniques of the western canon" (Scroll.in, 4 July 2021)

<https://scroll.in/article/999215/decolonising-creative-writing-its-about-not-conforming-to-techniques-of-the-western-canon>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3382>

"[A]ll the stories we hear (from Adivasis) are from Oxford graduates and 'upper' caste people. Those are not our stories. But nothing is too late; we have to write our own stories, about our issues, from our own perspectives. It is better late than never." – Scholar-Activist Abhay Xaxa quoted by Mahtab Alam (*The Wire*, 10 April 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/remembering-abhay-xaxa-a-fiercely-unapologetic-activist-scholar-activist>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=32717>

"Folktales are orally narrated and performed with the speaker's gestures, voice modulations, imitation of characters, and improvisations. They are also participated by the audience. When oral tales take the form of written narratives, they undergo several changes at the level of language, culture, genre and audience; from tribal language to standardized Oriya language, which in turn involves appropriation of cultures. In terms of genre, they change from oral performances of songs and stories to written narratives." – Anand Mahanand, Report on the National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23050>

"An intimate, long-term relationship with traditional territories also gives rise to Indigenous systems of governance, social organization, and science. [...] Examples of 'Native science' at work in food systems are among the best documented, having commanded the attention of natural and social scientists for at least the past century and a half. The process is both simple and complex." – Sam Grey & Raj Patel in "Food sovereignty as decolonization: some contributions from Indigenous movements to food system and development politics" (Springer, 2014)

<http://rajpatel.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Grey-Patel-2015-Food-Sovereignty-as-Decolonization.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27254>

"[S]torytelling at its best through true stories of a tribal people's daily life, and the interferences and abuses of power that come from government officials, politicians, lawyers — exploiters and manipulators of every hue. The full joy of tribal life [in Bastar] opens up in these pages without the slightest romanticisation. [...] This is a book highly recommended for anyone who wants to journey into a deeper understanding of tribal cultures, which currently face genocide in Central India." – Felix Padel reviewing *Woodsmoke and Leafcups* by Madhu Ramnath (The Hindu, 12 March 2016)

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/literary-review/felix-padel-reviews-woodsmoke-and-leafcups/article8341808.ece>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/930839347>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20305>

"There is a need to reclaim descriptions of the tribes; the onus must reside with the tribes themselves, since they have endured these portrayals for far too long." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4012>

"Situated in the lap of the Himalayas, Arunachal Pradesh is a unifying abode of diverse ethnic communities following their own distinct tongues and cultures. There are 26 major tribes and hundreds of sub tribes with more than 90 languages being spoken. But amidst this plurality, there is one common feature among all the communities, that is that they are great storytellers." – Yater Nyokir in "Bards from the dawn-lit mountains: What is the literature of Arunachal Pradesh?" (Scroll.in, 2 March 2021)

<https://scroll.in/article/988180/bards-from-the-dawn-lit-mountains-what-is-the-literature-of-arunachal-pradesh>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21624>

"If Adivasis were to start writing their own Discovery Of India, it would be something like this: There are those who talk of India's '5000 year-old culture,' there are those who talk of its 'timeless traditions.' If India has a timeless tradition, it is ours." – Gail Omvedt in "Call us adivasis, please", *Folio* Special issue "Adivasi" (The Hindu, 16 July 2000)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26645>

"Consistent across time and cultures is the use of the body to communicate and express—to tell stories, participate in the cycles of nature, mourn, pray, and celebrate" – Exhibition text, "Circle of Dance" (National Museum of the American Indian in New York)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=9325>



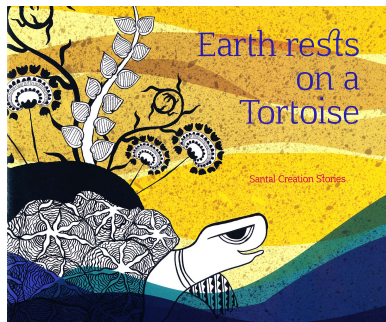
"We are the experts that connect to our people, and we know how to talk to our people in our communities. We know how to fairly represent them [...] giving voice to people who have never had much of a voice in the last few hundred years. [T]he key for Native media to succeed is for it to connect to its cultural roots." - Francine Compton (Canadian tv-producer) in "More than News: Indigenous media empowers native voices and communities" (*American Indian Magazine*, Smithsonian, Summer 2020)

[www.AmericanIndianMagazine.org](http://www.AmericanIndianMagazine.org)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22744>

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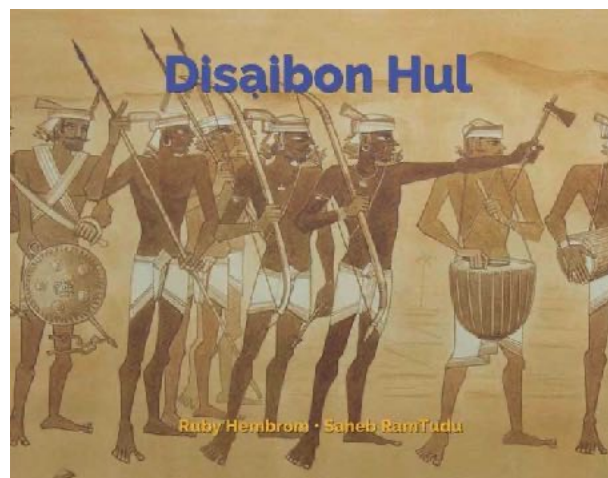
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[Santal Hul \(revolution of 1855-56\)](#) >>

[Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) >>

- **Tribal culture worldwide**

"I think the important thing is to realise in this discussion that we are holistic people and so every time we do something as indigenous people, we are considering everything, everything around us, and I think we should do the same throughout the world." – Linda Young, artist and Traditional Knowledge Keeper for the Saskatchewan Public School Division in Canada, interviewed by Veronica Yates, Director of Child Rights International Network CRIN, in "The Power of Healing" (15 January 2020)

<https://home.crin.org/readlistenwatch/stories/2020/5/6/the-power-of-healing>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=52680>

"Tribal cultures the world over are intricately linked with the forests they live in. The story, or should we call it the 'history' of modern civilization, is largely one of the taming and destroying the great forests of the world and the innumerable tribal communities that lived therein. [...] Vices like alcoholism were introduced; the addiction is now used by the settlers to exploit resources from the forests." – Pankaj Sekhsaria in *Islands in Flux: The Andaman and Nicobar Story* (Harper Litmus, 2017), pp. 5-7

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1122742858>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26863>

"People need language to communicate with one another and also transmit from generation to generation knowledge, ideas, beliefs and traditions, which are essential for their recognition, well-being, evolution and peaceful coexistence." –

"Summary report on the International Year of Indigenous Languages, 2019" (United Nations, 14 February 2020)

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/040/59/PDF/N2004059.pdf?OpenElement>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46777>

"Don't be afraid to evolve, don't be afraid to stay the same – because they are both valuable, you need both those tools!" – Buffy-Sainte Marie (singer, songwriter, activist and author of three books for children) interviewed by Piya Chattopadhyay for CBC radio

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thenextchapter/full-episode-june-18-2022-1.6491133/buffy-sainte-marie-s-new-children-s-book-tâpwê-and-the-magic-hat-draws-on-the-wisdom-of-indigenous-elders-1.6491178>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=50338>

"[India] has the highest number of Indigenous people in the world after Africa. As tribes uphold unique cultures, their preservation is vital at a time when a specific national cultural discourse is growing stronger [...] in the backdrop of climate change, development, and deforestation." – Deepanwita Gita Niyogi in "India's Adivasi Identity in Crisis" (Pulitzer Center, 27 May 2021)

<https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/indias-ativasi-identity-crisis>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17554>

"I carry my life experiences with me everywhere I go. It's those experiences that give me hope for the future. If an Indigenous woman from humble beginnings can be confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, our country holds promise for everyone." – Deb Haaland quoted in "Reactions From Indian Country to Deb Haaland's Confirmation as Secretary of the Interior" [USA] (National Museum of the American Indian, 18 March 2021)

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-indian/2021/03/18/reactions-indian-country-deb-haaland's-confirmation-secretary-interior/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4540>

"We were here before King Wijaya [the first Aryan king] came. We are the oldest living inhabitants in the country – and I want everyone to know that we exist here. I want everyone to know that we have our language, and we want to take it forward." – Gunabandilaaththo (Danigala Maha Bandaralage lineage of Vedda) interviewed by Zinara Rathnayake in "Sri Lanka's last indigenous people" (BBC Travel, 28 March 2022)

<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20220327-sri-lankas-last-indigenous-people>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=49524>

"[Archaeologist] Hazarika concludes that the earliest state formation in the region was not necessarily, as often thought, due to the inflow of Indo-Europeans into Assam, but as a result of intermittent trade between India and today's China." – Dhriyoti Kalita reviewing *Prehistory and Archaeology of Northeast India* by Manjil Hazarika (Scroll.in, 3 March 2019)

<https://scroll.in/article/915071/this-essential-book-on-the-prehistory-of-no>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=45657>

"If it was possible for the land they stewarded to be violently taken by newcomers, isn't it possible to peacefully return it, to make reparations for what was taken? In the past, and in our reckoning with loss, lies a world-expanding vision of the future, one that is not only possible but necessary." – Alexandra Kleeman in "Bolder Reimagining", discussing the past and future of the region now called California (55 Voices for Democracy: "Bolder Reimagining" by Alexandra Kleeman, 31 December 2021)

<https://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/55-voices/55-voices-democracy-bolder-reimagining-alexandra-kleeman/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23900>

"There are around 370 million indigenous peoples worldwide, living across 90 countries and representing 5000 diverse cultures. They make up less than 5 per cent of humanity, yet represent around 15 per cent of the world's poorest people. Two thirds of the world's indigenous peoples live in Asia and the Pacific. They include groups often referred to as tribal peoples, hill tribes, adivasis, janajati, orang asli, aboriginal or native. Indigenous peoples make significant contributions to humanity's cultural, intellectual and economic wealth. Across Asia and the Pacific, they are sharing essential knowledge and skills in conservation and the sustainable use of land, forests and natural resources – key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals." – Unicef in "The rights of indigenous peoples must be protected and respected"

<https://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/pdf/IDWIP%20Joint%20Statement%20FINAL.pdf>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=31852](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=31852)

"We can take action in our own daily lives, to uphold the rights that protect us all and thereby promote the kinship of all human beings." – Human Rights Day 10 December – United Nations

[www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday](http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"The tribal world and the tribal way is complete in itself." – Mahasweta Devi quoted by Gopalkrishna Gandhi in "Swearing by Mahasweta" (The Hindu, 6 August 2016)

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine/Swearing-by-Mahasweta/article14556890.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24902>

"[R]ivers run through Navajo lands but the water is diverted to golf courses in Phoenix [...] while natives lack legal rights to the water and can't even get plumbing to wash their hands." - Janene Yazzie (Navajo community organizer) quoted by Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "Coronavirus in Native American Communities: The Charade of 'Thanksgiving'"

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2020/11/22/coronavirus-in-native-american-communities-the-charade-of-thanksgiving/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7629>

"Indigenous people across North America depend on Native media outlets for essential information about their communities and tribal affairs. These newspapers, newsletters, magazines, radio and television broadcasts as well as online publications are often produced in places that otherwise lack a reliable source of timely, accurate and contextual coverage of what impacts their daily lives. Indigenous media, however, does more than distribute news. It serves as a community forum that can help reinforce cultural values and languages. Ultimately, it holds the potential to reaffirm an Indigenous community's identity." - Bryan Pollard (Cherokee Nation) in "More than News: Indigenous media empowers native voices and communities" (*American Indian Magazine*, Smithsonian, Summer 2020)

[www.AmericanIndianMagazine.org](http://www.AmericanIndianMagazine.org)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22744>

"[N]ative people are – through our strength, through our resilience, through our creativity – forcing the question: what kind of country do we want to be? And might we want to privilege our virtues and our values over our baser impulses." – Review "A New History of Native Americans Responds to 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee'": *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America From 1890 to the Present* by David Treuer (New York Times, 20 January 2020)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/20/books/review/david-treuer-heartbeat-wounded-knee.html>

<https://www.indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27370>

"The pressure that has been brought to bear upon the native people, since the cessation of armed conflict, in the attempt to force conformity of custom and habit has caused a reaction more destructive than war, and the injury has not only affected the [American] Indian, but has extended to the white population as well." – Luther Standing Bear (who "became hereditary chief of the Oglala Sioux in 1905") in "What the Indian Means to America"; quoted in *The Mammoth Book of Native Americans: the Story of America's original inhabitants in all its beauty, magic, truth and tragedy* by Jon E. Lewis (London, 2004)

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/784882158>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22744>

"The United States signed a series of treaties with Native Nations, making promises in exchange for parts, or the entirety, of their sovereign territories. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly recognized these treaties as legally binding. The unmet treaty rights have contributed to enormous health disparities between Native Americans and the general U.S. population, including a lack of access to well-equipped and staffed medical facilities." – "COVID-19 in Indian Country" (National Museum of the American Indian in Washington)

<https://americanindian.si.edu/developingstories/quintero.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23900>

"From India to Brazil, Europe to the United States, xenophobia is a structuring logic of state power and statecraft.[...] Freedom is not a gift. Justice is not an inheritance." – Ananya Roy ("55 Voices for Democracy", 14 December 2019)

<https://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/55-voices/55-voices-democracy-ananya-roy/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

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"We have to write our own stories, about our issues, from our own perspectives. It is better late than never."

[Abhay Xaxa](#) who is remembered as the  
Fiercely Unapologetic Adivasi Scholar-Activist  
Photo © Facebook reproduced on [TheWire](#) >>



## Topics and issues

- Accountability

The National Human Rights Commission "continued to receive complaints from different parts of the country on a wide range of issues [including] custodial deaths, torture, fake encounters, police high-handedness, violations committed by security forces, conditions relating to prisons." – Annual Report 2014-2015

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC\\_AR\\_EN\\_2014-2015\\_27022019.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC_AR_EN_2014-2015_27022019.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18066>

"Evil springs up again and again. Each generation must fight it." – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"The Commission regards crimes like rape, molestation, torture, fake encounter in police custody as manifestations of a systemic failure to protect human rights. [Its] efforts are also geared towards bringing an end to an environment in which human rights violations are committed with impunity under the shield of 'uniform' and 'authority' within the four walls of a police station, lock-up and prison, where the victims are helpless." – "Annual Report - 2014-2015" by the National Human Rights Commission (21 June 2016), p. 260

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC\\_AR\\_EN\\_2014-2015\\_27022019.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC_AR_EN_2014-2015_27022019.pdf)

[www.nhrc.nic.in](http://www.nhrc.nic.in)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"[The situation in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands] clearly demands careful intervention. One such framework was provided by the orders of the Supreme Court, which were passed in 2002 in response to a public interest litigation filed by non-governmental organisations. [...] Nearly a decade later, many of these orders have not been implemented." – Pankaj Sekhsaria in "An intricate web" (*The Hindu*, 4 February 2012)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine//article59800934.ece>

"In their practical political activities, many environmental groups and movements have been at the forefront of efforts to democratize state institutions, as well as in the creation of more democratic and accountable forms of environmental decision-making." – Mukul Sharma (Ashoka University, Department of Environmental Studies), quoted by Amitav Ghosh in *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis* (book excerpt in The Print, 14 October 2021)

<https://theprint.in/pageturner/excerpt/congress-left-bjp-india-striving-to-remake-itself-as-settler-colonialist-amitav-ghosh/750429/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=44650>

"The Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the country are the groupings of historically disadvantaged people that are given express recognition in the Constitution of India. [...] The policies and schemes implemented by successive governments at the Centre and the state have further worsened the situation." – Celine Sunny (Report "Impact of Janamaithri Suraksha Project on the Safety/Security of the Tribal People in Kerala, submitted to the Home Department, Govt. of Kerala, accessed 4 July 2019)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29463>

"We are in a situation where if we do not act every moment, we will have to own up to the responsibility of complicity to violence. Therefore, constructive action is our only future. There is none other, for otherwise there will be no future for us." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in "Tribal voice and violence" (*India Seminar*, # 513 May 2002)

<http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/513/513%20ganesh%20devy.htm>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6310>

"Custodial deaths in India are a cold-blooded play of power and class, which cannot be viewed in isolation. When law enforcement agencies become perpetrators of violence, it becomes an ominous case of abuse of authority, which is antithetical to the rule of law-based system of democratic governance where human rights rule supreme." – MY Siddiqui in "Time to tame torturers" (tehelka.com, 29 October 2020)

<http://tehelka.com/time-to-tame-torturers/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"The numbers are startling. A report by a consortium of NGOs against custodial torture have released a report in which they say 1,731 people died in custody in India during 2019. This works out to around five custodial deaths a day. [...] The fact remains that torture and beating up suspects to extract confessions have become very much part of policing in India. Policemen who engage in it are rarely punished - most times they are simply transferred to another district or state. The rare times that they are held accountable, judiciary have made stinging remarks about the need for reform. In one verdict last year, a judge noted that 'they are confident that they will not be held accountable even if the victim dies in custody and even if the truth is revealed.' In 2006, the Indian Supreme Court ruled that each state should set up a

police complaints authority where any citizen can lodge a complaint against police officers for any misdemeanour. However, this has not been done in most states. " – BBC News (27 June 2020) "Jeyaraj and Fenix: Outrage mounts over India police custodial deaths"

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-53202707>

"There is no denying the fact that there is widespread corruption in India. Petty corruption which affects the basic rights and services of the common man is highly rampant besides the grand corruption scandals which break out every now and then. A report on bribery in India published by Trace International in January, 09 states that 91% of the bribes were demanded by govt. officials." – "Battling India's malaise of Corruption" (Address to the India CEO Forum, accessed 6 July 2022)

<https://cvc.gov.in/sites/default/files/CEO.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6984>

"Attempts to silence free speech are, of course, always characteristic of governments that lack confidence and are uncomfortable with an independent citizenry." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) quoted in "Nationalism does not allow the Hindu in India to claim primacy" by Ziya Us Salam (The Hindu, 2 March 2016)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/historian-romila-thapar-says-nationalism-does-not-allow-the-hindu-in-india-to-claim-primacy/article8300752.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"The Right to Information Act 2005 guarantees access to information about government policies and their implementation to Indian citizens." – Book description for *The Right to Information in India* by Sudhir Naib (Oxford India Short Introductions, 2013)

<https://india.oup.com/product/the-right-to-information-in-india-9780198089353?>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=22276](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=22276)

"Amnesty International says it has been forced to halt its India operations due to 'reprisals' from the government [...] amid growing concern over the state of free speech in India." – Rajat Khosla, senior director of research, advocacy and policy, quoted in a BBC News report on the closure of Amnesty International's Indian branch (29 September 2020)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-54277329>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35584>

"The basic object of the Right to Information Act is to empower the citizens, promote transparency and accountability in the working of the Government, contain corruption, and make our democracy work for the people in real sense. It goes without saying that an informed citizen is better equipped to keep necessary vigil on the instruments of governance and make the government more accountable to the governed." – Government of India (About Right to Information Act 2005: Bringing Information to the Citizens (<http://rti.gov.in>, accessed 17 July 2018)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25221>

"Journalists across India are at risk of physical and digital attack in retaliation for their reporting. And during election campaigns, these dangers can increase." –

Kunal Majumder/CPJ India Correspondent in "Results of India's election climate for journalist safety are in" (The Committee to Protect Journalists, 23 May 2019)

<https://cpj.org/2019/05/india-election-journalist-safety-toolkit-harassed-legal-action/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11721>

"India is one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists trying to do their job properly." – 2021 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters without borders

<https://rsf.org/en/india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

"It is not necessary to prosecute each instance of critical reporting – legal harassment and action against a few serves as a deterrent for others." – Aman Abhishek (TheWire, 25 June 2020)

<https://thewire.in/media/covid-19-migrant-crisis-public-opinion-modi>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11721>

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- **Adverse inclusion**

"Adivasi struggles and perspectives come from experiences of discrimination, marginalisation and powerlessness and ours has been one of a long, ongoing call for justice for our rights of restitution and repatriation. Is anyone listening?" – Ruby Hembrom (founder-director of *Adivaani*—a publisher of Adivasi writing) in "A phrase that eclipses key histories" (The New Indian Express, 18 May 2016)

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/columns/A-phrase-that-eclipses-key-histories/2016/05/18/article3437908.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20374>

"India is a colourful country comprising a staggering variety of cultures and communities. Each section has its own needs and requirements and among all, we tend to forget the most sidelined community – the tribals." – *India Today* Web Desk in "Educating the world's largest tribal population is a challenge for India" (16 March 2017)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featurephilia/story/tribal-education-and-its-challenging-issues-in-india-965832-2017-03-16>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10669>

"The picture that emerges from the report is in many ways grim and troubling, one that affirms that there continue to be significant populations that are consistently and often extremely deprived of access to public goods that are essential for a human life with dignity." – "The India Exclusion Report 2015: A comprehensive, annually updated analysis on the exclusion of disadvantaged groups in India" (First Edition, New Delhi 2016, [www.yodapress.co.in](http://www.yodapress.co.in), supported by UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women)

[https://www.im4change.org/docs/91763text-final\\_India-Exclusion-Report-round2Final.pdf](https://www.im4change.org/docs/91763text-final_India-Exclusion-Report-round2Final.pdf)

<https://www.indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22410>

"[T]he the highest number of cases against Scheduled Tribes in that year [2020] was in Madhya Pradesh (2,401)." – Scroll Staff in "Crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes rose from 2018 to 2020, Centre tells Lok Sabha" (Scroll.in, 22 July 2022)

<https://scroll.in/latest/1028900/crimes-against-scheduled-castes-and-scheduled-tribes-rose-from-2018-to-2020-centre-tells-lok-sabha>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26798>

"A polity based on the structural exclusion of a section of its population cannot reasonably be said to qualify as a democracy." — Indrajit Roy in India Forum (September 2021)

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/article/india-world-s-largest-democracy-ethnocracy>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=9465>

"Tribal groups (adivasis) in India have often been excluded, marginalized and oppressed by 'mainstream' society. In many ways this exclusion, marginalization and oppression is fostered by the way in which 'mainstream' society looks at the adivasis – as exotic, dangerous, or 'primitive' others." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in *A Nomad Called Thief: Reflections on Adivasi Silence and Voice* (Orientblackswan.com 2006)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13801>

"Although, many of the denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes are spread among SC/ST/OBC [Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes], many are still not classified anywhere and have no access to socio-economic benefits, whether education, health, housing or otherwise. [...] In some states they are called 'tribal settlers'. In some states they are called 'hidden tribes' etc." – Bibek Debroy in "An unfortunate legacy" (Indian Express, 5 January 2017)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/crime-criminal-act-racial-discrimination-non-bailable-offence-criminal-tribes-act-an-unfortunate-legacy-4459258/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12284>

"The people among the tribal communities who get into 'the mainstream' of Indian society by landing a job after some education are in a small minority. They are made to feel inferior by the major communities in governmental or commercial administration." – Guest Column titled "Hands off tribal culture" (*India Today*, 9 January 2014)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/guest-column/story/19800915-hands-off-tribal-culture-821415-2014-01-09>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15861>

"[E]very time India tries to 'develop' her tribal communities, they end up destitute, working as wage labour in our fields and factories and brick kilns." – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>



"Behind the (justifiably) much-lauded secular model of development in Kerala lies the hideous reality of racism/casteism in which an Adivasi or a Dalit becomes the other." – Nissim Mannathukkaren in "The Adivasi in the mirror: The lynching of Madhu in Kerala must shock our conscience into recognising the dispossession of India's tribals" (The Hindu Opinion, 3 March 2018)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-ativasi-in-the-mirror/article22911351.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24460>

"[T]he incomes of the poorer sections of the society are decreasing, while those of the richer sections are increasing." – Dipa Sinha (Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi) in "A betrayal of the social sector when it needs help" (The Hindu, 2 February 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30029>

"Tribals are subject to oppression and cruelty even after independence and still picked up by the investigating officers to cover up shoddy investigations." – D.Y. Chandrachud (Chief Justice of India since 9 November 2022) quoted in "Members of De-Notified Tribes Picked Up to Cover Up Shoddy Investigations" (*The Wire*, 7 December 2021)

<https://thewire.in/rights/members-of-de-notified-tribes-picked-up-to-cover-up-shoddy-investigations-justice-chandrachud>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"[T]here exists a major gap in India between these encouraging judicial pronouncements and how the right plays out in reality [...] According to the latest 2010 data from the Indian government [...] a disproportionate percentage of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes (OBCs) made-up the undertrial-population, with nearly two-thirds of the total number of undertrials coming from one of these three communities." – Jayanth K. Krishnan & C. Raj Kumar in "Delay in Process, Denial of Justice: The Jurisprudence and Empirics of Speedy Trials in Comparative Perspective", 42 *Georgetown Journal of International Law* 747 (2011)

<https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/facpub/155/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13755>

"Dalits, Most Backward Castes, and Adivasis face staggering levels of dispossession and the brunt of economic downturns." – Nissim Mannathukkaren (Dalhousie University) in "How Hindu Nationalism Enables India's Slide Into Inequality" (*The Wire*, 28 December 2021)

<https://m.thewire.in/article/communalism/how-hindu-nationalism-enabled-indias-slide-into-inequality>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5547>

"[I]mplicit to theories such as Sankritisation is an evolutionary approach towards tribes, implying that there is a ladder towards attaining higher status under the fold of caste Hindus." – Subhadra Mitra Channa in *Anthropological Perspectives on Indian Tribes*, quoted by Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12454>

"It's a long road to freedom!" - Stan Swamy (sociologist and activist for Adivasi rights) in "I am Not a Silent Spectator: Why Truth has become so bitter, Dissent so intolerable, Justice so out of reach" (Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, 2021)

<https://indianculturalforum.in/2021/08/05/i-am-not-a-silent-spectator/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22085>

"The Denotified Tribes have been the victims of the doctrine of criminality by birth. This concept is abhorrent to the present-day thinking. [...] The process of Notification of innocent communities traders, itinerant entertainers, peasants and disbanded soldiers, begun in 1871 through enactment of the Criminal Tribes Act, should have come to an end soon after Independence. Instead, a Habitual Offenders Act was slapped on them, and their sufferings continued through the last six decades. This entire episode of turning innocent and defenseless communities into vulnerable and victimized groups has been a chapter of shame in India's social history. During the last twenty years, there has been a strong movement shaping up from the grass-roots, which has sought to restore dignity and human rights to these communities." – "Recommendations of the Technical Advisory Group" [TAG], New Delhi, 2006

<http://www.bhasharesearch.org/Reports/TAG%20Report.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=32139>

"The new normal is the many millions marching back in search of those livelihoods that we destroyed these past three decades." - P. Sainath (Founder, *People's Archive of Rural India* PARI) in "We Didn't Bleed Him Enough: When Normal is the Problem" (counterpunch.org, 12 August 2020, first published in *Frontline Magazine*)

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/12/we-didnt-bleed-him-enough-when-normal-is-the-problem/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35352>

"The post-independent states in South Asia occupied tribal land for military and security reasons, natural resource extraction, and development projects; leased land to corporations; and created zoning regulations to protect industry and private interests. In addition to the destitution caused by ecological devastation, the development projects—industry, hydraulics (dams and irrigation), infrastructure (roads, railways), mining, and plantations—led to massive, enforced displacement and migration in South Asia." – Chundankuzhiyil Ulahannan Thresia, Prashanth Nuggehalli Srinivas, Katia Sarla Mohindra, Chettiparambil Kumaran Jagadeesan in "The Health of Indigenous Populations in South Asia: A Critical Review in a Critical Time" (free access in SAGE Journals, August 2020)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0020731420946588>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27829>

"In a slave society, the master isn't required to unleash violence every single day. Just because the slave seems happy to serve his master doesn't make the latter non-violent." – G. Sampath on Ritual humiliation in "The Violence in Our Bones: Mapping the Deadly Fault Lines Within Indian Society' review: *An ideology of hatred*" (The Hindu, 6 November 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/the-violence-in-our-bones-mapping-the-deadly-fault-lines-within-indian-society-review-an-ideology-of-hatred/article37337087.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6771>

"Scheduling was the act of committing certain areas to a written list or inventory of 'special administrative regimes'; here, normal laws and regulations prevalent in the rest of British India would not be applicable. [...] The underlying belief behind this categorization was that modern representative democracy with electoral politics and law courts was highly unsuited to tribal communities." - Saagar Tewari, quoted by Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11544>

"In a complex democratic society such as ours, technically ideal solutions to public problems have to be balanced by the management of conflicts that are inevitable when there are multiple and contradictory pulls. This should also help in understanding why the idea of inclusion goes beyond narrow economic perspectives on poverty and its alleviation." – Vijaya Sherry Chand (Chairperson of JSW School of Public Policy) quoted in "Pranab Mukherjee all set to teach public policy at IIM Ahmedabad" (*India Today*, 8 September 2018)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pranab-mukherjee-all-set-to-teach-public-policy-at-iim-ahmedabad-1335295-2018-09-08>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6984>

"Highly urbanised societies such as Hong Kong and Singapore that have no agricultural base are food secure because of their considerable purchasing power, while India, although self-sufficient in agriculture, has much of its population that is food insecure primarily due to social inequity and poverty." – Terry C.H. Sunderland in "Forests and food security" (International Institute for Asian Studies, The Newsletter No. 58, 2011)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4747>

"When the Aryans came into India as invaders with radical differences in complexion, religion, customs, and manners between them and the non-Aryan inhabitants, there came about the first broad grouping in the emergent Indian society. Politically, the Aryans were the conquerors and the non-Aryans the conquered, and racially the former were of a fair complexion whereas the latter were dark. The Aryan society had three classes which were occupational in their nature: the soldier-administrator, the priest, and the agriculturist-artisan." – B.G. Gokhale in *Ancient India* (Bombay, 1959 ed.), p. 118

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/602186629>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4315>

"KISS seems to share key features of U.S. residential schools, and its stated goal of 'converting tax consumers into taxpayers' implies a view of tribal cultures as 'primitive'. This insensitivity to the complexity of Adivasi society and economy, the sheer scale of KISS, and its distance from villages, alienate children from their roots [...] The notion of 'mainstreaming' needs to be challenged not just because Adivasi culture is being crushed, but also because Adivasi values and ways of life offer insights that the 'mainstream' needs." – Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (*The Hindu*, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20406>

"At the bottom of all this bottomless/ enterprise to keep simple the heart's given beat,/ the only risk is heartlessness." – The final lines of an early poem by AK Ramanujan titled "The Hindoo: The Only Risk", quoted by Nakul Krishna in "RK Narayan's second opinions" (The Caravan, 1 October 2018)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/literature/rk-narayan-second-opinions>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23039>

"The World today is facing a challenge that is becoming increasingly acute day by day. For years and decades a few dominant countries and a small elite population in each developing country have ruled the world, exploited the human and material resources, in their favour. When the oppressed and the deprived have begun raising their voice on issues beyond immediate relief and gain." – Acceptance speech by Medha Patkar and Baba Amte (Narmada Bachao Andolan), Laureates of the 1991 *Right Livelihood Award* ("a courage-powered community for social change committed to peace, justice and sustainability for all")

<https://rightlivelihood.org/speech/acceptance-speech-medha-patkar-and-baba-amte-narmada-bachao-andolan/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

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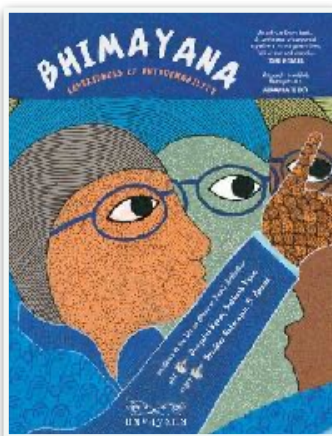
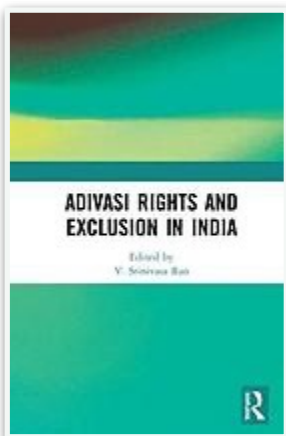


Photo of Santal writer Nirmala Putul by courtesy of Ivy Imogene Hansdak  
[Santal Literary Meet 2013 | Adivasi literature and translations >>](#)

- **Assimilation**

"In contemporary practice, the tribal memory is greatly undermined. There is general insistence that tribal children attend schools where non-tribal children attend schools, that they use medicines manufactured for others and that they adopt common agricultural practices. All because the world has very little time to listen patiently to the tribals, with their immense knowledge and creativity." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in *Painted Words: An Anthology of Tribal Literature*, quoted by Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak in "Is tribal identity relevant in today's world?", Inaugural Speech, National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://www.indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23032>

Jawaharlal Nehru formulated the following five principles for the policy to be pursued vis-a-vis the tribals:

- (1) People should develop along the lines of their own genius, and the imposition of alien values should be avoided.
- (2) Tribal rights in land and forest should be respected
- (3) Teams of tribals should be trained in the work of administration and development.
- (4) Tribal areas should not be over administered or overwhelmed with a multiplicity of schemes.
- (5) results should be judged not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the human character that is evolved.

Jawaharlal Nehru [1889–1964, first Prime Minister of India] quoted by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf in *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity. A Symposium*, Institute of Race Relations (Oxford University Press, 1967)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17554>

"[T]he process of homogenisation and assimilation has neglected the differences in the identity of various tribes [and] the structures thus imposed to understand tribal identities marginalise a large section of the populace that do not fit in the identity matrix." – Pradyumna Bag in "Denial of Differences: Examining the Marginalisation of Tribal Cultures and Languages" ("Tribes In Transition" conference 2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23073>



"What is characteristic of the relationship between tribe and civilization in India is that there was virtually no way in which a tribal dynasty could legitimize its rule without becoming Hinduized. This meant, among other things, bringing in Brahmin priests, Barbers, Washermen and the rest, and replicating in due course of time the hierarchical structure of caste." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6310>

"The pressure to mainstream the [Andamanese] tribes continued – in November 2014, environment minister Prakash Javadekar had again asked how long India can leave the Jarawas as museum pieces?" – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"The school leaves them half ignorant. They're forgetting our values, farming, song and dances." – A tribal mother's concerns (interviewed for Survival International) in "Factory Schools: Destroying Indigenous People in the Name of Education" (accessed 28 March 2021)

<https://www.survivalinternational.org/about/factoryschools>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34514>

"The reasons for the endangerment of languages vary across different communities and locations, but all indigenous peoples face tremendous challenges such as assimilation, enforced relocation, educational disadvantage, illiteracy, migration and other manifestations of discrimination that may eventually lead to the weakening of a culture or language almost to the point of disappearance." – "Summary report on the International Year of Indigenous Languages, 2019" (United Nations, 14 February 2020)

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/040/59/PDF/N2004059.pdf?OpenElement>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46777>

"Two key aspects of assimilation are residential schools that are removed from community life, and the imposition of dominant regional languages. Each Adivasi language encompasses a world of knowledge, cosmology, and values." – Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (The Hindu, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21733>

"[I]t is some of the basic values and ideology imbibed in the traditional tribal socio-cultural milieus that should have been emulated and promoted amongst the non-tribal mainstream, not, as has been going on, the other way round." – Arup Maharatna (Professor, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune) in "Who Is Civilised?: In Praise of Tribal Traditions, Society, and Culture in India" (Mainstream, Vol XLVIII, No 40, September 25, 2010)

<http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article2337.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34387>

"Gandharva-Sangīta was also associated with pūjā, a form of worship with non-Aryan or indigenous roots that eventually replaced the yajña [fire sacrifice] as the cornerstone of Hindu religious life. Instead of oblations into a fire, pūjā involves offerings of flowers, incense, food, water, lamps, and conches directly to deities or symbols on an altar. In pūjā, singing and playing instruments are conceived as offerings that are integrated with the other elements." – Historian of religions and musicologist Guy L. Beck in "Hinduism and Music" (2014, Oxford Handbooks Online)

<https://www.academia.edu/37849233>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3488>

"Folk music is an indelible part of India's storied oral tradition. Songs emanating from the tribal folk tradition are critical fragments of this country's vast cultural diversity." – Abhinav Agrawal, founder of the Anahad Foundation (a New Delhi-based not-for-profit organisation that works towards recording, preserving, documenting and consolidating the available knowledge of the evolution of Indian tribal folk music), quoted by Rinchen Norbu Wangchuk in "How This Organisation Is Giving India's Tribal Musicians a New Lease of Life" (TheBetterIndia.com, 17 November 2017)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/121371/anahad-tribal-music/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27044>

"[Millennial investors] are among India's growing tribe of uber luxury home owners who have been nudged further by the pandemic. Scenic locales, lavish homes built using traditional materials, state-of-the-art technology are just a few of the features luring them, and the tribe [distinct from any 'Scheduled Tribe' defined as 'backward'] is only increasing." – Nidhi Adlakha in "A home in the sky" on investors and second home owners who "yearn for the connection to Nature" (The Hindu, 8 July 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/luxury-homes-in-india-go-green-sustainable-real-estate/article65585349.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21398>

"KISS [Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, a boarding or 'factory school' for about 30,000 Adivasi children from Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Assam and other states] is a means to detribalize the Adivasi people and fill them with ideas and concepts that suits the current format of mainstream societal norms and ruling class." – Virginius Xaxa quoted by Goldy M. George in "Adivasis Protest Awarding of World Congress of Anthropology 2023 to KISS" (Forward Press, 23 July 2020), p. 2

<https://www.academia.edu/43929808/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20406>

"Contingent and regionally nuanced concepts emerged [for regions inhabited predominantly by Adivasis], such as 'racial' minorities, Adivasi rights, and social solidarity that refocused public and administrative attention on Adivasi history and heritage. These concepts are easily forgotten in polarized debates on the workings of assimilationist vs. protectionist ideologies in respect of Adivasi peoples and lands. Yet such shifts prompted a revision of wider temporal and cultural relations between majority (mainstream) and minority (tribal) communities." – Daniel Rycroft in Abstract: ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES AND 'CHIASMIC' TIME IN MODERN INDIA

[https://anthropologyireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IJA\\_19\\_2\\_2016.pdf](https://anthropologyireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IJA_19_2_2016.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31269>

"After Independence, that project of conquest continued. Every so often, there would be chatter about the imperative to 'mainstream' these tribes as though they have no say." – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

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- **Colonial policies**

"Tribal population was spread all over India and most of them occupied wild tracts, hilly and forested areas, away from more civilized centers. In 1880 their population was estimated at about seventy million. They had existed for centuries with their own social traditions and beliefs and subsisted on natural resources. They had preserved their near isolation and way of life until the British administration and policies made inroads into their territories." – Subha Johari in "Tribal Dissatisfaction Under Colonial Economy of 19th Century"

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1040271311>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11961>

"The British established mode of forest governance imposed restrictions on local forest-dwelling communities." – Research Team, Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation in "Revisiting the Forest Rights Act" (12 July 2019)

<https://www.academia.edu/41756309>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14402>

"Munda's rebellion had shaken the foundations of the British empire, fighting the British army's advanced weapons with bow and arrows. He died under mysterious circumstances in the Ranchi jail, and has, since then, been remembered as a martyr." – Sushmita in "In Photos | Warli Adivasis Recall Birsa Munda in Fight to Save Aarey" (*The Wire*, 20 November 2019)

<https://science.thewire.in/politics/rights/warli-adivasis-birsa-munda-aarey/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3922>

"The British Raj enacted the Criminal Tribes Act 1871 through which a tribe, gang, or class of persons addicted to the systemic commission of offences were notified. The Criminal Tribes Act was later repealed in 1949 once our Constitution was enacted, and the tribes were 'de-notified'." – D.Y. Chandrachud (Chief Justice of India since 9 November 2022) quoted in "Members of De-Notified Tribes Picked Up to Cover Up Shoddy Investigations" (*The Wire*, 7 December 2021)

<https://thewire.in/rights/members-of-de-notified-tribes-picked-up-to-cover-up-shoddy-investigations-justice-chandrachud>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"Slowly India recovered from the after-effects of the revolt of 1857-58. Despite British policy, powerful forces were at work changing India, and a new social consciousness was arising. The political unity of India, contact with the west, technological advances, and even the misfortune of a common subjection, led to new currents of thought, the slow development of industry, and the rise of a new movement for national freedom." – Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery Of India* (1946, OUP Centenary ed. 1989, p. 329)

<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.98835>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17554>

"The arrangement of Partition was, in its way, the dark end point of the concept of 'world religions', forged in the late nineteenth century. The idea of a population transfer based on religion – Muslims in India swapped for Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan – could only have come into being once religions had been reified, turned into impermeable entities with some borders to be policed." – Anna Della Subin in *Accidental Gods: On Men Unwittingly Turned Divine* (New York, 2021), p. 278

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/1151100898>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2299>

"The Brahmanical ideology of control through caste made myth and superstition a part of India's historical heritage. Over millennia, they injected the fear of education within the Shudra, Dalits and Adivasis. They fostered the psychology of fearing education, which confined all—except them—to local languages or oral traditions and prevented them from reading and writing even in colonial times." – Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd (political theorist, social activist and author who campaigns for English medium education) in "How English Language Initiated the Idea of Nationalism in India" (Newsclick.in, 1 Apr 2022)

<https://www.newsclick.in/how-english-language-initiated-idea-nationalism-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14270>

"In many formerly or currently colonised regions like South Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the American South and Native America, there has always existed a rich, vibrant tradition of oral storytelling, one that was marginalised, often violently, through an imposition of an allegedly modern, white Western language and culture." – Janice Pariat in "Decolonising creative writing: It's about not conforming to techniques of the western canon" (Scroll.in, 4 July 2021)

<https://scroll.in/article/999215/decolonising-creative-writing-its-about-not-conforming-to-techniques-of-the-western-canon>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=9325>

"[The ideology of] primitivism] has justified the subjugation of populations and places described wild, savage or, simply, primitive'." – Political scientist Uday Chandra, quoted by Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7686>

"Ever since the Portuguese travel writers and missionaries decided to describe the vast variety of ethnic and occupational groups and sects of the Indian subcontinent in terms of 'caste' and 'tribe', the terms have stuck to society as long-worn masks that start becoming one's real personality. The result is that today no Indian describes society without taking recourse to the categories 'caste' and 'tribe'." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in "Rethinking tribals", *Folio Special issue "Adivasi"* (The Hindu, 16 July 2000)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11460>

"The ancient tribal communities that lived here in the Andaman Islands [...] have lived and flourished here for at least 40,000 years., but the end could well be round the corner. [...] It definitely began with the British and their policies, which have been kept up with clinical efficiency by modern, independent India [which] was already on course to becoming a colonizer itself. [...] In the late 1960s, an official plan of the Government of India to 'colonize' (and this was the term used) the Andaman and Nicobar Islands was firmly in place. The forests were 'wastelands' that needed to be tamed, settled and developed." – Pankaj Sekhsaria in *Islands in Flux: The Andaman and Nicobar Story* (Harper Litmus, 2017), p. 4

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1122742858>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26863>

"If contemporary India is finding it so difficult and even offensive to swallow the idea of secularism, supposing it to be a foreign import from the West that colonized the country and still colonizes our imagination, might it find some succour in the idea of 'cultural democracy'? It is perhaps time that we started thinking about how the language of "cultural democracy" [envisaged by Gandhi] could be harnessed to furnish all Indians, and especially aggrieved Hindus, with the assurance there is another way of forging a nation without shedding the past." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "Gandhi, Secularism, and Cultural Democracy" (2 October 2020)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2020/10/02/gandhi-secularism-and-cultural-democracy/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34387>

"Coloniality is a dynamic we need to be alert for as much in the present even within so-called independent, decolonized countries." – Priyamvada Gopal on the rights of indigenous peoples including Adivasis ("Ideas" on CBC radio, 10 October 2019)

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/if-you-support-human-rights-you-re-obliged-to-be-an-anti-colonialist-argues-scholar-1.5315358>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24574>

"In the past, under British rule, several of the Andamanese tribes had come close to extirpation. So much so that the battered remnants of several were clumped together into a new tribe that we now call the Great Andamanese." – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"Despite the objections that ultra-nationalists raise about our colonial past, they are torchbearers for the British idea of uniform. Many argue that the school uniform enables equality. How? Irrespective of the common colour in pants, shirts, skirts or salwars, schools are cesspools of casteism and patriarchy. Clothes do not hide differences or equalise students; our social markers are far more insidious." – T.M. Krishna in "Does uniformity bring about equality? Think again" (Deccan Herald, 13 February 2022)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/does-uniformity-bring-about-equality-think-again-1080919.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21733>

"When India became free, the fledgling democracy faced a mountain of diverse challenges. An exploitative colonial regime had left the new nation in a quagmire of economic underdevelopment and widespread poverty. As mentioned earlier, at the time the handloom sector was the second-largest source of rural employment after agriculture. Therefore, the story of this sector highlights the fate of the countryside and that of large numbers of ordinary Indians through the seventy-five years of India's journey as an independent nation." – Neeta Deshpande in "India at 75: Khadi was an integral part of the freedom struggle. Where is handspun fabric today?", Scroll.in, 14 August 2022

<https://scroll.in/article/1030276/india-at-75-khadi-was-an-integral-part-of-the-freedom-struggle-where-is-handspun-fabric-today>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11257>



"Hunters [paving the way for settler colonialism] equated buffalo with the indigenous tribes of the region, and made war on the animal, as they made war on the people of the plains, to weaken the people and erode their way of life." – Alexandra Kleeman in "Bolder Reimagining" (55 Voices for Democracy: "Bolder Reimagining" by Alexandra Kleeman, 31 December 2021)

<https://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/55-voices/55-voices-democracy-bolder-reimagining-alexandra-kleeman/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23900>

"In 1871, the British passed the 'Criminal Tribes Act.' It notified about 150 tribes around India as criminal, giving the police wide powers to arrest them and monitor their movements. The effect of this law was simple: just being born into one of those 150 tribes made you a criminal." – Dilip D'Souza (Bombay based freelance journalist) in "Vicious cycle", *Folio* Special issue "Adivasi" (The Hindu, 16 July 2000)

Read or download the full issue here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/10OzfyoSUfEkZSNIsBRFpOmWba3jAVmK5/view>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11460>

"The Government of India Act [1935] introduced a new framework for the governance of 'Scheduled Areas,' i.e. those regions inhabited predominantly by 'tribal' peoples" – Daniel Rycroft in Abstract: ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES AND 'CHIASMIC' TIME IN MODERN INDIA

[https://anthropologyireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IJA\\_19\\_2\\_2016.pdf](https://anthropologyireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IJA_19_2_2016.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31269>

"At the time of independence in 1947, twenty-three lakh [2.3 million] people were reportedly suffering as Criminal Tribes. Pertinently, while the targeted communities were Hindu castes, the British maliciously labelled many of them as 'tribes' [...] thereby gaming them for 'civilising' missions." – Indian Police Service (IPS) officer M Nageswara Rao in "Scheduled Tribes: Who are they? How to mainstream them?" (Times of India, 16 May 2020)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/scheduled-tribes-who-are-they-how-to-mainstream-them/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7686>

"The colonial category of 'criminal tribes' may have been 'denotified' but many communities remain unclassified. History has a way of leaving unfortunate legacies. 'If the Local Government has reason to believe that any tribe, gang or class of persons is addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences, it may report the case to the Governor General in Council, and may request his permission to declare such tribe, gang or class to be a criminal tribe.' Hence, a register for Criminal Tribes, not to forget eunuchs." – The "Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871" quoted by Bibek Debroy in "An unfortunate legacy" (Indian Express, 5 January 2017)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/crime-criminal-act-racial-discrimination-non-bailable-offence-criminal-tribes-act-an-unfortunate-legacy-4459258/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12284>

"[O]wing to old colonial practices of 'plantation', the indigenous Mannan people lost their land and were rendered dependents on the activities pertaining to cultivation of cardamom. The 'development' of their land as cardamom plantation continued even after Independence; the colonial model of plantation development was in totality adopted by the nation-state, and it marked a cultural onslaught on the tribal people. The development model alienated tribals from their land, their culture and diluted their worldview." – Anu Krishnan in "Plantation Development and Tribes: Experiences of Expropriation of Land, History and Identity-A Case of Mannans", Report on the National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://www.indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23073>

"If Indians fought for the national flag with zeal, they did so because they believed in what it stood for and they did so from their own volition against colonial oppression. The affection for the flag came from within, as a mandate from the heart rather than from the state." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "'Har Ghar Tiranga': The Heart, the State, and the Indian Constitution - On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Indian independence, August 15" (16 August 2022)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2022/08/16/har-ghar-tiranga-the-heart-the-state-and-the-indian-constitution/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11257>

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- [Commentary](#)

"Unless we affirm our culture and right and language, we won't live. Our colour is good, our language is good, our art is good, our way of living is good. If we can respect your religion and your practices, why can't you respect ours?" – G. Thenadikulam from Wayanad District (Survival International, accessed 21 September 2022)

<http://notprimitive.in/not-primitive-info>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22274>

"I cling to the belief that for any culture as old and ancient as ours to have survived over time and in time, there could only be one basic common and acceptable core thought: humaneness. To accept each other's right to be human with dignity. This then is my fight. My dream. In my life and in my literature." – Mahasweta Devi during her inaugural speech for the Frankfurt Book Fair (Tehelka, 21 October 2006)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7298>

"Our moment calls for a bolder reimagination, based not on the constrained, degraded conditions around us but on a more expansive view of history and reality, considering as possible baselines both realities of the past and audacious visions of the future." – Alexandra Kleeman in "Bolder Reimagining" (55 Voices for Democracy: "Bolder Reimagining" by Alexandra Kleeman, 31 December 2021)

<https://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/55-voices/55-voices-democracy-bolder-reimagining-alexandra-kleeman/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23900>

"The best public universities have been gutted; all that is left is a shambolic display of awards of "excellence", a word as shorn of content as any. In one instance the award has been to an institute of higher education that does not even exist. Yet all this is far from what Gandhi had in mind when he pondered over the ruins of education and I wonder how he would have struggled to even comprehend the 'hardheartedness' of the educated in India today." – "The Undeveloped Heart: Gandhi on Education" by Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA), 15 October 2019

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2019/10/15/the-undeveloped-heart-gandhi-on-education/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29790>

"We met adivasis who had been persecuted by the Naxalites, and other adivasis who had been tormented by the Salwa Judum vigilantes [i.e. "a strange, not to say bizarre, example of bipartisan co-operation"]. The situation of the community was poignantly captured by one tribal, who said [...] "placed between the Maoists and the vigilantes, we adivasis are being squeezed from both sides". – Historian Ramachandra Guha in "The continuing tragedy of the adivasis" (The Hindu, 28 May 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-continuing-tragedy-of-the-adivasis/article4756954.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11336>

"A section of intelligentsia trained in typical colonial mould takes 'ethnicity' and isolation of vanvasis to paint a negative picture about the Indian State and mainstream society." – Indian Police Service (IPS) officer M Nageswara Rao in "Scheduled Tribes: Who are they? How to mainstream them?" (Times of India, 16 May 2020)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/scheduled-tribes-who-are-they-how-to-mainstream-them/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11544>

"When discussing the materialistic well-being of tribes, many anthropologists and other thinkers have also sometimes perpetuated a 'saviour complex,' portraying tribes as bereft of the agency to express their own aspirations, and seeing it necessary to salvage tribal people from the clutches of their insubstantial living conditions without a deep consideration of how their ways of life have thrived in the past." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26231>

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- **Community facilities**

"Santiniketan is in many ways a pioneering step in the field of education and rural reconstruction. Located in the heart of nature amongst Hindu, Muslim, and Santali villages which were in 'serious decline' despite a rich cultural heritage, the school, from almost its beginning aimed to combine education with a sense of obligation towards the larger civic community." – UNESCO World Heritage Centre website

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5495/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4348>

"Primitivism had bestowed on modernist art criticism the notion of virility as standing for bold simplicity, as opposed to the weakness of complicated 'feminine' anecdotal painting. [...] Primitivism in modern Indian art drew on adibasis [including Santals living near Santiniketan where] art was to be an integral part of an all-rounded education." – Partha Mitter in *The triumph of modernism: India's artists and the avant-garde, 1922-1947*, pp. 26 & 79

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4343>

"Increasingly available facilities are pushing the educated and informed tribal groups to seek (new) identity among majority in the Indian society. [...] So it is very important for anthropologists and other social scientists in contemporary world to study understand and explain the status of tribal youth with respect to its participation and acceptance to the wave of development and modernization and further related changes. [...] Fading importance of various social structures and institutions are few of the different dimensions of understanding among elderly sections in different tribal communities about the new aspiration of tribal youth." – Subhendu Kumar Acharya & Gautam K Kshatriya in: "Social Transformation, Identity of Indian Tribes in Recent Time: An Anthropological perspective" (*Afro Asian Journal of Anthropology and Social Policy* Volume-5, Issue-2 2014)

<https://www.academia.edu/9963906>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20371>

"The Asur community started popularising the language in their area. This has significantly aided the revival of the dying language." – Jharkhand-based tribal development expert Manoj Lakra quoted by Abhijit Mohanty in "Seven decades after independence, many tribal languages in India face extinction threat" (*Down to Earth*, 26 August 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/seven-decades-after-independence-many-tribal-languages-in-india-face-extinction-threat-73071>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6879>

"True self-reliance won't come from relentless industrialisation, but from localisation and decentralisation, as demonstrated by these remarkable stories of empowered rural communities." – Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh (Pune-based NGO)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/what-does-self-reliance-really-mean-amazing-stories-emerge-from-indias-villages/article31756580.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34172>

"India already starts off from a weak position of having very low spending in the critical areas of social protection, education and health. [...] This continued negligence does not bode well for inclusive development in India." – Dipa Sinha (Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi) in "A betrayal of the social sector when it needs help" (The Hindu, 2 February 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30029>

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"The goal is to prepare some model students in our villages, so that others will be inspired to follow them." – [Santal educationist Boro Baski](#) >>

"The smart boy or clever girl who is deprived of the opportunity of schooling, or who goes to a school with dismal facilities (not to mention the high incidence of absentee teachers), not only loses the opportunities he or she could have had, but also adds to the massive waste of talent that is a characteristic of the life of our country." – Nobel Awardee [Amartya Sen](#) >>

"We will have to look to people's movements on the ground. I think the people of India do not merely have resilience, but also the wisdom that is part of our civilisational inheritance." – [Vinay Lal](#)

- **Constitution and Supreme Court**

"While delivering the Foundation Day lecture, the Vice President asked that we shall first have to give up this hubris of considering tribes backward. Every tribe has a rich and living cultural tradition and we must respect them. He said it not only social courtesy to respect their cultural traditions but it is also our Constitutional obligation. He said as we are looking for ways of sustainable development, these groups can teach us lessons in sustainable development. [T]heir belief in the Nature remains one and firm. There can't be a better example of Unity in Diversity." – M. Venkaiah Naidu (Vice President of India) in the *First Foundation Day Lecture* of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) titled "Constitution and Tribes" (Press Information Bureau, 19 February 2019)

<https://ncst.nic.in/sites/default/files/2019/Media/2.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=36256>

"He who has not surrendered his free will and abdicated his intelligence and independent thinking, who does not blindly act on the teachings of others, who does not blindly accept anything without critically analysing and examining its veracity and usefulness, who is always prepared to protect his rights, who is not afraid of ridicule and unjust public criticism, who has a sound conscience and self-respect so as not become a tool in the hands of others, I call him a free man." – Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (who was more than the "drafter of the Constitution"), quoted by Goldy M George in *Journal of People's Studies* (Volume 1, Issue 4 June 2016, Page v)

<https://www.academia.edu/28587897>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"Constitutional and legal mandates are not sufficient to protect the rights of the marginalised group including Dalit and tribals. [...] The only recourse available to us is to faithfully abide by and give life to the constitutional ideals which Dr Ambedkar helped formulate, and use those to bring transformative change in the minds and perceptions of the society." – D.Y. Chandrachud (Chief Justice of India since 9 November 2022) quoted in "Members of De-Notified Tribes Picked Up to Cover Up Shoddy Investigations" (*The Wire*, 7 December 2021)

<https://thewire.in/rights/members-of-de-notified-tribes-picked-up-to-cover-up-shoddy-investigations-justice-chandrachud>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"[A]ny laws intended to safeguard the fundamental rights of Adivasis must acknowledge the fact that their diverse and complex identities are not homogenous, and that uniform laws have failed to address their systemic marginalisation since the colonial era." – Summary for *Adivasi rights and exclusion in India* by V. Srinivasa Rao (Routledge, 2019)

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1053859141>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10409>



"The framers of the Constitution took note of the fact that certain communities in the country were suffering from extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of age-old practice of untouchability and certain others on account of this primitive agricultural practices, lack of infrastructure facilities and geographical isolation, and who need special consideration for safeguarding their interests and for their accelerated socio-economic development. These communities were notified as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as per provisions contained in Clause 1 of Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution respectively." – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (accessed 31 May 2020)

<https://www.ncst.gov.in/index.php>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=33998>

"About 80 per cent of the 5 million chronically undernourished tribal children live in just eight states of Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Odisha. Tribal peoples in these states, which are covered by the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, and also other states have borne the maximum brunt of land alienation, displacement and poor compensation." – Unicef India "What we do: Tribal nutrition" (accessed 26 July 2022)

<https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/tribal-nutrition>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"India, also known as Bharat, is a Union of States. It is a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic with a parliamentary system of government. [...] The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. [...] All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, to assemble peaceably." – *Constitution of India* (Visited: 15 April 2021)

<https://www.india.gov.in/my-government/constitution-india>

[https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/COI\\_1.pdf](https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/COI_1.pdf)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=18809](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=18809)

"[Scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes (OBCs)], whose classifications are officially denoted and recognized in India, have long been formally identified by the government as deserving constitutional and statutory protection as well as affirmative public benefits, due to the historic, socio-economic, political, and religious discrimination they have faced." – Jayanth K. Krishnan & C. Raj Kumar in "Delay in Process, Denial of Justice: The Jurisprudence and Empirics of Speedy Trials in Comparative Perspective", 42 *Georgetown Journal of International Law* 747 (2011)

<https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/facpub/155/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13755>

"At present, India has 1,350 prisons with a rated full capacity of 4,03,739 prisoners. All jails are bursting with overcrowding and degrading inhuman conditions, so much for standards of human rights of prisoners in terms of the Constitution of India. The Constitution envisioned prisons as centres of reforms, which is not happening." – MY Siddiqui in "Time to tame torturers" (tehelka.com, 29 October 2020)

<http://tehelka.com/time-to-tame-torturers/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"[T]he Constitution gives equal respect to all communities, sects, lingual and ethnic groups, etc. The Constitution guarantees to all citizens freedom of speech (Article 19), freedom of religion (Article 25), equality (Articles 14 to 17), liberty (Article 21), etc." – Supreme Court judgment quoted in "India, largely a country of immigrants" (The Hindu, 12 January 2011)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/India-largely-a-country-of-immigrants/article15127444.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4315>

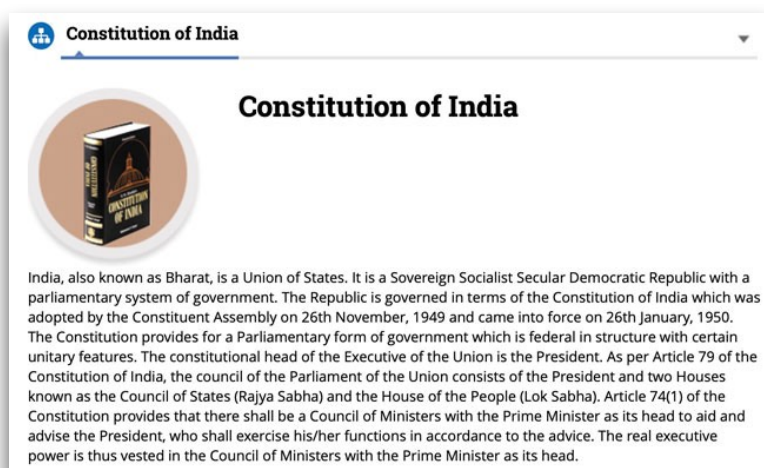
"In the midst of the fratricide wrought by the barbed edges of faiths, the Prime Minister [Nehru] preached tolerance of all spiritual proclivities, rather than the eradication of religion itself. India's constitution, Adopted in 1949, enshrined the freedom to practice and preach religion as a fundamental right. For his own part, Nehru would maintain that he abhorred 'organized religion', a phrase that dated back only to the mid-nineteenth century. 'Almost always it seemed to stand for blind belief and reaction, dogma and bigotry, superstition and exploitation', Nehru recalled in his Autobiography." – Anna Della Subin in *Accidental Gods: On Men Unwittingly Turned Divine* (New York, 2021), p. 282

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/1151100898>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2299>

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- **De- and re-tribalisation**

"The guiding principle is that no person who was not a Scheduled Tribe by birth will be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Tribe merely because he or she has married a person belonging to a Scheduled Tribe. Similarly a person who is a member of a Scheduled Tribe would continue to be a member of that Scheduled Tribe, even after his or her marriage with a person who does not belong to a Scheduled Tribes. However, status of the children born out of such marriages would depend on the particular caste status of the father." – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (accessed 31 May 2020)

<https://www.ncst.gov.in>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=33998>

"Despite the descriptive inadequacies of the term 'tribal', the alternatives are equally imprecise; 'tribal' is a politicised category all over India [Beteille 1991], but in Arunachal Pradesh the term is used with little controversy, and often with pride by those to whom it refers." – Research Description "Tribal Transitions at SOAS"

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/tribaltransitions/description/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=9346>

"Of the four Andaman islands tribes, it is Jarawa's situation that is most precarious." – Surabhi Sinha in "Save Jarawa" (Times of India, 2 June 2021)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/phases-of-life/save-jarawa-32818/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14820>

"In India, the term 'tribe' has referred, since the 16th century, to groups living under 'primitive' and 'barbarous' conditions. The colonial administration used the term to distinguish peoples who were heterogeneous in physical and linguistic traits and lived under quite different demographic and ecological conditions, with varying levels of acculturation and development. In the various countries of South Asia, tribal peoples were often called by derogatory terms such as jungli ('savage') during the colonial period." – Marine Carrin, General Introduction to *Brill's Encyclopedia of the Religions of the Indigenous People of South Asia* (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 2 South Asia, Volume: 36, 2021)

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1285067971>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=48430>

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- **Democracy**

"He who does not lead his life under the direction of others, who sets his own goal of life according to his own reasoning and decides for himself as to how and in what way life should be lead, is a free man." – Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (who was more than the "drafter of the Constitution"), quoted in "Contested Freedom" (*Journal of People's Studies* Volume 1, Issue 4 June 2016, Page iii)

<https://www.academia.edu/28587897>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"The highest court of judgement regarding social customs was the general hunt council to which the Santal tribes of a particular region gather together. [...] It was an exemplary institution of a direct democracy where for one night the final authority was the people themselves." – Timotheas Hembrom in "Introduction to the Santals" (*The Santal and the Biblical Creation Traditions: Anthropological & Theological Reflections*, pp. 26-27)

<https://adivaani.org/tag/santal/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13041>

"In a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and highly polyglot nation such as India, the national flag is there to remind every Indian that something unites them: before their allegiance to a language, religion, caste group, or anything else, they are Indian." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "'Har Ghar Tiranga': The Heart, the State, and the Indian Constitution - On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Indian independence, August 15" (16 August 2022)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2022/08/16/har-ghar-tiranga-the-heart-the-state-and-the-indian-constitution/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11257>

"Citizenship is a free person. Is a person who has rights, and the rights of what? The rights of a citizen are to water, food, shelter, to education, to health, to employment, to social justice and social equality." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) interviewed by Karan Thapar in "I Don't Like Modi's India, It Is Too Narrow and Limited" (*The Wire*, 12 August 2022)

<https://thewire.in/history/full-text-karan-romila-thapar-modi-independence>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"Our languages have survived tenaciously. We are truly a linguistic democracy. To keep our democracy alive, we have to keep our languages alive." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy (co-founder, People's Linguistic Survey of India) quoted by Soutik Biswas in "The man who 'discovered' 780 Indian languages" (BBC News, 27 October 2017)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-41718082>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24320>

"Development means nothing if it does not lead to human development in its broadest sense." – Parvathy Menon in "At 90, C.T. Kurien – Scholar of Social Conscience – Is More Relevant Than Ever" (*The Wire*, 5 July 2021)

<https://thewire.in/economy/ct-kurien-scholar-indian-economy>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=5208](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=5208)

"India's long democratic credentials and achievements as well as its success in upholding values and ideals such as multiculturalism, pluralism, secularism, tolerance, and international peace [...] have been crucial for India's rising superpower status." – Muhsin Puthan in "Is India Still a Rising Superpower?" (*The Diplomat*, February 2020)

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/is-india-still-a-rising-superpower/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13546>

"[T]he only way for the members of the marginalised communities to achieve personhood is through social mobilisation as a collective against discrimination. Such mobilisation should not be considered as 'politics of identity but as a necessary means for redressing historical discrimination." – D.Y. Chandrachud (Chief Justice of India since 9 November 2022) quoted in "Members of De-Notified Tribes Picked Up to Cover Up Shoddy Investigations" (*The Wire*, 7 December 2021)

<https://thewire.in/rights/members-of-de-notified-tribes-picked-up-to-cover-up-shoddy-investigations-justice-chandrachud>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"Language is one of the fundamental preconditions to human development, dialogue, reconciliation, tolerance, cultural and linguistic diversity, and the peaceful existence of human society." – "Summary report on the International Year of Indigenous Languages, 2019" (United Nations, 14 February 2020)

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/040/59/PDF/N2004059.pdf?OpenElement>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46777>

"Our job is to improve press freedom in India, not to carry out publication relations exercises. [...] Our report, dedicated to improving that freedom can hardly remain silent on the stifling of it, on the throttling of dissent, the undermining of democracy." – P. Sainath (Founder, People's Archive of Rural India PARI) quoted by Rohan Venkataramakrishnan, dismissing the claim that the "relationship between the government and the media in New Delhi as well as state capitals is vibrant and regular" according to a government-appointed panel that blames "western bias" for the country's poor performance (Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index) in "India complains about low press freedom rank – even as ministers talk of 'neutralising' journalists" (Scroll.in, 28 March 2021)

<https://scroll.in/article/990455/india-complains-about-low-press-freedom-rank-even-as-ministers-talk-of-neutralising-journalists>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

"All subjects will thus be equal in the eyes of the law. But every single individual will be free to pursue his own religion without hindrance, so long as it does not transgress the common law. The question of the 'protection of minorities' is not good for me; it rests upon the recognition of religious groupings between citizens of the same state." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "Gandhi, Secularism, and Cultural Democracy" (2 October 2020)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2020/10/02/gandhi-secularism-and-cultural-democracy/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"The first report on minority rights, made public in late August 1947, provided for reservation for Untouchables only. [...] However, one member [of the Constituent Assembly of India] regretted that 'the most needy, the most deserving group of adibasis [tribals] has been completely left out of the picture.'" – Ramachandra Guha in *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (New Delhi: Picador India), p. 115

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/179807214>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15375>

"There was a time when, in terms of freedom of press, India was in an enviable position among the developing nations. But that was 40 years ago." – N. Ram (Director, The Hindu Publishing Group) in a webinar organised by Live Law on "Criminalising Journalism and Cinema" (The Hindu, 6 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/todays-times-cant-be-exaggerated-as-emergency-n-ram/article33768798.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11721>

"India is experiencing what is known as 'competitive authoritarianism' or 'electoral authoritarianism' today." – Christopher Jaffrelot (Professor of South Asian Politics and History at Sciences) interviewed by Sidharth Bhatia in "Indian Judiciary Has Become an Instrument of the Executive" (*The Wire*, 7 July 2022)

<https://thewire.in/rights/full-text-christophe-jaffrelot-sidharth-bhatia-india-hindutva>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

"As a democracy, India has languished. [...] On the Democracy Index's global ranking, India dropped 10 places to 51: that it maintains even something of a place as a 'flawed democracy' has to do with the relatively smooth functioning of the election machinery, though the data shows the severe erosion of 'civil liberties'". – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA), in "Emergency in India, Faux and Real" (26 June 2020)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2020/06/26/emergency-in-india-faux-and-real/>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"In May [2020], the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah saying it was alarmed by the 'intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders' by the authorities." – Analysis by Soutik Biswas in "Outrage as jailed Indian poet contracts Covid" (BBC News, 17 July 2020)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-53441846>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25922>

"You can't keep quiet on everything. At some point, if you disagree - it's better to say it then rather than piling it up." – Former IAS Officer Kannan Gopinathan (who resigned from service over 'lack of freedom of expression') in a special lecture on "Democracy: Institutions and Individuals" (Asian College of Journalism - ACJ, 2 September 2020)

<http://acjnewsline.org/special-lecture-by-kannan-gopinathan-ex-ias-officer-and-activist-on-democracy-institutions-and-individuals/>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11721>

"Over the past six years, India fell 26 places—from 27 to 53—on the Democracy Index, published by the Economist Intelligence Unit. In March, Freedom House downgraded India from "free" to "partly free." – Sadanand Dhume (Senior Fellow, American Enterprise Institute) in "How Democratic Is the World's Largest Democracy?" (Foreign Affairs, 24 August 2021)

<https://www.aei.org/articles/how-democratic-is-the-worlds-largest-democracy/>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>



"Populist leaders often polarise society and delegitimise the political opposition, often presenting them as enemies of the state or people. [...] Electoral autocracies, according to V-Dem, are now present in 87 states that are home to 68% of the global population. Liberal democracies, the group says, are diminishing, and are home to only 14% of the people." – Report on democracy by Sweden-based V-Dem Institute noting India's diminishing of freedom of expression, the media, and civil society; quoted by Soutik Biswas in "'Electoral autocracy': The downgrading of India's democracy" (BBC News, 16 March 2021)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56393944>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11721>

"Unless people become citizens and not subjects under a patrimonial rule, the calamitous clouds of the pandemic portend a bleak future for Indian democracy as well." – Nissim Mannathukkaren (Chair, International Development Studies, Dalhousie University, Canada) in "Social murder and the missing state" (The Hindu, 7 May 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/social-murder-and-the-missing-state/article34502018.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

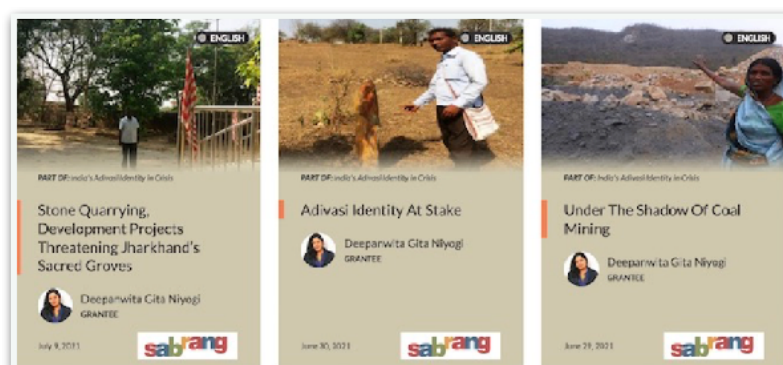
"Sure — democracy, first articulated, is Greek in origin. Europe provided the lexicon for it and its components. But just because it did, does not mean the desire for democracy, the desire for human rights, does not exist in every single one of us." – Melissa Chan in "How 'Stolen Words' Harm Democracy" (55 Voices for Democracy, 23 July 2021)

<https://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/55-voices/55-voices-democracy-stolen-words-harm-democracy-melissa-chan/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

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- **Economy and development**

"For how long will I have to/ Bear the pain of development  
Or is it that I will be done to death/ Before attaining development?"

Quote from a poem by Ram Dayal Munda titled "The Pain of Development (Vikas Ka Dard)"

<https://joharjournal.org/ram-dayal-munda/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4548>

"Prevent efforts to dilute our distinctive identity and culture by vested interests, who regularly seek opportunities to lure them to their side with inducements and brainwashing" – Kendriya Sarna Samiti activist Hindu Bhagat quoted by Rabindra Nath Sinha in "Tribal Outfits Gearing up to Restart Stir on Sarna Religious Code Issue" (Newsclick.in, 15 September 2022)

<https://www.newsclick.in/tribal-outfits-gearing-restart-sarna-religious-code-issue>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22095>

"In India, mobile peoples including former hunters-gatherers and criminal tribes, now denotified, have been the primary victims of both democracy and development." - Review by Ashish Saxena (Department of Sociology, University of Allahabad) on *The subaltern speaks: Truth and ethics in Mahasweta Devi's fiction on tribals* (2016) by Sanatan Bhowal, a book which "looks at the ideas of different thinkers with respect to selected texts of Mahasweta Devi's fiction on tribal life"

<https://orientblackswan.com/pressreviews/The%20Subaltern%20Speaks.pdf>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1052460258>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20733>

"There was a conversation I had in Marathwada, during a drought, with an old farmer. He picked up a clump of soil and told me, 'This is what it is all about'. [...] What the peasant was telling me was, 'A civilisation that does not look after soil is a doomed civilisation [and] going to face the grave danger of just not being able to survive any more.'" – Playwright Ramu Ramanathan interviewed by Dipanita Nath in "I know people who have chosen to be silent, some out of fear and others just out of being deadened" (Indian Express, 28 October 2020)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/i-know-people-who-have-chosen-to-be-silent-some-out-of-fear-and-others-just-out-of-being-deadened-6902500/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5576>

"In a year GDP contracted 7.7 per cent, and as we brace for another round of 'reverse' migrations, and as the farmers wait unheeded at the gates of Delhi, Indian billionaires reached record levels of wealth. [O]n the UN Human Development Index [we] rank 131 in 189 countries." – P. Sainath (Founder, *People's Archive of Rural India* PARI) in "Forbes, India and Pandora's Pandemic Box" (16 April 2021)

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/forbes-india-and-pandoras-pandemic-box/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1518>

"Unlikely as it may seem, indigenous people are at the forefront of the struggle to save the planet. Their courage and their worldview can inspire those of us who don't think life on earth should be determined by the boardroom bottomline. We, in our turn, have a role to play in defending the defenders." – Vanessa Baird in *New Internationalist* (print ed., issue 446, October 2011), p. 15

<https://newint.org>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4429>

"In fact, the integration of tribes has been seen as the panacea of their problems. However, if one looks at the nature of integration, one finds that the relationship between tribes and non-tribes and even the state, has been overwhelmingly interspersed with exploitation, domination and discrimination, which is conveniently overlooked." – Virginius Xaxa, excerpt from *Being Adivasi* (India Penguin, 2021)

<https://scroll.in/article/1014436/being-ativasi-autonomous-existence-or-integration-nehru-had-proposed-a-third-way>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1290015863>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27829>

"Who owns India? Who owns the forests and rivers, the farmlands eyed by industry, the slums coveted by real estate developers and airport authorities, the hills and plateaus desired by mining barons? In roughly a third of the country, this is no idle question." – Sunil Khilnani (Professor of Politics and History, Ashoka University) in "Birsa Munda, 1875-1900" (*Outlook Magazine*, 20 February 2016)

<https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/birsa-munda-1875-1900/296673>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6771>

"[I]f one is poor in India ... one is more likely to live in rural areas, more likely to be a member of the Scheduled Caste or Tribe or other socially discriminated group, more likely to be malnourished, sick and in poor health, more likely to be illiterate or poorly educated and with low skills, more likely to live in certain states (such as ... Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, and also Orissa) than in others." — Economist T. N. Srinivasan quoted on possible reasons for the growing migration from poorer areas to richer ones in *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* by Ramachandra Guha (Picador India, 2011), p. 711

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/179807214>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13755>

"Scheduled Tribes (STs) and also Scheduled Castes (SCs) are the disadvantaged sections of the society due to socio-economic exploitation and isolation since times immemorial." – Foreword to "Tribal Sub-Plan in Maharashtra: A Diagnostic Study" (TATA Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai supported by Unicef Maharashtra, December 2015)

<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3c8758b517083196f05ac29810b924aca/uploads/2019/11/2019112971.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31354>

"The tribal population was totally unprepared for the colonial economy. British land revenue policies and Forest Law directly affected their means of livelihood. They had been practicing shifting cultivation and were heavily dependent on forest for their day-to-day lives. Permanent land settlements gradually took away the land from them that they had been using for their mode of cultivation as common communal property." – Subha Johari in "Tribal Dissatisfaction Under Colonial Economy of 19th Century"

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1040271311>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11961>

"As far as I can tell, there is no real strategy for thinking about the future of the country. We will have to look to people's movements on the ground. I think the people of India do not merely have resilience, but also the wisdom that is part of our civilisational inheritance." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) interviewed by Somak Ghoshal (Livemint.com, 10 December 2020)

<https://lifestyle.livemint.com/news/big-story/-the-government-will-use-the-pandemic-as-a-pretext-for-economic-collapse-111607528985657.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23322>

"Some goals are clear: cancellation of Third World debt, for instance. In India, for ending the indebtedness of our own Fourth World." – P. Sainath (Founder, *People's Archive of Rural India* PARI) in "We Didn't Bleed Him Enough: When Normal is the Problem" (counterpunch.org, 12 August 2020, first published in *Frontline Magazine*)

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/12/we-didnt-bleed-him-enough-when-normal-is-the-problem/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"All the nations which succeeded in achieving inclusive growth in the Global South had land reforms combined with human capital, invested in infrastructure by promoting capitalism from below and began industrialisation in the rural sector. Only India lost on all three counts." – Kalaiyarasan A. (Assistant Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies and non-resident fellow at the Center for Contemporary South Asia, Brown University) in "The role of caste in economic transformation" (The Hindu, 23 June 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-role-of-caste-in-economic-transformation/article65554512.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2943>

"Though the masses of India were desperately poor and growing poorer, a tiny fringe at the top was prospering under the new conditions and accumulating capital [during British rule]. It was this fringe that demanded political reform as well as opportunities for investment." – Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery Of India* (1946, OUP Centenary ed. 1989, p. 330)

<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.98835>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17554>

"The moral standard of state and society can be deduced from the way people are treated who are not productive anymore and have no assets of their own. Missing the means for self-providence includes all those among the labouring poor who are disabled either because of old age, defective health or other handicaps that prevent them for working for their livelihood." – Jan Breman in "Caring for destitution or not?" (T.G. Narayanan Memorial Lecture on Social Deprivation, The Hindu, January 19, 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/resources/caring-for-destitution-or-not/article4323348.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=9731>

"The moneylender combines the roles of input supplier, crop buyer, labour employer and land lessor. This interlocked grid works in tandem with the oppressive caste system, with the poorer, 'lower' caste farmers, facing a cumulative and cascading spiral of expropriation. All the above reasons provide a strong case for state intervention in multiple agricultural markets." – Mihir Shah (Distinguished Professor, Shiv Nadar University) in "Plough to plate, hand held by the Indian state"(9 April 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/plough-to-plate-hand-held-by-the-indian-state/article34275034.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"Studies show that the development projects exclude and alienate Adivasi communities in India and they describe the history of Adivasi development in India in terms of material deprivation and cultural marginalisation. While the socio-political and cultural exclusion is acknowledged as a universal feature of Adivasi life, the everyday experience of their exclusion differs among different Adivasi communities." – Leena Abraham in "Perceptions and experiences of development: a study of two tribal communities in Wayanad district, Kerala" (PhD thesis, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 2013), Abstract

<https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/17821>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5169>

"[T]he adivasi and Dalit middle class speaks for a mass of poor whose material interests diverge from theirs insofar as they require a radical restructuring of the state's institutions and its economic policies." – Shashank Kela in "A party of the poor?" (*India Seminar*, Caste Matters, May 2012)

<https://www.india-seminar.com/2012/633.htm>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"Pervasive corruption, one source of the failure of the Indian bureaucracy, systematically disempowers the poor by making essential (and supposedly free) goods and services unaffordable. Siphoned off on their way down through the system, government funds fail to reach their intended beneficiaries, for whom they could make a life or death difference. Concentrated on their way up, bribes grease the wheels. The bureaucracy functions best for those who have political connections, cultural capital, and financial clout. [...] Demeaning representations and bureaucratic techniques of governance normalize the malign neglect of the poor." – Akhil Gupta reviewing *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India* by (Asian Ethnology 73/1–2, 2014, pp. 312-3)

<https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/4372>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22767>

"India's political transformation has been slow and hence it has enabled the sustenance of regressive elements. Elite control/capture still persists in parts of the country. Sections of non-elites are not mobilised politically. The competitive politics is yet to become intense in a few states. Even when there is competition at the national level, a substantial section of voters in rural areas do not experience it in their democratic choices. The size of the middle-class continues to be small in most parts of the country. All parties have played a role in the stagnation of the political development in the country." – V. Santhakumar (Azim Premji University) in: "Why am I not against the BJP?" (Economics in Action, 30 January 2021)

<https://vsanthakumar.wordpress.com/2021/01/30/why-am-i-not-against-the-bjp/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22893>

"People attack me for being a Marxist. I'll tell you a story. There is a village near Khandala where the caste-families evicted forty Untouchable families who were trying to build a road. The case was put to the Central Government two years ago. One could fight the British, but one can't fight them, because they are petty bourgeois, they are nothing, and one can't fight the wind. I have bought two villages, and the Untouchables have moved into them. But I can do nothing to get the petty bureaucracy out. If I lived in England I shouldn't worry, because there the bureaucracy seems to work. Here it doesn't, and I protest, and they call me a Marxist." – Mulk Raj Anand quoted by Dom Moraes in *Gone Away* (London, 1960), p. 23

<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/18773819>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22767>

"If Gandhi inspired and led a political revolution, [Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay] inspired and led a cultural revolution. [She] insisted on the importance of handicrafts as a traditional means of livelihood." – Feminist writer Gloria Steinem reviewing *A Passionate Life: Writings by and on Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay* by Ellen Carol Dubois and Vinay Lal (*OPEN Magazine*, 7 April 2017)

<https://www.openthemagazine.com/article/books/kamaladevi-chattopadhyay-the-last-teacher>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20948>

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- **Education and literacy**

"The goal is to prepare some model students in our villages, so that others will be inspired to follow them." – Santal educationist Boro Baski in "Long-term success of non-formal Adivasi school in West Bengal" (*D+C Development and Cooperation*, 2 July 2009)

<https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/long-term-success-non-formal-ativasi-school-west-bengal>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2274>

"[A]bout 40 per cent of school absence in rural India is attributed to only one factor: malnutrition." – Damayanti Datta in "Rage Of A Silent, Invisible Killer Called Malnutrition – Why Shining India Is In Grip Of An Epic Calamity" (*Outlook Magazine*, 26 August 2019)

<https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/india-news-rage-of-a-silent-invisible-killer-called-malnutrition-why-shining-india-is-in-grip-of-an-epic-calamity/302037>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30029>

"India has the world's largest tribal population and it is also the most economically underprivileged in our country. One of the first steps to developing any community is education." – *India Today* Web Desk in "Educating the world's largest tribal population is a challenge for India" (16 March 2017)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featurephilia/story/tribal-education-and-its-challenging-issues-in-india-965832-2017-03-16>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10669>

"A sustainable improvement in the quality would happen only when there is an effort to improve quality along with inclusion. This cannot be achieved by creating a few centers of excellence." – V. Santhakumar (Azim Premji University) in: "Only small, consistent steps can improve the quality of education in India" (*Economics in Action*, 11 October 2019)

<https://vsanthakumar.wordpress.com/2019/11/01/only-small-consistent-steps-can-improve-the-quality-of-education-in-india/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30571>



School celebration in Kakrana on the  
Narmada river >>  
Photo by courtesy Swapan Bhattacharjee



Glimpses from a model school run for and by Adivasi  
communities of the Nilgiris: Viswa Bharathi Vidyodaya Trust in  
Tamil Nadu Photos © Vidyodaya Culture Centre >>



Photo © by courtesy of Mari Thekaekara (Gudalur)

"The concept of public education is based on the objective of inclusiveness. What are the consequences of this overnight switch to a digital mode when a large segment of population remains digitally excluded? [...] The path we now follow focusses only on people who are digitally privileged. People without access to resources, data and devices have been left in the cold." – K.S. Madhavan in "Kerala: Path we've taken favours privileged" (Times of India, 3 June 2020)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kochi/kerala-path-weve-taken-favours-privileged/articleshow/76174319.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1882>

"A most important truth, which we are apt to forget, is that a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame." – Rabindranath Tagore quoted in *Santiniketan* (1961, p. 28)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2603>

"Recently, one of my tribal friends spoke warmly of Murmu's genuine concern for higher education in Jharkhand. Yet, how can this be ensured for tribals without providing quality education for them at the primary and secondary levels? Many ST seats [i.e. reserved for students from 'backward communities' labelled ST for 'Scheduled Tribes'] are not filled in professional colleges because the candidates are not found suitable." – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak in "Presidential elections: An Adivasi in high office" (Indian Express, 16 July 2022)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/an-adivasi-in-high-office-8032126/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=51060>

"Literacy rate among the [Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups] has gone up significantly over the past. From a single digit literacy rate, the figures have increased to 30 to 40 % in many of the PVTGs. However, as is the case with entire India, female literacy rate is still considerably lower compared to male counterpart." – "The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of India — Privileges and Predicaments" (published by the Anthropological Survey of India AnSI), quoted by Shiv Sahay Singh in "Vulnerable tribes: lost in a classification trap" (The Hindu, 8 April 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/vulnerable-tribes-lost-in-a-classification-trap/article17894997.ece>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=22029](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=22029)

"The Big-brother attitude of educators must end. The approach to tribal education has to be a two-way transaction of give and take, based on an informed appreciation of traditional tribal values and wisdom." – Uma Ram (Professor & Head Department of English, Kakatiya PG College, Chhattisgarh) in *Issues in Tribal Education in Bastar, Chhattisgarh* (Folklore Foundation, Lokaratna, Volume IV 2011)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14683>

"History is becoming a cataclysm. You're given a question and you are given an answer. You stick with that question and you stick with that answer, don't ask another question and don't look for another answer. Which is why one is so worried about the New Education Policy." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) interviewed by Karan Thapar in "I Don't Like Modi's India, It Is Too Narrow and Limited" (*The Wire*, 12 August 2022)

<https://thewire.in/history/full-text-karan-romila-thapar-modi-independence>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"In North India it is still common to reprimand a child: study or else you'll cut grass; the prospect of manual work invoked as a threat. Education was valued because it could widen the distance from the labouring multitudes." – Author and diplomat Pavan K. Varma in *Being Indian: Inside the Real India* (2005), p.104

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/903789955>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21762>

"Education has to liberate a person from narrow world view and the boundaries of caste, community, race and gender. Teachers have been entrusted with the responsibility of moulding the young minds to understand the world and make it better." – Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President of India (National Award 2014 to Teachers)

[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/President%20Confers.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/President%20Confers.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22421>

"Janakiamma has not had formal education, but she is now the director of a farmer producer company in the Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu. Started by the tribal people, for the tribal people, Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Ltd (APPCL), located in Kotagiri in Nilgiris, has seven directors from the indigenous communities at the helm of affairs. ." – Arathi Menon in "Aadhimalai, winner of UN Equator Prize from Nilgiris, offers a lesson in indigenous economics" (Mongabay Series: Eco Hope, 20 December 2021)

<https://india.mongabay.com/2021/12/aadhimalai-winners-of-un-equator-prize-from-nilgiris-offer-a-lesson-in-indigenous-economics>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46483>

"There are many indices one can use to measure the shocking failures of education, even as it is conventionally understood, in India today. The stories of state-run schools that are in absolute shambles are legion, and have been documented by thousands of researchers, journalists, and social workers. More than seventy years after independence, the effective countrywide literacy rate is less than 50%; in some districts of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh, female literacy rates still hover at 10%. The best public universities have been gutted; all that is left is a shambolic display of awards of "excellence", a word as shorn of

content as any. In one instance the award has been to an institute of higher education that does not even exist." – "The Undeveloped Heart: Gandhi on Education" by Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA), 15 October 2019

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2019/10/15/the-undeveloped-heart-gandhi-on-education/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29790>

"Nearly one in every twelve humans is a young Indian for whom meaningful education is of critical importance. [...] If knowledge is the core of education and if education lays the very foundation of a nation, the author [Ganesh Devy] argues that it is of critical importance that the plight of educational institutions and the need to generate knowledge appropriate to India are addressed without any delay." – Privy Trifles reviewing *The Crisis Within* by Ganesh [G.N.] Devy (The Book Shelf, 24 June 2017)

<https://www.privytrifles.co.in/2017/06/book-review-crisis-within-by-gn-devy.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23322>

"Due to the pandemic, the school has been closed. However, teaching has not really stopped. Teachers make short videos and send them to the students' parents. Whenever the students watch the videos, they respond on the WhatsApp group." – B Ramdas, co-founder of Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust (VBVT) in "The story of YouTube channel Kaathadi and how it's empowering tribal communities in TN" by Megha Kaveri featuring "Kaathadi", an innovative YouTube channel accessible to all learners (thenewsminute.com Education, 18 July 2020)

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/story-youtube-channel-kaathadi-and-how-its-empowering-tribal-communities-tn-128968>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34846>

"At the core of any higher education policy lies the notion of a university [distinguished] from its medieval forerunners by envisaging for it an autonomous sphere in relation to the emerging nation-state. Universities are thus required to be 'incubators of ideas and innovations'." – Suranjan Das, Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University Kolkata (The Telegraph, 30 September 2020)

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/calcutta/the-relevance-of-vidyasagar/cid/1793177>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35639>

"[The] morungs of the Nagas, the dhumkuria of the Santals and the gotuls of the Gonds [are] equivalents to schooling systems in mainstream societies." – Subhadra Mitra Channa in *Anthropological Perspectives on Indian Tribes*, quoted by Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12454>

"On a very small scale compared to the widely promoted homogenising mega-schools, [alternative schools] respect diversity and are sensitive to the socio-cultural and political context of the children. [...] The notion of 'mainstreaming' needs to be challenged not just because Adivasi culture is being crushed, but also because Adivasi values and ways of life offer insights that the 'mainstream' needs." – Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (*The Hindu*, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4429>

"The educational establishment has entrenched interests within it for whom the improvement of Adivasi education is not a priority and who may even look down upon them as second-class citizens." – Amman Madan, Rama Sastry and B Ramdas in "Social Movements and Educational Change: A Case Study of the Adivasi Munnetra Sangam" (*The Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 54, Issue No. 5, 02 Feb, 2019, Social Movements and Educational Change)

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/5/special-articles/social-movements-and-educational-change.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27219>

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Shanthi, a first-generation learner, with her mother, Karupri  
featured in "The forest in Shanthi Teacher's classroom" by [PARI](#) >>

- **Endangered language**

"Language is the only tool for expressing identity and culture as well as one of the greatest emblems of human diversity. There are 7,000 living languages in the world and around 3,000 are considered as 'endangered'. This means that almost half of the planet's current linguistic diversity is under threat." – Abhijit Mohanty in "Seven decades after independence, many tribal languages in India face extinction threat" (*Down to Earth*, 26 August 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/seven-decades-after-independence-many-tribal-languages-in-india-face-extinction-threat-73071>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6879>

"The country has already lost about 250 languages in the last 50 years. The state must recognise that a monolingual nationalistic model is not just robbing us of our linguistic richness, but also limiting the economic potential of the country. Diversity of language is not a burden on us. Rather, considering that even the most cutting-edge technologies are language-based, different languages spoken across the country have the potential to better build the country's economic future." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy (co-founder, People's Linguistic Survey of India) quoted by in "Need to preserve linguistic diversity, says expert" (The Times of India, 13 February 2014)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/Need-to-preserve-linguistic-diversity-says-expert/articleshow/30300251.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14145>

"Literacy level among women in India being alarmingly low, it will be necessary to expand our school education system so as to introduce and include as many languages as possible, so that the girl children are educated in their own languages. For this purpose, CIIL should take lead in studying and preparing materials in as many minority and tribal languages as possible. It should be a special endeavour of CIIL to promote and document the endangered languages of India, which are very much a part of India's plural cultural heritage." – Director, Central Institute of Indian Languages (Accessed 11 March 2021)

<https://www.ciil.org/aboutAhead1.aspx>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6039>

"According to the Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysuru, a language is 'endangered' when it has less than 10,000 speakers." – Priti David (Editor, PARI Education) in "Think and go slowly. You will get gold" (*People's Archive of Rural India*, 8 February 2018)

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/think-and-go-slowly-you-will-get-gold/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6338>



"If our language is alive, only then will our culture thrive. Losing our language, we will lose our identity, our forests, rivers and mountains." – Lado Sikaka (Dongria Kondh leader) quoted by Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (The Hindu, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21733>

"It is almost impossible to characterize all of India's tribals in a single ethnographic or historic framework. [...] After Independence, these communities were 'denotified' and placed quite randomly in the schedules of tribes, castes and other 'backward communities'. Yet anyone with any experience of tribal culture will find these listings mind-boggingly oversimplified. The most useful indicator of tribal identity, then, is language." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in *Painted Words: An Anthology of Tribal Literature* (Vadodara: Purva Prakash, 2012)

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/878631199>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22979>

"[A]ccording to the People's Linguistic Survey of India, as many as 780 different languages are spoken and 86 different scripts are used in the country. However, only 22 of them are recognized by the government as scheduled languages. [...] India has lost nearly 250 languages in the last half century, and 196 more have been declared endangered by UNESCO. As many as 120 of these 196 languages are spoken in the North-East. With most of these languages spoken by tribes and lacking a script, it has been particularly difficult to preserve them." – Osama Manzar in "Preserving our vanishing tribes, their heritage, language and wisdom" (Livemint, 8 September 2017)

<https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/AhrviHfdlAluJ6ffBBpUQN/Preserving-our-vanishing-tribes-their-heritage-language-an.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6039>

"Our intention is to protect, promote and educate the present youths on tribal languages. These unique languages are endangered with many people migrating to urban areas." – T.T. Basavanagouda (Director, Karnataka State Tribal Research Institute) on support extended to members of the Hakki Pikki and Dungri Garasia communities whose mother tongues are on the verge of extinction, quoted in "Dictionaries on tribal lingo to be brought out by year-end" (The Times of India, 3 December 2014)

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mysuru/Dictionaries-on-tribal-lingo-to-be-brought-out-by-year-end/articleshow/45360898.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17105>

"Kolami, Koya, Gondi, Kuvi, Kui, Yerukala, Savara, Parji, Kupia. Do these names ring a bell? No, right? They are all native tribal tongues that have immensely contributed to enrich the language and culture of Telugu people. But these languages are dying due to a plethora of reasons — lack of practice, absence of education, poverty-stricken state of the speakers. The UNESCO lists 191 languages of India as endangered. And as Eduardo Hughes Galeano, the literary giant of the Latin America puts it, 'Every two weeks, a language dies. The world is diminished when it loses its human sayings, just as when it loses its diversity of plants and beasts.' Numbers can be deceptive, India is a graveyard of more languages than one can imagine." – Papri Paul in "The dying tongues of Telangana and Andhra" (Times of India, 21 February 2017)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/the-dying-tongues-of-telangana-and-andhra/articleshow/57253816.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22153>

"Concluding his ambitious marathon Peoples' Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI) which took four years of field work preceded by nearly 15 years of conceptualization and planning, Prof Ganesh Devy, the Sahitya Akademi award winner, literary critic and founder of the Tribal Academy at Tejgadh declares that out of 1,600-odd languages listed in the 1961 survey of India, they have been able to trace not more than 850 languages during their survey. The survey was initiated by Vadodara-based Bhasha Research and Publication Centre founded by Prof Devy." – Papri Paul in "The fight for survival: language and identity" (Times of India, 21 February 2017)

<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/features/fight-survival-language-identity/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30494>

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- **Film**

"They have started making films in Gondi. The Bhojpuri film industry is prospering. The language itself is growing, probably the fastest in the country." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy quoted by Abhijit Mohanty in "Seven decades after independence, many tribal languages in India face extinction threat" (*Down to Earth*, 26 August 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/seven-decades-after-independence-many-tribal-languages-in-india-face-extinction-threat-73071>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6879>

"Crucial social issues can be raised by fun movies, getting people to change their attitudes. The key is to make it 'not cool' to have a feudal backward medieval mindset. I believe India's youth will come on board, for a variety of reasons." – Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD-Nilgiris) in "Can Bollywood shatter India's caste system?" (New Internationalist, 13 July 2012)

[https://www.newint.org/blog/2012/07/13/bollywood-untouchable-force/?utm\\_medium=ni-email&utm\\_source=message&utm\\_campaign=intl-eneews-2012-07-26](https://www.newint.org/blog/2012/07/13/bollywood-untouchable-force/?utm_medium=ni-email&utm_source=message&utm_campaign=intl-eneews-2012-07-26)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6944>

"In nearly all tribal villages, men, women and children dance together on many occasions. As with singing and the playing of musical instruments here the average knowledge and skills are generally higher than in any other south Asian communities. Even in rural and tribal villages one can observe that participation in dance has been declining due to the impact of the massive film industry and television." – Rolf Killius in "Traditional Dance in South Asia"

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16298>

Assamese film makers challenge the representation of tribal women in Indian films in the wake of Satyajit Ray's *Aranyer Din Ratri* (Days And Nights In The Forest):

"The immediate impression of Indian movies is that all are depicting an established formula, where the good woman is usually vulnerable and innocent, mostly good looking and also helpless or lacking in intelligence. The bad woman is either sensuous or scary and wicked even in appearance. But Assamese cinema, especially as seen through most of the films taken for the study, has not stuck to this kind of stereotyping in the larger sense. Films in Assam, through the decades, have dealt with serious issues concerning the society, and women in majority of the films, rather than only showing romance and escapism." – Rashmi Sarmah in "Gender Representation in the Cinema of Assam" (PhD thesis, Assam University 2014), Abstract p. 11

[https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/55929/5/05\\_abstracts.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/55929/5/05_abstracts.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15597>

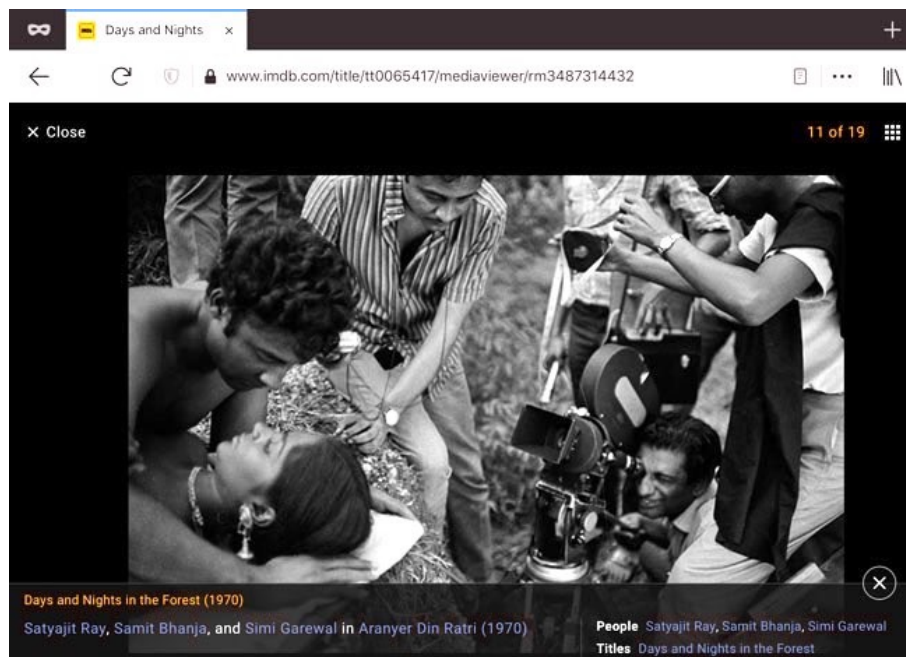
"Days and Nights in the Forest was one of Ray's most successful films [wherein he introduces] an overt sensuality to his work. [...] Feel the tension in this scene [5:10] A beguiling Santal woman [portrayed by a non-Santali actress Simi Garewal] whom [the young men in this story] met is hired to clean their room – and perhaps more. [...] No girlfriend of these guys would be allowed to parade themselves in this manner [...] In the forest, their true selves are revealed." – Preston Miller, voice-over for scenes from Satyajit Ray's 1970 film *Aranyer Din Ratri*: "Days and Nights in the Forest - introduction"

<https://youtu.be/IV8cIWVf0>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15597>

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Simi Garewal portraying Duli (tribal woman) in *Aranyer Din Ratri* ("Days and Nights in the Forest"); going by the *Summary* on [satyajitray.org](http://satyajitray.org) the fact that it came to be regarded as "one of Ray's most successful films" may, in part, be explainable by its portrayal of young men "full of the over-confidence of the big city and scant respect for the villagers" indulging in "drunken sprees and adventures with servants" who (spoiler alert) "depart again for the city, each with a better appreciation of life".

- **Gandhian social movement**

"Our idea of development is based on a very old idea taken up by many great minds such as Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore [...] about development from within. Development through the strength of the community's own." – Santal educationist Boro Baski quoted in "The Indian school where Indigenous children are 'never outsiders'" by Rosemary Marandi (Al Jazeera Education, 10 February 2020)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/indian-school-indigenous-children-outsiders-200128131128144.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34790>

"The tribal culture at its best provides a living example of the Gandhian concept of trusteeship [...] In cross-cultural settings, individual and group relations among tribals are valued on trust rather than on dominance." – Lachman Khubchandani in *Indigenous Peoples: Responding to Human Ecology* (Central Institute of Indian Languages & Bhasha Research & Publication Centre, Mysore, 2009), pp. 14-15

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/557412988>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7015>

"The slogan today is no longer merely 'Asia for the Asians' or 'Africa for the Africans' but the unity of all the oppressed races of the earth." – Mahatma Gandhi addressing two stalwarts of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa (quoted by Vinay Lal in "The Solidarity of Oppressed Peoples: A Tribute to E S Reddy, Anti-Apartheid Activist" (23 November 2020)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2020/11/23/the-solidarity-of-oppressed-peoples-a-tribute-to-e-s-reddy-anti-apartheid-activist/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23349>

"Charity destroys, work builds." – Social and environmental activist Baba Amte (who "exemplified the humanitarian politics of Gandhiji"), quoted by Medha Padkar in "The inspiring gardener" (DownToEarth, 15 March 2008)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/baba-amte-the-inspiring-gardener-4264>

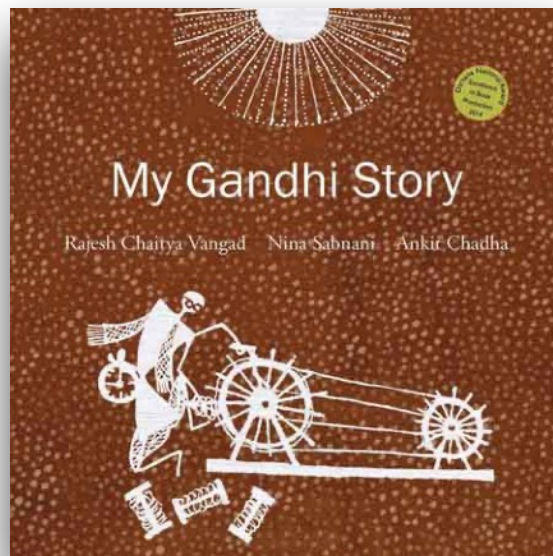
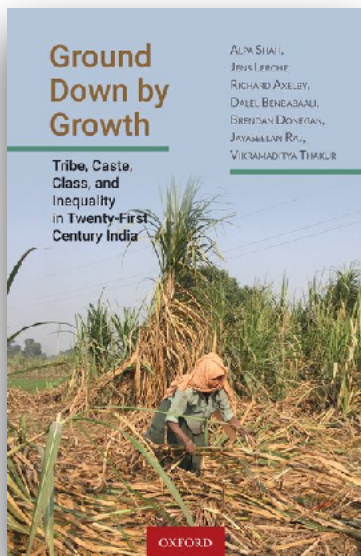
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21404>

"I wonder how [Gandhi] would have struggled to even comprehend the 'hardheartedness' of the educated in India today. Let there be no mistake: what really ails Indian education is the fact that at its center is the 'undeveloped heart'." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "The Undeveloped Heart: Gandhi on Education" (15 October 2019)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2019/10/15/the-undeveloped-heart-gandhi-on-education/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29790>





Find publications on all issues that matter, for members of tribal communities just as teachers and concerned citizens all over India and beyond >>

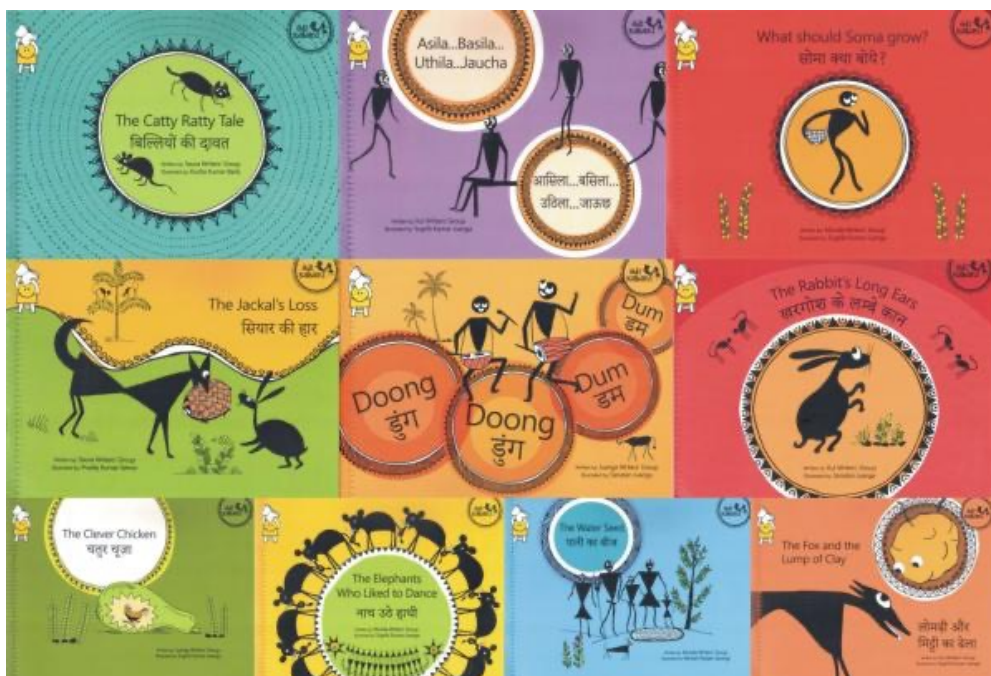


Image © Pratham tribal book series >>

"His absolute and uncompromising commitment to carry all communities together in crafting a utopian society is still relevant these days, especially as we live in cynical times when everything is about mobilising opinion for narrow gains and presenting one's identity in the most superficial and orchestrated manner." – Historian Lakshmi Subramanian (professor at the Humanities and Social Sciences, Pilani), interviewed by Rajkumarisharma Tankha (The New Indian Express, 31 January 2020)

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2020/jan/31/singing-gandhis-india-exploring-the-role-of-music-in-gandhis-life-2096814.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26089>

"Gandhi believed that giving more importance, value and relevance to practical skills, and applying traditional knowledge to solving day-to-day problems were essential for the development of rural India." – Bunker Roy (founder of Barefoot College, which helps rural communities become self-sufficient)

<https://www.barefootcollege.org>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12993>

"AV Thakkar, a Gandhian nationalist and the one-time head of the Harijan Sevak Sangh [...] advocated for bringing tribes into the Hindu fold." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3203>

"The world has enough for everyone's need but not for anyone's greed." – Mahatma Gandhi quoted in the Acceptance speech by Medha Patkar and Baba Amte (Narmada Bachao Andolan), Laureates of the 1991 *Right Livelihood Award* ("a courage-powered community for social change committed to peace, justice and sustainability for all")

<https://rightlivelihood.org/speech/acceptance-speech-medha-patkar-and-baba-amte-narmada-bachao-andolan/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

"If we ignore the message of Gandhi's Hind Swaraj, on the basis of what we gained our freedom, and on the basis of which we enjoy respect in the world, we will not just jeopardise that freedom and respect, we will be jeopardising the very future of our civilisation. Gandhi had warned us that the resource-hungry, consumerist model rests on war and creates ecological disasters. It is this dual threat of conflicts between people and violence against nature that can destroy civilisation. For centuries tribals have lived peacefully with nature. In this period of ecological catastrophes like climate change, the tribal way of life shows the alternatives we need to promote peace, sustainability and justice." – Declaration on Adivasi Swaraj by Navdanya (co-founded by physicist Vandana Shiva who also founded the



Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Natural Resource Policy (RFSTN), an organization devoted to developing sustainable methods of agriculture)

<https://navdanya.org>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6068>

"[W]hen you say take away their tears that Gandhi talked of, what are we doing with our tribals? We're making them face a nightmare of corporates coming in and mining the very land that they are cultivating. They're insecure because they're holding on to the land that they are cultivating." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) interviewed by Karan Thapar in "I Don't Like Modi's India, It Is Too Narrow and Limited" (*The Wire*, 12 August 2022)

<https://thewire.in/history/full-text-karan-romila-thapar-modi-independence>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"Air is free to all but if it is polluted it harms our health... Next comes water... From now on we must take up the effort to secure water. Councillors are servants of the people and we have a right to question them." – Mohandas K. Gandhi, Ahmedabad address on 1 January 1918; quoted by his grandson Gopalkrishna Gandhi in "On another New Year's Day: Mahatma Gandhi's 'khorak' a 100 years ago" (*The Hindu*, 1 January 2018)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/on-another-new-years-day/article22339609.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24087>

"Gandhi is a universal figure. [...] He is affirmed and avowed in many parts of the world while Indians might of course forget him or scorn him or defile him as they are doing now." – Ramachandra Guha in conversation with sociologist Nandini Sundar (*The Wire*, 21 March 2022)

<https://thewire.in/history/ramachandra-guha-history-gandhi-mentors>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11336>

"If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish therefore to wrestle with the snake." – Mahatma Gandhi quoted by Anna Della Subin in *Accidental Gods: On Men Unwittingly Turned Divine* (New York, 2021), p. 279

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/1151100898>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2299>

"Freedom from British rule meant nothing [to Gandhi] if it did not liberate Indians from hunger and give them an improved life. A leader had to identify completely with the poor, not through the easy means of a sermon but by sacrificing comfort and forsaking the temptations of money. This was the minimum, non-negotiable condition." – MJ Akbar in "The Rediscovery of Nehru: How Nehruvians revised their idol" (*OPEN Magazine*, 13 August 2021)

<https://openthemagazine.com/cover-stories/the-rediscovery-of-nehru/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30463>

"We should welcome your collaboration, but in devising something [like literacy campaigns] you should not lose sight of the fact that there are seven hundred thousand villages in India. They are not villages in the Western sense – dung heaps would better describe them." – Mahatma Gandhi quoted in *Maria Montessori Writes to her Grandchildren: letters from India, 1939-1946* (Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, 2020), p. 160

<https://montessori-pierson.com/india.html>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1273931392>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16037>

"[Gandhi's] political actions against the British colonial state were meant to pose a spiritual alternative to materialist exploitation [whereby] each person had to find the Truth in his or her own traditions." – Peter van der Veer (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity) in "Spirituality in Modern Society"

<https://www.academia.edu/33935500>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16037>

"Perhaps no one grasped this dimension of colonialism as sharply and instinctively as Mahatma Gandhi, who chose khadi as his non-violent tool to advance the cause of India's freedom. The humble handspun and handwoven fabric was a revolutionary emblem of the political fight for Indian independence, and an equally important revitalising instrument in the Gandhian toolkit to make the villages self-sufficient and uplift the poorest." – Neeta Deshpande in "India at 75: Khadi was an integral part of the freedom struggle. Where is handspun fabric today?", *Scroll.in*, 14 August 2022

<https://scroll.in/article/1030276/india-at-75-khadi-was-an-integral-part-of-the-freedom-struggle-where-is-handspun-fabric-today>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11257>

"Truth (Satya) implies Love, and Firmness (Agraha) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force ... that is to say, the Force which is born of Truth and Love or Non-violence." – Mahatma Gandhi on Civil Disobedience and Satyagraha quoted in *The Essential Gandhi: His Life, Work, and Ideas* by Louis Fischer (New York, 1983), p. 87

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1184167180>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12987>

"[Gandhi's] singular achievement was formulating what he calls his 'religion of ahimsa' [non-violence]." – Jyotirmaya Sharma, author of *Elusive Non-Violence: The Making And Unmaking Of Gandhi's Religion Of Ahimsa*, in an interview titled "Gandhi has become all things to all people" by Somak Ghoshal (Livemint.com, 1 October 2021)

<https://lifestyle.livemint.com/news/talking-point/gandhi-has-become-all-things-to-all-people-111633080526074.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5457>

"The attacks on Gandhi are coming fast and furious from every corner. His assassin, Nathuram Godse, is being hailed by some Indians as a martyr, a true shaheed. Reportedly, Godse is trending at #1 on Twitter in India. Gandhi's statues are vandalized and in social media he is accused of the worst atrocities that can be imagined." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "Gandhi, Secularism, and Cultural Democracy" (2 October 2020)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2020/10/02/gandhi-secularism-and-cultural-democracy/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=42475>

"[O]ther countries had factories, mines and airlines. India had millions—especially, but not only, female millions—who were experts in handicrafts that went far beyond Gandhi's spinning wheel" – Feminist writer Gloria Steinem reviewing *A Passionate Life: Writings by and on Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay* by Ellen Carol Dubois and Vinay Lal (*OPEN Magazine*, 7 April 2017)

<https://www.openthemagazine.com/article/books/kamaladevi-chattopadhyay-the-last-teacher>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20948>

"Although [Thakkar Bapa] was a follower of Gandhi, there is little that is Gandhian about the ashramshala pedagogy. The most recent government committee on tribal affairs, headed by Virginius Xaxa, refers to an 'ashramisation' of tribal education. Many ashram schools covertly became Hindu nationalist, yet followed patterns set by Christian mission schools, with uniforms, strict (often brutal) discipline, a deeply hierarchical structure, alien 'knowledge' learnt by rote, short haircuts, and Adivasi names replaced with Hindu ones. A 1941 lecture by Thakkar in Pune highlighted

negative stereotypes about tribal 'laziness', 'promiscuity', 'illiteracy', and 'addiction to shifting cultivation'. The cultural racism in such stereotypes forms the backdrop to the continuing discrimination and humiliation of Adivasis." – Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (The Hindu, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21733>

"Freedom of opinion and freedom of association are the two lungs that are absolutely necessary for a man to breathe the oxygen of liberty." – Gandhi on 28 December 1921, quoted by SN Sahu (press secretary to President KR Narayanan) in "Why Gandhi's use of oxygen as a metaphor during the freedom struggle has resonance for India today" (Scroll, 11 July 2021)

<https://scroll.in/article/997802/why-gandhis-use-of-oxygen-as-a-metaphor-during-the-freedom-struggle-has-resonance-for-india-today>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4395>

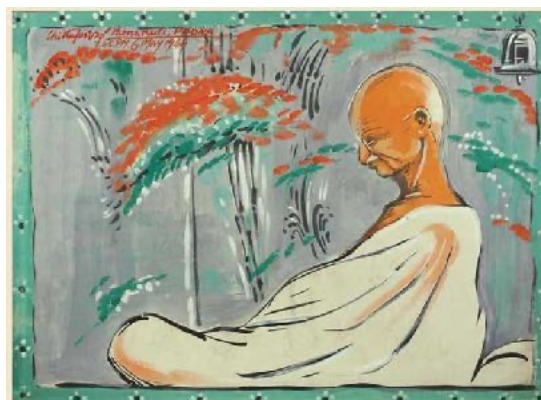
"What becomes evident from a perusal of the art is that the artists and printmakers saw in Gandhi the supreme embodiment of the aspirations of a people striving to be free." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "The Art of the Freedom Struggle in India" (12 August 2022)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2022/08/12/the-art-of-the-freedom-struggle-in-india/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10692>

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"Gandhiji at Prayer Time, Parnakuti, Poona" (1944) by Chittaprosad, "the great advocate of the rights of workers and revolutionary artists", explained by Vinay Lal in [Gandhi, Secularism, and Cultural Democracy](#) >>

- **Globalization**

"India is seen as an emerging major player in the global economy, but this progress has not yet reached the country's tribal people. They comprise eight percent of the population." – Santal educationist Boro Baski in "Long-term success of non-formal Adivasi school in West Bengal"(Development and Cooperation 7-8/2009)

<https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/long-term-success-non-formal-ativasi-school-west-bengal>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2274>

"By the impact of globalization, free trade and the communication revolution non-tribesmen are gradually invading the indigenous areas and intrude into their spiritual realms by introduction of their Gods, Goddesses and deities. They systematically and surreptitiously exploit their economy and devalue the indigenous culture. They clandestinely deprive their traditional spiritual culture and fervour making them vulnerable to external oppressive, exploitative forces." – S Davidson Sargunam & S Suja in "Eco-Spirituality and Climate Change with Reference to the Kaani Tribe of Kanyakumari Forests" (Tribal Foundation Nagercoil, 4 July 2015)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18372>

"The challenges to their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights [i.e. of India's 'Scheduled Tribes' (STs)] have been critical today, insofar as they perpetuate extreme form of deprivation in many ways. [...] The instruments of globalization have not rendered any positive impact in achieving the intended objectives of social security to the indigenous people." – Celine Sunny (Report "Impact of Janamaithri Suraksha Project on the Safety/Security of the Tribal People in Kerala, submitted to the Home Department, Govt. of Kerala, accessed 4 July 2019)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29463>

"Now in the present age of globalization the world has shrunk into a village as the society has advanced in technology. But the tribes, who are the custodians of Indian culture in real sense, are far behind in this race of advancement. In order to rescue them from the present plight, the university has put before itself the following aims and objectives [such as] providing more opportunity for the tribes." – Indira Gandhi National Tribal University Amarkantak (Madhya Pradesh), 2011

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3803>

"The seeds [for right livelihood] are still alive in many a tribal societies which cannot be allowed to be extinct. They have to say "NO" to plundering their natural capital and cultural wealth if the world is to behave. Bows and arrows will not help." –

Acceptance speech by Medha Patkar and Baba Amte (Narmada Bachao Andolan), Laureates of the 1991 *Right Livelihood Award* ("a courage-powered community for social change committed to peace, justice and sustainability for all")

<https://rightlivelihood.org/speech/acceptance-speech-medha-patkar-and-baba-amte-narmada-bachao-andolan/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

"We have become a civilization based on work [yet] engaged in utterly meaningless or counter-productive activities [This may explain why] we rankle with resentment that there may be others out there that are not in the same trap." – Anthropologist David Graeber quoted by Richard Swift in "Living Well" (New Internationalist #534 November-December 2021, p. 34)

<https://newint.org/features/2021/10/07/living-well>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2943>

"[T]he Adivasi is the owner of the land rather than an imperfectly integrated cultural fragment. Hence, it links the story of the Adivasi with the global story of oppression and dispossession of indigenous populations at the hands of outsiders." – Anshul Trivedi (PhD candidate at the Centre for Political Studies, JNU) in "The silent erasure of Adivasiyat" (The Hindu, 4 December 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-silent-erasure-of-adivasiyat/article35842267.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4548>

"Land conflict, intensive farming, and marginalisation have resulted in worsening socio-economic indicators including malnutrition, child deaths and food crisis linked to land alienation and the loss of their traditional agriculture in tribal communities, the government has noted." – Mahima Jain reporting on Kudumbashree which mobilises community-based networks in "Kerala's attempt to revive traditional farm practices puts tribal women at the forefront" by Mahima Jain (Scroll.in, 19 April 2020)

<https://scroll.in/article/959378/keralas-attempt-to-revive-traditional-farm-practices-puts-tribal-women-at-the-forefront>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20778>

"Hundreds of millions of people today are highly impoverished and disadvantaged by virtue of ethnic or gender identity. These and other forces render them highly vulnerable to false offers by human traffickers." – Interview titled "Quick, cheap and vulnerable: Siddharth Kara on the persistence of modern slavery" (Harvard Kennedy School, 12 October 2017)

<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/research-insights/policy-topics/human-rights/siddharth-kara-persistence-modern-slavery>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=36150>

"Broadly, trafficking is the exploitation of people, most often for sexual exploitation or forced labour. The different elements are captured within the UN 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children', adopted in 2000 and implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). [...] The highest numbers of trafficking victims are detected in the countries in which they are citizens." – Anna Tsalapatanis (Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford) in "An uncertainty of terms. Definitional and methodological concerns in human trafficking" (IIAS The Newsletter 87 Autumn 2020)

<https://www.iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/uncertainty-terms-definitional-and-methodological-concerns-human-trafficking>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3615>

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. [...] Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world." – Eleanor Roosevelt quoted by the United Nations in "Human Rights Day 10 December"

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"The Nobel-prize-winning economist Amartya Sen worries that, as these inequalities [resulting from growth marked by considerable disparities of region and class] intensify, one half of India will come to look and live like California, the other half like sub-Saharan Africa." – Ramachandra Guha in *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (Picador India, 2011), p. 711

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/179807214>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5733>



"The issue is not whether the world's economy is governable toward ambitious goals like promoting social justice, equality between countries and greater democratic control for the bulk of the world's people, but whether it is governable at all." – Mogobe B. Ramose quoting Globalization in question by Hirst, P. and Thompson, G in "Globalization and ubuntu" (The African Philosophy Reader), pp. 732-6 p. 750

<https://www.academia.edu/36236714>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5844>

"The tribals' life is a clean slate in the face of globalisation and it is interesting to see how they are adapting to modernisation, which is changing their life and culture." - Jitendra Vasava (a lecturer at Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh) in "Symposium held on Gujarat tribal literature, culture" (Indian Express, 28 February 2010)

<http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/symposium-held-on-gujarat-tribal-literature/585310>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6304>

"Bring your know-how from your countries and communities. Air, water, earth... They have no borders." He continues. "We cannot think about nations. We can't think about national borders... Do not turn Slow Food into a church. Do not turn Slow Food into a political party. Do not turn slow food into a bureaucracy. There is no charity here." – Carlo Petrini, co-founder of the Slow Food Youth Network (SFYN), quoted in "Eat, pray, love" (The Hindu, 10 November 2012)

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine//article59815973.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=8166>

"The cash crop economy is an integral part of Third World 'Development' and a major cause of deforestation. The best land is taken to earn export income, which is very often used to pay the foreign debt. Farmers are forced onto marginal lands, resulting in deforestation, land degradation and poverty." – Manoj Kumar Hazarika in "Deforestation in Garo Hills and its impact", *The Echo: An Online Journal of Humanities & Social Science*, Volume I, Issue IV, April 2013 (Karimganj College, Assam)

<https://www.thecho.in/files/Deforestation-in-Garo-Hills-and-its-impact.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14246>

"The problem is twofold: on the one hand economic development is a necessity for India; on the other hand the attitude of the Indian government towards the adivasis in an increasingly connected and competitive world, ignores the minorities." – Anjana Singh ("Inheemse volken" in Groniek 213, University of Groningen)

<http://groniek.nl/groniek-213-is-uit-inheemse-volken/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27284>

"The concept of a mixed economy as envisaged in the Indian constitution gave way to a modern free market economy. As a result, the ground gained over the previous two decades in the fight against poverty began to slide out from under them. Accordingly, they are not taken in when they are told again and again that globalisation is good for all of us but that we must go through the belt-tightening phase even if eating less means malnutrition or death for the poorest women and children." – Stan Thekaekara (Co-founder, Just Change India) in "Humanising globalisation" (FEASTA REVIEW Number 2, 2018)

<http://justchangeindia.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Humanising-Globalisation.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23371>

"Alcoholism, in every corner of the globe, has been the biggest factor in the downfall of indigenous people and in the decimation of their society." – Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD-Nilgiris) in "Glad to be adivasi!" (New Internationalist, 13 June 2014)

<https://newint.org/blog/2014/06/13/adivasi-indigenous-culture/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15283>

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Image © Google Maps

Find publications on the ways modernity and globalization affect India's tribal communities depending on a variety of factors such as climate change, access to education, food and health care

- **Health and nutrition**

"Tribal children have higher levels of undernutrition compared to children of socially economically advanced sections." – Programme report on Tribal nutrition: "UNICEF's efforts to support the tribal population, especially children who suffer from malnourishment"

<https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/tribal-nutrition>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"The tribal food basket has always been diverse and nutritious, including maize, minor millets like kodo and kutki, oil seeds like ramtila, along with fruits, leaves, - rhizomes, mushrooms, meat and fish [...] We have pushed them out of their complementary relationship with ecology, way of life and time-tested nutrition." – Nutrition expert Bal quoted in "Rage Of A Silent, Invisible Killer Called Malnutrition – Why Shining India Is In Grip Of An Epic Calamity" (*Outlook Magazine*, 14 August 2019)

<https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/india-news-rage-of-a-silent-invisible-killer-called-malnutrition-why-shining-india-is-in-grip-of-an-epic-calamity/302037>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30029>

"The National Curriculum Framework recommends that children should examine local issues of livelihood, production, health and environment first and then link it to history, geography, science and environmental studies." – Sujit Sinha, who teaches the master's in education course at Azim Premji University (Bengaluru), quoted by Natasha Badhwar in "The school on the hill" (*Livemint*, 7 November 2015)

<http://www.livemint.com/Leisure/hrgTu2CmdYZERoR1TaBc0M/The-school-on-the-hill.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20136>

"[N]utritional deficiency is the root cause of most ailments in the tribal population consisting of Korku, Gond and Gawali tribes. [Therefore Bhartiya Kushta Nivarak Sangh] has been educating tribals about the nutritional needs and the kind of food items that will fulfill this from locally available materials." – Jayant Kothe (chief coordinator of an NGO working in 80 villages) quoted in "NGO works to spread awareness about nutrition" (*Times of India*, Nagpur, 26 January 2011)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/ngo-works-to-spread-awareness-about-nutrition/articleshow/7363914.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21003>

"Dams, irrigation and factory farms are linked to 25% of infectious diseases in humans. Travel, transport and food supply chains have erased borders and distances. Climate change has contributed to the spread of pathogens. [...] To prevent future outbreaks, we must become much more deliberate about protecting our natural environment." – Inger Andersen (Under-secretary general and executive director of the UN Environment Programme) quoted in "Coronavirus: Fear over rise in animal-to-human diseases" (BBC News, 6 July 2020)

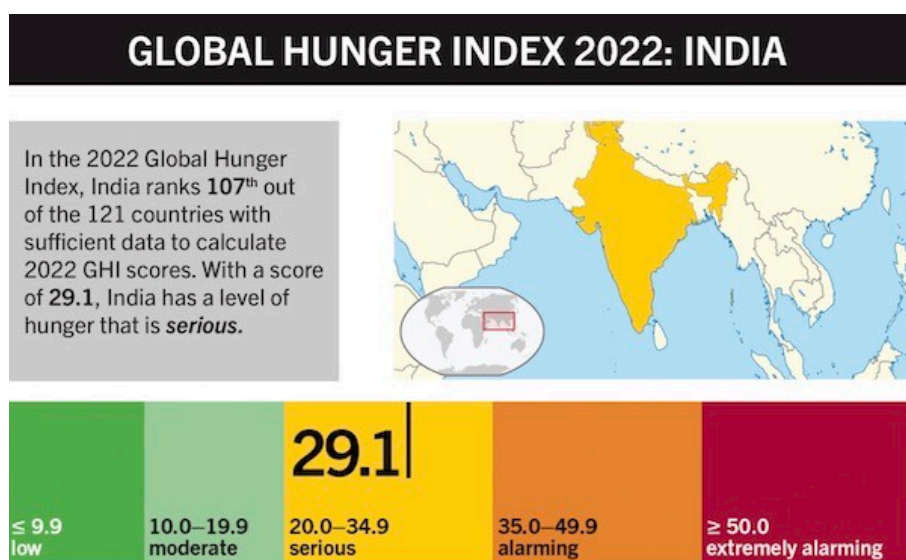
<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-53314432>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22575>

"In the 2022 Global Hunger Index, India ranks 107th out of the 121 countries with sufficient data to calculate 2022 GHI scores. With a score of 29.1, India has a level of hunger that is serious. [...] The Global Hunger Index is a peer-reviewed annual report, jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and country levels. The aim of the GHI is to trigger action to reduce hunger around the world." – "Global Hunger Index 2022: India" (October 2022)

<https://www.globalhungerindex.org/india.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5547>



2022 Global Hunger Index

<https://www.globalhungerindex.org/india.html>

Find publications on urgent issues for India's tribal communities such as adverse inclusion, development, health and nutrition, and rural poverty >>

"India's worrying ranking in the Global Hunger Index: 101 out 116 (and behind Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan)." – Nissim Mannathukkaren (Dalhousie University) in "How Hindu Nationalism Enables India's Slide Into Inequality" (*The Wire*, 28 December 2021)

<https://m.thewire.in/article/communalism/how-hindu-nationalism-enabled-indias-slide-into-inequality>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5547>

"Adivasi communities traditionally depended on the forest for all their nutritional needs. They subsisted mainly on fruits, vegetables, tubers, fish, small game as well as the occasional crop they grew, predominantly coarse grains. However, as time passed and the nature of, as well as their access to, forests changed, their diet started becoming deficient. Certain tribes, such as Paniyas, forced into bonded labour saw a paradigm shift in their dietary practices due to their dependence on their exploiters for their sustenance needs. This deficiency started manifesting in the form of rampant malnutrition, among adults and children alike, underweight babies as well as high maternal mortality. Another consequence was increased susceptibility to Tuberculosis among the Adivasis." – Blog post "Gardening their way to Good Health" by ACCORD – Action for Community Organisation, Rehabilitation and Development

<https://www.accordweb.in/?p=4840>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=36391>

"Health spending by the Indian government as percentage of GDP has long been one of the lowest for any major country, and the public health system is chronically dismal." – Pranab Bardhan in "The two largest democracies in the world are the sickest now" (scroll.in, 24 August 2020)

<https://scroll.in/article/971086/the-two-largest-democracies-in-the-world-are-the-sickest-now>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13755>

"It was assumed that tribal people have same health problems, similar needs and hence the uniform national pattern of rural health care would be applicable to them as well, albeit with some alteration in population: provider ratio. The different terrain and environment in which they live, different social systems, different culture and hence different health care needs were not addressed. Not surprisingly health and healthcare in tribal areas remained unsolved problems." – Preface by Abhay Bang (Chairman, Expert Committee on Tribal health) in "Tribal Health in India: Bridging the Gap and a Roadmap for the Future" (Report of the Expert Committee on Tribal Health, undated)

[https://www.nhm.gov.in/nhm\\_components/tribal\\_report/Executive\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.nhm.gov.in/nhm_components/tribal_report/Executive_Summary.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=36758>

"In Port Blair itself, some years ago, the son of Jirake, the king of the Great Andamanese, had been found begging. [T]he state and its tribal department had allowed the worst of our society – paan, tobacco, liquor and now, COVID-19 – to reach these endangered communities. Newer threats, like a transshipment port at Great Nicobar, emerged." – M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"[T]he terrible neglect in public delivery of healthcare must not be allowed to continue." – Brochure for the report titled "Living World of the Adivasis of West Bengal: An Ethnographic Exploration", issued on the occasion of the Kolkata International Book Fair 2020

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31882>

"India's healthcare spending, including both private and public, has been around 3.6% of GDP for the past six years [with] fewer than 10 doctors per 10,000 people, and in some states the figure is less than five." – Vikas Pandey in "Coronavirus: How India descended into Covid-19 chaos" (BBC News. 5 May 2021)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56977653>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34679>

"The per capita consumption of alcohol for India is 4 litres [...] Alcohol related diseases are growing leading to high occupancy of hospital beds in hospitals." – Human Development Report 2005 Kerala, Government of Kerala (2006), pp. 57-61

[https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/stateplan/sdr\\_pdf/shdr\\_kerala05.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/stateplan/sdr_pdf/shdr_kerala05.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6045>

"[W]e don't die like we used to before" and "we are not afraid like we used to be before." – Dr Shylaja Devi quoting members of Gudalur's Adivasi communities on the biggest difference Ashwini has made to their lives in "The wealth of wellness" (Tata Trusts, 3 June 2012)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6406>

"Who, if anyone, is excluded—or adversely included—from equitable access to public goods [...] resulting in intense dispossession, sexual and economic exploitation, alarming health and nutrition declines as well as precarious survival. [...] The picture that emerges from the report is in many ways grim and troubling." –

"The India Exclusion Report 2015: A comprehensive, annually updated analysis on the exclusion of disadvantaged groups in India" (First Edition, New Delhi 2016, [www.yodapress.co.in](http://www.yodapress.co.in), supported by UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women)

[https://www.im4change.org/docs/91763text-final\\_India-Exclusion-Report-round2Final.pdf](https://www.im4change.org/docs/91763text-final_India-Exclusion-Report-round2Final.pdf)

<https://www.indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22410>

"Many people – though not all – have been able to secure freedom from torture, unjustified imprisonment, summary execution, enforced disappearance, persecution and unjust discrimination, as well as fair access to education, economic opportunities, and adequate resources and health-care." – Introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations), p.vi

[https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr\\_booklet\\_en\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"Despite South Asia's promising social inclusion processes, staggering social and health inequalities leave indigenous populations largely excluded. Marginalization in the South Asian polity, unequal power relations, and poor policy responses deter Adivasi populations' rights and opportunities for health gains and dignity. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is likely to result in a disproportionate share of infections and deaths among the Adivasis, given poor social conditions and exclusions." – Chundankuzhiyil Ulahannan Thresia, Prashanth Nuggehalli Srinivas, Katia Sarla Mohindra, Chettiparambil Kumaran Jagadeesan in "The Health of Indigenous Populations in South Asia: A Critical Review in a Critical Time" (free access in *SAGE Journals*, August 2020)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0020731420946588>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27829>

"The nation's 'primary conservers' – often tribal farmers – are now seen as 'guardians of biological diversity' and therefore entitled to protection under the law known as Biodiversity Act." – Video message by scientist M.S. Swaminathan whose research foundation (MSSRF) was founded with proceeds from the First World Food Prize (1987) and remains committed to the livelihoods of rural communities.

<https://www.mssrf.org>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>



"The eco fragile region calls for a more sustainable path. Unfortunately, most of the large dams don't have disaster management plans in place. According to the Central Water Commission, there are 5,334 large dams in India besides 411 under construction. A report of the Auditor General in 2017 found that only 349 of these dams had disaster management plans in place. Indeed a matter of grave concern!" – Charanjit Ahuja in "Was the Uttarakhand tragedy waiting to happen?" (Tehelka, 15 February 2021)

<http://tehelka.com/was-the-uttarakhand-tragedy-waiting-to-happen/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6068>

"And when all of a sudden all these non-urban communities couldn't feed themselves, how would that create a crisis? It's a crucial part of the puzzle to make sure that those community remain as sustainable as they can and continue feeding themselves." – Rick Knecht (University of Aberdeen) in "Green Thinking: Climate Justice" (BBC Radio 3 Arts & Ideas, 10 November 2021)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0b3fdzq>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16267>

"Farmers on the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border have been sending organic produce to Bengaluru even during the lockdown [2020]." – Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh (Pune-based NGO)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/what-does-self-reliance-really-mean-amazing-stories-emerge-from-indias-villages/article31756580.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34172>

"A quick survey of edible plant foods in some villages in Bastar yielded a list of more than 300 species. However, those that were regularly eaten were far fewer, many species having slipped out of traditional diets as 'there was not enough time'". – Madhu Ramnath in "Within the world of food collection" (*India Seminar*, Contested Cultures, February 2018)

[www.india-seminar.com/2018/702/702\\_madhu\\_ramnath.htm](http://www.india-seminar.com/2018/702/702_madhu_ramnath.htm)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24941>

"In addition to rice, North East India is also home to the cultivated species of bananas known by their genus name, Musa." – Dhriyoti Kalita reviewing *Prehistory and Archaeology of Northeast India* by Manjil Hazarika (Scroll.in, 3 March 2019)

<https://scroll.in/article/915071/this-essential-book-on-the-prehistory-of-no>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=45657>

"Adivasis are extremely knowledgeable about the tubers, berries, leafy greens and mushrooms which they collect. [...] They would also fish and hunt small animals for food throughout the year. Most homes would have some meat drying above the cooking fires for a rainy day." – Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD-Nilgiris) quoted by Priti David in "In the Nilgiris, an inheritance of malnutrition" (*People's Archive of Rural India*, 1 May 2020)

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/in-the-nilgiris-an-inheritance-of-malnutrition/>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5547>

"The adivasis pity the Dilliwallahs. They find us under-nourished, anorexic and weak. They think it is an urban disease to believe that money can buy everything. They also pity us for being addicted to our computers and mobile phones." – Nandan Saxena (co-director of National Award-winning documentary "I Cannot Give You My Forest") quoted by S. Ravi (*The Hindu*, April 24, 2015)

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/on-national-award-winning-documentary-i-cannot-give-you-my-forest/article7137681.ece>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17768>

"Traditional farming systems in India have received a major boost at a time when Indian agriculture is struggling to come to terms with modern technologies. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has accorded the status of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) to the traditional agricultural system being practiced in Koraput region of Odisha." – Jyotika Sood in "UN heritage status for Odisha's Koraput farming system" (*Down To Earth*, 4 January 2012)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/un-heritage-status-for-odishas-koraput-farming-system-35627>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16267>

"As more people migrate to cities and towns in search of better employment and education opportunities, one tends to take up food habits that are convenient and less time-consuming. [...] Sadly, this is the story of most villages in India that have bid adieu to not just its people but its age-old regional cuisines that were high on nutritional values too." – S. Lekshmi Priya on a campaign by two women – illustrator Tanya Kotnala and nutritionist Tanya Singh – to revive the local art and culture of Uttarakhand in "With Art and Science, Two Women Are Reviving Uttarakhand's Nutritional Delicacies" (7 September 2017)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/114669/uttarakhands-nutritional-delicacies-revived-through-art-bhuli/>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25814>

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- **Media portrayal**

"[W]e live in a world of rapid development in the media [and] everyone has different influences from where they live and change in different directions." – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak interviewed by Norwegian writer and filmmaker Audun Nedrelid (*The Johar Journal*, Vol. II, January-June 2021)

<https://joharjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Volume-II-January-June-2021.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35277>

"For quite a while now, we see young people being robbed of their history, denied any knowledge of what India's fight for freedom and Independence was about." – P. Sainath (founder of PARI "*People's Archive of Rural India*") interviewed on "The Last Heroes" (Scroll Staff, 10 October 2022)

<https://scroll.in/article/1034653/p-sainaths-second-book-the-last-heroes-will-be-published-25-years-after-his-iconic-first-book>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=52313>

"I would like the media to be more responsive to the needs of the poorest people, and less single-minded in their coverage of the world of glitzy entertainment and shining business opportunities. The most vibrant media in the world is so silent on the needs and predicaments of the poorest." – Nobel Awardee Amartya Sen (*The Hindu*, 1 February 2014)

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-authors/jaipur-diary/article5643002.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13755>

"PARI is not only archiving invaluable materials about rural India, but also developing a cadre of knowledgeable reporters who can report from rural India about its realities. This digital archive has already received some significant awards for its work, including the Praful Bidwai Memorial Award (June, 2016). PARI seeks to 'continue its efforts to push the borders of digital multimedia and take journalism, arts, crafts, and literature out of the hands of corporations and hand it back to people.' – Jael Silliman in "Voices from the countryside" (*The Telegraph*, 12 November 2016)

[https://www.telegraphindia.com/1161112/jsp/opinion/story\\_118705.jsp](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1161112/jsp/opinion/story_118705.jsp)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21398>

"Although deprivation so defined is a huge part of contemporary Indian reality both in the countryside and in cities, the mainstream media do not generally give it informed, sustained coverage." – Asian College of Journalism: "Covering Deprivation" (course-related information)

<https://www.asianmedia.org.in/acj/programme/covering-deprivation/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

"Touring ten drought-stricken states in India transformed the acclaimed journalist Palagummi Sainath – showing him a devastating situation mostly ignored by his fellow journalists. 'I felt that if the Indian Press was covering the top 5 percent, I should cover the bottom percent.' – A conversation with Saint Francis Xavier University's Coady Chair in Social Justice for 2015" (CBC radio podcast May 27, 2016)

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/imprisoned-by-profit-media-democracy-1.3601228>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23847>

"[L]et us recognise that there there is a manic irrationality that is being carefully seeded in Indian society today and that hate-filled words have an impact on the rights and well-being of all." – Vasundhara Sirnate Drennan (political scientist and journalist) on Mass indoctrination in "Haridwar's hubris of hate must be stopped" (The Hindu, 30 December 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

"[T]he key for Native media to succeed is for it to connect to its cultural roots." - James R. Mountain (owner of the San Ildefonso Pueblo community's newspaper in New Mexico) in "More than News: Indigenous media empowers native voices and communities" (*American Indian Magazine*, Smithsonian, Summer 2020)

[www.AmericanIndianMagazine.org](http://www.AmericanIndianMagazine.org)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22744>

"[T]here have been constant press freedom violations [with] calls for the journalists concerned to be murdered." – *2020 World Press Freedom Index* by Reporters without borders

<https://rsf.org/en/india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

"In the 2020 World Press Freedom Index, India slipped a further two notches and now ranks a lowly 142, lower than even Myanmar which is ruled by a military junta." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "Emergency in India, Faux and Real" (26 June 2020)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2020/06/26/emergency-in-india-faux-and-real/>

"The Indian authorities' response to protests has focused on discrediting peaceful protesters, harassing critics of the government, and prosecuting those reporting on the events." – Meenakshi Ganguly (South Asia director at Human Rights Watch) quoted by Soutik Biswas (BBC News, 4 February 2021)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-55906345>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11721>

"75 per cent of the population did not make news. [...] We need peoples' movements around Health Justice, Food Justice, and more – some inspiring ones already exist, but are marginalised in corporate media coverage." – P. Sainath (Founder, *People's Archive of Rural India* PARI) in "We Didn't Bleed Him Enough: When Normal is the Problem" (counterpunch.org, 12 August 2020, first published in *Frontline Magazine*)

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/12/we-didnt-bleed-him-enough-when-normal-is-the-problem/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20921>

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All India tribal arts exhibition Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi

Photo © editor

More about [crafts and visual arts](#) | [Homes](#) | [Organizations](#) >>

- **Modernity**

"Our vital traditions are being lost. They are being 'modernized'." – A tribal mother's concerns (interviewed for Survival International) in "Factory Schools: Destroying Indigenous People in the Name of Education" (accessed 28 March 2021)

<https://www.survivalinternational.org/about/factoryschools>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34514>

"Samagra, an online portal of the Government of Madhya Pradesh, is supporting identification, verification, updating and categorization of all individuals in a family by local bodies and linking households to their respective fair price shops electronically." – Unicef India "What we do: Tribal nutrition" (accessed 26 July 2022)

<https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/tribal-nutrition>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"In Nehru's view, the process of modernization must not be taken as forcing a sudden break with the tribals past but help them build upon it and grow by a natural process of evolution." – Chittaranjan Mishra in "Tribal Philosophy and Pandit Nehru" (*Odisha Review*, November 2017)

<https://magazines.odisha.gov.in/Orissareview/2017/November/engpdf/100-110.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16310>

"People think differently, and the function of the language is different. So hopefully those of us who know many different ways to express ourselves will be able to make a better world because of our ability to reach one another and to say things in ways that make a new kind of common sense." – Buffy-Sainte Marie (singer, songwriter, activist and author of three books for children) interviewed by Shelagh Rogers for CBC radio

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thenextchapter/full-episode-june-18-2022-1.6491133/buffy-sainte-marie-s-new-children-s-book-tâpwê-and-the-magic-hat-draws-on-the-wisdom-of-indigenous-elders-1.6491178>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=50338>

"Since the advent of the digital era, tribals are asserting themselves not only through oral narratives but in written and visual mediums as well. Here I would like to give three examples to show how tribals are judiciously using digital platforms to reach out." – Santal writer Sunder Manoj Hembrom in "Preserving Tribal Memory through New Forms of Orality in the Digital Era", National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=45026>

"The tribal peoples access to forests has almost gone. Their life-style is changing rapidly. They have already mingled with the non-tribals and imbibed their culture and life-styles. The fact of the matter is they can no longer live like their ancestors, no longer depend on the vanishing forests for their sustenance. It will be to their advantage if they are equipped to meet these changes with a balanced approach; otherwise they will just be swept over. We hope they will retain the tribal values that have relevance even today and accept the good brought in by modernization. It is a question of survival." – Rama Sastry & B. Ramdas in "Work and Wisdom of Vernacular" (Supported by UNESCO)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1929>

"A group of women recall their bygone days: In our big village we girls and boys were together in pairs. But the pairs of our friendships are no more. Some of us have shut ourselves up indoors." – Synopsis by Boro Baski for "Rasi Nato (Big Village)", a song composed and performed by staff and students of the Rolf Schoembs Vidyashram (Non-formal Santal school, Ghosaldanga village, Dist.-Birbhum, West Bengal), included in the Santali video album "Ale Ato" (Our Village)

<https://youtu.be/3UbSfSI2jN4>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=25317](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=25317)

"The awakening of India was two-fold: she looked to the west and, at the same time, she looked at herself and her own past." – Jawaharlal Nehru in The Discovery Of India (1946, OUP Centenary ed. 1989, p. 329)

<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.98835>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17554>

"[T]hey face the challenge of facing the modern world on a daily basis and feeling the need to belong to." – "Writer Mari Marcel Thekaekara says the tribal communities are a standing example of how women play a major role in preservation of eco historic cultural heritage in India" (The Hindu, 27 January 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/A-messenger-from-the-mountains/article17102329.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22373>

"India lives in its villages, but it has been forced to go to its cities to work. We have created a nation where nearly half of the wealth is generated by the labour of these unseen and unheard men, women and children. We call them migrant labour. For all the wealth generated by the cities, the migrants live in poverty, working in jobs that profit others but bring them very little." – Chitvan Gill in "The lives of the unseen, unheard men and women who build the cities we inhabit" (Scroll.in, 31 May 2020)

<https://scroll.in/article/962825/photo-essay-the-lives-of-the-unseen-unheard-men-and-women-who-build-the-cities-we-inhabit>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=33992>



"The Madhus of the world suffer violent deaths not because we failed to modernise them, but because of the intrinsic connections between their terrible fate and well-being — in 70 years after Independence, post-colonial governments have virtually replicated colonial government policies towards the Adivasi." – Nissim Mannathukkaren in "The Adivasi in the mirror: The lynching of Madhu in Kerala must shock our conscience into recognising the dispossession of India's tribals" (The Hindu Opinion, 3 March 2018)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-ativasi-in-the-mirror/article22911351.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24460>

"There is no other way but to redefine 'modernity' and the goals of development, not to narrow it to 'environment' but to widen it to a sustainable equitable just society based on harmonious non exploitative relationship between human being to human being, and human being to nature. We cannot be either politically naive or apathetic or playing the unseen hand of free economy." – Acceptance speech by Medha Patkar and Baba Amte (Narmada Bachao Andolan), Laureates of the 1991 *Right Livelihood Award* ("a courage-powered community for social change committed to peace, justice and sustainability for all")

<https://rightlivelihood.org/speech/acceptance-speech-medha-patkar-and-baba-amte-narmada-bachao-andolan/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

"Only a few [tribals] are genuinely proud of their own culture, understand its roots and want to bring about some rapprochement between its traditions and the requirements of modernity." – Guest Column titled "Hands off tribal culture" (*India Today*, 9 January 2014)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/guest-column/story/19800915-hands-off-tribal-culture-821415-2014-01-09>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2299>

"The recent trend is to use exotic species for manicured lawns and gardens. This means indigenous species are losing even more space, and our local species decline with them. New lifestyle patterns are also changing things. For example, India's urban sparrow population has dipped. Even growing up, sparrows were as common as a crow or a pigeon. But now they've almost disappeared. Why?" – Rashneh Pardiwala in "Why It's Hard to 'Change Mindsets' on Environmental Protection Among India's Elites"; interview on environmental education at her Centre for Environmental Research and Education (CERE) in Mumbai (Asia Blog, 27 July 2015)

<https://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/interview-why-its-hard-change-mindsets-environmental-protection-among-indias-elites>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14402>

"Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi had distinguished the modern university from its medieval forerunners by envisaging for it an autonomous sphere in relation to the emerging nation-state." – Suranjan Das, Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University Kolkata (The Telegraph, 30 September 2020)

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/calcutta/the-relevance-of-vidyasagar/cid/1793177>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35639>

"If Gandhi Assassination was the nations original sin, secularism was its atonement. As Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru strove to purge religion from the political sphere, building what would become the world's largest democracy." – Anna Della Subin in *Accidental Gods: On Men Unwittingly Turned Divine* (New York, 2021), p. 282

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/1151100898>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2299>

"[T]he primary identity of every citizen of India, over and above all other identities of religion, caste, language, race and suchlike, is that of an Indian." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) quoted in "Nationalism does not allow the Hindu in India to claim primacy" by Ziya Us Salam (The Hindu, 2 March 2016)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/historian-romila-thapar-says-nationalism-does-not-allow-the-hindu-in-india-to-claim-primacy/article8300752.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"Despite the modern obsession with factories, mines and airlines in a newly independent India, [Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay] pointed out that for millions of villagers [...] handicrafts were a source of income and pride." – Feminist writer Gloria Steinem reviewing *A Passionate Life: Writings by and on Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay* by Ellen Carol Dubois and Vinay Lal (OPEN Magazine, 7 April 2017)

<https://www.openthemagazine.com/article/books/kamaladevi-chattopadhyay-the-last-teacher>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20948>

"[N]o good purpose can be served by turning a blind eye to corrupt practices and the resulting failures of policies, thereby distorting the picture of the true conditions of tribal populations. [...] The tribals were dislodged from their traditional sources of livelihood and places of habitation." – Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf in Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival (University of California Press, 1982), pp. 320-1

[https://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/rarebooks/downloads/Haimendorf Tribes of India.pdf](https://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/rarebooks/downloads/Haimendorf_Tribes_of_India.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12724>

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Combining traditional environmentalism with technical solutions at community level  
Modern education for a remote tribal school on the Narmada river: Setting up a digital classroom in Kakrana >>  
Slides by courtesy Swapan Bhattacharjee  
More about Education and literacy, Modernity and Networking >>

- **Multi-lingual education**

"Medium of instruction shall, as far as practicable, be in child's mother tongue." – The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 quoted in "Primary Education of Tribal Children" by Press Information Bureau, Government of India (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 9 December 2019)

<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1595502>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16476>

"Only six tribal languages – Santali, Ho, Soura, Munda and Kui – have a written script. Santali has already been included in the Eighth Schedule. The state government adopted the Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) programme in 2006 to address the issues of language barriers faced by tribal children." – Abhijit Mohanty in "Seven decades after independence, many tribal languages in India face extinction threat" (*Down to Earth*, 26 August 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/seven-decades-after-independence-many-tribal-languages-in-india-face-extinction-threat-73071>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6879>

"Language is a major issue. The tribal child in Bastar has to simultaneously contend with at least three languages: (a) his mother tongue that could be Gondi or Bhatari or Dorli or Dhurvi or Telga or Halbi (b) Halbi, which is the lingua franca in Bastar and (c) Hindi, the official medium of instruction. Add to this English, which is taught from Standard I." – Uma Ram (Professor & Head Department of English, Kakatiya PG College, Chhattisgarh) in "Issues in Tribal Education in Bastar, Chhattisgarh" (Folklore Foundation, Lokaratna, Volume IV 2011)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14683>

"[Thakkar Bapa, who set up the influential ashramshala model, in a] 1941 lecture advocated using tribal tongues as a 'bridge', but in practice, even this did not happen." – Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (The Hindu, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21733>

"The educational difficulties faced by tribals have been addressed through bilingual or multilingual programmes that start with education in the child's mother tongue, then transit to the regional or state language, and finally progress to the study of English. This three-language formula, however, remains in an experimental stage, and its practice is limited to isolated pilot projects." – Boro Baski in "Teaching Santal children" (*D+C Development and Cooperation*, 2 July 2009)

<https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/long-term-success-non-formal-ativasi-school-west-bengal>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2274>

"To be taught in a language other than one's own has a negative effect on learning. [Starting a child's education in the mother tongue] allows teachers and students to interact naturally and negotiate meanings together, creating participatory learning environments that are conducive to cognitive as well as linguistic development." - UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2016 quoted "Why is India obsessed with English-medium education – when it goes against scientific consensus?" by Shoaib Daniyal (Scroll.in 6 August 2020)

<https://scroll.in/article/969356/why-is-india-obsessed-with-english-medium-education-when-it-goes-against-scientific-consensus>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7707>

"There is no script in most Adivasi languages, they are phonetically driven. In 2018, a dictionary in Gondi was released by Kannada University in Hampi. There is a need to preserve these languages and to ensure that children who have grown up speaking such languages don't feel left out at schools [...] In schools, teachers often have a hard time connecting with students because of the language divide [and] children just kept repeating [...] without understanding a word." – Dada Jokal, author of several books in Gondi and who now teaches school teachers the language in "Chhattisgarh: Tribal languages to be a medium of education in pre-school" (Indian Express, 17 February 2020)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/governance/chhattisgarh-education-reforms-tribal-languages-to-be-a-medium-of-education-in-pre-school-6271547/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22893>

"If you map the parts of India where illiteracy is highest, you will find that it matches the parts where the mother tongues of children are different from the official language." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy (linguist, Unesco Linguapax laureate and founder of the Vadodara-based Bhasha Research and Publication Trust) in: "How Tribal Kids in MP Are Getting a Chance to Learn in Their Languages" (thebetterindia.com, 2 August 2017)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/110025/books-tribal-languages-help-rejuvenate-school-learning-central-india/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22755>

"[T]he poorer and backward sections of [Gadchiroli district's Madia Gondi] society tend to think that the state language is a tool to move upward in class and caste hierarchy, that the local, indigenous language is inferior and imitating the upper classes will elevate them in the societal hierarchy. To break this myth, Lok Biradari Ashram School plans to change the language of instruction for kindergarten students from Marathi to Madia." – Samiksha Godse-Amte in "Nurturing one's own tongue" (The Hindu, 3 April 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/nurturing-ones-own-tongue/article4575333.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16208>

"Many children speak a home language that differs from the language of instruction in education programs. Research confirms that children learn best in their mother tongue as a prelude to and complement of bilingual and multilingual education. [...] If they continue to have opportunities to develop their first language skills in secondary school, they emerge as fully bilingual (or multilingual) learners. If, however, children are forced to switch abruptly or transition too soon from learning in their mother tongue to schooling in a second language, their first language acquisition may be attenuated or even lost. Even more importantly, their self-confidence as learners and their interest in what they are learning may decline, leading to lack of motivation, school failure, and early school leaving." – Unesco report by Jessica Ball titled "Enhancing learning of children from diverse language backgrounds: Mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual education in early childhood and early primary school years"

UNESCO Mother-tongue based EY 2010.pdf

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16476>

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Photos and story by courtesy Swapan Bhattacharjee:  
[Improving Bhil children's reading skills and comprehension at Rani  
Kajal Jeevan Shala \(Madhya Pradesh\) >>](#)  
[More about multi-lingual education >>](#)

- **Names and communities**

Communities with populations spread across state/linguistic borders are often known by different names by local authorities while "some of these communities figure in various classifications in the states" according to the National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes: "There are many anomalies in terms of identification of these communities, from state to state. Many people also do not know what is denotified tribe and which authority is looking after their grievances. [...] In some states they are called 'tribal settlers'. In some states they are called 'hidden tribes' etc." – Bibek Debroy in "An unfortunate legacy" (Indian Express, 5 January 2017)"

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/crime-criminal-act-racial-discrimination-non-bailable-offence-criminal-tribes-act-an-unfortunate-legacy-4459258/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12284>

Many of the communities concerned are listed here (with hyperlinks to a wide range of sources):

“Sitemap – Names of tribal communities”

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=23748](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=23748)

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- **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)**

"Are there any privileges or special rights for Scheduled Tribes? 'Scheduled Tribes being backward and isolated from the rest of the population are not able to exercise their rights. In order to empower them to be able to exercise their rights special provisions have been made in the Constitution [...] so that Scheduled Tribes can avail the opportunities and exercise their rights and safeguards.'" – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (Frequently Asked Questions)

[www.ncst.gov.in](http://www.ncst.gov.in)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=22496](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=22496)

"Updates crucial: The book points out that the PVTG list requires revising and refinement to avoid overlapping and repetition. For instance, the list contains synonyms of the same group such as the Mankidia and the Birhor in Odisha, both of which refer to the same group. Some of the PVTGs are distributed in more than one State. The Birhor are recognised as a PVTG in four States, while 10 other group are PVTG in two States, namely the Sahariya, Kurumba, Koraga, Korwa, JenuKuruba, Kattunayakan, Katkari/Kathodi, Kharia, Kolam, and Lodha. Thus, the number of the PVTGs at the national level would be 63, the book states." – "The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of India — Privileges and Predicaments" (published by the Anthropological Survey of India AnSI), reviewed by Shiv Sahay Singh in "Vulnerable tribes: lost in a classification trap" (The Hindu, 8 April 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/vulnerable-tribes-lost-in-a-classification-trap/article17894997.ece>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=22029](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=22029)

"The Dhebar commission (1960) and the Shilu Ao (1969) team recommended the Government of India that primitive tribal communities should be taken as a special category for which special programmes would have to be initiated as quickly as possible for their all-round development. [S]eventy five tribal groups have been categorised as 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' (PVTG) in India. The main criteria adopted for identification of such tribe are: (i) Pre- agricultural level of technology, (ii) Very low level of literacy, and (iii) Stagnant or declining population. As these tribes are in a very poor state of economy, a separate special Central assistance is provided to the state for their development. Total primitive tribal population in India is 27, 68322 and in Kerala is 20,186 (2001 Census)." – Sujeesh in "Role of gender and social capital in sustainable livelihood promotion of Kadar tribe in Kerala" (PhD thesis, M.K. The Gandhigram Rural Institute, 2014), Introduction, p. 4

<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/186310>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30463>

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- **Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

"The power of the Universal Declaration is the power of ideas to change the world. It inspires us to continue working to ensure that all people can gain freedom, equality and dignity. One vital aspect of this task is to empower people to demand what should be guaranteed: their human rights." – UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the *Illustrated edition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (2015 ed.)

[https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr\\_booklet\\_en\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"At the heart of all the violations of our human rights has been the failure to respect our integrity, and the insistence on speaking for us, defining our needs and controlling our lives." - Karbi leader Dharamsing Teron quoted by Meenaxi Barkataki-Ruscheweyh in "Performing Ethnicity to Resist Marginalisation: The Tangsa in Assam" (PhD thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2015)

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1039320680>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=27](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=27)

"[In 2007] the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [...] recognized the rights of indigenous peoples to revitalize, use, protect, preserve and transmit their histories, languages and oral traditions to future generations, and granted indigenous peoples the right to establish media and educational systems in their own languages." – "Summary report on the International Year of Indigenous Languages, 2019" (United Nations, 14 February 2020)

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/040/59/PDF/N2004059.pdf?OpenElement>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46777>

Excerpts from the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples":

"Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such. [As they] contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind [...] all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust. [Therefore] indigenous peoples, in the exercise of their rights, should be free from discrimination of any kind." – Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007

[https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29168>

"[T]he concept of indigenous peoples relates to the specific situations where people suffered from historic injustices as a result of their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources." – Mayank Joshi (Councillor, Permanent Mission of India to the UN), General Assembly (Statement, 8 September 2017)

<https://pminewyork.gov.in/IndiaatUNGA?id=MzUwMQ>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=259](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=259)

"We also need, here and worldwide, to focus on those rights in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights that corporate media have simply expunged from public discourse." – P. Sainath (founder of *People's Archive of Rural India* PARI) in "We Didn't Bleed Him Enough": When Normal is the Problem (counterpunch.org , 12 August 2020, first published in *Frontline Magazine*)

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/12/we-didnt-bleed-him-enough-when-normal-is-the-problem/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35352>

"UN Convention Against Tortures seeks to prevent all types of tortures and other acts of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment around the world. Currently, the Convention is under review to make it more effective. Except seven countries that include India, all UN member nations have ratified the UN Convention Against Tortures." – MY Siddiqui in "Time to tame torturers" (tehelka.com, 29 October 2020)

<http://tehelka.com/time-to-tame-torturers/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"[The National Human Right] Commission remained engaged, suo-motu or on the basis of complaints, with instances of custodial death and rape, death in police custody, illegal detention and torture, police high-handedness, death in police and para-military firing and encounter, atrocities against vulnerable sections of society – women, children, disabled and the elderly – often compounded when they belong to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes." – National Human Right Commission, "Annual Report - 2014-2015", p. 257

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC\\_AR\\_EN\\_2014-2015\\_27022019.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC_AR_EN_2014-2015_27022019.pdf)  
[www.nhrc.nic.in](http://www.nhrc.nic.in)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25720>

"All the tribals in the country have been following many different religions like Gondi, Koya Punem, Adi, Sarna, etc. However, none of them have been recognised. The government should provide a separate code for tribal religion so that their identity can be preserved. [...] No matter which community we belong to, we will follow our beliefs, customs, deities, rituals, culture, in our own way." – Satyanarayan Singh (tribal activist from Bihar) quoted by Santoshi Markam (*The Wire*, 2 April 2019)

<https://thewire.in/rights/adivasi-religion-recognition-census>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11009>

"Earlier, the lands have no title, as all the lands are located inside Reserve Forests. [Now] the tribal land issue has become the single major human rights issue created by the non-tribesmen." – Sargunam Davidson (by email, 10 June 2019)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29223>

"In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands [we] have here a situation where the protection of the indigenous peoples, the forests and the islands' biodiversity including its rich bird life are all intricately linked." – Pankaj Sekhsaria in "An intricate web" (*The Hindu*, 4 February 2012)

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine//article59800934.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"Even though they are responsible for protecting the largest part of the global forest heritage [...] a third of indigenous and community lands in 64 countries are under threat due to the lack of land tenure rights." – Pressenza Rio de Janeiro in "Indigenous people are heading to CoP26: 'There is no solution to the climate crisis, without us'." (*Down To Earth*, 1 November 2021)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/climate-change/indigenous-people-are-heading-to-cop26-there-is-no-solution-to-the-climate-crisis-without-us--79981>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5851>

"In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group [including acts such as] imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." – The Office on Genocide Prevention (United Nations) in "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" (Definition, Article II d & e)

<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24574>

"We can take action in our own daily lives, to uphold the rights that protect us all and thereby promote the kinship of all human beings." – United Nations manifesto on the purpose of celebrating "Human Rights Day" each year on 10 December

<https://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/>

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[Human Rights Day \(10 December\)](#) | [United Nations](#) >>

- **Rural poverty**

"Although there has been a decline, the level of poverty in the tribal population is still much higher than the national average and the gap between the two continues to be one of the major issues of concern in poverty discourse in India." – Virginius Xaxa (Delhi School of Economics) in "The Status of Tribal Children in India: A historical perspective" (Opportunities, Working Paper No. 7, 2011), Institute for Human Development India & United Nations Children's Fund, India

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10430>

"Everyone wants to learn but the problem is atmosphere, the medium of teaching and the method of teaching, besides the facts of economics. It is the reason why tribal children find it difficult to integrate with the mainstream. Another factor is the cost of schooling. According to a 2015 report by the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, the annual secondary school drop-out rate among Indigenous children in India is just above 40 percent compared with the national average of about 25 percent. The ministry lists 'economic' issues as the biggest reason for the dropouts - families just cannot afford to keep their children in school." – Santal educationist Boro Baski in "The Indian school where Indigenous children are 'never outsiders'" by Rosemary Marandi (Al Jazeera Education, 10 February 2020)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/indian-school-indigenous-children-outsiders-200128131128144.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34790>

"[I]n agriculture, members of the family can be drafted to work on the family's farm, as also in other farm and non-farm work. This phenomenon is quite widespread in India today: of the nine crore [90 million] rural families who draw their main income from unskilled manual labour, four crore are small and marginal farmers. Through overwork and self-exploitation, peasant farmers are able to cling on to their land." – Mihir Shah (Distinguished Professor, Shiv Nadar University) in "Plough to plate, hand held by the Indian state" (9 April 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/plough-to-plate-hand-held-by-the-indian-state/article34275034.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"The poor are forgotten, or they are sidelined, or they are not taken seriously enough." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) interviewed by Karan Thapar in "I Don't Like Modi's India, It Is Too Narrow and Limited" (*The Wire*, 12 August 2022)

<https://thewire.in/history/full-text-karan-romila-thapar-modi-independence>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"[Asia's] so-called backward countries are peopled by millions of souls, sensitive souls, peacefully and nobody inclined, but so distressed and poor that they can best be described in the words of that great Indian philosopher, Dr. Radhakrishnan [the second President of India], who recently called them 'souls without a body'." – Maria Montessori quoted in *Maria Montessori Writes to her Grandchildren: letters from India, 1939-1946* (Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, 2020), pp. 160-161

<https://montessori-pierson.com/india.html>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1273931392>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16037>

"Instead of creating a strategy based on reacting or responding to the symptoms of poverty, we want to create a new possibility in which poverty would have no space to exist." – Kalyan Akkipeddi in "A Search for Resilience" (TEDxGurugram, 3 April 2017)

<https://ted.com/tedx>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26213>

"Class differentiation has produced a semi-proletariat of small farmers and labourers, especially in regions of dryland cultivation, whose size can only be guessed at. Its economic position is sometimes as desperate as that of the rural under-class – witness the rising tide of farmers' suicides over the last two decades – yet caste assertion undercuts class solidarity." – Shashank Kela in "A party of the poor?" (*India Seminar*, Caste Matters, May 2012)

<https://www.india-seminar.com/2012/633.htm>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"315,000 farmers took their own lives between 1995 and 2018, as the numbers (huge underestimates) of the National Crime Records Bureau show. Millions either became agricultural labourers or migrated out of their villages – since many allied occupations had also died – in search of jobs." – P. Sainath (Founder, *People's Archive of Rural India* PARI) in "We Didn't Bleed Him Enough: When Normal is the Problem" (counterpunch.org, 12 August 2020, first published in *Frontline Magazine*)

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/12/we-didnt-bleed-him-enough-when-normal-is-the-problem/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35352>



"By urban standards, the Bhils were poor but not impoverished [until the 1980s]. Very few Bhils worked outside their villages, and most of them seemed to be content with how they were. They grew whatever they required, and their methods of cultivation were simple: they scattered the seeds on the slopes of the hills and let them grow naturally. The forests around were rich in fruits, vegetables and herbs, which were collected. [...] They had no faith in the promises of the government of being suitably rehabilitated [in the wake of submersion of their villages caused by the "Sardar Sarovar" dams along the Narmada river]." – Yoginder Sikand in "Simple ways of life" (Deccan Herald, 23 December 2012)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/300193/simple-ways-life.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

"The vulnerability of tribal populations to exploitation by minor government officials, as well as moneylenders, landlords, and other agents of vested interests, can largely be traced to their illiteracy and general ignorance of the world outside the narrow confines of their traditional environment." – Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf in Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival (University of California Press, 1982), pp. 320-1

[https://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/rarebooks/downloads/Haimendorf Tribes of India.pdf](https://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/rarebooks/downloads/Haimendorf_Tribes_of_India.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12724>

"[I]ncome security of tribal peoples has been adversely affected by losses and access to productive resources (rights to forest or agricultural lands coupled with poor compensation). Debts are one of the main coping strategies, resulting in a hand-to-mouth existence for those affected." – Tribal nutrition: UNICEF's efforts to support the tribal population, especially children who suffer from malnourishment

<https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/tribal-nutrition>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"India has the highest number of slaves in the world, with estimates ranging from 14 million to 18 million people. In India, many people work as slave labour in the brick kiln industry – this includes women and children. Now, as in the past, not all slaves are forced into slavery. Historically, some experienced such severe poverty that they had no choice but to sell themselves to be bound to another person. And similar cases still happen around the world today." – Catherine Armstrong (School Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Loughborough University, UK) in "India is home to the world's largest slave population (Scroll.in, 21 October 2018)

<https://scroll.in/article/898862/india-is-home-to-the-worlds-largest-slave-population-yes-slavery-still-exists>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=19122>

"'Deprivation' refers to the inability of individuals in a society to achieve basic human functionings. Among these are the ability to live a long and healthy life free from avoidable disease and hunger, and the opportunity to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a socially acceptable standard of living." – Asian College of Journalism: "Covering Deprivation" (course-related information)

<https://www.asianmedia.org.in/acj/programme/covering-deprivation/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23343>

"As poverty grew agricultural indebtedness also grew rapidly, and the money-lending establishments held mortgages on the land and eventually acquired much of it. Thus the moneylender became the landlord also." – Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery Of India* (1946, OUP Centenary ed. 1989, p. 331)

<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.98835>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17554>

"Nehru was fascinated by the spontaneity of tribal culture and their capacity of joy and heroism in spite of their appalling poverty, destitution, and ignorance." – Chittaranjan Mishra in "Tribal Philosophy and Pandit Nehru" (*Odisha Review*, November 2017)

<https://magazines.odisha.gov.in/Orissareview/2017/November/engpdf/100-110.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16310>

"Is it eccentric to live in beautiful scenery in the hills among some of the most charming people in the country, even though they may be ignorant and poor?" – Verrier Elwin quoted by Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in *The Oxford India Elwin*

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15861>

"Gandhi's logic and rationale were irrefutable. Colonialism had impoverished and killed India's poor. This was literally true, for countless millions had died in famines which had started as a drought but became mass-killers because of merciless taxation and exploitation." – MJ Akbar in "The Rediscovery of Nehru: How Nehruvians revised their idol" (*OPEN Magazine*, 13 August 2021)

<https://openthemagazine.com/cover-stories/the-rediscovery-of-nehru/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30463>

"Poor implementation of existing schemes in the tribal regions has meant that not only poverty continues at an exceptionally high levels in these regions, but the decline in poverty has been much slower here than in the entire country, as shown in this table (for the years 1993-94, 1999-2000 and 2004-05)" – "Rural Population Living Below Poverty Line (In Percent), Planning Commission, Twelfth Five Year Plan Document" by Ashok A. Sonkusare, Joint Adviser (S&T), NITI Aayog/Planning Commission

<https://data.gov.in/resources/rural-population-living-below-poverty-line-percent>  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23847>

"In the matter of poverty, group inequality is still a matter of concern for Kerala as we see in the following chapter: Absolute deprivation continues to be largely concentrated among the marginalised communities, such as the tribals (adivasi) and fishing community [...] and the hiatus between the Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Castes is a distressing symptom of a still uncured aspect of horizontal inequality in the State." – Human Development Report 2005 Kerala (Government of Kerala (2006), pp. 57-61

[https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/stateplan/sdr\\_pdf/shdr\\_kerala05.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/stateplan/sdr_pdf/shdr_kerala05.pdf)  
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5169>

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Farming in Wayanad >>  
Photo © editor

- **Scheduled Tribe (ST)**

"Who are Scheduled Tribes? The framers of the Constitution took note of the fact that certain communities in the country were suffering from extreme social, educational and economic backwardness on account of the primitive agricultural practices, lack of infrastructure facilities and geographical isolation. The Constitution of India in Article 366 (25) prescribe that the Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 of the Constitution to be Scheduled Tribes." – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (Frequently Asked Questions)

<http://www.ncst.gov.in/content/frequently-asked-questions>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=22496](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=22496)

"Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 States/UTs [Union Territories]. Number of individual ethnic groups, etc. notified as Scheduled Tribes is 705. There has been some changes in the List of Scheduled Tribes in States/ UTs during the last decade". – C. Chandramouli (Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, Ministry of Home Affairs) in "Scheduled Tribes in India as revealed in Census 2011" (3 May 2013)

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/library/resource/scheduled-tribes-in-india-as-revealed-in-census-2011/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1690>

"What are the Rights of Scheduled Tribes? The Constitution of India seeks to secure for all its citizens, among other things, social and economic justice, equality of status and opportunity and assures the dignity of the individual. All Rights available to the Citizens of India, enshrined in the Constitution or any law of the land or any order of the Government are equally available to the Scheduled Tribes also." – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (Frequently Asked Questions)

<http://www.ncst.gov.in/content/frequently-asked-questions>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=22496](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=22496)

"After Independence, the erstwhile aborigines were classified as scheduled tribes, the untouchables were classified as scheduled castes and others included in the backward classes." – Bibek Debroy quoting a 2016 Report of the National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes NCDNT (Indian Express, 5 January 2017)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/crime-criminal-act-racial-discrimination-non-bailable-offence-criminal-tribes-act-an-unfortunate-legacy-4459258/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12284>

"[G]iven the historical experiences of land encroachment, acquisition of forest land by the Government and tribal displacement, the STs [Scheduled Tribes] remain vulnerable, the proportion of households with more than one hectare declining over time." – Human Development Report 2005 Kerala (Government of Kerala (2006), pp. 57-61

[https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/stateplan/sdr\\_pdf/shdr\\_kerala05.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/stateplan/sdr_pdf/shdr_kerala05.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5169>

"Out of forty eight tribal communities found in Kerala, thirty seven of them were categorised as scheduled tribes. Kerala has the population in its all districts. Wayanad, Idukki, and Palakkad districts constitute major tribal population in Kerala. Paniyas, Marathis, Malayarayangans, Kuruvans, Kurichens and Erulas are the major tribal communities in Kerala. In Kerala Koraga, Cholanaikkans, Kurumba, Kadar and Kattunaikkans are the five indigenous tribal groups categorised as PVTGs." – M.K Sujeesh in "Role of gender and social capital in sustainable livelihood promotion of Kadar tribe in Kerala" (PhD thesis, The Gandhigram Rural Institute, 2014), p. 4

<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/186310>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1882>

"While the Constitution is silent about the criteria for specification of a community as a Scheduled Tribe [ST]. The words and the phrase ‘tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities’ in Article 342 have to be understood in terms of their historical background of backwardness. Primitiveness, geographical isolation, shyness and social, educational & economic backwardness due to these reasons are the traits that distinguish Scheduled Tribe communities of our country from other communities. It takes into account the definitions of tribal Communities adopted in the 1931 Census. These facts are the basis for the provision in Article 342(1) which mandates to specify the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribe in relation to that State or Union Territory as the case may be. Thus the list of Scheduled Tribes is State/UT specific and a community declared as a Scheduled Tribe in a State need not be so in another State." – National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (Frequently Asked Questions)

<https://www.ncst.gov.in/content/frequently-asked-questions>

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- **Success story**

“These women are doing it every day, and how!” – Jovita Aranha on the Halpati community of Gujarat whose entrepreneurial journey ended exploitation without financial help from anybody; in “Of Spice & Spirit” (*The Better India*, 3 July 2018)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/148422/spice-saumya-omer-gujarat-tribe/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25808>

"[Dr. Boro] Baski, who holds a doctorate in education and a master's in social work from Viswa Bharati University, says he is happy being an educator. He has become a strong voice of the community not just in India but elsewhere, writing articles and books, and representing his community at conferences." – Rosemary Marandi in "The Indian school where Indigenous children are never outsiders" (Aljazeera.com Education, 10 February 2020)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/indian-school-indigenous-children-outsiders-200128131128144.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34790>

"True self-reliance won't come from relentless industrialisation, but from localisation and decentralisation." – Ashish Kothari in "What does self-reliance really mean? Amazing stories emerge from India's villages" (The Hindu, 5 June 2020)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/what-does-self-reliance-really-mean-amazing-stories-emerge-from-indias-villages/article31756580.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34172>

"[I]ndigenous communities can name hundreds of plant, animal and fish species – they also have very precise ways of telling time and tracking astronomical events, without needing clocks or calendars." – Lexicographer David Harrison interviewed by Srijana Mitra Das in "Indigenous languages have wisdom that can save us from climate crisis" (Times of India, 23 January 2021)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/indigenous-languages-have-wisdom-that-can-save-us-from-climate-crisis/articleshow/80411082.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46777>

“The relative backwardness of scheduled tribes may not disappear through the overall development of a state and that may require special efforts. [...] However, the life of Scheduled Tribes in certain parts of India is relatively better.” – V.

Santhakumar, Azim Premji University in: “It is possible to have a better life for Scheduled Tribes in India!” (Economics in Action, 4 May 2018)

<https://vsanthakumar.wordpress.com>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24803>

"As local and indigenous groups across the tropics demonstrate and exemplify sustainable development, the Equator Prize shines a spotlight on their efforts by celebrating them on an international stage." – Equator Initiative of the United Nations which recognizes outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity Global Programme on Nature for Development

<https://www.equatorinitiative.org/equator-prize/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46483>

"Demarcation around the boundaries by red flags or statues of gods or goddesses have been erected in these forests to provide a place to put votive offerings which ultimately give protection to these forests in the form of social conservation. Sharing stories that make use of overlaps with indigenous beliefs may, therefore, be a valuable approach in conservation education and wider conservation communication." – Nazir A. Pala, Ajeet K. Neg and N.P. Todaria in "The Religious, Social and Cultural Significance of Forest Landscapes in Uttarakhand Himalaya, India" (*International Journal of Conservation Science*, Vol. 5, Issue 2, April-June 2014)

<https://www.academia.edu/32265911>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24271>

"Birsa's life [1875–1900] was driven by poverty, but he still set a powerful example for the youth to emulate by giving more to society than what is taken." – Ramya in "Remembering Birsa Munda: A Tribal Folk Hero And Freedom Fighter" (Outlook, 14 November 2020)

<https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/opinion-remembering-birsa-munda-a-tribal-folk-hero-and-freedom-fighter/364269>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14270>

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Village mural in West Bengal  
"Santals celebrate the seasons" [series](#) >>



- **Tagore and rural culture**

"In his play Muktagadha (The Waterfall), Tagore robustly employs this element of freedom. The play relates the story of an exploited people and their eventual release from it. [Today, when] tribal populations across India are being uprooted with impunity Tagore's message of freedom, in all its shades, is of utmost relevance." – Bhaswati Ghosh in "Freedom in Tagore's Plays" (Parabaas, 9 May 2011)

<https://www.parabaas.com/rabindranath/articles/pBhaswati.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6357>

"Santiniketan is in many ways a pioneering step in the field of education and rural reconstruction. Located in the heart of nature amongst Hindu, Muslim, and Santali villages which were in 'serious decline' despite a rich cultural heritage, the school, from almost its beginning aimed to combine education with a sense of obligation towards the larger civic community. [...] While Tagore supported the idea of religious communities fostering educational research and revival of their cultures, his educational system at Santiniketan was based on plurality of cultures and religion." – Santiniketan (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Submitted by Archaeological Survey of India 20 January 2010)

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5495/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4348>

"Tagore—poet, internationalist, humanist [...] advocated the importance of sowing the seed of humanism as early as possible, and fostering the individual's enjoyment of education as well as their courage to challenge conventions." – Rabindranath Tagore: adventure of ideas and innovative practices in education by Kumkum Bhattacharya (Springer, 2014)

<https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319008363>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21780>

"I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live. [...] I am willing to serve my country; but my worship I reserve for Right which is far greater than country. [...] To worship my country as a god is to bring curse upon it." – Rabindranath Tagore quoted by Meghalaya-based women's and democratic rights activist Angela Rangad in "Beyond Har Ghar Tiranga: Why Indians must plant Tagore's vision of nationalism in every home" (Scroll.in, 9 August 2022)

<https://scroll.in/article/1029979/beyond-har-ghar-tiranga-why-indians-must-plant-tagores-vision-of-nationalism-in-every-home>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35584>

"Society as such has no ulterior purpose. It is an end in itself. It is a spontaneous self-expression of man as a social being. It is natural regulation of human relationships, so that men can develop ideals of life in cooperation with one another." – Rabindranath Tagore quoted in *Santiniketan: Birth of Another Cultural Space* by Pulak Dutta (Santiniketan, 2015) p. 42 [from The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 2004, p. 421]

[http://www.mediafire.com/file/zfx3vb2xulgkxa3/Pulak Dutta II Santiniketan-Birth of Another Cultural Space.pdf/file](http://www.mediafire.com/file/zfx3vb2xulgkxa3/Pulak_Dutta_II_Santiniketan-Birth_of_Another_Cultural_Space.pdf/file)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35584>

"And then come these words of Gora [articulated in Tagore's novel], which one might well apply to Tagore himself: 'No longer is there opposed within me the Hindu, Moslem and Christian. Today all foods are my food.' For indeed, Tagore took nourishment from what all the world had to offer, and his message of mutual understanding and tolerance is directed far beyond the boundaries of India, to all cultures and to all men. A message of freedom too, not merely freedom for oneself, but for all: 'He who wishes freedom for himself', he affirmed, 'yet fears freedom for his neighbour, is not worthy of freedom.'" – Message from the Director-General of Unesco (Tagore Centenary celebrations in Bombay, January 1961)

<https://en.unesco.org/courier/decembre-1961>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21449>

"It is well-known that Rabindranath Tagore harboured a special affection for the Santhals in the villages around Santiniketan. He saw in their life a special beauty. They combine the tilling of the earth as farmers with poetry, songs and dance. Through this blending of the practical work for food and livelihood with the fulfillment of one's artistic needs, life receives a fullness which it otherwise would lack. The farmer's life, by itself, is monotonous. But when it is mirrored, symbolised, and interpreted through poetry and dance, farming becomes a primeval activity of archetypal importance. Do we not see here in action Rabindranath's concept of raising everyday life on to a higher, more meaningful level through the expressions of beauty?" – Martin Kämpchen quoted by Prabir Chatterjee in "Santals and Santiniketan" (originally published by The Statesman)

<https://www.mail-archive.com/jharkhand@yahoogroups.co.in/msg04356.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15026>

"Gurudev Tagore's approach to education, the ambience of the gurukul system, lack of rigidity in the curriculum, and the emphasis on holistic education made me realize the possibility of there being a lot of room for improvement in the prevailing system of education Santhal children were subjected to." – Rina Mukherji in "Infusing the Santhali Element in Schooling"

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2603>

"The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence." – Rabindranath Tagore 1926 quoted in Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography by Uma Das Gupta (Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2004)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15448>

"At Santiniketan, art was to be an integral part of an all-rounded education." – Partha Mitter in The triumph of modernism: India's artists and the avant-garde, 1922-1947 (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2007)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4343>

"As a master of his craft, Tagore combined the purity of poetry with a purpose for living. He not only healed the sorrow and suffering which he had experienced due to death, depression and disappointment in his own life but he worked too to heal the wounds of injustice and inequality within Indian society. [...] The worldview of Tagore is seeing the unity of reason and religion, spirit and matter and letting them dance together. This is the big vision where science complements spirituality, art complements ecology and freedom complements equality." – Satish Kumar in "The Wisdom of Tagore" (Resurgence, Issue 266 May/June 2011)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2603>

"Two major figures in the history of modern India were deeply influenced by Vivekananda's ideas about spirituality: the great Indian political leader Mohandas Gandhi and the Noble Prize-winning poet Rabindranath Tagore. The first developed the nationalist strand in the idea of spirituality while the second developed the international strand, both showing the extent to which the national and transnational are actually interwoven. They argued that the materialism of the West created warfare and colonial exploitation, while the spirituality of the East provided an alternative that would lead to world peace and equal prosperity for all." – Peter van der Veer (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity) in "Spirituality in Modern Society" (Social Research Vol 76 No 4, Winter 2009)

<https://www.academia.edu/33935500>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16037>

"If Tagore had done nothing else, what he did at Santiniketan and Sriniketan would be sufficient to rank him as one of India's greatest nation-builders. [...] Though outside India Tagore upheld and interpreted the Indian philosophy of life, in his own country he was the severest critic of its social institutions and religious practices which encouraged superstition and inequality and tolerated injustice." – Krishna Kripalani in Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography (Oxford University Press 1962, reprint Santiniketan 1980)

[https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.39366/2015.39366.Rabindranath-Tagore---A-Biography\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.39366/2015.39366.Rabindranath-Tagore---A-Biography_djvu.txt)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4348>

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Raktakarabi lecture [Viswa Bharati](#) 2013  
by courtesy [Boro Baski](#) >>

More about India's Founding Fathers:  
[Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar](#) >>  
[Mahatma Gandhi](#) | [Jawaharlal Nehru](#) >>  
[Rabindranath Tagore and rural culture](#) >>

- **Tourism**

"Tourism, particularly ecotourism, can place a greater focus on the conservation of natural resources by ensuring financial or in-kind support by the government, in recognition of their importance to visitor experiences. But, the benefits of tourism are not unequivocal. It is often seasonal and mainly generates part-time and unskilled jobs for local people. Further, if not planned carefully, tourism can be destructive of culture and local traditions." – Report "Vision2030" by Kerala Government (visited 3 July 2014), p. 409

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14554>

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nQ1s8tFZkp989COzsZrm4VJVeanS\\_tWM/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nQ1s8tFZkp989COzsZrm4VJVeanS_tWM/view?usp=sharing)

"Who exactly were the original settlers of Jharkhand? We will never truly know. But one look at the intricate woodwork, the pitkar paintings, tribal ornaments, stone carvings, dolls and figurines, masks and baskets, will tell you how deep into time these manifestations of culture go, how the well-spring of creativity continues to recharge the spirit of the tribes and the state itself." – Department of Tourism, Jharkhand

<https://jharkhandtourism.gov.in>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23907>

"In India, as elsewhere, colonialism is first, foremost and always about land. [...] As in North America and Africa, the policing of reserve forests has often resulted in what amounts to ethnic cleansing, with Indigenous peoples being evicted from their homelands for the benefit of the tourism industry and its urban, middle-class clients. Displaced Adivasis are often forced to relocate to settlements that bear a strong resemblance to reservations." – Amitav Ghosh in *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis* (book excerpt in The Print, 14 October 2021)

<https://theprint.in/pageturner/excerpt/congress-left-bjp-india-striving-to-remake-itself-as-settler-colonialist-amitav-ghosh/750429/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=44650>

"We envision forms of tourism which are non-exploitative, where decision making is democratised, and access to and benefits of tourism are equitably distributed. [...] Everyday we hear that tourism brings economic development, it creates jobs and revenues. But who really benefits from it? The local community, the village elite, or the owner?"

<https://beta.equitabletourism.org/about>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14502>

"In October 2017, the Andaman Authorities opened the long-awaited alternative sea route to Baratang. This sea route was supposed to stop the human safaris. But despite the authorities' commitment to ensuring all tourists would have to use the sea route, very few currently do, and the market in human safaris along the road is flourishing." – Surabhi Sinha in "Save Jarawa" (Times of India, 2 June 2021)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/phases-of-life/save-jarawa-32818/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14820>

"Over the past decades, the Jarawa indigenous peoples have been hit by the arrival of settlers from elsewhere in India and the limited development that has taken place, especially the construction of the Andaman Trunk Road and the rise in tourism. As is typical in such instances, this has meant the spread of disease among the Jarawa, sexual and other forms of abuse by outsiders, incursions into their territory and rampant poaching. [...] To promote the area as a destination, the government has sanctioned a Rs 50 crore project on the development of a sea route from Port Blair to Baratang, one of the islands and home to the mud volcanoes." – Rajat Arora (Economic Times, 26 September 2015)

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/modi-governments-rs-10000-crore-plan-to-transform-andaman-and-nicobar-islands/articleshow/49111067.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

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- Women

"If women are empowered, there is more development in society. Women lead with empathy, with care." – The President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu (The Hindu, 15 November 2022)

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/others/president-murmu-in-nagaland-on-2-day-visit-urges-more-women-to-enter-public-life-101667398375029.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=52591>

"[T]here is no social bias against women in tribal communities such as there exists among the middle castes, especially landed ones. Women

can ask for a divorce, and in many communities, money is paid to the girl's family at the time of marriage." – Abhay Bang (Chairman, Expert Committee on Tribal health) quoted by S. Rukmini in "Higher sex ratio among tribal, SC groups: census" (The Hindu, 31 October 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/higher-sex-ratio-among-tribal-sc-groups-census/article5300478.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22068>

"Spousal violence is very much related to compulsory marriages [and] though the percentage of women accessing higher education in Tamil Nadu is high, a majority of them drop out of the job market after that." – S. Anandhi (Professor, Madras Institute of Development Studies) in "No safe haven for women at home" (The Hindu, 17 Apr 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16376>

"Every village [in Bastar] has its own 'super-woman', a plant collector par excellence, in whose house one inevitably finds unusual foods." – Madhu Ramnath in "Within the world of food collection" (*India Seminar*, Contested Cultures, February 2018)

[www.india-seminar.com/2018/702/702\\_madhu\\_ramnath.htm](http://www.india-seminar.com/2018/702/702_madhu_ramnath.htm)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24941>



*Have you seen the arana* - Image from the award-winning documentary by Sunanda Bhat | Songline Films >>



"The Irula Tribal Women's Welfare Society (ITWWS), established in 1986, is a women's community-based development organization [...] using the Irula tribal knowledge of forest resources for economic prosperity." – The Times of India ("Irula's tribal secrets unraveled", 29 March 2005)

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1064853.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16322>

"Women's rights are human rights. But in these troubled times, as our world becomes more unpredictable and chaotic, the rights of women and girls are being reduced, restricted and reversed. Empowering women and girls is the only way to protect their rights and make sure they can realize their full potential." – UN Secretary-General's Message for International Women's Day 2017

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/3/statement-sg-international-womens-day-2017>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21750>

The National Human Rights Commission "continued to receive complaints from different parts of the country on a wide range of issues [including] atrocities committed on women and children and other vulnerable sections, communal violence, bonded and child labour." – Annual Report 2014-2015)

[https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC\\_AR\\_EN\\_2014-2015\\_27022019.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/NHRC_AR_EN_2014-2015_27022019.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18066>

"[I]t is only a myth that better education, economic progress or an ideology that espouses something different would automatically yield a gender-equitable culture." – Pon Vasanth B.A (\*Name changed to protect identity) in "No safe haven for women at home" (The Hindu, 17 Apr 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16376>

"It's high time we recognise the contributions of tribal women in Indian literature." – Devendra Kumar Devesh of Sahitya Akademi on the occasion of a two-day meet organised by Sahitya Akademi in association with Jharkhandi Bhasha Sahitya Sanskriti Akhara to commemorate the birth centenary of Alice Ekka, the country's first acclaimed woman tribal writer (The Telegraph, 8 September 2017)

[https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170908/jsp/jharkhand/story\\_171464.jsp](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170908/jsp/jharkhand/story_171464.jsp)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22856>

"The general trend in the 'civilized' perception of tribal nudity alternates between a scathing denunciation and a romantic glorification. By contrast, Mahasweta Devi's treatment of tribal nudity is deromanticizing. Sometimes, this nakedness becomes a trope of empowerment for the tribal woman, as in her short story 'Draupadi'. So Draupadi, the victim of multiple rapes, retaliates by remaining publicly naked and thereby intimidates the Senanayak." – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak in "Narrativizing Resistance: Mahasweta Devi's Representation of the Tribal Guerrilla" (*The Johar Journal*, Issue 01, July-Dec 2020)

<https://joharjournal.org/narrativizing-resistance-mahasweta-devis-representation-of-the-tribal-guerrilla/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20733>

"Tracing the rise of patriarchy to class-based 'civilisations' and the diminishing role of women in such societies, Chris Harman, in his book 'A People's History of the World', says in hunter-gatherer societies, there was no male supremacy over women as there was almost always a division of labour between the sexes, with the men doing most of the hunting and the women most of the gathering. [...] Today, when most societies consider themselves highly advanced compared with our 'barbaric' ancestors, the position of women in society has changed little." – Cover story "Women in India: A reality check" (*Frontline Magazine*, 25 January 2013)

<http://www.frontline.in/cover-story/women-in-india-a-reality-check/article4275963.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18066>

"I've been heavily heavily attacked in the worst, in the most disgusting of ways, because I am a woman and you know, women are easy targets, especially for sexist attacks. And I've been heavily attacked, but I still maintain that the history that is being propagated as 'Hindutva history' is not history. [I]t's a strong attempt to undo history because fortunately, so far, we do have some excellent young historians who are not buying this." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) interviewed by Karan Thapar in "I Don't Like Modi's India, It Is Too Narrow and Limited" (*The Wire*, 12 August 2022)

<https://thewire.in/history/full-text-karan-romila-thapar-modi-independence>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"Piplantri has turned almost into an oasis and it is surrounded by a large number of trees. 'My daughter is seven years now. I have seen these trees and my daughter grow up together. Initially, not all villagers agreed to follow the idea of planting 111 saplings. Now, it's no less than any ritual in our village,' said Shantu Bhil, a tribal from Piplantri village. Another resident of Piplantri village said that it was for the first time he decided to bring up his daughter just like a son. Despite being a school teacher he never sent his daughter to a school." – Abhishek Gaur in "Eco-feminism drive wins accolades" (Deccan Herald, 5 April 2015)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/469775/eco-feminism-drive-wins-accolades.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=19376>

Watch a video by Praise Foundation on the manner in which the Irula Tribal Women's Welfare Society empowers Irula women by promoting their medicinal products: "This revival of traditional healing systems addresses public health needs as well as conserves Irula culture and expertise."

<https://youtu.be/hc1IK1vIKNY>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16322>

"The story of an uneducated tribal woman from an economically poor background who went on to head a company with over 1600 shareholders runs parallel to the story of Aadhimalai itself, the farmer producer company that started as a small tribal collective but has bagged this year's Equator Prize by the United Nations Development Programme. [...] Men go for work, but the money hardly reaches the woman in most households. Now she can earn by selling these, and these products don't go waste in the forest as well." – Arathi Menon in "Aadhimalai, winner of UN Equator Prize from Nilgiris, offers a lesson in indigenous economics" (Mongabay Series: Eco Hope, 20 December 2021)

<https://india.mongabay.com/2021/12/aadhimalai-winners-of-un-equator-prize-from-nilgiris-offer-a-lesson-in-indigenous-economics>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46483>

"Belonging to the Halakki indigenous tribe in Karnataka, Tulasi Gowda grew up in a poor and disadvantaged family. She never received a formal education, and yet, today she is known as the 'Encyclopedia of the Forest' [as she] continues to nurture plants and share her vast knowledge with the younger generation to promote the importance of environmental conservation." – "Meet Padma Shri Tulasi Gowda, the barefoot environmentalist known as 'Encyclopedia of Forest'" (*India Today*, 8 November 2021)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/padma-shri-tulasi-gowda-barefoot-environmentalist-encyclopedia-of-forest-1874499-2021-11-08>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2804>

“What I wanted to do was to make people, for whom Indian democracy and institutions mean something, think about the places where it fails so utterly and completely, and how their own lives are connected to these other citizens. [...] In Bastar, sexual violence has been deployed as a weapon of war. But it has received scant attention in reportage, policy and commentary, so much so that authorities deny it exists.” – Nandini Sundar (Professor of Sociology, Delhi University), interviewed by Chitrangada Choudhury (Livemint, 10 October 2016)

<https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/zyfPVZSNYs3suCelqi4vBP/Nandini-Sundar-Militarization-of-the-imagination.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2299>

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## Tribal identity

"While benefiting from affirmative action in some cases, Adivasis or indigenous people in India also feel the claustrophobic confines of their identity which has been imposed on them by others, be it the colonial administrator, the colonial anthropologist, the missionary or the neo-liberal, neo-imperialist forces that rule global economy today." – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak in "Is tribal identity relevant in today's world?", Inaugural Speech, National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23032>

"We realise that the only way a culture gets conserved is when it is promoted. [...] We have decided that as and when such information is gathered we would immediately introduce them into the curriculum at the various levels." – Culture Centre (Viswa Bharathi Vidyodaya Trust, Nilgiri)

<https://www.vidyodaya.org/vbvt/culture/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1921>

"Adivasis do not need an education [in boarding or 'factory schools'] to understand the rights over one's own lands, forests and territories, which they imbibe growing up in their community itself." – Adivasi leader Soni Sori from Bastar, Chhattisgarh quoted by Goldy M. George in "Adivasis Protest Awarding of World Congress of Anthropology 2023 to KISS" (Forward Press, 23 July 2020), p. 4

<https://www.academia.edu/43929808/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20406>

"Nehru built up a relationship with tribals based on sympathy, affection and sincerity. [He] declared 'you should live in your own way. This is what I want you to decide yourselves ... your old customs and habits are good. We want that they should survive but at the same time we want that you should be educated and should do your part in the welfare of our country'." – Chittaranjan Mishra in "Tribal Philosophy and Pandit Nehru" (*Odisha Review*, November 2017)

<https://magazines.odisha.gov.in/Orissareview/2017/November/engpdf/100-110.pdf>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16310>

"Jawaharlal Nehru was among the few people who understood Elwin's belief that tribal society must be allowed to evolve in its own distinctive manner and its culture must not be violated. Elwin was for a long time his major adviser on tribal affairs. Not that Nehru was altogether able to prevent the exploitation of tribals and the violation of their culture; but at least he kept it in some check." – Guest Column titled "Hands off tribal culture" (*India Today*, 9 January 2014)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/guest-column/story/19800915-hands-off-tribal-culture-821415-2014-01-09>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15861>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6304>

"For strategic planners, forests are 'an administrative category implying a desired land use' whether or not trees are included, but it is useful in making claims to 'extend the control of the forest service'. [...] To tribal people, forests involve habitat and identity and are thus inseparably linked to their lives and livelihoods. Because of this reality, several inter-disciplinarians see forests as something linked to human rights for indigenous communities." – Rebecca S. David in "An analysis of the impact of the Forest Rights Act (2006) in three states of India" (MPhil University of Cambridge, UK, 2014), p. 1

<https://www.academia.edu/30648733/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=27254>

"The socio-political mainstream [is] unaccustomed to accept them as civilized human being, tries to subjugate them. They agree to accept non-tribal intellectuals at the cost of betrayal to their self-identity.' – Teresa Tudu in "Tribal Literature: Santhals and their Cultural Anxiety", National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23277>

"The word "tribe" itself, in fact, has always been a contentious term. Due to the lack of an adequate term, indigenous people chose to adopt it to identify their place in the world. The narrative is changing today. [...] Tribes are people with a functional social order, culture, customs, cosmology and metaphysics. They must be treated as any other contemporary people." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2261>

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- **Adivasi** [Ādivāsi, Ādibāsi]

"Adivasi [Adibasi] – which is derived from Sanskrit - is applied to the dark-skinned or Austro-Asiatic indigenous groups of India (usually those from Eastern India). It is a commonly-used term in Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha. It is also used by the local Mongoloid tribes of North Eastern India for the migrant workers who were brought in as indentured labourers to work in tea plantations during the colonial period. 'Tribal' is a very broad term in the English language, as we all know, and includes all the different indigenous groups of India." – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak (email dated 27 March 2020)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23032>

"[Kripasindhu] Mahata argued in favour of a generic nomenclature that is easily remembered, referred to and recalled, and all-inclusive. 'The religious code should ideally be 'adivasi', and it would refer to the entire tribal population in the country and even those who have migrated and settled elsewhere.'" – Kripasindhu Mahata of Totemic Kudumi/Kurumi Mahata Samaj quoted by Rabindra Nath Sinha in "Tribal Outfits Gearing up to Restart Stir on Sarna Religious Code Issue" (Newsclick.in, 15 September 2022)

<https://www.newsclick.in/tribal-outfits-gearing-restart-sarna-religious-code-issue>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22095>

"Literacy has prime value today. The question is: how to impart it without erasing Adivasi knowledge and value systems?" – Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (The Hindu, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21733>

"The three terms, 'tribal,' 'Ādivāsi,' and 'indigenous peoples' are related, but have their own trajectories; they have come into use at different times and for different motives. The definition of tribe has changed since the colonial period and varies among the different South Asian countries." – Marine Carrin, General Introduction to *Brill's Encyclopedia of the Religions of the Indigenous People of South Asia* (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 2 South Asia, Volume: 36, 2021)

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1285067971>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=48430>



"In India tribal people are often called 'Adivasis' and the government recognizes them as scheduled tribes (STs). Scheduled Tribes (STs) and also Scheduled Castes (SCs) are the disadvantaged sections of the society due to socio-economic exploitation and isolation since times immemorial. According to the Census of 2011, the ST population in India was 104.5 million, accounting for 8.63 percent of the total population of the country." – S. Parasuraman (Foreword) in "Tribal Sub-Plan in Maharashtra: A Diagnostic Study" (TATA Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai supported by Unicef Maharashtra, December 2015)

<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31354>

"The first report on minority rights, made public in late August 1947, provided for reservation for Untouchables only. [...] However, one member [of the Constituent Assembly of India] regretted that 'the most needy, the most deserving group of adibasis [tribals] has been completely left out of the picture.'" – Ramachandra Guha in *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (New Delhi: Picador India), p. 115

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/179807214>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15375>

"Since the Indian Constitution uses the term 'Scheduled Tribes' or 'tribals' to refer to indigenous communities in India and the colloquial reference used by several indigenous communities themselves is 'adivasis' these two terms shall be used interchangeably." – Rebecca S. David in "An analysis of the impact of the Forest Rights Act (2006) in three states of India" (MPhil University of Cambridge, UK, 2014), p. 1

<https://www.academia.edu/30648733/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15257>

"[A] large section of different tribal bodies off late have also started demanding for an Adivasi code. Claiming that all tribals can't be forced to accept their identities as nature worshippers, they have announced to launch a protest. This in turn has forced the state government to take a middle path by naming the draft as Sarna/Adivasi code." – Report titled "It's Sarna, not adivasi, code for tribals: Bandhu Tirkey", on a move by the Jharkhand government to introduce a "Sarna/Adivasi" code in a special Assembly session (Telegraph Ranchi, 8 November 2020)

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/jharkhand/its-sarna-not-adivasi-code-for-tribals-bandhu-tirkey/cid/1796860>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11009>

"Adivasis do not form a homogenous community. Achievements related to socio-economic well-being were found to vary across groups and places among the members of the same community. [...] Instead of seeing the Adivasis as 'problems,' the entire country can benefit massively by perceiving the Adivasis as co-citizens

and sharing their historically constructed cultural values which often manifest the best forms of democracy and uphold the notions of higher levels of justice, fairness and equality than those which prevail in the seemingly mainstream societies. By ensuring their rights to live their own lives, the country can in fact guarantee itself a flourishing democracy." – Brochure for the report titled *Living World of the Adivasis of West Bengal: An Ethnographic Exploration*, issued on the occasion of the Kolkata International Book Fair 2020

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31882>

"Adivasi people have an alternative world view, which has rarely been acknowledged or recognized. Their existence was never based on accumulation or consumerism. [...] All of us can learn from them." – Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD-Nilgiris) in "Adivasi people: proud not primitive" (New Internationalist, 15 July 2013) in "Adivasi people: proud not primitive" (New Internationalist, 15 July 2013)

<https://newint.org/blog/2013/07/15/india-adivasi-survival-international/?55521117611331971>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11937>

"Adivasis is the collective name used for the many indigenous peoples of India. The term Adivasi derives from the Hindi word 'adi' which means of earliest times or from the beginning and 'vasi' meaning inhabitant or resident, and it was coined in the 1930s, largely a consequence of a political movement to forge a sense of identity among the various indigenous peoples of India." – Minority Rights Group International (World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – India: Adivasis 2008)

<https://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/49749d14c.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=8415>

"The Adivasis, who have made sacrifices during our freedom struggle were not given their due respect and recognition. The Tribal museum aims at showcasing the involvement of Adivasis in our freedom struggle." – Prime Minister of India in "English rendering of PM's speech at inauguration of new Civil, Cancer & Eye Hospitals in Ahmedabad" (Prime Minister's Office Posted On: 04 MAR 2019)

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1567548>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=36256>

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- **Childhood**

"Only the collaboration between the children and the adults will be able to solve the problems of our time." – Maria Montessori from Madras on 11 November 1939 (Report on the First Indian Training Course in Education); quoted in *Maria Montessori Writes to her Grandchildren: letters from India, 1939-1946* (Amsterdam, 2020), p. 38

<https://montessori-pierson.com/india.html>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1273931392>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16037>



Museum of Santal Culture (Bishnubati)

Photo by courtesy Boro Baski >>

"In case of tribal societies [...] there are two striking aspects with regard to caring for the child and nurturing the young. One is the prevalence of breast feeding and the other is the tradition of kin/community care of the children. It is the kin care that explains as to why it is rare to find destitution and begging among tribal population, including tribal children." – Virginus Xaxa in "The Status of Tribal Children in India: A historical perspective" (Institute for Human Development and United Nations Children's Fund, India)

[https://www.ihdindia.org/pdf/virginus\\_xaxa.pdf](https://www.ihdindia.org/pdf/virginus_xaxa.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14668>

"Mother's love is unconditional, it is all-protective, all-enveloping; because it is unconditional it can also not be controlled or acquired. Its presence gives the loved person a sense of bliss; its absence produces a sense of lostness and utter despair." – Social psychologist Erich Fromm in *The Art of Loving* (New York, 1956), p. 65

<https://archive.org/details/TheArtOfLoving/page/n79/mode/1up>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31882>

"The smart boy or clever girl who is deprived of the opportunity of schooling, or who goes to a school with dismal facilities (not to mention the high incidence of absentee teachers), not only loses the opportunities he or she could have had, but also adds to the massive waste of talent that is a characteristic of the life of our country." – Nobel Awardee Amartya Sen in *The Argumentative Indian* (India Penguin, 2005), p. 344

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Argumentative\\_Indian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Argumentative_Indian)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=25728](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=25728)

"It is not very difficult to identify the issues related to accessing the educational opportunities by the Adivasi children in general, and children within certain groups in particular. They include difficulties of physical access, the problem of language and culture, and the contrast between the apparent backwardness of these communities as imagined by the authorities and a very different objective reality that upholds a plethora of cultural strengths that can be fruitfully utilised while planning educational initiatives. Utilisation of resources available in the form of educated Adivasi youths would be just one of several to achieve this end." – Brochure for the report titled "Living World of the Adivasis of West Bengal: An Ethnographic Exploration", issued on the occasion of the Kolkata International Book Fair 2020

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31882>

"Women have profound traditional and contemporary knowledge about the natural world around them and hence there's a necessity to make policies mindful of the connection between environment and gender. [T]hat's why it's largely in the hands of women to sensitise our children towards the ecological heritage. Big changes always begin with small steps and the right place is always the home." – "Writer Mari Marcel Thekaekara says the tribal communities are a standing example of how women play a major role in preservation of eco historic cultural heritage in India" (The Hindu, 27 January 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/A-messenger-from-the-mountains/article17102329.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22373>

"Components like teacher training, regular academic follow-up and comprehensive evaluation were largely ignored by the state government. If urgent steps are not taken, it is likely to affect the learning of tribal children in the classroom, since learning depends on continuous interest and eternal vigilance." – Joy Daniel Pradhan (Delhi-based development practitioner and an expert on tribal development issues) quoted by Abhijit Mohanty in "Seven decades after independence, many tribal languages in India face extinction threat" (*Down to Earth*, 26 August 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/seven-decades-after-independence-many-tribal-languages-in-india-face-extinction-threat-73071>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6879>

"The fact that many of those are indigenous languages places at risk the indigenous cultures and knowledge systems to which those languages belong. [...] In practical terms, the risk is that parents and elders can no longer transmit indigenous languages to their children and that indigenous languages fall out of daily use." – "Summary report on the International Year of Indigenous Languages, 2019" (United Nations, 14 February 2020)

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/040/59/PDF/N2004059.pdf?OpenElement>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46777>

"We've now started a joint project with the government to create a garden and learning resource center for school children." – Rashneh Pardiwala in "Why It's Hard to 'Change Mindsets' on Environmental Protection Among India's Elites"; interview on environmental education at her Centre for Environmental Research and Education (CERE) in Mumbai (Asia Blog, 27 July 2015)

<https://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/interview-why-its-hard-change-mindsets-environmental-protection-among-indias-elites>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11066>

"About 40 per cent of under five tribal children in India are stunted, and 16 per cent of them are severely stunted." – *Tribal nutrition: UNICEF's efforts to support the tribal population, especially children who suffer from malnourishment* (Programme, accessed 6 June 2022)

<https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/tribal-nutrition>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"Childline 1098 is a 24x7 emergency, free phone outreach for children in distress. It is one of the world's biggest emergency helpline services dedicated to children, and is considered to be among the country's largest emergency response systems with 50 lakh [5 million] calls received annually [and] the entire child rights sector depends on it." – Jagriti Chandra in "Childline 1098 may be merged with emergency helpline 112" (The Hindu, 16 April 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/cloud-over-child-helpline-1098-as-government-mulls-merging-it-with-national-emergency-helpline-112/article65327177.ece>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=21889](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=21889)

"[Tribal] children are preferred for particular works due to the benefit of vigorous toil for low wages. [...] Income generation at a very young age reduces the scope for development of other individual resources." – Ameya MR in "A Case Study of 'Kanavu' in the Evolutionary Perspective of Approaches to Education" (MA thesis, Mahatma Gandhi University 2015), p. 57

<https://www.academia.edu/21289981>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1847>

"I think that by retaining one's childhood love of such things as trees, fishes, butterflies and ... toads, one makes a peaceful and decent future a little more probable, and that by preaching the doctrine that nothing is to be admired except steel and concrete, one merely makes it a little surer that human beings will have no outlet for their surplus energy except in hatred and leader worship." – George Orwell in his posthumous volume of essays *Shooting an Elephant*, quoted by E.M Foster in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London, 1976), p. 76

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/805143625>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34514>

"A boy tells a girl: Oh Muni, you may have forgotten the days when we played together under the banyan tree. Playfully we cooked dust as if it were rice and tree-leaves as if they were curry. How we used to catch fish together in the muddy water and pull out lotus-roots from the water to eat. Maybe you no longer remember? The girl tells the boy: Remembering our bygone days makes my heart burn, the smile of my child lightens my heart." – Synopsis by Boro Baski for "Dhuri Daka (Rice made of Dust)", a song composed and performed by staff and students of the Rolf Schoembs Vidyashram (Non-formal Santal school, Ghosaldanga village, West Bengal), included in the Santali video album "Ale Ato" (Our Village)

<https://youtu.be/OU15PO8TFnA>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=25317](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=25317)

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- **Crafts and visual arts**

"During our biggest festival 'Sorhai' there were decoration on the walls with flower designs, bird and animal figures. I saw my mother and sister drawing red and blue lines on the walls by climbing on the bamboo ladder. [C]enturies-old traditional knowledge and art of building low-cost-no-cost mud-houses and the related skills and crafts, like wall paintings die out." – Boro Baski in "Is 'brick house' the only sign of development?" (translated from an article in Bengali Anandabazar Patrika, 21 July 2019)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29829>

"Tagore wanted his students to feel free despite being in the formal learning environment of a school, because he himself had dropped out of school when he found himself unable to think and felt claustrophobic within the four walls of a classroom. [...] Thanks to Tagore's legacy, Santiniketan has managed to preserve Bengal's fast-disappearing rural crafts culture through folk markets, like the weekly Bondangaar Haat, and rural co-operatives, like Amar Kutir." – Sanchari Pal (*The Better India*, 31 August 2016)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/66627/santiniketan-rabindranath-tagore-bengal/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21449>

"In post-independence India, two factors had an enduring influence on tribal art, bringing it out of its purely ritualistic and iconographic confines and allowing it to conquer its own contemporary artistic space — the government's decision to promote an active 'handicrafts' policy and to give paper to tribal communities, and the creation of museums where this art could be showcased. Artists were no longer circumscribed to painting the walls of their homes." – Vaiju Naravane in "Magical idiom" (*The Hindu Magazine*, 10 April 2010)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4731>

"Today, the dual onslaught of commercialization and urbanization, means that weavers are being forced to churn out designs which cater to the demands of the market, rather than those which focus on their folk traditions. However, there is now a growing movement to preserve indigenous identity, and some serious attempts are being made to revive age-old customs, rites and stories by a conscious few within society." – Ramona Sangma quoted by Avantika Bhuyan (Livemint, 1 December 2017)

<https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/FR23TDZqwz1hDYOIB5mRSN/Folklore-myths-and-handloom.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23691>



"The adventure-filled origin myth about Bhil art revolves around the thirst for rain and water conservation – important for the people living in the dry western and central parts of India. Their close interaction with the natural world finds an abiding expression in their art, called pithora. Painting is like prayer for the Bhils, and each dot in the vibrant and colourful patterns represents an ancestor whom they invoke for the well-being of all forms of life." – Background information for *A Bhil Story*

<https://www.tulikabooks.com>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=19254>

"[I]n the strict sense it is a misnomer to use the expression 'tribal art' for such objects since tribals themselves view them as utilitarian items rather than works of art. Objects are divided into four primary classes: totems, deities, toys and ornaments and utensils. Toys are used as offerings for the deities and utensils too are used for rituals." – Niranjana Mahawar (collector of tribal art) quoted by Sreekant Khandekar in "Tribal art was dying out, commerce reduced good artists to artisans" (*India Today*, 22 August 2014)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/society-the-arts/story/19820731-tribal-art-was-dying-out-commerce-reduced-good-artists-to-artisans-772004-2013-10-15>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7922>

"[I]n a newly independent India [...] handicrafts were a source of income and pride. Not only did such skills provide a livelihood locally, but they could become a unique global export." – Feminist writer Gloria Steinem reviewing *A Passionate Life: Writings by and on Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay* by Ellen Carol Dubois and Vinay Lal Ellen Carol Dubois and Vinay Lal (*OPEN Magazine*, 7 April 2017)

<https://www.openthemagazine.com/article/books/kamaladevi-chattopadhyay-the-last-teacher>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20948>

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- **Cultural heritage**

"We want our young generation to be rooted in our specific culture and to have good opportunities to take their fate into their own hands. Using our language is essential. What alphabet we use in school, matters less. We tell our students about Ol-chiki [the Santali alphabet invented in 1925 and one of India's 22 official languages since 2004] – encouraging, but not forcing them to learn it." – Boro Baski in "The pros and cons of Ol-chiki" (*D+C Development and Cooperation*, e-Paper April 2021)

[https://www.dandc.eu/sites/default/files/pdf\\_files/dc\\_2021-04.pdf](https://www.dandc.eu/sites/default/files/pdf_files/dc_2021-04.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21581>

"Each island has its own culture, tradition which is unique. They [the Nicobarese] are not one tribe. Like we say all Chinamen look alike but we know there is great diversity among them. Similarly is the case here. So it will be a unique loss of culture. Each island has a very small population. Each has its own culture. If one island also gets wiped out it will be the loss of an entire culture, a whole tradition." – The late activist Samir Acharya quoted by M. Rajshekhar in "Remembering Samir Acharya, Who Fought to Preserve the Cultures of Andaman and Nicobar" (*The Wire*, 18 October 2020)

<https://thewire.in/rights/samir-acharya-andaman-nicobar-activist-culture-preservation-tribute>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7364>

"Tribals are the first to bring about civilisation. Indus-valley scripts are their major contribution. Outsiders are simply jealous and their invasion is simply to bring about an end to the tribal culture." – Latari Kawadu Madaavi (tribal scholar writer from Maharashtra) quoted in "Treasure trove of golden words" (*The Telegraph*, 29 April 2005)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1825>

"[T]he tribal communities are a standing example of how women play a major role in preservation of eco historic cultural heritage in India." – "Writer Mari Marcel Thekaekara says the tribal communities are a standing example of how women play a major role in preservation of eco historic cultural heritage in India" (*The Hindu*, 27 January 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/A-messenger-from-the-mountains/article17102329.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22373>

"In Rayagada in Odisha, Kondh parents distinguish between dangar patha (mountain learning) and kagaj patha (paper learning). Asked which they prefer, many parents answer 'both'. This expresses a need deeply felt by Adivasis: literacy, with fluency in the regional language or English, is important; but so is respect for native languages and knowledge systems linked to the land and forest." – Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (The Hindu, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4176>

"The Tree of Life [a six-foot-tall metal Bastar tribal sculpture made of brass, bronze and alloy casting] is the most ancient cross cultural symbolic representation of the universe's construction. It can be seen to dwell in three words- a link between earth, heaven and the other world." – The Times of India 22 December 2008

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Almost-all-of-Tajs-art-safe-remaining-can-be-restored/articleshow/3872065.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3121>

"Today, Gonds are fast catching up with city life, and modern-day amenities, but most of their rituals remain the same. As Japani said, 'Thoughts have changed and so also the lifestyle. Houses are fast changing into concrete ones. However, the tradition of painting on the walls is still there. [...] We exhibit our paintings at many places around the country. People often tell us to take up modern art but we want to stick to our tribal painting style and the depiction of our culture and nature through it. We also would like to give our perspective of the outside world through our art.'" – Venus Vinod Upadhyaya in "Rituals – Where art imitates life" (lifepositive.com)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4084>

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- **Customs**

"We have a song for every situation. We feel money takes away from the enjoyment of life. But to earn a livelihood, people have to learn other languages." – Santal teacher Pada Murmu interviewed by Nandini Nair (*OPEN Magazine*, 13 January 2017)

<https://openthemagazine.com/features/dispatch/santali-talking-time/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21581>

"We regard birth as arrival upon the earth and offer our thanks by holding a special bhumi puja. For marriage, guardians from the boy's side visit the girl's place for negotiations, and there is no practice of dowry and 'tilak'. – Sarna 'dharamguru' Bandhan Tigga quoted by Rabindra Nath Sinha in "Tribal Outfits Gearing up to Restart Stir on Sarna Religious Code Issue" (Newsclick.in, 15 September 2022)

<https://www.newsclick.in/tribal-outfits-gearing-restart-sarna-religious-code-issue>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22095>

"Tribals do not exploit other people's labour for the sake of their own avarice, nor do they destroy nature to build monuments to the human ego." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in *Painted Words: An Anthology of Tribal Literature* (Vadodara: Purva Prakash, 2012)

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/878631199>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22979>

"Every Adivasi society was/is governed by its own social organization and institutions. These institutions, linked to biological resource management, were governed by religious myth and socio-cultural belief system." – Nirmal Mahato (University of Gour Banga) in "Adivasi (Indigenous people) Perception of Landscape: The Case of Manbhum", *Journal of Adivasi and Indigenous Studies (JAIS)*, Vol. II, No.1, February 2015, pp. 52-53

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315799935>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5844>

"We don't have boundaries for collecting tubers or fish but if people from one village are going to another village to collect anything from the forest, they will inform their relatives in that village and go only with them." – Wildlife conservationist Ramesh in "Bomman thatha and his forest", a conversation with his grandfather on "bonding between adivasi people and the forest" (At the Edge of Existence, 29 October 2014)

<https://cultureandconservation.wordpress.com/2014/10/29/bomman-thatha-and-his-forest/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=8262>



Toda culture (Tamil Nadu) Photos © editor

More about the the Nilgiri Biosphere of  
Southern India and the Western Ghats >>

"[T]ribal religions and customary laws are as relevant as organised religions and institutionalised laws in modern society." – Subhadra Mitra Channa in *Anthropological Perspectives on Indian Tribes*, quoted by Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6911>

"We must remember that the Kondhs, many of whom live high up in the mountainous forests and call themselves Dongria Kondh, do not safeguard humanity with just their seeds. They do so with their food systems, their bond with the forests and wildlife, their belief system, social ways, and culture. Kondh society carries within it several lessons that can teach us about humanity itself." – Aditi Pinto in "There will always be a seed for everyone" (*The Hindu*, 23 April 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/there-will-always-be-a-seed-for-everyone/article18194781.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22300>

"The traditional 'school' of the tribal in Bastar was in the ghotul [learning centre]. The best of what is in tribal culture owes to the ghotul. However, under the influence of the new education, the ghotul has suffered a systematic disintegration." – Uma Ram (Professor & Head Department of English, Kakatiya PG College, Chhattisgarh) in *Issues in Tribal Education in Bastar, Chhattisgarh* (Folklore Foundation, Lokaratna, Volume IV 2011)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=14683>

"[W]ithin a patriarchal society, women are infantilised and husbands are later given the 'obligatory' role of a disciplinarian." – Poet and writer Meena Kandasamy quoted in "No safe haven for women at home" (*The Hindu*, 17 April 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16376>

"Sati [ritualized self-immolation by a widow] was likely alien to the Harappans, but in the mixed culture that arose later, it gained a foothold among the various elites and became part of the Indo-Aryan cultural legacy in the subcontinent." – Namit Arora in *Indians: A Brief History of a Civilization* (India Penguin, 2021), p. 37

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1235947581>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5629>

"The development of patriarchal society goes together with the development of private property." – Social psychologist Erich Fromm in *The Art of Loving* (New York, 1956), p. 66

<https://archive.org/details/TheArtOfLoving/page/n80/mode/1up>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31882>

"Brought up in a system in which all communications are by word of mouth, and hence used to trusting verbal statements, [tribal populations] get confused by constant reference to documents and written rules, which increasingly determine all aspects of rural life." – Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf in *Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival* (University of California Press, 1982), pp. 320-1

[https://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/rarebooks/downloads/Haimendorf Tribes of India.pdf](https://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/rarebooks/downloads/Haimendorf_Tribes_of_India.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12724>

"Despite this horrible oppression on them, the tribals of India have generally (though not invariably) retained a higher level of ethics than the non-tribals. They normally do not cheat or tell lies, or commit other misdeeds, which many non-tribals do. They are generally superior in character to non-tribals. It is time now to undo the historical injustice to them." – Supreme Court judgment quoted in "India, largely a country of immigrants" (The Hindu, 12 January 2011)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/article1081343.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4315>

"The ethos [held up by parents and teachers at the Rolf Schoemb Vidyashram school] is one of community, with programmes devised and implemented by members of the community rather than by outsiders who might not be familiar with the strengths of and issues faced by local people." – Santal educationist Boro Baski in "The Indian school where Indigenous children are 'never outsiders'" by Rosemary Marandi (Al Jazeera Education, 10 February 2020)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/indian-school-indigenous-children-outsiders-200128131128144.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34790>

"[C]aste is not a residual variable, but is an active agent which stifles economic transformation." – Kalaiyaran A. (Assistant Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies and non-resident fellow at the Center for Contemporary South Asia, Brown University) in "The role of caste in economic transformation" (The Hindu, 23 June 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-role-of-caste-in-economic-transformation/article65554512.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7686>



"Probably caste was neither Aryan nor Dravidian [and] it is still a burden and a curse." – Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery Of India* (1946, OUP Centenary ed. 1989, pp. 86-87)

<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.98835>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17554>

"Neither music, nor prayer, nor fasting was able to heal the scars of a wounded civilization or to arrest its fall into an abyss of communal hatred, caste exclusion and political opportunism." – Historian Lakshmi Subramanian in *Singing Gandhi's India: Music and Sonic Nationalism* (New Delhi: Roli Books 2020), p. 189

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/1139768131>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26089>

"Caste is – and is not – class. It is class insofar as it determines class position for most Indians. It is not class insofar as it inhibits class mobilization across castes." – Shashank Kela in "A party of the poor?" (*India Seminar*, Caste Matters, May 2012)

<https://www.india-seminar.com/2012/633.htm>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11674>

"Unless the successors of Nehru can teach 'mainstream' society to respect the different methods of the tribal people and devise ways of controlling the process of cultural desecration, mere economic development will not prevent the alienation of tribal communities." – Guest Column titled "Hands off tribal culture" (*India Today*, 9 January 2014)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/guest-column/story/19800915-hands-off-tribal-culture-821415-2014-01-09>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=17554>

"Anyone who has had some meaningful interaction with India's indigenous or adivasi people, cannot fail to be touched by the encounter. There is a directness in them, an absence of artifice or guile, an almost childlike innocence, born of simplicity combined with a lack of greed and avarice. The more interior and untouched a village, the more unsullied the people." – Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD-Nilgiris) in "Glad to be adivasi!" (*New Internationalist*, 13 June 2014)

<https://newint.org/blog/2014/06/13/adivasi-indigenous-culture/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15283>

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- **Dress and ornaments**

"We have forgotten the habit of putting a towel on our shoulder and embroider the end-pieces of our towels but we have not forgotten our childhood friendship." –

Synopsis by Boro Baski for "Bagi kedalang (We no longer do the same)", a song composed and performed by staff and students of the Rolf Schoembs Vidyashram (Non-formal Santal school, Ghosaldanga village, Dist.-Birbhum, West Bengal), included in the Santali video album "Ale Ato" (Our Village)

<https://youtu.be/OU15PO8TFnA>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=25317](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=25317)

"Life in the hamlet, home to a small number of families of the Bhil tribe, was simple. There were then no roads in the area, and communication with the world outside was strictly limited. The jungles and mountains acted as a barrier to the infiltration of outside influences, which meant that the denizens of the hamlet lived much as their ancestors must have. Bhil men donned just a small loin cloth, woven at home, and the women left their torsos uncovered. There were no shops in the area, indicating that the Bhil villages were largely self-sufficient." – Yoginder Sikand in "Simple ways of life" (Deccan Herald, 23 December 2012)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/300193/simple-ways-life.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

"Hidden within the colour, weave and design of tribal textiles are many legends. [...] Each pattern is a little capsule of information—containing tales of ancestors, social values, clan practices, and more. [...] It has also been observed that the one thing common to most weaves and motifs is the role of women as creators." – Avantika Bhuyan (interviewing members the North East Network) in "Folklore, myths and handloom" (Livemint, 1 December 2017)

<https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/FR23TDZqwz1hDYOIB5mRSN/Folklore-myths-and-handloom.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23691>

"[I]t is one of the signs of the 'educated' barbarian of today that he cannot appreciate the qualities of people in any way different from himself - in looks or clothes, customs or rituals." – Guest Column titled "Hands off tribal culture" (*India Today*, 9 January 2014)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/guest-column/story/19800915-hands-off-tribal-culture-821415-2014-01-09>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11257>

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- **Ekalavya (Eklavya, Eklabya), EMR & Factory schools**

1. Ekalavya (Eklavya, Eklabya): the name of a legendary archer prodigy “who, being a Nishada [Sanskrit Niṣāda, “tribal, hunter, mountaineer, degraded person, outcast”], had to give his thumb as a fee to the brahmin guru thus terminating his skill as an archer.” – Romila Thapar in “The epic of the Bharatas” (*India Seminar* 2010)

[http://www.india-seminar.com/2010/608/608\\_romila\\_thapar.htm](http://www.india-seminar.com/2010/608/608_romila_thapar.htm)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=26432](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=26432)

2. "Ekalavya Residential School Scheme": a network of boarding schools where tribal children are to be educated in accordance with rules and syllabi provided by the government; such schools are being designated as "Eklavya Model Residential School (EMR)" with the objective of empowering students "to be change agent, beginning in their school, in their homes, in their village and finally in a large context."

<https://tribal.gov.in/DivisionsFiles/sg/EMRSguidlines.pdf>

3. In some regions there are similar "Residential Schools" and "Ashram Schools" for tribal children, as in Tripura where they are managed by a society called “Tripura Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TTWREIS)”

<https://twd.tripura.gov.in/tripura-tribal-welfare-residential-educational-institutions-society>

4. Factory schools "exist to turn tribal and indigenous children – who have their own language and culture – into compliant workers-of-the-future. The world’s largest Factory School stated that it turns 'Tax consumers into tax payers, liabilities into assets'." – Survival International

<https://survivalinternational.org/factoryschools>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34514>

"EMRSs [Eklavya Model Residential Schools] are a flagship intervention of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to provide quality education to tribal students in remote tribal areas. The programme being implemented since 1998 have created a niche in the tribal education landscape of the country. [...] Currently there are 588 schools sanctioned across the country in 28 States/UT with around 73391 students enrolled in the Schools." – Ministry of Tribal Affairs (PIB Delhi) in "MoU signed with 21 States/UTs for better functioning of Eklavya Model Residential Schools", 01 February 2021

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1694272>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34514>

"Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) for tribal children is another ambitious programme under which 740 EMRS will be established in tribal dominated areas in the next three years." – "Education & Tribal Affairs ministries launch school innovation" (Times of India, 16 July 2021)

<https://m.timesofindia.com/home/education/news/education-tribal-affairs-ministries-launch-school-innovation-programme/articleshow/84474106.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29790>

"Their parents sent these children, belonging to the most marginalised segment of Indian society, to these schools in the hope that education would liberate them from poverty and want. [...] There are no easy answers to how and how fast tribal communities join the mainstream. Taking their brightest children out of their homes and away from their culture, only to maim or kill them, is certainly not one of them." – The Economic Times (Commentary, 19 April 2016)

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-commentary/schools-for-tribal-kids-or-for-horror/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29790>

"A 1941 lecture by Thakkar in Pune highlighted negative stereotypes about tribal 'laziness', 'promiscuity', 'illiteracy', and 'addiction to shifting cultivation'. The cultural racism in such stereotypes forms the backdrop to the continuing discrimination and humiliation of Adivasis." – Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (The Hindu, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21733>

"The parallels abound: as with the 'Indian boarding schools' of North America, privately owned institutions are now reeducating Adivasi children; in consonance with settler-colonial practice, the material basis of Adivasi life is being steadily undermined by restricting access to traditional foraging grounds and the banning of certain kinds of hunting and gathering." – Amitav Ghosh in *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis* (book excerpt in The Print, 14 October 2021)

<https://theprint.in/pageturner/excerpt/congress-left-bjp-india-striving-to-remake-itself-as-settler-colonialist-amitav-ghosh/750429/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=44650>

"If Adivasis were to start writing their own Discovery Of India, it would be something like this: [...] We were here before the Aryans came thundering in their chariots through the mountain passes; they could break the dams, flooding the plains and destroying the remnants of the Indus cities but they could not destroy us. They knew us as Nishada and Naga; they called us Rakshasa, they burned the forests to destroy us and free the land to fashion their agrarian society stamped with the hierarchy of caste. They were the ones who remembered us as their enemies. Ekalavya was one of our great archers, so skillful that the hero of the Aryans, Arjun, could not stand before him. But they assaulted him, cutting his thumb, destroying his ability to fight – and then fashioned a story in which he accepted Drona as his Guru and agreed to surrender his thumb!" – Gail Omvedt in "Call us adivasis, please", *Folio* Special issue "Adivasi" (The Hindu, 16 July 2000)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26645>

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Source: screenshot from Eklavya | Mahabharat | Hindi  
Animated Stories For Kids- 2 | Moral Stories  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tgl0L401Vki>

- **Fashion and design**

"[I]n Arunachal Pradesh change as much through creative innovation as through passive adaptation. [...] Cultural change is everywhere apparent: textile designs of one tribe are borrowed by others; local festivals are centralised and refashioned as community events; oral traditions are printed and discussed as 'cultural heritage'. One tribe regularly holds a 'Fashion Show' in which young men and women display the latest innovations in traditional dress. Some traditional practices (such as tattooing) have been banned by tribal organisations, while others (woodcarving, for example) are expanding." – Research Description "Tribal Transitions at SOAS"

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/tribaltransitions/description/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=9346>

"The western region is home to a wide variety of people with different religious 's and cultures, most of whom have distinctive traditional textiles. They include Jains, Parsis, Hindus and Muslims, as well as tribal groups such as the Bhils and Mina. This region's propensity toward colour has deep roots, for it is here that the Indus Valley civilization developed cotton-growing and -dyeing technologies. From at least the early second millennium AD, western India has traded dyed textiles to the Middle East, South-East Asia and the Far East, and later to Europe and the Americas, although most local communities maintained their own textile designs." – Linda Lynton in *The Sari: Styles, Patterns, History, Techniques* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), p. 25

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11257>

"The Toda embroidery is called as 'Torhbohr' or 'poothkuli' and the whole design of the embroidery is based on counting. It is done on a calculation and the finished product is so attractive and traditional, the whole effort and time taken to complete the same becomes a pleasure. [...] The embroidery is done on the reverse to produce a rich, embossed effect on the surface and each one has more than nine intricate designs. The women do them out of practice without tracing the pattern or referring to a book." – Gayathri V Raj in "Toda community forays into reviving traditional art" (Deccan Herald, 11 December 2011)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/176591/toda-community-forays-reviving-traditional.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4855>

"Baiga tribe motifs vary for instance, from Bhil tribes. [...] The aim is to be able to engage and work with a number of forms of craft and tribal art from all parts of the country — that are made with varying materials for different purposes and a diverse set of meanings associated with the craft or tribal art." – Rites of Passage (The Typecraft Initiative's digital typeface based on Godna tattoos: Working with tribal women artists from Chhattisgarh)

[www.typecraftinitiative.org](http://www.typecraftinitiative.org)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21844>

"Adivasi elders have complained of the loss of old ways and values, as the young move into modern clothes and emulate both filmstar heroes and non-tribal neighbours. Traditional adivasi garb has almost disappeared from younger people's wardrobe. Women have switched to saris or salwar-kameez. [...] Recently, there were discussions on whether the loss of tradition and culture is irreversible. Whether there is some hope of at least making kids aware of their heritage." – Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD-Nilgiris) in "Glad to be adivasi!" (New Internationalist, 13 June 2014)

<https://newint.org/blog/2014/06/13/adivasi-indigenous-culture/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15283>

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[Santali Literary Meet 2017 >>](#)

Photo © by courtesy [Ivy Hansdak >>](#)

[More about India's tribal fashion and design >>](#)



- **Games and leisure time**

"Everything I knew, poetry, music, games, it was all in Santali. This school gave me a sense of community and I hope my students get to feel the same. [...] When I teach my students, I try to stress that we need to remember that the central ideas about Santali culture is dance, music and poetry." – Santal teacher Pada Murmu interviewed by Nandini Nair (*OPEN Magazine*, 13 January 2017)

<https://openthemagazine.com/features/dispatch/santali-talking-time/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21581>

"In Goa, tribal women celebrate a religious festival with dancing and games. [...] In India, where mostly women are discouraged from openly enjoying themselves and their mobility restricted, the content of this video serves as a reminder that certain customs which are considered 'traditional' and relegated to marginalised tribal societies are actually quite forward-thinking." – Devidas Gaonkar (Community Correspondent) in "Tribal Festival Celebrates Femininity" (VideoVolunteers, 10 December 2010)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy83wAUEWts>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6733>

"The archers of Siwatarai village have excelled in championships even without much professional training and facilities as they belong to traditional archery community where youngsters are exposed to the skill at early age." – Divya Dubey in "Tribal village Siwatarai emerges as archery hub" (Times of India Chhattisgarh 27 November 2017)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/more-sports/others/tribal-village-siwatarai-emerges-as-archery-hub/articleshow/61822651.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25913>

"[O]ral literature does not depend upon authorship but on interpretation and oral translation [which explains] the role of memory in tribal literature due to the non-availability of printed text. This memory is preserved in the form of songs, dances, riddles, adages, yells and cries etc. shared and transferred by a number of people providing a kaleidoscopic view of shared knowledge." – Athikho Kaisii in "Oral Literature and Memory: A Study of Tribal Folklore", National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23039>

"The first ten years of my childhood were the golden time of my life. [...] Those were the days, when I learnt to climb trees, swim in the rivers and catch snails and fishes and hunt birds and rabbits and feasted with my friends at the end of the village in the evening with great joy and fun. Here I learnt the various types of riddles, love songs and playing the bamboo flutes. During the herding days, I learnt how to accomplish a task as a team and developed an egalitarian mindset and overcame the gender barriers. Here I had realized the importance of love and friendship in life. The herding days was my first school, the traditional school." – Boro Baski in "Gai Gupi Kada Gupi (The story behind the song)"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SyRGJHepbc>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=42269>

"Entire tribal populations across India are being uprooted with impudence so dams can replace their homes; children's imagination, especially in urban areas is fuelled more by video games, television, and the internet and less by direct human interaction; education for a lot of societies means little more than students cramming recycled information inside boxed classrooms, pushing for higher grades and bagging lucrative jobs [...] In such a scenario, Tagore's message of freedom, in all its shades, is of utmost relevance." – Bhaswati Ghosh in "Freedom in Tagore's Plays" (Parabaas, 9 May 2011)

<https://www.parabaas.com/rabindranath/articles/pBhaswati.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6357>

"Many youth of the current generation are sportspersons exhibiting their talents in state and national-level tournaments." – Poovadevi quoted in "Toda community forays into reviving traditional art" – Gayathri V Raj in "Toda community forays into reviving traditional art" (Deccan Herald, 11 December 2011)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/176591/toda-community-forays-reviving-traditional.html>

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Village mural in West Bengal  
"Santals celebrate the seasons"[series](#) >>

- **History**

"Since the days of remote past, the diversified art and cultural forms generated by the tribal and rural people of India, have continued to evince their creative magnificence. Apart from their outstanding brilliance from the perspective of aesthetics, the tribal/folk art and culture forms have played an instrumental role in reinforcing national integrity, crystallizing social solidarity, fortifying communal harmony, intensifying value-system and promoting the elements of humanism among the people of the country." – Final Report "Evaluation Study of Tribal/Folk Arts and Culture in West Bengal, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhatisgrah and Bihar" submitted to SER Division Planning Commission Govt. of India New Delhi by Gramin Vikas Seva Sanshtha West Bengal

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29938>

"While academic historians are involved in trying to meaningfully understand how the past differs from the present, for pseudo-historians, in sharp contrast, it is about realising the political ambition of trying to project their version of the present into the past." – Rohan D'Souza (Professor of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University) in "The Risks of Looking at India's History Through the Eyes of Pseudo-Historians" (*The Wire*, 20 October 2021)

<https://thewire.in/history/india-history-pseudo-historians-risks>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=7022>

"[E]ven after nearly seventy-three years since the tribes were de-notified, the members of the tribes are still subject to oppression and cruelty." – D.Y. Chandrachud (Chief Justice of India since 9 November 2022) quoted in "Members of De-Notified Tribes Picked Up to Cover Up Shoddy Investigations" (*The Wire*, 7 December 2021)

<https://thewire.in/rights/members-of-de-notified-tribes-picked-up-to-cover-up-shoddy-investigations-justice-chandrachud>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"In Anthropological Perspectives on Indian Tribes [...] the anthropologist Subhadra Mitra Channa writes that people categorised as tribes are not merely remnants of a static past." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12454>

"There is undoubtedly ample evidence to lay claim upon the fact that the North East Indian region has never been an isolated backwater even during prehistoric times." – Dhriyoti Kalita reviewing *Prehistory and Archaeology of Northeast India* by Manjil Hazarika (Scroll.in, 3 March 2019)

<https://scroll.in/article/915071/this-essential-book-on-the-prehistory-of-no>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=45657>

"The injustice done to the tribal people of India is a shameful chapter in our country's history. The tribals were called 'rakshas' (demons), 'asuras', and what not. They were slaughtered in large numbers, and the survivors and their descendants were degraded, humiliated, and all kinds of atrocities inflicted on them for centuries. They were deprived of their lands, and pushed into forests and hills where they eke out a miserable existence of poverty, illiteracy, disease, etc. And now efforts are being made by some people to deprive them even of their forest and hill land where they are living, and the forest produce on which they survive." – Supreme Court judgment quoted in "India, largely a country of immigrants" (The Hindu, 12 January 2011)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/article1081343.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4315>

"[W]hat is really happening, to put it in a nutshell, is the revival of the colonial history of India, by pretending that this is the indigenous history." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) interviewed by Karan Thapar in "I Don't Like Modi's India, It Is Too Narrow and Limited" (*The Wire*, 12 August 2022)

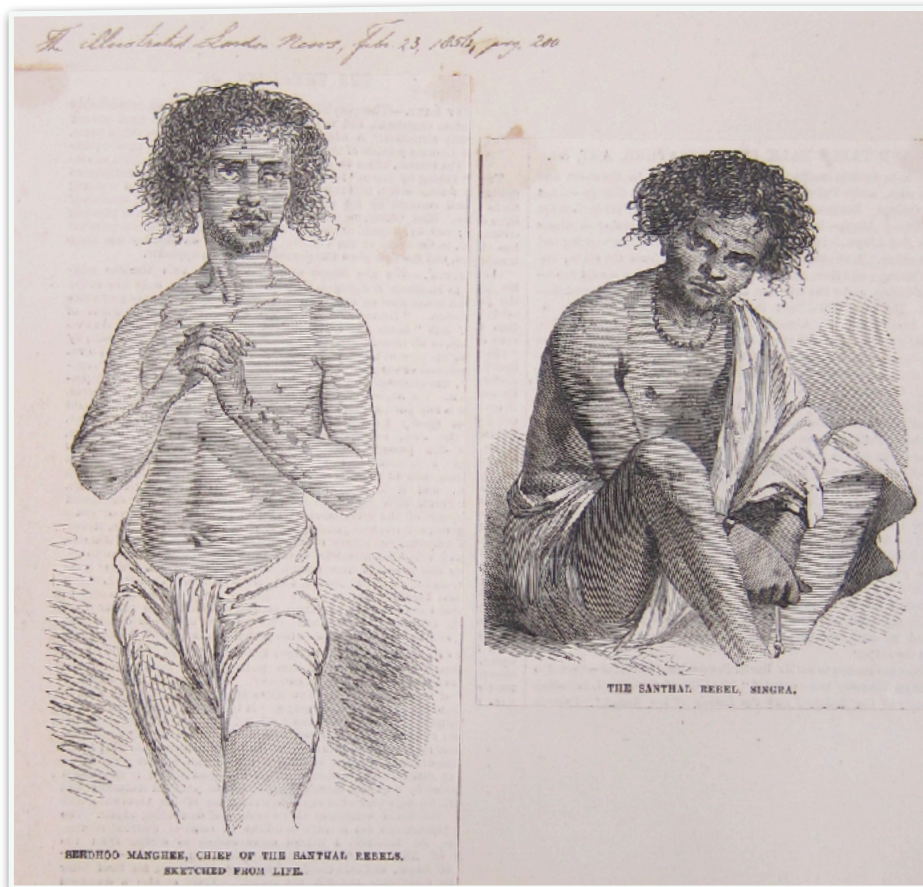
<https://thewire.in/history/full-text-karan-romila-thapar-modi-independence>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"The structure and ideologies of ancient monarchies and the modern Indian nation state are very different. A few fundamental issues remain the same, but they are addressed in different ways. All states have to mask, justify and legitimise their use of violence through some sort of ideology. The purpose of this ideology is to present the state's violence as necessary force. In ancient times, the state presented this violence as necessary to uphold the kingdom. Today it is presented as necessary to uphold the nation." – Upinder Singh (Department of history at Delhi University and author of *Political Violence in Ancient India*) interviewed by Monobina Gupta in "What Political Violence in Ancient India Tells Us About Our Past and Present" (*The Wire*, 9 November 2017)

<https://thewire.in/history/upinder-singh-interview-political-violence-ancient-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5859>



"Santhal rebels Seedhu Manghe & Singra" in  
*Illustrated London News* (23 February 1856), p 200  
 by courtesy of [Artis Library Amsterdam](#) | [Find books on the Santal rebellion >>](#)

Under the headline "Suppression of the Santhal insurrection", the report describes how 15.000 Santhals had lost their lives and dozens of villages were destroyed in November 1855 to suppress the insurrection started by Sidhu *Manji* (leader) together with his brothers Kanhu, Chand, Bhairat, Jhano, and Phulo. On Juli 24 Sidhu, Kanhu and many others were taken prisoner, and eventually executed by hanging. In their honour, a commemoration stamp was released on 6 April 2002.





"Imagine a 25-year-old who took on an empire, left an indelible mark on tribal rights across the country and was seen as a mystic and folk hero for hundreds of thousands. Few would have achieved so much in so short a time and it's not surprising then that Birsa Munda's portrait hangs proudly in India's parliament." – Aditi Shah in "Birsa Munda – The Tribal Hero" (livehistoryindia.com, 26 July 2018)

<https://www.livehistoryindia.com>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23975>

"[I]t was by reading and speaking to Tagore that these founders of modern India, Gandhi and Nehru, developed a theory of nationalism that was inclusive rather than exclusive. Tagore's [collected lectures on the subject of] Nationalism should be mandatory reading in today's climate of xenophobia, sectarianism, violence and intolerance." – Ramachandra Guha, Introduction to the 2017 India Penguin ed. of *Nationalism* by Rabindranath Tagore

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/nationalism/oclc/1099200491>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18808>

"Every society had narratives about its past and some regarded them as history as time went on [...] So your fantasy runs wild, you can concoct a utopia exactly as you want." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University), during an interactive workshop on 22 August 2013 responding to a participant's question: "Is there also the risk of creating fake history through the invention of tradition?" [1h41m55s]

<https://youtu.be/QZU0G0P3Elw?t=1h41m55s>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=22452](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=22452)

"A long, contentious debate on whether Vedic culture originated in what is now Indian territory or was the result of complex patterns of migration and settlements has, so far, thrown up little evidence of the former." – Sowmiya Ashok in "The Dig" (Fiftytwo.in, 2 April 2021)

<https://fiftytwo.in/story/the-dig/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5454>

"[R]ight now we are in the midst of a name-changing game, as if by changing a name, history can be erased. Battles lost have become battles won, words on plaques have been changed, the victor becoming the loser, the loser the victor." – Novelist Shashi Deshpande in "Why have we lost the spirit of questioning handed down by the Vedas, the Upanishads, the epics?" (Scroll.in, 25 July 2021)

<https://scroll.in/article/1001004/why-have-we-lost-the-spirit-of-questioning-handed-down-by-the-vedas-the-upanishads-the-epics>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4720>

"The Aryans describe their enemies as dark in complexion, noseless or flat-nosed, of harsh speech, not honouring the Aryan gods, not observing the Aryan religious ritual, but rich in material possessions and living in fortified cities. They are named Dāsas, Asuras, Panis and Kīkatas. The Aryan invaders finally triumphed over the non-Aryans, many of whom were killed, enslaved or driven further inland. In this land, which the Aryans conquered from their enemies, were founded the early Aryan settlements." – B.G. Gokhale in *Ancient India* (Bombay, 1959 ed.), p. 22

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/602186629>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5851>

"How could peace be brought, with justice? Is there even a movement for peace? How does this war compare with other wars in India, and worldwide? Few have targeted civilian villagers as remorselessly, though Ashoka's Kalinga war, over 2,000 years ago, that killed 100000 people directly, and many indirectly according to Ashoka's own inscriptions, presents a model of genocidal invasion and takeover all too comparable to the present situation. This paper walks through this context of Bastar." – Abstract by Felix Padel (*Journal of People's Studies*, 2017)

<https://www.academia.edu/34104980>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21733>

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Village mural in West Bengal  
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- **Homes and utensils**

"The disappearance of mud-house from Santal life not only ends the mud-house alone but also their religious and cultural life that are connected to it. And also the centuries-old traditional knowledge and art of building low-cost-no-cost mud-houses and the related skills and crafts, like wall paintings die out." – Boro Baski in "Is 'brick house' the only sign of development?" (translated from an article in Bengali Anandabazar Patrika, 21 July 2019)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29829>

"[D]eforestation and landscape change [have] negatively impacted communities [and] resulted in non-availability or decrease in availability of forest produce. This has manifested in the lack of trees for building houses. [...] They now need to travel greater distances to access bamboo and other forest produce." – Vikram Aditya in "Displaced from the hills: Livelihoods of tribal communities in Eastern Ghats under threat" (*Down to Earth*, 24 February 2021)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/forests/displaced-from-the-hills-livelihoods-of-tribal-communities-in-eastern-ghats-under-threat-75657>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29829>

"Traditional huts which use boulders and wooden logs are becoming rare in Yelagiri as many villagers now prefer concrete structures. But these tribal huts are much stronger." – Serena Josephine in "Tribal architecture and culture, passed on through generations" (The Hindu, 30 January 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/tribal-architecture-and-culture-passed-on-through-generations/article4359679.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13005>

"Tribal communities have a much deeper and a live sense of nature, living organisms, climate and material." – Veteran architect Narendra Dingle on architecture as an art: "Poetry in architecture" (The Hindu, 29 July 2007)

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sundaymagazine/poetry-in-architecture/article2275459.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18902>

"Like all traditional architecture, the Naga way of building has evolved over centuries through trial and error. Out of necessity, it engages with the local environment directly. Local forest and earth provide a large part of building materials. And houses are shaped to offer resistance to the cold and rain. The lightweight architecture that results fits well in the earthquake-prone north-eastern region. [...] The bamboo and thatch can be framed and braced well to resist earthquakes and reduce damage." – Himanshu Burte in "Naturally Naga" (Livemint, 1 Feb 2009)

<https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/qw1XDX8Q6eDTKNNQPnsRIM/Naturally-Naga.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18902>

"So there was the village blacksmith, the tailor, the cattle-rearer, the hunter-gatherer, the farmer, the fisherman, and even an expert who had the perfect antidote for treating poison bites [and] none of the implements that were being used here were 'bought'. They were all made by them. And necessity being the mother of invention, you could see innovation at its best." – Gangadharan Menon in "You've Seen Warli Paintings" (*The Better India*, 10 April 2014)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/9921/walvanda-tribal-art-music-culture-travel-maharashtra/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18779>

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Kuruma home in [Wayanad](#) >>

Photo © Arun V.C.

More about tribal [homes and utensils](#) >>



Santal home in [West Bengal](#) >>

Photo © editor

Find [books](#) on India's rural architecture >>

- **Languages and linguistic heritage**

"Nations don't make us human – languages make us human [and] behave like civilised beings." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy (co-founder, People's Linguistic Survey of India) in a video interview (Scroll.in, 25 November 2017)

<https://www.facebook.com/scroll.in/videos/1600744976675043/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24320>

"My stay in India led to the observation of the very young child – from the moment of birth until three. It was the experience I gained there that led me to the conclusion that the first years of our lives are the most important in the psychic development of men. I published a book a little while ago, which I called *The Absorbent Mind*, in which I described the tremendous capability of the young child to absorb those things from its environment which are necessary to its psychic construction." –

Maria Montessori quoted in *Maria Montessori Writes to her Grandchildren: letters from India, 1939-1946* (Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, 2020), p. 159

<https://montessori-pierson.com/india.html>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1273931392>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16037>

"With the loss of language comes the loss of everything in culture and loss of solidarity, the loss of Man himself." – Ayesha Kidwai (Centre for Linguistics, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) quoted by Abhijit Mohanty in "Seven decades after independence, many tribal languages in India face extinction threat" (*Down to Earth*, 26 August 2020)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/seven-decades-after-independence-many-tribal-languages-in-india-face-extinction-threat-73071>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6879>

"They have lost their livelihood, their forests and even their Gods. Now they will also lose their language." – Raghavan Payyanad (folklorist and exponent of indigenous knowledge), in "Relinking tribal youth with their culture" on efforts to revive and reacquaint youngsters from different tribes with endangered tribal arts at the Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Tribes Kozhikode (KIRTADS)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/relinking-tribal-youth-with-their-culture/article7994424.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=19376>

"There are 418 different tribes in India, with even more languages and dialects. [...] To accommodate these diverse and culturally distinct communities with a single educational policy is a mammoth task, verging on the impossible. Thus, despite good intentions, tribal-education policies are mostly dysfunctional. And when such systematic dysfunction continues for years or even generations, social unrest erupts." – Boro Baski in "Teaching Santal children" (*D+C Development and Cooperation*, 2 July 2009)

<https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/long-term-success-non-formal-ativasi-school-west-bengal>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2274>

"[L]inguistic reorganisation helped to underline the cultural diversity, which underlay the unity of the nation. The basic structure of the polity that evolved stood the test of time, withstanding the pressures, be they from the Northeast or the South or Kashmir." – K.N. Panikkar reviewing *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* by Ramachandra Guha in "Democracy in practice" (The Hindu, 19 June 2007)

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/179807214>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3246>

"All languages created by human communities are our collective cultural heritage. Therefore, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that they do not face the global phonocide let loose in our time." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in a lecture at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore (26 September 2010)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/Inclusive Education NIAS Lecture 2010 Prof-Ganesh Devy.pdf](https://indiantribalheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/Inclusive_Education_NIAS_Lecture_2010_Prof-Ganesh_Devy.pdf)

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=27950](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=27950)

"Odisha has one of the most diverse tribal populations in India, with 62 tribes, including 13 primitive tribes, residing in the State. They speak 72 mother tongues broadly grouped into 38 languages, 19 of which are nearly extinct. Only four tribal languages here — Santhali, Ho, Sora and Kui Lipi — have a written script. Santhali has already been included in the Eighth Schedule and the Odisha government has recommended Ho be included as well." – Satyasundar Barik in "Tribal communities in Odisha are speaking up to save their dialects" (The Hindu, 3 June 2017)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/tribal-communities-in-odisha-are-speaking-up-to-save-their-dialects/article18713925.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22690>

"1500 km and 1300 years separate the IVC [Indus Valley Civilisation] and Keeladi. The gap may not lead to too many direct and immediately recognisable similarities. But the fact that we have found graffiti that looks very similar to Harappan script in the Keeladi excavations [Tamil Nadu] is extremely important, especially since this is not the first time that graffiti similar to Harappan scripts have been found in South India and even Sri Lanka." – Tony Joseph, author of *Early Indians* quoted in "The Dig" by Sowmiya Ashok (Fiftytwo.in, 2 April 2021)

<https://fiftytwo.in/story/the-dig/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=38630>

"[I]n the context of tracing the origins of Dravidians there are suggestions that connect the Dravidian speakers of Southern India to the geographical regions west and North West of India." – R. Balakrishnan in "Remnants of Dravidian Name Heritage in Indus Valley and Beyond", *WCTC Souvenir* (The Hindu, accessed 16 April 2012)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5824>

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## • Misconceptions

"The adivasi has always been described as a figure of pity by mainstream writers. But there is a group of tribal writers, who, through their literature, are giving an answer to the questions raised on their identity." – Jitendra Vasava, a lecturer at Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh (Indian Express, 28 February 2010)

<http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/symposium-held-on-gujarat-tribal-literature/585310>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6304>

"We are so much more than that. We follow a tradition rich in music, dance and love." – Swarnalatha, who now runs an NGO that works for the upliftment for people of her tribal Irula community (known for their snake-catching skills), quoted in "Irulas much more than a community of snake catchers" (Times of India, 23 February 2018)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/irulas-much-more-than-a-community-of-snake-catchers/articleshow/63035204.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1753>

"It is wrong and does not help the tribal cause either to reduce the image of the Indian tribal society to that of destitute remnants, on the verge of dying out." – Georg Pfeffer in *Voices from the Periphery: Subalternity and Empowerment in India* (Routledge India 2012)

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1230529121>

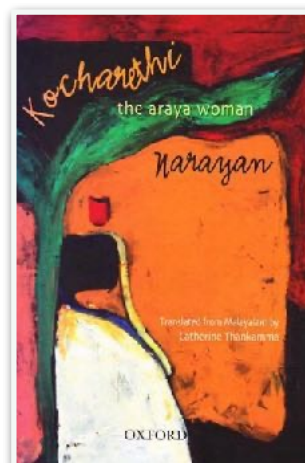
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11961>

"Though Narayan wrote several novels and almost a hundred short stories, his most famous work is his first novel, Kocharethi, the writing of which was an overtly political act to counter the offensive misrepresentations of his community, the Mala Araya tribe [resulting in] a hugely readable, and well-crafted text that exudes the vigour of felt experience." –

Translator Catherine Thankamma in "'A dignified son of the Western Ghats': A tribute to Narayan, India's first Adivasi writer" (Scroll.in, 27 August 2022)

<https://scroll.in/article/1030906/a-dignified-son-of-the-western-ghats-a-tribute-to-narayan-indias-first-adivasi-writer>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1459>



Adivasi Literature >>

"[T]he research suggested that the Harappan civilisation was not some mysterious forgotten society. It was part of a larger cultural milieu that survived its demise." – Nayanjot Lahiri quoted in "The Dig" by Sowmiya Ashok (Fiftytwo.in, 2 April 2021)

<https://fiftytwo.in/story/the-dig/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23774>

"Emerging globalized world is partly responsible for undervaluing the philosophy and traditions of the traditional community. This process led them to undergo cultural crisis and philosophical stigma. The outcome is the polarisation of human society and civilization into culture and uncultured, democratic and undemocratic, civilized and uncivilized, and so forth. It functions within the calculate strategy of the dominant ideologies so as to perpetuate hegemonic domination." – "Tribal Philosophy and Culture: Mao Naga of North-East" by Athikho Kaisii (Publisher's discription, accessed 23 June 2022)

<https://mittalbooks.com/products/tribal-philosophy-and-culture>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25096>

"If Adivasis were to start writing their own Discovery Of India, it would be something like this: There are those who talk of India's '5000 year-old culture,' there are those who talk of its 'timeless traditions.' If India has a timeless tradition, it is ours." – Gail Omvedt in "Call us adivasis, please", *Folio* Special issue "Adivasi" (The Hindu, 16 July 2000)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=26645>

"By revealing the spectacular diversity of these foot soldiers who fought the great battles of freedom – Adivasis, Dalits, Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus; OBCs, Brahmins; men, women and children, believers and atheists – The Last Heroes contends that Independence was not the gift of a handful of Oxbridge elites." – Book review: *The Last Heroes* by P. Sainath (Scroll, 10 October 2022)

<https://scroll.in/article/1034653/p-sainaths-second-book-the-last-heroes-will-be-published-25-years-after-his-iconic-first-book>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=52313>

"The civilization of India alone has progressed for countless millenniums without being prematurely choked out of existence by the desiccation of the soil or the drying up of the nobler springs of human action, by the spread of malaria or the moral decadence of the people. It is true that the progress of culture in India, though continuous, was not uniform. It did not proceed in a straight line, but in undulations like the waves of the sea." – P.T. Srinivasa Ayyangar in *The Stone Age in India* (Introduction, S. Subrahmanya Ayyar Lecture, 10 December 1925), Government Press Madras, 1926

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/38147053>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=22452](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=22452)

"History is an attempt to understand and explain what happened in the past, so as to understand the present better. So, you go for evidence, and it has to be reliable. You can't say 'such and such a God came and then this happened' or 'such and such a Rishi had supernatural powers and this happened'." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) interviewed by Karan



Thapar in "I Don't Like Modi's India, It Is Too Narrow and Limited" (*The Wire*, 12 August 2022)

<https://thewire.in/history/full-text-karan-romila-thapar-modi-independence>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"[T]he writing of South Asian as well as colonial scholars caricatured tribal communities by misrepresenting or fetishising their existence, and sometimes overcompensating for earlier misunderstandings—all of which further pushed tribes into obscurity. [They] are made to believe that they must give up their value systems, culture, religion, customs and aspirations, and that they must embrace the new order of the nation state to repay the favours done to them until they become self-sufficient through economic upliftment." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24902>

"Rural India's diversity is well known. Yet the fact that more than 833 million people live in India's villages, speak over 780 languages, and use 86 different scripts should make us pause to consider the cultural vastness of an India we urbanites know so little about." – Jael Silliman in "Voices from the countryside" (*The Telegraph*, 12 November 2016)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21398>

"Though the Indian constitution envisaged the abolition of 'untouchability' and an end to discrimination, prejudice is rampant among the affluent sections of society and those entrusted with upholding the constitution have tended to treat Dalits and Adivasis with utter insensitivity." – Anurag Bhaskar (Jindal Global Law School, Sonapat and Center on the Legal Profession at Harvard Law School) in "When It Comes to Dalit and Tribal Rights, the Judiciary in India Just Does Not Get It" (*The Wire*, 3 May 2020)

<https://thewire.in/law/when-it-comes-to-dalit-and-tribal-rights-the-judiciary-in-india-just-does-not-get-it>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35183>

"The nation-state's changing definition of the 'tribal' is informed by certain stereotypes or prejudices, by preserving the tribal identity, in an implicit manner, as being 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised'. The tribal worldview has never been taken cognisance of, while working out the definition of 'tribe' and, instead, there is imposition of certain state-sanctioned identity whereby the tribal's identity-crisis is magnified." – Shreya Jessica Dhan in "Defining the 'Tribe' in State Discourse: From Adivasi and Scheduled Tribe to Indigenous Peoples", National Conference "Tribes In Transition-II: Reaffirming Indigenous Identity Through Narrative" (2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23073>

"Indian local communities shape their identity around their status of caste and/or tribe, and while some anthropologists have considered the boundaries between these presumably discrete identities to be porous, it is striking how tribal people perceive their identity as immutable, regardless of social dynamics. While not denying that discontinuity and innovation have affected the formation of identities in South Asia, they should not be treated as arbitrary constructions, as has been the trend in these postmodern times." – Marine Carrin, General Introduction to *Brill's Encyclopedia of the Religions of the Indigenous People of South Asia* (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 2 South Asia, Volume: 36, 2021)

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1285067971>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=48430>

"The theoretical debate on caste among social scientists has receded into the background in recent years. [C]aste is in no sense disappearing: indeed, the present wave of neo-liberal policies in India, with privatisation of enterprises and education, has strengthened the importance of caste ties, as selection to posts and educational institutions is less based on merit through examinations, and increasingly on social contact as also on corruption." – Harald Tambs-Lyche (Professor Emeritus, Université de Picardie, Amiens) in "Caste: History and the Present" (*Academia Letters*, Article 1311, 2021)

<https://www.academia.edu/4996345>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6771>

"Many people—including those we might see as good and kind people—could be casteist, meaning invested in keeping the hierarchy as it is or content to do nothing to change it, but not racist in the classical sense, not active and openly hateful of this or that group." – Isabel Wilkerson's book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* reviewed by Dilip Mandal in *The Print*, 23 August 2020)

<https://theprint.in/opinion/oprah-winfrey-wilkerson-caste-100-us-ceos-indians-wont-talk-about-it/487143/>

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1176245188>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24460>

"[S]ince national histories have become suspect to enlightened liberals, more particularly as they generally degenerate into becoming nationalist histories, scholars have had to search for new ways to write national histories without succumbing to the nationalist malady." – Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) reviewing *India: A Story Through 100 Objects* by Vidya Dehejia

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2021/07/17/objects-and-their-objective-the-story-of-india/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6335>

"There are myths indicating that Asuras were made slaves by Aryans. These slave races are still struggling for annihilation of caste system. They live in abject poverty. Their latest names are 'Scheduled Castes', 'Scheduled Tribes', and 'Other Backward Castes'. They are yet to know about 'human rights'. The fact is that aboriginals were enslaved and subjected to inhuman treatment through centuries. [...] Students of history and anthropology have found numerous instances recorded in all prehistoric and established history of India, of a glowing past of this ancient tribe [known as Kolis, Koris and Kols] and more is being uncovered as research continues." – "Koli, Kori, Kol - Aboriginal tribes of India" (based on three publications written in Gujarati) by Bhushan (MEGHnet, 1 January 2011)

<https://www.meghnet.in/2011/01/kolikori-of-india-we-call-them.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2918>

"There was once perhaps an assumption that education and urbanisation would automatically drive change towards more liberal values in India. But it no longer seems as if these transformations are inevitable. The education level or wealth of respondents had little impact on the likelihood of experiencing social bias according to a recent survey." – Rukmini S., book excerpt from *Whole Numbers and Half Truths: What Data Can and Cannot Tell Us About Modern India* in "Liberals are really India's fringe: What a new book on data says" (The News Minute, 5 January 2022)

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/liberals-are-really-india-s-fringe-what-new-book-data-says-159529>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21540>

Going by the Summary on satyajitray.org the fact that *Aranyer Din Ratri* ("Days and Nights in the Forest") came to be regarded as "one of Ray's most successful films" may, in part, be explainable by its portrayal of young men "full of the over-confidence of the big city and scant respect for the villagers" indulging in "drunken sprees and adventures with servants" who (spoiler alert) "depart again for the city, each with a better appreciation of life."

<https://satyajitray.org/aranyer-din-ratri-days-and-nights-in-the-forest/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15597>

"Many modern Hindus revere their Sanskritic Vedas as the fountainhead of their religion, but the Harappan substrate that lives on today its both older and arguably more pervasive, especially in what we might call 'folk Hinduism', with its mother goddesses, guardian deities, reverence for certain trees and animals and perhaps even spiritual meditative practices." – Namit Arora in *Indians: A Brief History of a Civilization* (India Penguin, 2021), p. 38

<https://worldcat.org/en/title/1235947581>

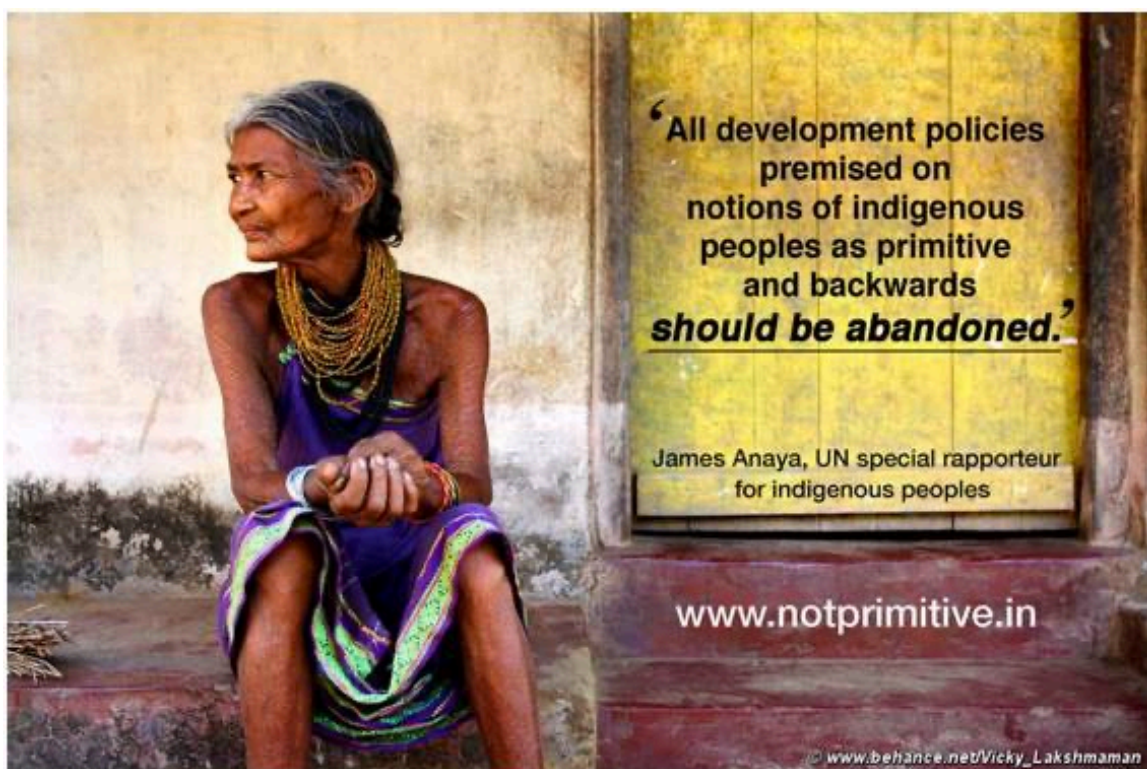
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5629>

"Aparna Vaidik's [book] *My Son's Inheritance* goes deeper into Indian history and culture, and shows that instead of being a recent phenomenon, violence, physical and psychic, has been endemic to the Indian socio-polity since ages. [...] Vaidik locates this violence in communal enmities between the Hindus and the minorities, particularly Muslims, which often validates itself as retributive justice. Deep psychic violence also operated, the author reminds us, among Hindus themselves. Many Indian Muslims and Christians, we are asked to remember, were Hindus of the lower castes, or 'non-Aryan' tribals, who converted out of Hinduism because of the torture of untouchability and ostracisation." – Suparna Banerjee, reviewing *My Son's Inheritance* (The Hindu, 1 August 2020)

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/my-sons-inheritance-review-a-culture-of-violence/article32237271.ece>

[https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page\\_id=7592](https://indiantribalheritage.org/?page_id=7592)

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Member of the [Halakki](#) community (Karnataka)

Blockpost © Vicky Lakshmanan >>

Quotation: James Anaya | [Keynote Address \(video\)](#) >>

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

[More resources](#) >>

- **Music and dance**

"Within villages around Dang [in Gujarat], traditional instruments and artists are waning. Cultural music and dance forms among the adivasis have evolved over centuries. Beautified by elements and nuances of their surroundings, these forms depict their very lifestyles. Played for hours together in the same tempo, music is an integral part of celebrations and mourning. [...] Each instrument has a purpose and belief related to it." – Ashleshaa Khurana in "The ailing art of adivasi music" (Times of India, 30 January 2014)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13780>

"In Kongthong, every time a baby is born, the mother composes a lullaby that becomes a unique identity of the child for life. Moreover, the lullaby has no words and is just is a tune, a kind of hum that only the villagers are able to recognise and remember. [...] The village's practice of whistling to each other also makes a lot of practical sense." – Sanchari Pal in "In The Whistling Village of Meghalaya, Every Child Has a 'Unique Lullaby ID!'" (*The Better India*, 1 February 2018)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/129583/unique-whistling-village-kongthong-meghalaya-lullaby/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22477>



"The tribes and castes in India are communities apart. Those who belong to castes belong to no tribes, and those who belong to tribes are outside the caste pyramid. What brings them together is probably their love for songs." – Ganesh [G.N.] Devy in "What unites Indians is a love for songs" (The Telegraph, 1 November 2019)

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/the-musical-legacy-of-kabir-mira-nanak-tukaram-akka-mahadevi-what-unites-indians-is-a-love-for-songs/cid/1716091>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3488>

"The old villagers who have imbibed our traditional knowledge and normally make and play the Banam [fiddle] are unable to transmit their skills and knowledge to [youngsters] busy preparing school lessons and therefore get little time to sit with the elderly people of their village and learn from them. Another reason is [an] attraction to the fast and loud music from Bollywood and from other modern sources." – Boro Baski on the purpose of organizing instrument making workshops at the Museum of Santal Culture (Bishnubati village near Santiniketan, West Bengal)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=30075>

"Musical knowledge is transmitted through a collective oral-aural, participative method, in which memory and tradition are the basic principles. Music skills are acquired by listening and repeating, by assimilating formulary materials, and by participation in a kind of communal retrospection." – Ruchira Ghose in "Cadence and Counterpoint: Documenting Santal Musical Traditions" (A virtual exhibition on Google Cultural Institute 2016)

<https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/DwISi2xsSQFgKA>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=19487>

"The great diversity of music in India is a direct manifestation of the diversity and fragmentation of the population in terms of race, religion, language, and other aspects of culture. The process of acculturation, so accelerated in modern times, is still not a very significant factor in many areas of the country. There remain remote pockets where tribal societies continue to live much as they have done for centuries. Even though some of these may show evidence of borrowing from higher cultures, they nevertheless manage to assimilate these elements into their own culture in such a way as to enhance their own identity." – NA Jairazbhoy in *A Cultural History of India* (Oxford University Press, 1975, Chapter XVI "Tribal, Folk and Devotional Music"), pp. 212-242

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3488>

"Many of the modern day gypsies can be traced back to the nomadic tribe called Roma. In Europe, they were referred to as the goddess-worshippers. This goddess was none other than Kali. They were later referred to as gypsy, as they believed that they came from Egypt before spreading to European countries. The tribe Roma also make a claim that their ancestors were an ancient warrior class in Punjab. [...] While suspicions have led to wide scale persecution, the world also acknowledges their amazing contribution, especially to music and dance. From guitar to violins in places like Hungary, the flamenco dances in Spain and Oriental dances in Egypt is said to originate from them." – "Where do gypsies come from?" (The Times of India, Life, 14 May 2013)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/where-do-gypsies-come-from/articleshow/18791132.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20310>

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- **Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes**

"The Nomadic Tribes of India, were formally known and notified as the 'Criminal Tribes of India'(DNTs) by the British as per the 1871 Act. Today they constitute a total population of about 60 million. While these communities are enlisted in various disadvantaged sub categories by the government [...]. These tribes were originally nomadic and traditionally seen as traders in commodities like salt and honey. After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 they were seen by the British government as an intelligence threat as they wandered unchecked across the country carrying messages and information. Since they could not be forcibly settled the notification act was used. [...] These groups were formally 'de-notified' in 1952 by the Indian government, but event today they continue to carry the stigma of being 'born criminals'." – "Justice for the DNTs" (Bhasha Trust, accessed 13 October 2022)

<https://bhasharesearch.org/justice-dnts.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=12284>

"Every spring, as the snow begins to melt in the mountains, the nomadic tribe of Van Gujjars embarks on an epic journey in search of the best pastures for their buffaloes. Here is the story of this peaceful, forest dwelling tribe and their journey across high plains, treacherous passes and picturesque Himalayan valleys." – Sanchari Pal in "Nomads of the Himalayas: A Fascinating Glimpse into the Rarely-Seen Forest World of the Van Gujjars" (*The Better India*, 3 September 2016)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/topics/tribes/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20921>

"[In 2022 the] Union Social Justice Ministry received 402 applications online from across the country for benefits under the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of Denotified, Nomadic, Semi-nomadic (SEED) Tribes. More than 10 crore [100 million] Indians from 1,400 communities belong to these groups, show the latest estimates available with the government [yet] the exercise to categorise all 1,400 communities under the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes is holding up the implementation of the scheme." – Abhinay Lakshman in "Denotified, nomadic, semi-nomadic tribes: 402 SEED registrations so far online, none approved yet" (*The Hindu*, 29 August 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/denotified-nomadic-semi-nomadic-tribes-402-seed-registrations-so-far-online-none-approved-yet/article65827103.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22095>

"The widely prevailing belief which tends to associate all Adivasis with a nomadic life isn't rooted in objective reality; more often than not it comes from the easy—fictitious—route of distance and dominance." – Brochure for the report titled "Living World of the Adivasis of West Bengal: An Ethnographic Exploration", issued on the occasion of the Kolkata International Book Fair 2020

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31882>



- **Performing arts**

"Culture nourishes itself from nature / Without nature, culture cannot exist / without culture, a society cannot" – Vayali Folklore Group's motto on its journey: "learning the traditional/local Knowledge systems practiced in and around the banks of River Nila (Bharatha Puzha) and share/impart the same to the young generation" through folk art dance performance.

<http://www.vayali.org>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1972>

"Economic deprivation, degradation of land and the temptations of urban culture have led to large scale migration of tribals to greener pastures. The ones who are left behind have far more pressing problems to attend to, than that of the survival of a dance form that hardly anyone understands or appreciates." – Amitabh Ghosh of The Celluloid Chapter Art Foundation in Jamshedpur, quoted in "The disappearing steps of tribal dance" (The Deccan Herald, 22 October 2011)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/199806/disappearing-steps-tribal-dance.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=5383>

"Many of the tribes have two distinct types of music, the 'outdoor' ensemble, which is often performed by members of a different tribe or a Hindu caste, and their own characteristic tribal songs. The outdoor ensemble is used at weddings and on festive occasions. It varies in size and structure, depending to some extent on the affluence of the tribe. The main instruments are the double-reed oboe-type, a straight, curved, or S-shaped horn, a variety of drums – kettle-shaped, cylindrical, or frame drums similar to the tambourine – and cymbals." – NA Jairazbhoy in *A Cultural History of India* (Oxford University Press, 1975, Chapter XVI "Tribal, Folk and Devotional Music"), pp. 212-242

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=3488>

"The performers of the Tribal/Folk Arts and Culture should continually upgrade their creative flair and operational skill so that they themselves can play a proactive role in bolstering the foundation and ensuring the sustainability of Tribal /Folks Arts and Culture. They should adopt a proactive stance in carrying the rich cultural legacy of India and proceed forward in pursuit of functional excellence." – Final Report, Evaluation Study of Tribal/Folk Arts and Culture in West Bengal, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar.

[http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/sereport/ser/ser\\_folk2211.pdf](http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/sereport/ser/ser_folk2211.pdf)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=29938>

"The seven sister states of northeast – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura – and the Himalayan state of Sikkim could well become India's next music epicentre." – Ruhi Batra (Times of India, 17 May 2015)

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/Why-the-northeast-is-rocking/articleshow/47314514.cms>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13956>

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Community performances in Gujarat (Adivasi Academy), West Bengal (Santal stage murals), Meghalaya (Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures), Tamil Nadu (Kaani student performance at Nagercoil), and Wayanad (Kanavu)

Photo credits © Bhasha, Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibasi Trust, Dev Narayan Chaudhuri, Davidson Sargunam, and editor

- **Puppetry**

"Chadar Badni often referred to as Chadar Badar is a unique form of puppetry that is practiced by just a few members of the Santal community. Practically extinct among the Santals themselves, it first came to the limelight around 1985, when cultural ethnographer Ravikant Dwivedi chanced upon it during a field trip to Dumka, in the Santhal Paraganas of Jharkhand. Since then, a few instances of it have also surfaced in West Bengal." – Ratnaboli Bose, Daricha Foundation

<http://www.daricha.org>

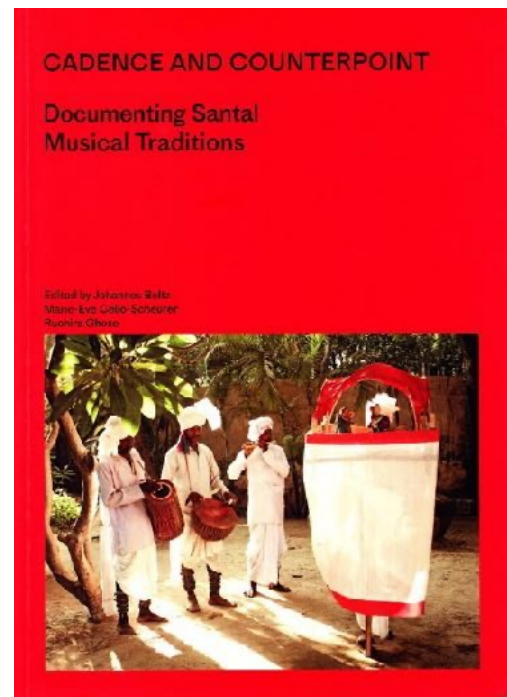
<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24109>

"There are two varieties of Santhali puppet in that area [near Dumka, in the Santhal Parganas of Jharkhand where 'Chadar Badnis' are still remaining]. One is known as 'Chakav', in which when the string is pulled there is a movement of lower lip, and another is known as 'Thap', a finger puppet. In one finger the head of the puppet is placed and in two fingers hands of puppet are placed. That puppet is covered with a small piece of cloth. 'Chakav' and 'Thap' are single puppet, but 'Chadar Badni' is a group puppet. [...] 'Karam Putul', a kind of puppet of Munda tribe is seen in a village, near Bangla and Jharkhand borders. [It is yet unknown] whether Mundas have picked up this art form from the lower Hindu Section [or] Hindus have learnt it from the Mundas." – Documentary filmmaker Sangita Datta (email 12 January 2014)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13578>

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[Books on tribal culture >>](#)

[Santal music & puppetry >>](#)

## • Revival of traditions

"A great deal of things could be learnt from their culture." – Jawaharlal Nehru, first Prime Minister of free India, quoted in The Tribal Culture of India by Lalita Prasad Vidyarthi and Binay Kumar Rai

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=19220>

"Adivasi communities with whom Bhasha has been actively involved, have voiced themselves through various spaces and mediums as arts, theatre, publishing, journalism and cultural activism." – Bhasha Research Archival Website

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23324>

"Our ancestors were so clever. When they couldn't cross rivers, they made Jingkieng Jri – the living root bridges." – Shailinda] Syiemlieh in "The ingenious living bridges of India" by Zinara Rathnayake (BBC, 18th November 2021)

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20211117-how-indias-living-bridges-could-transform-architecture>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18841>

"The aim is to be able to engage and work with a number of forms of craft and tribal art from all parts of the country – that are made with varying materials for different purposes and a diverse set of meanings associated with the craft or tribal art." – [www.typecraftinitiative.org](http://www.typecraftinitiative.org)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21844>

"We slowly started losing our way of life, but now, things are slowly changing, with the Vedda community reclaiming their heritage along with renewed interest in these first people of Sri Lanka." – Gunabandilaaththo (Danigala Maha Bandaralage lineage of Vedda) interviewed by Zinara Rathnayake in "Sri Lanka's last indigenous people" (BBC Travel, 28 March 2022)

<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20220327-sri-lankas-last-indigenous-people>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=49524>

"Bengali literature celebrated the natural, healthy Santal way of living." – Partha Mitter in The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-garde

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4358>



[Learn how and why India's tribal cultural heritage matters >>](#)



"Tribals had a rich oral tradition, which was one of the pillars of Indian culture. The death of oral tradition could lead to lack of creativity. By saving the tribals, the oral tradition [is] saved." – Chandrashekhar Kambar (writer and former Vice-Chancellor of Hampi Kannada University) on the occasion of the the Second Tribal Sammelan at Karkala, quoted in "Stop harassing tribal people, officials told" (The Hindu, 18 April 2010)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Mangalore/article402569.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1462>

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Santal wedding ceremony

Mural in Ghosaldanga village (West Bengal)

"Santals celebrate the seasons" [series](#) >>

More about tribal [customs](#), [crafts](#) and [visual arts](#) >>

- **Seasons and festivals**

"Our boys and girls get an opportunity to set their eyes upon each other during the dance of the Dandari. They also get to interact a little before they can mutually agree to take the matter to the next step. [...] As per our customs and traditions the youngsters enjoy liberty in many aspects. It is rare that a selection made during the Dandari-Ghusadi [dance festival] phase gets cancelled." – Patel of Bandeyer Atram Sone Rao (Telangana), quoted in "Adivasis dance their way to a girl's heart" (The Hindu, 29 October 2016)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/telangana/Adivasis-dance-their-way-to-a-girl's-heart/article16085049.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22436>

"Santal festivals have always been closed community festivals. [...] We wanted to disseminate the ideas of Baha flower festival among the people at large [for which] various tribal sports, folk dances are organized – everybody can take part. In the evening the prize distribution, felicitations, Santali dramas and a whole night musical programme take place." – Boro Baski in "Baha Parab, the Santal Flower Festival celebrating Man's Communion with Nature"

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21797>

"In North East India, rice is not only the staple food – the extended influences of the crop can be found in local festivals, rituals, dance, songs and folklore." – Dhriyoti Kalita reviewing *Prehistory and Archaeology of Northeast India* by Manjil Hazarika (Scroll.in, 3 March 2019)

<https://scroll.in/article/915071/this-essential-book-on-the-prehistory-of-no>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=45657>

"The old seeds festival is organised to encourage farmers to retain and to protect seeds of many varieties of high quality seeds which are facing a threat due to changing food habits and farm practices. There is also a threat to biodiversity if the seeds are not protected and promoted. Through our Paata Vittanala Pandaga we are also creating awareness among the people, NGOs and the Government." – P. Devullu (Secretary, Sanjeevani) interviewed by G Narasimha Rao (The Hindu, 29 April 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/amazing-variety-of-seeds-protected-by-tribal-people-of-agency/article4665741.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13727>

"We are living in a world where deeply coloured opinions exist and for the world to become a happy and colourful place, it must first become colourless, which is why I recently became a part of an anti-racism campaign 'Born Colourless' by Absolut. [...] I believe that if people stop spending time on their computer and mobile screens and use that time to get to know their neighbours, the world will be a much better place. I feel we need to stop making 'friends' only on Facebook and travel and make real friends." – Bobby Hano, co-founder Bobby Hano of the Ziro Festival of Music interviewed in Indian Express (26 August 2019)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25626>

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Wayanad tribal festival >>

Photo © editor



- **Social conventions**

"The Indian constitution had to empower the state to enter into the realm of Indian society and transform it by eradicating deeply embedded economic, political and social hierarchies." – Arun Thiruvengadam in "Constitution Day talk" (Centre for Law and Policy Research, 2 December 2015)

<https://clpr.org.in/blog/the-foreign-and-the-indigenous-in-the-indian-constitution-constitution-day-talk-by-arun-thiruvengadam/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=34135>

"Our bridegrooms pay a token gift to the bride's family because women are valued." – Adivasi facilitator Gopalan quoted by Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD-Nilgiris) in "Glad to be adivasi!" (New Internationalist, 13 June, 2014)

<https://newint.org/blog/2014/06/13/adivasi-indigenous-culture/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15283>

"Yet despite the common belief that education will improve attitudes to female children, the data shows that India's least educated social groups are those with better sex ratios. [M]ost tribal communities either do not know of pre-natal sex determination, or do not have access to it." – S. Rukmini in "Higher sex ratio among tribal, SC groups: [2011] census" (The Hindu, 31 October 2013)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/higher-sex-ratio-among-tribal-sc-groups-census/article5300478.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22068>

"With modernity and development creeping in and growing contact with the outside world, things are changing in rural and tribal India. Traditions and folklore are being modified and girls in villages are no longer interested in getting a tattoo. Nowhere is that more evident than among the girls of the Baiga tribe in central India." – Keya Pandey, a social anthropologist at Lucknow University in "'Don't brand me': The Indian women saying no to forced tattoos" (BBC News Delhi, 4 October 2017)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-41466751>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=25251>

"Casteism is the investment in keeping the hierarchy as it is in order to maintain your own ranking, advantage, privilege, or to elevate yourself above others or keep others beneath you." – Isabel Wilkerson's book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* reviewed by Dilip Mandal in *The Print*, 23 August 2020)

<https://theprint.in/opinion/oprah-winfrey-wilkerson-caste-100-us-ceos-indians-wont-talk-about-it/487143/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=24460>

"At a time when hate is being manufactured, it's important to tell these stories of love and how widespread it is and that it's not just a flash in the pan. [...] According to the India Human Development Survey, only about 5% of marriages are inter-caste. Interfaith unions are even rarer - one study put them at just over 2.2%. And those choosing to marry outside of these boundaries often face violence [as] interfaith marriages - especially those involving Hindu women and Muslim men - are being ascribed a much more sinister motive." – Geeta Pandey in "India Love Project: The Instagram account telling tales of 'forbidden' love" (BBC, 10 November 2020)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-54869565>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22373>

"In recent years, the results of any new research on early India have invited keen political interest, because proponents of Hindu nationalism support the notion of Vedic culture—including the Sanskrit language, a pastoral economy dependent on cattle, and the origins of a caste hierarchy—as fundamental to the origins of Indian civilisation." – Sowmiya Ashok in "The Dig" (Fiftytwo.in, 2 April 2021)

<https://fiftytwo.in/story/the-dig/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=18808>

"There are myths indicating that Asuras were made slaves by Aryans. These slave races are still struggling for annihilation of caste system. They live in abject poverty. Their latest names are 'Scheduled Castes', 'Scheduled Tribes, and 'Other Backward Castes'. They are yet to know about 'human rights'. The fact is that aboriginals were enslaved and subjected to inhuman treatment through centuries. Most of them still live in villages and they are coerced to live in wretched and inhuman conditions." – Posted by Bhushan (MEGHnet, 1 January 2011)

<https://meghnet.blogspot.com/2011/01/kolikori-of-india-we-call-them.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2918>

"As occupations developed and occupational skills came to be handed down in hereditary fashion, the classes showed a tendency to harden into groups, and this, in course of time, became one of the factors in the formation of the 'caste' system. True it is that one hymn in the last book of the Rg Veda refers to the creation of the four orders of society from the body of the Cosmic Man, but by many scholars this hymn is considered apocryphal. [It] tells us that the Brahmana came from the mouth of the Cosmic Man, the Ksatriya was created from his arms, the Vaisya from his thighs, and the Sudra from his feet." – B.G. Gokhale in Ancient India (Bombay, 1959 ed.), p. 118

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/602186629>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2918>

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- **Tribal elders**

"We plant the trees for our children in the memory of our elders who planted for us."  
– Fundia Bai Parte of Korku village in Betul (Madhya Pradesh), interviewed in  
"Protectors dubbed criminals" by Aparna Pallavi (*Down To Earth*, 7 June 2015)

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/protectors-dubbed-criminals-38993>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20447>

"The Adivasi Munnetra Sangam, Gudalur, spearheaded a movement that prevents Adivasi children from dropping out of school, by involving local tribal communities in the process. [It] appointed village elders in all tribal hamlets and have given them the responsibility to take [2,800 tribal] children to school, wait till classes get over, and then return." – Former Founder-Trustee of the Viswa Bharathi Vidyodaya Trust, Bhaskaran Ramdas interviewed in "Grassroots movement to keep kids in school" by Rohan Premkumar The New Indian Express, 11 August 2016)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20832>

"We were there, we are here and we will be there (Hum the, hum hain aur hum rahenge)." – Vandna Tete (General secretary, Jharkhandi Bhasha Sahitya Sanskriti Akhra) during the first-ever all-India tribal women writers' meet, quoted in "City platform for tribal women writers" (The Telegraph, 8 September 2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22856>

"Literature on adivasis, shaped by perspectives of authors who may or may not have interacted or studied the tribals and their lives, could be romantic flights of the imagination or grim portraits about trials and tribulations of the tribals. Irked by these fanciful and wrong representations of his community, Narayan, a member of the Malaarayar tribal community in Kerala, took up the pen to write the first authentic novel written by an adivasi in South India [who] reminds us, yet again, how these children of the land were marginalised by the state, the establishment and organised religion. From proud farmers, practitioners of traditional medicine and guardians of the land, the tribals became displaced and dispossessed, dependent on the largesse of the State to protect their lands and, most importantly, their cultural identity." – Saraswathy Nagarajan in "Found in translation" reviewing *Kocharethi* by Narayan, "a novel based on experiences told by the author's elders" (The Hindu, 27 April 2011)

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/article1772998.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=1459>

"By addressing the needs of users of indigenous languages and offering an adequate response to the challenges indigenous people face in maintaining and transmitting their languages from one generation to another, the global community acknowledges the wider and special significance of all indigenous languages and their role in and relevance to peacebuilding, good governance, sustainable development and reconciliation within our societies." – "Summary report on the International Year of Indigenous Languages, 2019" (United Nations, 14 February 2020)

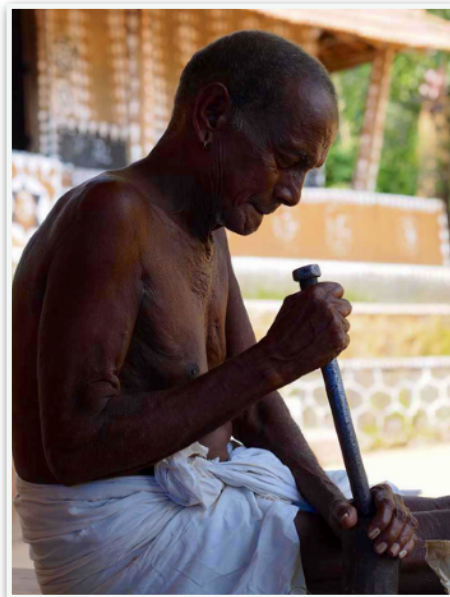
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/040/59/PDF/N2004059.pdf?OpenElement>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=46777>

"The national media focuses on the negative. We are providing positive stories- stories about who has survived and how we are all pitching in to help each other and take care of our elders." - From the Editors in "On the front lines: Journalism may never be so needed - or so endangered" (*American Indian Magazine*, Smithsonian, Summer 2020)

[www.AmericanIndianMagazine.org](http://www.AmericanIndianMagazine.org)

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Tribal elder in [Wayand](#) © Arun V.C.

- **Worship and rituals**

"Bomman thatha told me that our gods live in stones, big rocks and trees. We won't cut aal maram (*Ficus religiosa*) because gods will be in that tree. Even the water in the area around the tree should be used neatly and not destroyed. In our community our god Ajji (grandmother) lives in Ellamalai mountain. She is also called Thrithri Eributham. [...] Before fishing or taking tubers, we will pray to god and only then we will take it." – Wildlife conservationist Ramesh in "Bomman thatha and his forest", a conversation with his grandfather on "bonding between adivasi people and the forest" (At the Edge of Existence, 29 October 2014)

<https://cultureandconservation.wordpress.com/2014/10/29/bomman-thatha-and-his-forest/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=8262>

"[P]eople believing in 'Jal, Jangal and Zameen' and having faith in nature worship are followers of this religion. They worship trees and hills and go all out to protect forests." – Rabindra Nath Sinha in "Tribal Outfits Gearing up to Restart Stir on Sarna Religious Code Issue" (Newsclick.in, 15 September 2022)

<https://www.newsclick.in/tribal-outfits-gearing-restart-sarna-religious-code-issue>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22095>

"There is no idol worship" – Poovadevi explaining her tradition in "Toda community forays into reviving traditional art" (Deccan Herald, 15 July 2011)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/176591/toda-community-forays-reviving-traditional.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=4855>

"[T]he approach to understand 'tribe/tribal' within the social structure of Hinduism is doomed to fail because the religion is itself a conglomeration of various schools of thought, often contradictory to each other." – Pradyumna Bag in "Denial of Differences: Examining the Marginalisation of Tribal Cultures and Languages" ("Tribes In Transition" conference 2017)

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23073>

"The philosopher-poet [Rabindranath Tagore] wanted a multi-cultural country rooted in egalitarianism, secularism and the right to dissent." – Meghalaya-based women's and democratic rights activist Angela Rangad in "Beyond Har Ghar Tiranga: Why Indians must plant Tagore's vision of nationalism in every home" (Scroll.in, 9 August 2022)

<https://scroll.in/article/1029979/beyond-har-ghar-tiranga-why-indians-must-plant-tagores-vision-of-nationalism-in-every-home>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=35584>

"Perhaps the most fundamental change [in Arunachal Pradesh] is that animistic beliefs and rituals are undergoing formalisation into a 'religion', with new visual images, permanent places of worship and a formal theology. This systematisation of the worship of Donyi-Polo places it alongside the other religions in the area: Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism. Ritual practitioners have also formed a state-wide association of shamans. All these changes are fast-paced but largely undocumented." – Research Description "Tribal Transitions at SOAS"

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/tribaltransitions/description/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=9346>

"We do not have any concept of idol worship; our practices follow natural laws and are not codified ones that you see in other religions. Most importantly, we have always resisted the onslaught of any other religion. So, how is it that someone can come and claim Sarnaism as a part of Hinduism?" – Bandhan Tigga ("known as a Sarna 'Dharmguru' among the tribal people") quoted by Abhinay Lakshman in "Being Sarna: a fight to define tribal identity in Jharkhand" (The Hindu, 23 July 2022)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/being-sarna-a-fight-to-define-tribal-identity-in-jharkhand/article65670776.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11009>

"Interventions intending to impose religion onto tribes have attempted to assimilate them into mainstream society by diluting their uniqueness. For tribes, the links between culture and religion are integral to shaping their ways of life. [...] It is well-known that tribal communities in the northeast exist outside of Hindu society, even if there is a fluidity in the boundary between tribes and Hindu society in other parts of India. [...] Then there are the tribes in the northeastern hill areas—Konyak, Abor, Dana and many others—who, because of their location on the frontier of more than one civilization, were better able to withstand the pressure to become castes, although the Ahom, now regarded as a caste, were once clearly a tribe, and the Khasi, still regarded as a tribe, were developing a state with unmistakably Hindu features." – Richard Kamei in "Uncivilising the Mind: How anthropology shaped the discourse on tribes in India" (*Caravan Magazine*, 1 March 2021)

<https://caravanmagazine.in/books/anthropologists-tribes-india>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22844>

"If the tribal gods are comfortable on the trees, let them be...why make them a Hindu?" – Niranjan Mahawar, author of a book titled *Bastar Bronze*, interviewed by Suvojit Bagchi (The Hindu, 24 October 2012)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/interview/i-have-a-problem-with-the-makeover-of-tribal-culture/article4026265.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=16409>

"The Bhils of the area [remote tribal villages in northern Maharashtra] practiced their own unique religion, a form of animism and ancestor worship with a heavy dose of magic. But it was clear even at that time that their ancient religious tradition would soon disappear: many Bhils in the area had become devotees of wandering Hindu sadhus and Christian missionaries. Soon, their religious tradition would be looked down by others as 'primitive'." – Yoginder Sikand in "Simple ways of life" (Deccan Herald, 23 December 2012)

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/300193/simple-ways-life.html>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=10420>

"Many ashram schools covertly became Hindu nationalist, yet followed patterns set by Christian mission schools, with uniforms, strict (often brutal) discipline, a deeply hierarchical structure, alien 'knowledge' learnt by rote, short haircuts, and Adivasi names replaced with Hindu ones." – Felix Padel & Malvika Gupta in "Are mega residential schools wiping out India's Adivasi culture?" (The Hindu, 13 February 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/children-from-tribal-communities-are-being-corralled-into-mass-schools-that-are-wiping-out-cultures/article33818793.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21733>

"The structural violence of slavery or untouchability doesn't need intentionality precisely because the intent is encoded in the collective memory of the tremendous violence that, in the distant past, accomplished the subjugation of a community. It is this memory, passed on through generations, that enforces a violent act of ritual humiliation so very 'non-violently'." – G. Sampath on Ritual humiliation in "The Violence in Our Bones: Mapping the Deadly Fault Lines Within Indian Society" review: *An ideology of hatred*" (The Hindu, 6 November 2021)

<https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/the-violence-in-our-bones-mapping-the-deadly-fault-lines-within-indian-society-review-an-ideology-of-hatred/article37337087.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=6771>

"[R]eligious conversion is frequently perceived as an act of expediency undertaken by converts for purely temporal gains [wrongly assuming that] conversions take place only among deprived lower caste or tribal groups, which are considered more susceptible to allurements or coercion." – Santali poet, scholar and translator Ivy Imogene Hansdak in "Pandita Ramabai Saraswati: the convert as 'heretic'"; in *Conversion and coercion: the politics of sincerity and authenticity* (Groningen studies in cultural change, 2006)

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/63171256>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=23050>



"To relieve themselves from poverty, illiteracy, shamans, exorcisers, witch-hunting, to impart modern education to their children, many Santals have voluntarily converted to Christianity." – Santal educationist Boro Baski in "Discussion is the Need of the Hour, Not Banning"

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=22844>

"Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Dalits and Adivasis are all equal citizens [as guaranteed by the Indian constitution]. All citizens have the right to debate and discuss their duties towards the state and also the obligations of the state to ensure that the claims to human rights of all citizens are met by the state to an equal degree." – Romila Thapar (Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University) quoted in "Nationalism does not allow the Hindu in India to claim primacy" by Ziya Us Salam (The Hindu, 2 March 2016)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/historian-romila-thapar-says-nationalism-does-not-allow-the-hindu-in-india-to-claim-primacy/article8300752.ece>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"In many ways, the 19th-century 'science of religion' invented what it purported to describe. According to its theorists, religion was an ancient, eternal fact of human existence, and the study of it was as old as the philosophical schools of Greece, enshrined by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle." – Anna Della Subin in *Accidental Gods: On Men Unwittingly Turned Divine* (New York, 2021), pp. 174-5

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/1151100898>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=2299>

"Whether we think of the Indian, Egyptian or Greek cultures, or of the Jewish-Christian, or Islamic religions, we are in the middle of a patriarchal world, with its male gods, over whom one chief god reigns, or where all gods have been eliminated with the exception of the One, the God." – Social psychologist Erich Fromm in *The Art of Loving* (New York, 1956), p. 66

<https://archive.org/details/TheArtOfLoving/page/n80/mode/1up>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=31882>

"Adivasi concerns caste while Sarna is about religious affinity. Tribals across the country for decades have been fighting for religious identity in the form of a separate code in the census." – Jharkhand tribal lawmaker Bandhu Tirkey on his opposition to a so-called "Sarna/Adivasi" code during a Jharkhand special Assembly session, reported in "It's Sarna, not adivasi, code for tribals" (The Telegraph, 8 November 2020)

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/jharkhand/its-sarna-not-adivasi-code-for-tribals-bandhu-tirkey/cid/1796860>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11009>

"Whether it is Koya Punem, Adi, Sarna, or any other, they all believe in aboriginal philosophy." – Aakash Poyam, Researcher and founder editor of *Adivasi Resurgence* quoted by Santoshi Markam (*The Wire*, 2 April 2019)

<https://thewire.in/rights/adivasi-religion-recognition-census>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=11009>

"There is a battle for adivasi souls between RSS-Hindutva (or Hindu nationalist) groups and Pentecostal Christians. Conversions, Christianising or Sanskritising, further alienate them from their roots and culture." – Mari Marcel Thekaekara (writer and Co-founder of ACCORD-Nilgiris) in "Glad to be adivasi!" (*New Internationalist*, 13 June 2014)

<https://newint.org/blog/2014/06/13/adivasi-indigenous-culture/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=15283>

"The Santals are non-idol worshipping theist people. They have no temples, nor images to worship and no fixed place to worship in; no holy mountains and no sacred rivers for pilgrimages and yet they hold an unassailable religious faith which can be traced through the tradition of the creation narrative, through their festivals, their cleansing ceremonies performed during their birth, wedding, and death, and through their belief in the continuation of life after death." – Writer, editor, singer-musician, and songwriter Timotheas Hembrom in *The Santal and the Biblical Creation Traditions: Anthropological & Theological Reflections* – a work "on a group of people, whose faith declaration of creator-creation relationship, as expressed through their ancestral creation narrative, is compared and discussed with that of the Biblical one" (Adivaani, Kolkata 2013)

<https://adivaani.org/2013/10/07/timotheas-hembroms-new-book-is-out/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=13041>

"What I wish India to do is to assure liberty of religious profession to every single individual. Then only India can be great, for it was perhaps the one nation in the ancient world which had recognized cultural democracy, whereby it is held that the roads to God are many, but the goal is one, because God is one and the same. In fact the roads are as many as there are individuals in the world." – Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in *Harijan* (31 August 1947); quoted by Vinay Lal (Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) in "Gandhi, Secularism, and Cultural Democracy" (2 October 2020)

<https://vinaylal.wordpress.com/2020/10/02/gandhi-secularism-and-cultural-democracy/>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=20996>

"While recent instances of religious intolerance and bigotry may have shocked many, data on Indian attitudes and behaviours - particularly among young people - show that these attitudes are the mainstream, and not the fringe." – Rukmini S., book excerpt from *Whole Numbers and Half Truths: What Data Can and Cannot Tell Us About Modern India* in "Liberals are really India's fringe: What a new book on data says"

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/liberals-are-really-india-s-fringe-what-new-book-data-says-159529>

<https://indiantribalheritage.org/?p=21540>

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Dhanjibhai Jerdi Konkni and Kasiram Lalsu Konkni demonstrating the use of their musical instruments during festivals and rituals in South Gujarat:

*Tarpu* (wind) and *Tircho* (percussion)

Images from a video documentary series by Hanoz H.R. Patel on *the artistic orientation of the tribals of India* produced for Bhasha Research and Publication Centre Tejgadh >>

