

# Tribe in Indian Society

- Also known as Janjatis, Adivasis, Vanvasis, Primitive groups, indigenous people, ethnic minorities
- 8.6% of the total population (104 million – 2011 census)

## Definition – Features

- Distinct identity and culture, different from non-tribals
- **Primitive people**, living in backward areas,
- Ecology – living in isolated hills and forests,
- Common culture.

# Tribe in Indian Society

- No scriptures, except Santhal tribe
- Primitive arts & crafts,
- Linguistic and political boundary distinct,
- Socio-economic: Unstratified, non-monetised economy,
- Self contained unit – considered mostly backward

# Features of Indian Tribes

- Oldest inhabitants of the country
- Living in relative isolation in hills and forests
- Low level of techno-economic development
- Distinct culture – language, world-view, customs, beliefs and institutions
- Largely homogeneous and non-hierarchical
- Differentiation among tribes – due to language and racial stocks, levels of technological and economic development

# Features cont'd

- They are undergoing **changes** and many do not confirm to the ideal tribal society
- Interactions with hindu caste is an on-going process and at times difficult to distinguish them
- Religious conversion especially to christianity has taken place among many large tribals
- In India there is a big variation among the tribes – NE part of India, eastern, western and southern tribes – population, geographical spread, nature of livelihoods and social organisation

# Constitution of India and Tribes

- Constitution – ***Scheduled Tribes*** – classified based on certain criteria – living close to nature in a definite geographical area, distinctive culture and occupational pattern, lack of education and technological development
- **Constitution Article 342 (1)** – listing of ST for special treatment, President does it in consultation with the Governor of the State/UT.
- It may also remove from the ST category

# Scheduled Tribes

- In 1951 there were 212 tribes and now it is 800, about 8.6% of the population of the country.
- Odisha – 62 tribes and it is about 25% of the total population
- Dispersed all over – concentrated in North East and Central/East India
- North East India – Garo, Khasi, Naga, Bhotia, Lepcha
- Central/East India – Gond, Khond, Santhal, Oraon, Juang, Saora, Birhor, Bonda, Munda, Didayi
- Western India – Bhil, Meena and Garasia
- Southern India – Chenchu, Irula, Kurumba, Toda
- Andamans – Jarawe and Onge

# Scheduled Tribes

- Tamil Nadu – 7% - Mizoram – 95%
- **Literacy rate** – varies – 20% - Rajasthan, 83% in Mizoram
- **Racial Diversity** – Negrito, Mongoloids and Proto-Austroloids
- **Linguistic Diversity** – Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-asiatic, Sino-Tibetan
- Many tribes speak more than one language
- Santhals have a script of their own

# Economy of the Tribe

- Largely self-sufficient
- Forest dependent – gathering and hunting
- Shifting cultivation – 'podu chasa', swidden cultivation – slash and burn (Juang, Saora, NE tribes)
- Settled cultivation – small plots of land available (large tribes – Santhals, Khonds, Munda)
- Industrial workers – wage workers e.g Ranchi and Orissa
- Terrace cultivation – hill tribes (NE and East)
- Nomadic groups – pastorals (Gujjars) – Western and northern parts











