Tribal Development

> Mains Syllabus: GS II - Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable section

Why in the News?

Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched an outreach programme, targeting around 1 lakh tribal-dominated villages, to ensure doorstep delivery of two welfare schemes.

What is the status of tribal population in India?

- **Population of Scheduled Tribes** - The 2011 census indicates that there are 705 Scheduled Tribes in India, comprising about 8.6% of the country's total population.
- **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** - There are 75 officially recognised PVTGs across various states in India.
- **Tribal Diversity** - Tribal communities in India have diverse cultural practices, languages, and social structures.
- **Tribal Development** - Among Scheduled Tribes, communities are at varying stages of social, economic, and educational development.
- While some have adopted modern lifestyles, others still live at a pre-agricultural stage, relying on hunting and gathering for survival.

Tribal Development Initiatives

• **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006** – It aims to provide legal recognition of tribal rights over forest land and resources. While the Act is a landmark in upholding tribal dignity and livelihood security, accessing its benefits remains a challenge.
• **Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST)** – Launched as Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in 1974-75, it has evolved into the Scheduled Tribe Component (STC) and the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST).
• These plans ensured that various ministries targeted tribal welfare through a coordinated approach.
• **PM JANMAN** – It was launched in 2023, targeting the socio-economic development of 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) across 18 states and one UT
• **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan** – It was launched on 2nd October, 2024 to saturate infrastructural gaps in tribal villages and improve access to health, education, Anganwadi facilities and providing livelihood opportunities .
• The Abhiyan comprises of 25 interventions implemented by 17 line Ministries.
• **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** - These schools aim to provide quality education to ST children in remote areas, facilitating access to higher education and employment opportunities.
• **National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC)** - It provides financial assistance to ST beneficiaries at concessional interest rates, focusing on income-generating activities.
• Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) - It promotes tribal products through its TRIBES India outlets and e-commerce platforms, providing sustainable livelihood opportunities to tribal artisans.
• By promoting handicrafts, textiles, and other tribal products, TRIFED creates market linkages for these communities.

What are the problems faced by tribals?

- **Loss of Ancestral Lands** – Tribes are often displaced from their traditional lands due to large-scale development projects (dams, mines, industries), deforestation, and urban expansion.
- **Exploitation and Indebtedness** - Tribals often fall prey to moneylenders and middlemen who exploit them through high-interest loans and unfair trade practices, leading to a cycle of debt.
- **High Incidence of Diseases** - They suffer from higher rates of malnutrition (especially among women and children), infectious diseases, and poor maternal and child health outcomes.
- Tribal populations in India face a disproportionate burden of various diseases, including infectious diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, and leprosy
- **Illiteracy** - The literacy rate for Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India, according to the 2011 Census, was 59% which is significantly lower than the overall national literacy rate of 73%.

What are the challenges in tribal development?

- **Remote Location** - Most reside in ecologically fragile and inaccessible regions such as forests, hills, and remote rural areas.
- These settlements often make it difficult for government welfare schemes to reach them.

- **Subsistence Livelihood** - Their livelihoods depend primarily on subsistence agriculture, forests, and traditional occupations.
- **Lack of Secure Tenure** - Many tribal communities lack formal land titles or recognized rights, making them vulnerable to land alienation and exploitation by external parties.
- **Education in Mother Tongue** – There are limitations such as diversity of tribal languages, non written form of the languages and shortage of human resource, in providing eduation in mother tongue to tribalse.
- **Bureacratic Dominance** - Bureaucratic nature of implementing tribal development programmes often overlooks the involvement of tribal communities in decision-making and reduces their effectiveness.

What needs to be done for tribal development?

- The development of tribal communities in India is a complex, ongoing process that requires a multi-pronged and sensitive approach.
- Effective Implementation of PESA (Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996) to grant self-governance to tribal communities.
- Recognition of individual and community forest rights can be strengthened.
- Providing demand-driven skill development and vocational training programs tailored to their specific needs.
- Following tribal panchsheel formulated by Jawaharlal Nehru ensures that development approach respects tribal identity, culture, and self-determination.

Tribal Pancheel
• People should develop a long line of their own genius and nothing should be imposed on them. • Tribal rights in land and forest should be respected. • We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do work of administration and development. • We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. • We should judge the result not by the statistics of the amount of money spent but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

References

1. The Indian Express | Centre’s outreach to tribal people
2. Deccan Hearald | Margins to mainstream

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