

UPSC CSE MAINS

| ANTHROPOLOGY OPTIONAL

PAPER II

# Tribal India Notes

Part B of Paper II: the tribal situation in India and the problems of tribal communities, displacement and forest policy, exploitation of SCs, STs and OBCs and constitutional safeguards, ethnicity, unrest and tribal movements, religions and the tribe–nation–state question, tribal administration, PVTGs, NGOs and the role of anthropology in development, with previous year questions after every chapter.

Compiled by Arvind KrS

TRIBAL SITUATION AND PROBLEMS

DISPLACEMENT AND FOREST RIGHTS

SC, ST, OBC SAFEGUARDS

TRIBAL MOVEMENTS

TRIBE AND NATION-STATE

TRIBAL ADMINISTRATION AND PVTGS

**15**

Chapters

**4**

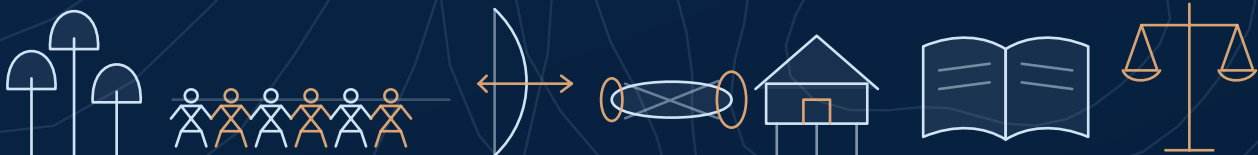
Units

**534**

Previous year questions

**77**

Diagrams

**IN THIS BOOK**

06 Tribal Situation in India

07 Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs

08 Religions, Tribes and the Nation-State

09 Tribal Administration and Development



## **Anthropology Optional — Paper II**

Part B: Tribal India

Mains 2027 Edition · Compiled October 2026

© 2026 LotusArise IAS. All rights reserved. This PDF is licensed to the purchaser for personal study only. Copying, sharing, reselling or uploading it to any website, drive or group, in whole or in part, is not permitted.

Questions or corrections: [support@lotusarise.com](mailto:support@lotusarise.com)

# Contents

|                |                                                                                                              |            |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>UNIT 06</b> | <b>Tribal Situation in India</b>                                                                             | <b>4</b>   |
| 01             | Tribal Situation in India: Bio-genetic Variability, Languages and Socio-economic Life .....                  | 5          |
| 02             | Problems of Tribal Communities: Land Alienation, Indebtedness, Education, Health and M <b>IN THIS SAMPLE</b> | 31         |
| 03             | Development Projects and Tribal Displacement: Rehabilitation, Niyamgiri and Land Law .....                   | 55         |
| 04             | Forest Policy, Urbanization and Industrialization: Tribes from the Forest Acts to FRA 2006 .....             | 78         |
| <b>UNIT 07</b> | <b>Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs</b>                                                           | <b>101</b> |
| 05             | Exploitation and Deprivation of SCs, STs, OBCs: Safeguards, Schedules and PoA Act .....                      | 102        |
| 06             | Social Change in Contemporary Tribal Societies: Democracy, Development and Welfare .....                     | 129        |
| 07             | Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict and Regionalism: Tribal Unrest, Autonomy, National Integration .....              | 152        |
| 08             | Pseudo-Tribalism and Social Change among Tribes: Colonial Rule to Post-Independence India .....              | 176        |
| 09             | Tribal Social Movements in India: Santal Hul, Birsa Munda, Tana Bhagat and Jharkhand . <b>IN THIS SAMPLE</b> | 197        |
| <b>UNIT 08</b> | <b>Religions, Tribes and the Nation-State</b>                                                                | <b>220</b> |
| 10             | Impact of Religions on Tribal Societies: Hinduization, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism .....                | 221        |
| 11             | Tribe and Nation-State: Indigenous Rights, Settler States and India Compared .....                           | 243        |
| <b>UNIT 09</b> | <b>Tribal Administration and Development</b>                                                                 | <b>266</b> |
| 12             | Tribal Administration in India: History, Policies, Sub-Plan and DAPST .....                                  | 267        |
| 13             | Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups and NGOs: Criteria, Distribution, PM-JANMAN, Roles .....               | 289        |
| 14             | Role of Anthropology in Tribal and Rural Development: Applied, Action, Policy and Cases .....                | 315        |
| 15             | Anthropology of Regionalism, Communalism and Ethnic Movements: Riots, Recognition, Policy .....              | 338        |

## UNIT 06

## 4 CHAPTERS

# Tribal Situation in India

*Tribal situation in India: Bio-genetic variability, linguistic and socio-economic characteristics of the tribal populations and their distribution. Problems of the tribal Communities: Land alienation, poverty, indebtedness, low literacy, poor educational facilities, unemployment, under-employment, health and nutrition. Developmental projects and their impact on tribal displacement and problems of rehabilitation. Development of forest policy and tribals. Impact of urbanisation and industrialization on tribal populations.*

## CHAPTERS

|    |                                                                                              |    |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 01 | Tribal Situation in India: Bio-genetic Variability, Languages and Socio-economic Life        | 5  |
| 02 | Problems of Tribal Communities: Land Alienation, Indebtedness, Education, Health and Markets | 31 |
| 03 | Development Projects and Tribal Displacement: Rehabilitation, Niyamgiri and Land Law         | 55 |
| 04 | Forest Policy, Urbanization and Industrialization: Tribes from the Forest Acts to FRA 2006   | 78 |

ANTHROPOLOGY OPTIONAL

PAPER II · PART B

# Problems of Tribal Communities: Land Alienation, Indebtedness, Education, Health and Markets



PYQ RADAR 63 questions · last asked 2026

This article covers the problems of tribal communities and the **trade and markets** of tribal societies (§9). **Who the tribes are and where they live** is in **6.1**; **displacement by development projects** in **6.3a**; **forest policy** in **6.3b**; the **Fifth and Sixth Schedules** and other safeguards in **7.1**; and **PVTGs** and tribal plans in **9.1**.

**SYLLABUS** 6.2 Problems of the tribal communities – land alienation, poverty, indebtedness, low literacy, poor educational facilities, unemployment, under-employment, health and nutrition.

## CONTENTS

|    |                                                 |    |                                              |
|----|-------------------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------------------|
| 01 | 1. Understanding Tribal Problems                | 02 | 2. Land Alienation                           |
| 03 | 3. Poverty                                      | 04 | 4. Indebtedness and Bonded Labour            |
| 05 | 5. Low Literacy and Poor Educational Facilities | 06 | 6. Unemployment and Under-employment         |
| 07 | 7. Health and Nutrition                         | 08 | 8. Other Vulnerable Groups and New Pressures |
| 09 | 9. Trade and Markets in Tribal Societies        | 10 | Key Terms                                    |
| 11 | Contemporary Developments                       | 12 | Diagrams to Master                           |
| 13 | Revision Grid                                   | 14 | Previous Year Questions                      |

## ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL INDIA

## Problems of Tribal Communities

One chain of deprivation, many links

TOPIC MAP

## LAND · DEBT · SCHOOL · WORK · HEALTH · MARKET

Each problem feeds the next

Land lost  
mortgage, fraudDebt  
lender-traderPoverty  
labour, migrationSchooling  
drop-outHealth  
undernutrition

## Land alienation

Cultivators **34.6%**, labourers **44.4%** (2011)Mortgage, **benami**, state acquisition**Samatha** 1997, PESA 1996

## Poverty and debt

Rural ST poor **45.3%** (2011–12)Lender = **buyer = seller**

Bonded labour: 1976 Act

## Education

Literacy **59%** against 73%**Language**, curriculum, distanceEMRS, **Xaxa** Committee

## Work

Low unemployment, high **under-employment**Seasonal **migration**125 days: **VB-G RAM G**

## Health and nutrition

Stunting **40.9%**; anaemia 64.6%**Bang**: triple burden**Sickle-cell** mission

## Trade and markets

Weekly **haat**: more than tradeBarter, reciprocity, **MFP**MSP, **Van Dhan**, PESAIn simple words: **lost land is where most tribal problems begin.**

Anthropology

01

## 1. Understanding Tribal Problems

## IN SIMPLE WORDS

Most tribal problems began when the outside world reached tribal areas: new land laws, money, moneylenders, forest rules and, later, mines and dams. These problems are linked: loss of land leads to debt, debt to bonded labour, poverty to poor schooling and poor health. Solving one problem alone rarely works.

**Example first: the Santal Hul.** In 1855 the **Santals** of the Rajmahal hills rose against the *diku* (outsiders): **zamindars, moneylenders and traders** who had taken their land through debt and false weights, backed by colonial courts and police. The revolt was crushed, but the British carved out the **Santhal Parganas** with special rules. Half a century later the **Munda** rising under **Birsa Munda** (1899–1900) led to the **Chotanagpur**

**Tenancy Act (1908).** The pattern of **contact → exploitation → revolt → protective law** recurs throughout tribal history, and most of the problems in this article are its modern forms.

## 1.1 How colonial rule changed tribal resources

- **Land:** the **Permanent Settlement (1793)** and later revenue systems turned clan land into **private property** recorded in the name of zamindars or individuals; unrecorded customary rights could be ignored.
- **Forests:** the **Indian Forest Acts (1865, 1878, 1927)** made forests **state property**, turning shifting cultivation, grazing and collection into offences (detail in **6.3b**).
- **Money and courts: cash revenue**, written documents and distant courts favoured literate outsiders; the **moneylender** became the gateway to cash.
- **Outcome:** a chain of revolts (Kol 1831–32, Santal 1855, Munda 1899–1900) and **protective laws** for “Excluded” and “Partially Excluded” areas that the **Fifth and Sixth Schedules** inherited.

## 1.2 Approaches to the problems

- **Isolation** (“national parks” for tribes), urged in his early writings by **Verrier Elwin**, would protect culture but freeze poverty.
- **Assimilation**, urged by **G.S. Ghurye**, would absorb tribes as “backward Hindus” and dissolve their identity.
- **Integration**, the policy of **Nehru’s Tribal Panchsheel**, aimed at development “along the lines of their own genius”, respecting **land and forest rights** (the debate is in **4b**).

The problems below are therefore judged by a double test: do they cause **material deprivation**, and do they erode **community control** over land and life?

## 02 2. Land Alienation

### IN SIMPLE WORDS

Land alienation means tribal land passing into the hands of non-tribals, by sale, mortgage, fraud, encroachment or government acquisition. For a tribal family land is not only income but identity, ancestry and security, so its loss starts a chain of debt, migration and poverty.

**Example first: from cultivator to labourer.** Between the **2001 and 2011 Censuses** the share of **cultivators** among Scheduled Tribe workers fell by about **10 percentage points**, to **34.6%**, while the share of **agricultural labourers** rose to **44.4%**. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs estimated that about **3.5 million** tribal people left farming in that decade for informal labour. National Sample Survey data show the share of rural Adivasi households owning **no land at all** rising from **16% (1987–88)** to **24% (2011–12)** (Brinda Karat and Vikas Rawal, 2014). The numbers describe a people being turned from **landholders into wage workers** on land they once owned.

## 2.1 Why land matters more to tribes

- **Identity and ancestry:** clan territories, burial stones (the **Munda sasandiri**) and sacred groves tie the lineage to its land; selling land can mean selling the ancestors' place.
- **Communal tenure: clan or village ownership**, shifting fields and forest commons were rarely written down, so they were easy to deny in a court that wanted documents.
- **No alternatives:** with low literacy and few skills valued outside, a landless tribal has only **casual labour**.

## 2.2 How land is lost

The methods fall into **four types**, from open sale to state action. The table groups them so that each can be matched with its remedy.

| TYPE                     | METHODS                                                                                                                                                           | EXAMPLE                                                                             |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Private transfer</b>  | Sale, <b>mortgage for debt</b> , lease, sharecropping that becomes ownership                                                                                      | Moneylenders taking land for unpaid loans                                           |
| <b>Fraud and evasion</b> | <b>Benami</b> (in another's name) purchases through <b>tribal wives</b> or "adopted" tribals; forged or back-dated deeds; collusive court decrees; 99-year leases | Collusive suits in Jharkhand's industrial belt                                      |
| <b>Encroachment</b>      | Settlers occupying land without title; officials not recording tribal possession                                                                                  | Tribal land in the <b>Nilgiris</b> and the <b>Tarai</b> under non-tribal occupation |
| <b>State action</b>      | Acquisition for <b>dams, mines, industry and towns</b> ; declaring land "forest" without settling rights; parks and sanctuaries                                   | Mining and dam projects ( <b>6.3a</b> ); "deemed forests" ( <b>6.3b</b> )           |

The first three types are illegal or loophole-driven and can be stopped by **better laws and records**; the fourth is **legal** and can be checked only by **consent, compensation and rehabilitation** rules.

## 2.3 Consequences

- **Pauperisation and debt:** loss of the main asset pushes families to the **moneylender** (§4).
- **Migration** to brick kilns, plantations and cities (§6).
- **Women** lose the most: they lose access to land-based work and forest produce, and have no title of their own.
- **Cultural erosion:** festivals, clan rituals and the authority of village councils rest on land.
- **Unrest:** land loss lies behind movements from the **Hul** to the **Naxalite** belt; the government's own expert group linked **land alienation** to extremism in tribal areas.

## 2.4 Safeguards and why they fail

### Constitutional and legal protections.

- **Fifth Schedule, paragraph 5(2)**: following the Constituent Assembly's sub-committees on excluded areas, which urged strict limits on land transfer and money-lending, the **Governor** may make regulations to **prohibit or restrict transfer of land** by or among STs, regulate allotment of land, and regulate **money-lending** in Scheduled Areas.
- **State laws**: the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (1908)** and **Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act (1949)** in Jharkhand; the **Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Areas Land Transfer Regulation (1959)**, tightened by **Regulation 1 of 1970**; the **Odisha** regulation of **1956**; **Maharashtra's** restoration Act of **1974**; **Karnataka's PTCL Act (1978)** for granted lands.
- **Samatha v. State of Andhra Pradesh** (Supreme Court, **11 July 1997**): the word "person" in the 1959 Regulation **includes the State**, so government land in Scheduled Areas cannot be leased to **non-tribal private mining companies**; such leases are void; transfers to **state undertakings** or tribal cooperatives are allowed, and lessees must spend on tribal welfare.
- **PESA Act (1996)**: the **gram sabha** in Scheduled Areas has power to **prevent land alienation and restore unlawfully alienated land**, to **control money-lending** and to **manage village markets**.
- **Forest Rights Act (2006)** recognises individual and community rights over forest land (**6.3b**); the **Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (2013)** requires **gram sabha consent** for acquisition in Scheduled Areas (**6.3a**).

### Why the laws leak. Studies of state laws list the same gaps:

- laws apply only in **Scheduled Areas**, not to tribals outside them;
- short **limitation periods** (12 years in some states) bar old claims;
- no **suo motu** action, so the illiterate owner must sue;
- **documentary evidence** beats oral evidence, though tribal tenure was oral;
- **Collector's permission** for transfers is routinely granted;
- **bank mortgages** were exempted, so defaulted loans transfer land;
- endless **appeals and stay orders** let occupants stay for decades;
- **records** are old or never made.

**Remedies proposed** include a **presumption that disputed land is tribal**, the **burden of proof on the non-tribal**, **summary courts**, the State as a **compulsory party**, **updated land records** with the gram sabha, and **cheap institutional credit** so that land is not mortgaged.

#### COMMON CONFUSION

**Is land acquired by the government for a dam "land alienation"?** Yes, in the anthropological sense, because the land passes out of tribal control. But it is **lawful acquisition**, governed by the **2013 Act** and the **Fifth Schedule**, not an illegal transfer. The remedies differ: illegal transfers are **reversed and restored**; lawful acquisition is checked through **consent, compensation and rehabilitation**.

## ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL INDIA

# Land Alienation

*How tribal land passes out of tribal hands, and what checks it*

LAND

**Causes****Debt** to moneylenders · **no written records** of clan and customary land · **illiteracy** · in-migration of settlers · **state projects** · forest declarations**Methods****Mortgage and sale** · **benami** purchase through tribal wives or "adopted" tribals · forged, back-dated deeds · collusive decrees · 99-year leases · **encroachment** · **acquisition** for dams and mines · "deemed forests"**Results****Landlessness** (16% → 24% of rural Adivasi households, 1987–2012) · cultivator → **labourer** · debt and **migration** · women's loss of work · **unrest****Safeguards****Fifth Schedule** para 5(2) · **CNT 1908**, **SPT 1949**, AP 1959 (1/70) · **Samatha 1997** · **PESA 1996**: gram sabha restores land · **FRA 2006** · **LARR 2013** consent**Why the laws leak**Only in **Scheduled Areas**Short **limitation** periodsPapers beat **oral** evidenceCollector's **permission** grantedBank **mortgages** exemptedEndless **appeals** and staysIn simple words: **tribal land was held by custom, and lost through paper.**

Anthropology

03

## 3. Poverty

**IN SIMPLE WORDS**

Scheduled Tribes are the poorest social group in India by every measure: income, consumption, assets, health and schooling. Their poverty has fallen, but more slowly than that of other groups, so the gap remains.

The table compares official poverty estimates for STs with the whole population. Note that the ST rate in 2011–12 was about where the national rate had been in the mid-1990s.

| MEASURE                                                    | SCHEDULED TRIBES              | ALL POPULATION |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Poverty ratio, rural (2004–05 → 2011–12, Tendulkar method) | 62.3% → 45.3%                 | 41.8% → 25.7%  |
| Poverty ratio, urban (2004–05 → 2011–12)                   | 35.5% → 24.1%                 | 25.7% → 13.7%  |
| Multidimensional poverty (2015–16, Global MPI 2021)        | 50.6% (highest of all groups) | 27.9%          |

- **Global MPI 2021** (UNDP and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative) found STs, **9.4%** of the population, to be the **poorest group**: **65 million of 129 million** were multidimensionally poor, with the highest intensity of deprivation.
- A **World Bank** study of India's Adivasis (**Maitreyi Bordia Das** and colleagues, 2010) found that tribal poverty fell more slowly than that of others, leaving STs about **twenty years behind** the general population.

#### Why tribal poverty persists.

- **Spatial**: STs live in **remote, hilly, forested** districts with poor roads, markets and services.
- **Asset loss**: land alienation and displacement remove the main productive assets (§2).
- **Resource restrictions**: forest laws cut access to food, fodder and saleable produce.
- **Low returns**: **rain-fed** farming, small plots and low prices for forest produce sold to middlemen.
- **Human capital**: low literacy and poor health reduce earnings (§§5, 7).
- **Political voice**: tribes are a minority in most states and their elites are few, so their concerns stay marginal.

04

## 4. Indebtedness and Bonded Labour

### IN SIMPLE WORDS

A poor family borrows to eat, to pay for a wedding or a funeral, or to buy seed. When the lender charges very high interest and keeps the accounts, the debt grows faster than the family can repay. The family then pays with its land or with its labour, sometimes for generations.

**Example first: the *hali* of south Gujarat.** The Dutch anthropologist **Jan Breman** (*Patronage and Exploitation*, 1974) studied the **Dubla**, a tribal community of south Gujarat who worked as ***hali***, farm servants bound to high-caste landlords by **loans taken for marriage**. The landlord gave food, a hut and loans; the *hali* and often his wife and children worked for him until the debt was repaid, which in practice was **never**. Breman showed that the old **patronage** that once gave the *hali* some security decayed into plain **exploitation** as farming commercialised. Similar systems are known as ***kamiauti*** in Bihar and ***sagri*** in Rajasthan.

## 4.1 Causes

| CAUSE                             | HOW IT WORKS                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Poverty and food gaps</b>      | Loans for consumption in the lean season, repaid at harvest at high cost                          |
| <b>Social and ritual expenses</b> | Bride-price, marriage, funeral and festival feasts                                                |
| <b>Illness</b>                    | Treatment costs and lost workdays                                                                 |
| <b>No institutional credit</b>    | Banks want collateral, forms and visits to town; they do not lend for consumption                 |
| <b>Moneylender's advantages</b>   | Lends at once, without security, on trust, at the doorstep; also buys the produce and sells goods |
| <b>Illiteracy</b>                 | Borrowers cannot check accounts; thumb impressions on blank papers                                |
| <b>Low prices</b>                 | Forest produce and crops sold cheaply to the same trader who lends                                |

**How the trap works.** The moneylender often plays **three roles at once: lender, buyer of produce and seller of goods**. He lends in the lean season, buys the harvest at a low price fixed by himself to "recover" the loan, and sells rice and cloth on credit at a high price. Interest of **3–5% a month** (36–60% a year) compounds; the family repays interest, never the principal. Debt then converts into **land transfer** (\$2) or **bonded labour**. Because the lender is also a neighbour who helps in emergencies, the relationship is accepted as **patronage**, which is why it lasts.

## 4.2 Consequences

- **Land alienation** through mortgage and sale.
- **Bonded labour** and **child labour**: the Planning Commission's evaluation found that most bonded labourers were **SCs and STs**.
- **Migration** to escape or to repay.
- **Loss of bargaining power** in selling produce.

## 4.3 Remedies and their limits

- **Article 23** prohibits **forced labour**; the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976** freed bonded labourers, **cancelled their debts** and set up district **vigilance committees**. The **Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers (2016)** pays rehabilitation assistance to those released.
- **Money-lending regulations** under the Fifth Schedule and state laws require **licences** and cap interest, and **PESA** gives the gram sabha power to **control money-lending**.
- **Cooperatives: Large-sized Adivasi Multi-Purpose Societies (LAMPS)** were set up from the 1970s to give credit, buy produce and sell essentials under one roof, the three functions of the moneylender.

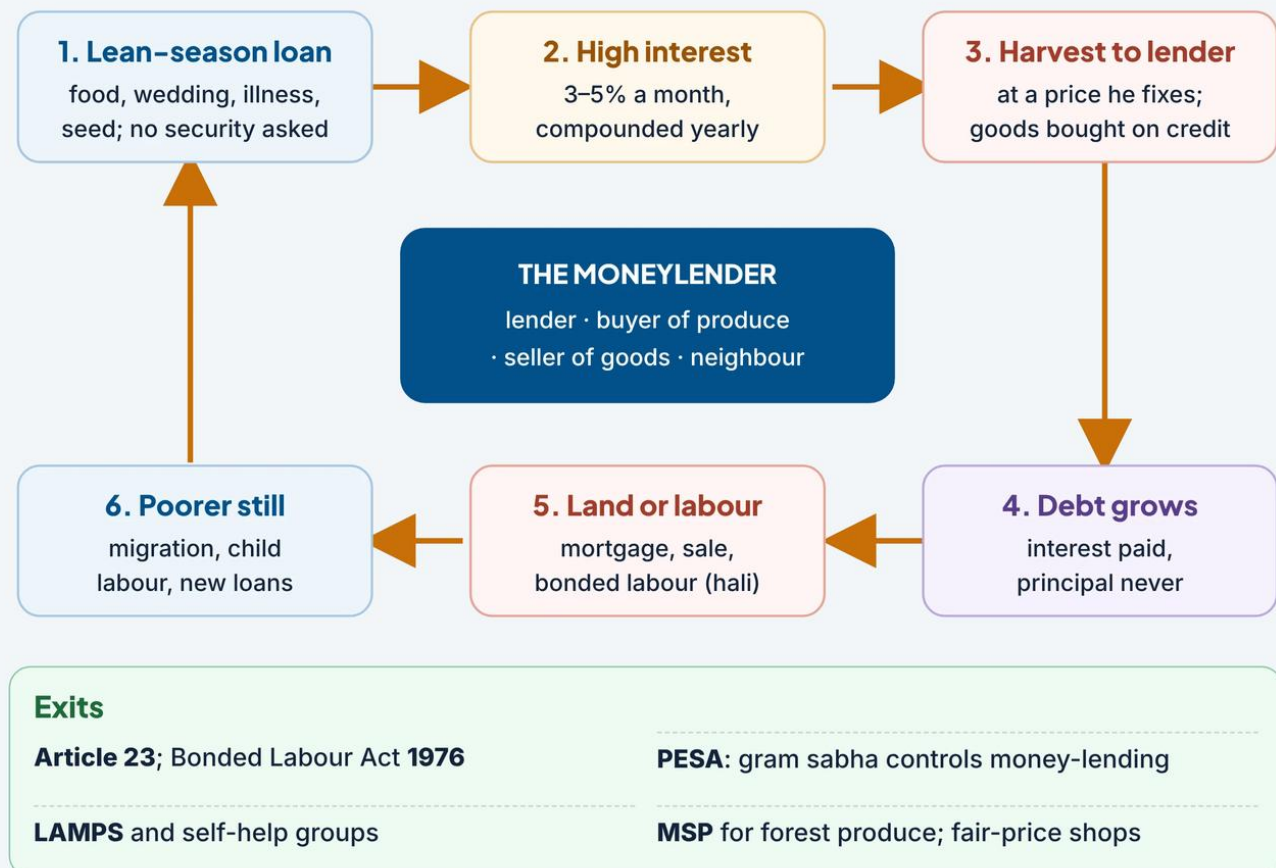
- **Why they fall short:** moneylenders seldom take licences, enforcement is weak, cooperatives are often **captured or under-funded**, and banks still do not lend for consumption. **Self-help groups, fair-price shops** and **minimum support prices for forest produce** (§9) attack the trap from the market side.

## ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL INDIA

## The Debt Trap

*When the lender is also the buyer and the seller*

DEBT



In simple words: **the family repays the interest and loses the land.**

Anthropology

05

## 5. Low Literacy and Poor Educational Facilities

### IN SIMPLE WORDS

Tribal children start school later, understand less of what is taught, and leave earlier than other children. The reasons lie partly in poverty and distance, but mostly in a school that teaches in an unfamiliar language, with a curriculum and teachers that ignore the child's own world.

**Example first: the language gap.** A **Koya** child in the Godavari hills or a **Gond** child in Bastar arrives at school speaking only her mother tongue, and meets a teacher and textbooks in **Telugu or Hindi**. For two or three years she copies words she does not understand, falls behind, is labelled “slow”, and drops out. Where schools begin in the **mother tongue** and bridge to the state language, children stay longer and learn more. Studies of tribal education repeatedly find that **language**, not lack of ability, explains much of the gap.

## 5.1 The gap in numbers

The table traces the literacy gap and shows where it persists today.

| INDICATOR                                          | SCHEDULED TRIBES       | ALL                    |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Literacy 1961 → 2011 (Census)                      | 8.5% → 59.0%           | 28.3% → 73.0%          |
| Female literacy 2011                               | 49.4%                  | 64.6%                  |
| Gross enrolment, higher secondary (UDISE+ 2023–24) | 48.7%                  | 56.2%                  |
| Gross enrolment, higher education (AISHE 2023–24)  | men 21.9%, women 23.7% | men 28.9%, women 31.2% |

- **Progress:** enrolment at the **primary** level is now near universal for STs; the gap opens at **secondary and higher** levels.
- **Variation:** ST literacy was **91.5%** in **Mizoram** but about **49%** in undivided **Andhra Pradesh** (2011), showing that history (missionary schooling) and policy matter more than “tribal” status.

## 5.2 Constraints

Educational constraints are best grouped as **economic, socio-cultural, institutional and psychological**.

- **Economic:** children **work** (cattle, younger siblings, forest collection, seasonal migration with parents); schooling has an **opportunity cost**; families cannot afford uniforms, books or travel.
- **Socio-cultural:** **language** of instruction; a **curriculum** built on urban, caste-Hindu life; **festival and agricultural calendars** that clash with the school year; early marriage of girls.
- **Institutional:** schools far from **scattered hamlets**; buildings, hostels and teachers in short supply; **teacher absenteeism**; non-tribal teachers posted unwillingly; separate departments running schools; in conflict areas, schools **occupied by security forces**.
- **Psychological:** teachers’ **stereotypes** (“tribal children are docile”, “their language is inferior”) and the child’s sense of **inferiority** lower expectations on both sides; lack of educated role models in the family.

The four groups interact: a child who migrates with parents for four months (economic) misses the lessons she could not follow anyway (socio-cultural), in a school with an absent teacher (institutional), and concludes that school is “not for us” (psychological).

## 5.3 Measures

- **Constitution: Article 46** (promote with special care the educational interests of STs), **Article 15(4)** (special provisions), **Article 350A** (primary education in the mother tongue for linguistic minorities).
- **Residential schooling: ashram schools**, whose origin is linked to **Thakkar Bapa's Bhil Seva Mandal** (1922) in Gujarat; **Eklavya Model Residential Schools** for blocks with **over 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons: 728 approved, 508 functional** (July 2026).
- **Scholarships, hostels, coaching** and reservation in admissions.
- **Mother-tongue and multilingual education:** the **NEP 2020** asks for the home language as the medium **at least up to Grade 5** wherever possible; states such as **Odisha** run multilingual programmes in tribal languages.
- **The Xaxa Committee** (High Level Committee on the socio-economic, health and educational status of tribal communities, chaired by **Virginius Xaxa**, report **2014**) recommended **multilingual early education**, a **separate cadre of teachers** for tribal schools, **teacher training institutions in tribal areas**, **local culture and history in the curriculum**, **residential schools for nomadic tribes**, **demilitarisation of schools**, **social audits** and community control through panchayats.

06

## 6. Unemployment and Under-employment

### IN SIMPLE WORDS

Few tribal people are "unemployed" in the sense of having no work at all, because the poor cannot afford to sit idle. Their problem is under-employment: work for only part of the year, in low-paid, insecure jobs, often far from home.

- **Low open unemployment:** the **PLFS** for calendar **2025** put the ST **unemployment rate** at only **2.1%** (rural **1.6%**, urban **6.6%**). The figure hides more than it shows.
- **Under-employment:** rain-fed farming gives work for **four to six months**; forest work has shrunk; landless families depend on **casual and seasonal** labour. Census 2011 showed a rise in **marginal workers** (those with work for less than six months).
- **Shift from land to labour:** cultivators fell and agricultural labourers rose (§2); one ST household in two now relies mainly on **manual labour**.
- **Distress migration:** seasonal streams of **Bhils** from western Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to Gujarat's farms and construction sites, of **Santal, Oraon and Munda** to brick kilns and the farms of West Bengal and Punjab, of **Gond and Kondh** to cities. Migrants face **advance-wage bondage**, unpaid wages, unsafe sites and, for women, **sexual exploitation**. The **Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979)** covered only contractor-recruited workers and was weakly enforced; it is now subsumed in the **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (2020)**.

**Issues of tribal agricultural labourers.** They face **low and unequal wages**, **seasonal idleness**, **debt to employers**, absence from **land reform** benefits, and exclusion from welfare when they migrate. Women labourers are paid less than men.

**Remedies. Rural employment guarantee:** the **MGNREGA (2005)** was repealed and replaced from **1 July 2026** by the **Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 (VB-G RAM G)**, which guarantees **125 days** of wage work a year to rural households; **skilling** and **Van Dhan** enterprises (§9); **reservation** in jobs; **restoring land and forest rights**, which remain the surest source of year-round work.

## 07 7. Health and Nutrition

### IN SIMPLE WORDS

Tribal people fall ill more often and die younger than other Indians. The causes are partly ecological (malaria in forests, inherited blood disorders), partly economic (poverty and lost forest foods) and partly social (remote clinics and a health system that does not speak their language). Malnutrition among tribal children is the most serious single problem.

**Example first: Gadchiroli.** In **Gadchiroli**, a forested tribal district of eastern Maharashtra, screening under the national sickle-cell mission had tested about **4.9 lakh** people by July 2026 and found about **24,000 carriers** and **2,654** people with sickle-cell disease. The same district carries a heavy burden of **falciparum malaria**, which the sickle-cell gene once helped carriers survive. Here the **ecology** of the forest, the **genetics** of the population and the **poverty** of the households combine in one disease landscape. The public-health physician **Abhay Bang** began his community work in this district.

### 7.1 The health gap in numbers

The table compares STs with the rest of the population on the key indicators from NFHS-5.

| INDICATOR (NFHS-5, 2019-21)                   | SCHEDULED TRIBES | ALL INDIA |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Children under 5 stunted (too short for age)  | 40.9%            | 35.5%     |
| Children under 5 wasted (too thin for height) | 23.2%            | 19.3%     |
| Children under 5 underweight                  | 39.5%            | 32.1%     |
| Women (15-49) anaemic                         | 64.6%            | 57.0%     |

- **Progress:** stunting, wasting and underweight among ST children fell from **43.8%, 27.4% and 45.3%** in NFHS-4 (2015-16); **NFHS-6 (2023-24)** shows national stunting down to **29.3%**, but ST-wise figures await the full report.
- **Anaemia rose** among ST women, from **59.9%** (NFHS-4) to **64.6%**; **ST under-five mortality** was still about **50 per 1,000** live births, and **32.8%** of ST men drank alcohol against **17.4%** of other men.
- **Micro-studies** show how low tribal health once stood: among the **Muria, Maria, Bhattra and Halba** of **Bastar**, life expectancy at birth was about **41 years** (Basu and Kshatriya, 1989), far below the national level of the time.

- **A paradox:** STs have **lower** rates of diabetes and high blood pressure, and better sex ratio and breastfeeding, than non-STs; their burden is concentrated in **infection, undernutrition and addiction**.

## 7.2 The Bang Committee (2018)

The **Expert Committee on Tribal Health**, set up in **2013** by the health and tribal affairs ministries and chaired by **Abhay Bang**, reported in **2018** (*Tribal Health in India: Bridging the Gap and a Roadmap for the Future*).

- **Triple burden: malnutrition and communicable disease** (malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoea), rising **non-communicable disease**, and **mental illness and addiction**.
- **Malaria:** tribal areas accounted for about **30%** of cases, over **60%** of *falciparum* cases and about **half** of malaria deaths, from **8.6%** of the population; **tuberculosis** prevalence was about **703 per lakh** against 256.
- **Recommendations:** a **National Tribal Health Action Plan**, **Aarogya Mitras** (trained tribal youth) beside ASHAs, a **Tribal Health Council**, a **Tribal Health Index**, and health spending per tribal person matching national norms.
- **Cultural distance:** services work better in **local languages**, with traditional healers and *dais* involved and the **gram sabha** in charge (Paper I, **9.8**, §7).

## 7.3 Environmental and biocultural causes

- **Ecology:** **malaria-endemic** forests and hills; **fluorosis** from groundwater in parts of central India; **iodine-poor** hill soils (goitre).
- **Genetics:** **sickle-cell disease**, **G6PD deficiency** and **thalassaemias** (6.1, §3.3); **consanguinity** raises recessive disorders in some southern tribes.
- **Food systems:** deforestation and forest laws removed **tubers, greens, fruit, honey and game** that once balanced diets; the shift from **millets** to polished **PDS rice** lowered micronutrient intake.
- **Water and sanitation:** unsafe water and open defecation spread diarrhoea and worms, which waste the food a child eats.
- **Health culture:** illness is often explained by **spirits, sorcery or broken taboos**, and the first resort is the **ojha, sirha or guni** (diviner-healer); clinics are distant and staff may not speak the language.
- **Habits and stress:** **alcohol** (including home-brewed rice beer and mahua liquor, part of ritual) and **tobacco**; displacement and migration add **mental stress** and loss of social support.
- **Women's workload:** long hours of fuel and water collection during pregnancy, with closely spaced births, produce **low birth weight**.

**Causes of stunting and wasting among tribal children.** **Stunting** (chronic) reflects **maternal undernutrition and anaemia, low birth weight**, poor **complementary feeding** after six months and **repeated infections**; **wasting** (acute) reflects **seasonal hunger**, diarrhoea and malaria. **Interventions:** take-home rations and hot meals through **POSHAN 2.0** and anganwadis in every hamlet; **millets and forest foods** in the PDS and school meals; **WASH** (water, sanitation and hygiene); malaria control; and **community-based management** of acute malnutrition.

**Traditional knowledge and health.** Tribal **ethnomedicine** includes herbal remedies, bone-setting and birth attendance, and knowledge of hundreds of medicinal plants. It is valuable where it works and where it builds

trust; the task is to **validate** remedies, **protect** knowledge against unfair patenting, and **link** healers with the formal system rather than replace them.

## 7.4 Sickle-cell disease: the national mission and the states

- **Prevalence:** carriers range from **1% to 40%** across tribes of **central, western and southern India**, highest in groups of **Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Odisha**.
- **The mission:** the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission**, launched at **Shahdol** on **1 July 2023**, aims to eliminate the disease as a public-health problem by **2047** by screening **7 crore** people aged **0–40** in **17** states. By **July 2026** it had conducted more than **7.25 crore** screenings, found about **2.5 lakh** people with the disease and about **20 lakh** carriers, and issued **genetic status cards** to guide marriage and pregnancy choices; **17 centres of excellence** in **15** states have been approved with tribal affairs funding.
- **State initiatives:** **Gujarat** began the first state **Sickle Cell Anaemia Control Programme** in **2006** in its tribal districts and has screened over a crore people; **Madhya Pradesh** set up a **State Haemoglobinopathy Mission**, piloted screening in **Jhabua and Alirajpur** (2021) and built integrated centres in tribal districts; **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Odisha** run **newborn screening** programmes.
- **The anthropological point:** pre-marital counselling must work through **clan and marriage rules**; a card that marks a person as a carrier can create **stigma** unless the community owns the programme.

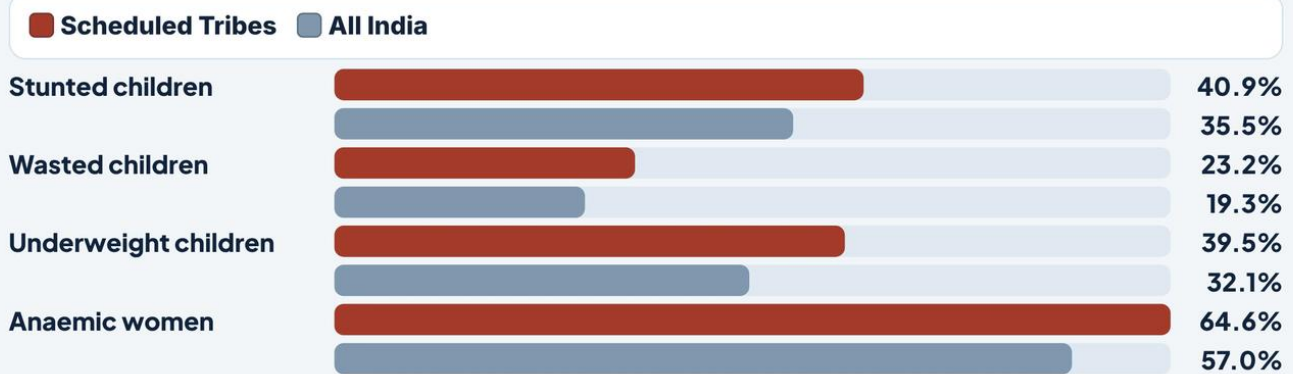
## ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL INDIA

## Tribal Health and Nutrition

*Gaps, burdens and their biocultural roots*

HEALTH

## NFHS-5 (2019–21): SCHEDULED TRIBES AGAINST ALL INDIA



## BANG COMMITTEE (2018): THE TRIPLE BURDEN

## Malnutrition, infection

**Malaria:** ~30% of cases, half of deaths

TB **703** per lakh

## Non-communicable

Rising blood pressure

Diet shift to **PDS rice**

## Mind and addiction

ST men drinking **32.8%**

Stress of displacement

## BIOCULTURAL CAUSES

**Ecology**  
malaria forests

**Genes**  
sickle cell, G6PD

**Diet**  
forest foods lost

**Water**  
diarrhoea, worms

**Health culture**  
ojha first

**Sickle-cell mission (2023):** over **7.25 crore** screened, about **2.5 lakh** patients and **20 lakh** carriers found (July 2026); Gujarat's state programme since **2006**

In simple words: **forest, genes, poverty and distance make tribal children smaller and sicker.**

Anthropology

08

## 8. Other Vulnerable Groups and New Pressures

## IN SIMPLE WORDS

Some tribal groups face special problems: nomads who have no fixed village, communities once branded "criminal" by colonial law, and forest peoples whose livelihoods are threatened by mining and climate change.

- **Nomadic, semi-nomadic and denotified tribes:** the colonial **Criminal Tribes Act (1871)** branded whole communities as hereditary criminals; it was repealed in **1952** ("denotification"), but **Habitual Offenders** laws and police suspicion continued. Their problems are **no land, no fixed address** (hence no ration card)

or school enrolment), **stigma** and exclusion from ST/SC lists in many states. The **Renke Commission (2008)** and **Idate Commission (2015–18)** recommended a permanent commission and inclusion in reservation lists; the **SEED** scheme (2022) offers coaching, health insurance and livelihood support.

- **Mining:** most of India's **coal, iron ore and bauxite** lies under tribal districts of Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh; mining brings **displacement, polluted water, lost forests and in-migration**, while benefits flow outward. **District Mineral Foundations** (2015) were meant to return a share to affected people (detail in 6.3a).
- **Climate change:** forest-dependent and rain-fed tribal farmers are among the **most exposed:** erratic monsoons, heat stress, failing forest produce and new vector-borne disease. Yet their **sacred groves, mixed cropping, millets and community forest management** are adaptation strategies the state now seeks to learn from.
- **Elites and alienation:** the benefits of reservation and development have gone disproportionately to an **educated tribal elite**, opening a gap between them and the majority, and between the elite and its own culture.

09

## 9. Trade and Markets in Tribal Societies

### IN SIMPLE WORDS

Most tribal villages have no shop. Once a week people walk to a market, the *haat*, to sell forest produce and crops and buy salt, cloth and tools. The *haat* is also where people meet relatives, settle disputes, court, hear news and perform rituals, so it is a social centre as much as a place of trade.

**Example first: a Bastar market.** The British anthropologist **Alfred Gell** studied a weekly market among the **Muria Gond** of north-central Bastar ("The Market Wheel: Symbolic Aspects of an Indian Tribal Market", *Man*, 1982). He read the market's **layout** and the **movement of people** through it as a **map of society**, a symbolic expression of the relations between tribe, caste and trader. The market linked tribal producers to a **chain of traders** that ran to the towns. Earlier, **D.P. Sinha** (*Culture Change in an Intertribal Market*, 1968) showed how the **Banari** market of the Chotanagpur hills brought several hill peoples together and became a channel of **cultural change**.

### 9.1 Forms of exchange

- **Barter:** goods for goods, measured by **volume** rather than weight, at **customary** rates: the **Maler** (Sauria Paharia) exchanged forest timber with **Santal** plains farmers for rice.
- **Reciprocity:** **generalised** among kin (help at transplanting), **balanced** in gift exchange at marriages, **negative** (bargaining for advantage) with outsiders (Paper I, 3b).
- **Inter-tribal specialisation:** in the **Nilgiris** the Toda, Kota, Badaga, Kurumba and Irula exchanged dairy produce, tools, music, grain and forest produce (6.1, §6.3).
- **Coconut currency** among the **Nicobarese** in trade with passing ships.
- **Market exchange** in cash at the weekly *haat* and through traders, now dominant almost everywhere.

## 9.2 Characteristics and functions of the tribal market

The weekly market differs from a town market in rhythm, layout and meaning. The table lists its functions, of which the economic is only the first.

| FUNCTION                      | WHAT HAPPENS                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Economic</b>               | Sale of forest produce, crops, livestock and crafts; purchase of salt, oil, cloth, tools and ornaments; credit from traders |
| <b>Social</b>                 | Meeting kin from other villages; arranging marriages; courtship among the young in their best clothes                       |
| <b>Political and judicial</b> | Village and inter-village councils meet; disputes are settled; leaders and officials address people                         |
| <b>Religious and ritual</b>   | Offerings at the market deity; sale of ritual goods; festival markets                                                       |
| <b>Information and change</b> | News, rumours and new goods spread; health and government campaigns use the <i>haat</i>                                     |
| <b>Recreation</b>             | Cockfights, dance, liquor and entertainment                                                                                 |

- **Periodicity:** markets in neighbouring villages meet on **different days**, forming a **weekly circuit** that traders follow.
- **Location:** at **ecological boundaries** (hill and plain) where different products meet.
- **Inter-ethnic:** tribals, caste peasants, artisans and traders meet; the market is where **tribal and non-tribal economies** interlock.

## 9.3 Exploitation and change

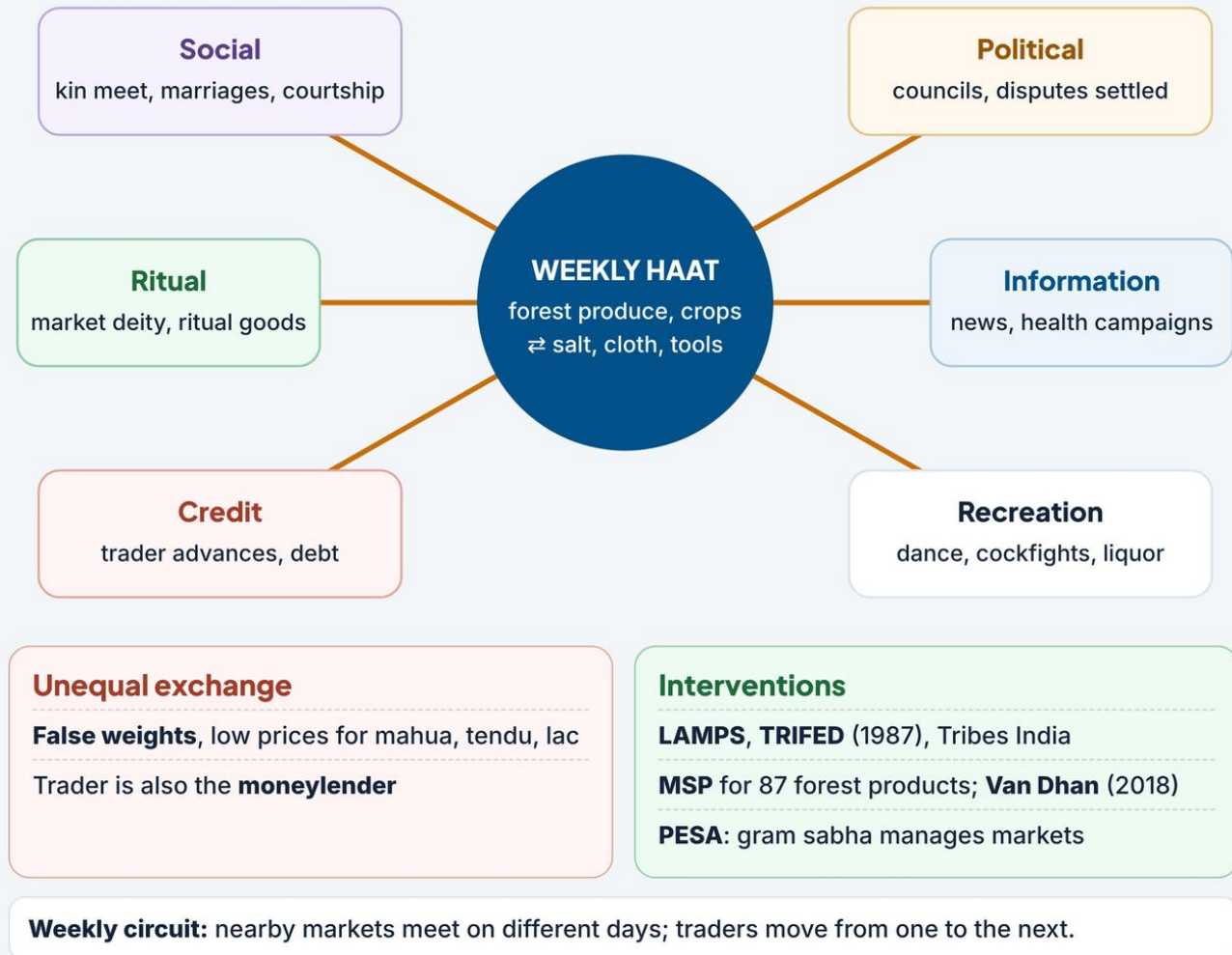
- **Unequal exchange:** traders use **false weights**, fix low prices for **minor forest produce** (mahua, tamarind, sal seed, tendu leaves, lac, honey) and sell manufactured goods dear; the **trader-moneylender** binds sellers through advances (§4).
- **Commercialisation:** cash crops, plastic and factory goods replace crafts, undercutting **artisan tribes**; permanent shops and mobile phones change the weekly rhythm.
- **Interventions:** **LAMPS** and state forest-produce corporations buy produce; **TRIFED** (the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India, **1987**) markets tribal crafts under **Tribes India**; **minimum support prices** for minor forest produce, introduced in **2013–14** for **10** items, now cover **87**; **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras** (from **14 April 2018**, first at **Bijapur**, Chhattisgarh) group gatherers into producer clusters, with **4,125** sanctioned for about **12.3 lakh** members; **PESA** lets the gram sabha **manage village markets**; **tribal multipurpose marketing centres** are part of the 2024 village mission.

## ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL INDIA

# The Weekly Tribal Market

*The haat as a wheel of functions*

## MARKETS



In simple words: **the haat is where tribal life meets the wider economy.**

Anthropology

10

## Key Terms

| TERM                   | MEANING IN SIMPLE WORDS                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Land alienation</b> | Tribal land passing to non-tribals or the state     |
| <b>Benami transfer</b> | Buying land in someone else's name to evade the law |
| <b>Diku</b>            | Chotanagpur term for exploiting outsiders           |

| TERM                         | MEANING IN SIMPLE WORDS                                                                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Scheduled Area</b>        | An area notified under the Fifth Schedule for special protection                          |
| <b>Samatha judgment</b>      | 1997 ruling barring leases of Scheduled Area land to non-tribal private miners            |
| <b>PESA</b>                  | 1996 law giving gram sabhas in Scheduled Areas power over land, markets and money-lending |
| <b>Bonded labour</b>         | Working without free choice to repay a debt                                               |
| <b>Hali</b>                  | A tied farm servant in south Gujarat, bound by marriage loans                             |
| <b>LAMPS</b>                 | Cooperative giving credit, buying produce and selling goods to tribals                    |
| <b>Under-employment</b>      | Working fewer days or hours than one needs                                                |
| <b>Distress migration</b>    | Leaving home for work because of debt or hunger, not opportunity                          |
| <b>Stunting / wasting</b>    | Low height for age (chronic) / low weight for height (acute)                              |
| <b>Triple burden</b>         | Undernutrition and infection, non-communicable disease, and addiction together            |
| <b>Genetic status card</b>   | Card showing whether a person carries the sickle-cell gene                                |
| <b>Ethnomedicine</b>         | A community's own system of healing                                                       |
| <b>Denotified tribes</b>     | Communities once branded "criminal" under the 1871 Act                                    |
| <b>Haat</b>                  | Weekly market in a tribal area                                                            |
| <b>Minor forest produce</b>  | Non-timber forest products such as mahua, tendu and lac                                   |
| <b>Van Dhan Vikas Kendra</b> | A cluster of tribal self-help groups processing forest produce                            |

## 11 Contemporary Developments

- **Saturation drives: PM-JANMAN** (launched **15 November 2023**) for the 75 PVTGs, and the **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan** (approved **18 September 2024**, launched **2 October 2024**), with **25 interventions** by **17 ministries** in **63,843** tribal-majority villages of **549** districts, an outlay of **₹79,156 crore** and up to **1,000 mobile medical units**.
- **Rural employment:** the **VB-G RAM G Act, 2025** replaced MGNREGA from **1 July 2026** with a guarantee of **125 days**.
- **Sickle-cell mission:** more than **7.25 crore** screenings by July 2026; **17** centres of excellence approved.

- **NFHS-6 (2023–24)**, released **29 May 2026**: national child stunting **29.3%**; ST-wise figures are awaited.
- **Education**: **508** EMRS functional of **728** approved (July 2026).
- **Forest produce**: MSP list at **87** items; **4,125** Van Dhan Kendras sanctioned.

## 12 Diagrams to Master

- **Topic map**: land → debt → poverty → schooling → work → health, with markets and safeguards.
- **Land alienation chain**: causes → methods → consequences → safeguards (Fifth Schedule, tenancy laws, Samatha, PESA, FRA, LARR).
- **Debt trap**: the lender-buyer-seller triangle, compound interest, mortgage and bondage, and the exits.
- **Health and nutrition panel**: NFHS-5 gaps; Bang's triple burden; biocultural causes; sickle-cell mission.
- **Haat wheel**: six functions, weekly circuit, unequal exchange and interventions.

## 13 Revision Grid

| SCHOLAR OR BODY                    | WORK (YEAR)                                           | KEY IDEA                                                        |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| D.P. Sinha                         | <i>Culture Change in an Intertribal Market</i> (1968) | The Banari market as a channel of change                        |
| Jan Breman                         | <i>Patronage and Exploitation</i> (1974)              | Dubla <i>hali</i> bondage in south Gujarat                      |
| Alfred Gell                        | "The Market Wheel" (1982)                             | The Bastar market as a map of society                           |
| Supreme Court                      | <i>Samatha v. State of Andhra Pradesh</i> (1997)      | No mining leases to non-tribal private firms in Scheduled Areas |
| Parliament                         | PESA Act (1996)                                       | Gram sabha control over land, markets and money-lending         |
| Maitreyi Bordia Das and colleagues | World Bank study of India's Adivasis (2010)           | Tribal poverty about twenty years behind                        |
| Virginus Xaxa (chair)              | High Level Committee report (2014)                    | Multilingual education, teacher cadre, land and health          |
| Abhay Bang (chair)                 | <i>Tribal Health in India</i> (2018)                  | Triple burden; tribal health action plan                        |
| Brinda Karat and Vikas Rawal       | "Scheduled Tribe Households" (2014)                   | Rising landlessness among Adivasis                              |
| UNDP and OPHI                      | Global MPI (2021)                                     | STs the poorest group: 50.6%                                    |



## Previous Year Questions



- 2026** Write an account on the prevalence of sickle cell disease among the tribal populations of India. What are the initiatives undertaken by the affected states to tackle with this disease?
- 2026** What are the major challenges tribal communities are facing in contemporary India?
- 2025** Examine the environmental and biocultural factors influencing the health of tribals of India.
- 2024** Write notes on: Causes of stunting and wasting among tribal children.
- 2024** Custodians of natural resources are the tribals, but they are the most deprived. Critically examine how climate change will impact their survival in future.
- 2024** Discuss the economic, social, and developmental impacts on tribal communities with special reference to mining.
- 2022** Write notes on: Issues of tribal agricultural labourers.
- 2022** Write notes on: Major problems of nomadic and semi-nomadic groups.
- 2022** Discuss the issues and solutions related to the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe populations in India.
- 2022** Explain how British policies impacted the major resources of the tribals.
- 2021** Elucidate the problems and challenges in educational attainment of the Scheduled Tribes.
- 2021** Examine the factors responsible for malnutrition in tribal India and suggest interventions required to overcome the problem.
- 2020** Elucidate the problems of land alienation among the tribals of India.
- 2019** Write a note in 150 words on Issues relating to tribal education.
- 2017** Write a note in 150 words on Indebtedness among tribal communities.
- 2017** Describe the impact of displacement on the health and nutritional status of tribal communities.

- 2015 Discuss how constitutional provisions in India have built-in mechanisms for dealing with the problem of land alienation in tribal areas.
- 2015 Discuss the sociocultural, economic and psychological constraints responsible for low literacy in tribal areas.
- 2014 Discuss the impact of land alienation on the tribes of Central India.
- 2010 Write a note in 150 words on Education and health among tribal women.
- 2010 "Land and forest are the twin problems of the tribes." Explain.
- 2010 Discuss the relevance of traditional wisdom and knowledge of the tribes with reference to health in the present day context.
- 2010 Critically examine the various structural constraints in the educational development of Scheduled Tribes.
- 2009 Write a note on Indebtedness in Tribal Communities.
- 2008 Discuss the health problems faced by tribal populations in India. Suggest some corrective measures.
- 2007 Write a note on Land Alienation.
- 2005 Discuss the factors related to low literacy rate among the tribals of India. Write in brief the measures taken by the government in different five-year plans to eradicate it.
- 2003 Write a note on Constraints of educational development among the tribals.
- 2003 Write a note on Land alienation among the tribals.
- 2000 Write a note on The problems of denotified groups.
- 1999 Write a note on Land Alienation in tribal India.
- 1999 Bring out, with suitable examples, the constraints of educational development of tribal communities in India. Suggest remedial measures in this context.
- 1998 Discuss the health and nutritional status of tribal and rural children in India. How far has the government policy been effective ?

- 1996** Distinguish among nutrition, food and diet. Comment on the nutritional status of the tribes with subsistence economy in the form of hunting-gathering, shifting cultivation and settled agriculture in India.
- 1995** Describe the socio-cultural factors related to the poor health conditions of the Indian tribal population. Suggest measures for improving these conditions.
- 1994** Write a note on Factors responsible for tribal migration and its consequences.
- 1993** Write a note on Tribal education.
- 1992** Write a note on Indebtedness and land alienation among Indian tribes.
- 1992** What are the major problems of the tribes in India ? Evaluate the measures adopted by the Central and State Governments in India to solve these problems.
- 1990** Write a note on Transfer and alienation of tribal land.
- 1990** Discuss the anthropological approach to the understanding of the tribal ethos and comment on the major socioeconomic problems of Indian tribes.
- 1989** Discuss major problems of the tribes of India. Make a critical evaluation of the measures adopted by the Central and State Govt, in India to solve these problems and account for their limited success.
- 1988** Write a note on Common Property Resources in tribal villages.
- 1988** Write a note on Elites and alienation in tribal society.
- 1988** Discuss the special problems of shifting cultivators or of hunting food gathering tribes.
- 1986** Write a note on Indebtedness and land alienation among Indian tribes.
- 1986** Define untouchability and point out whether the problems of its removal should be treated as a matter of social reform rather than as part of administrative and legal measures.
- 1983** Write a note in 200 words : Indebtedness and land alienation among Indian tribes.
- 1983** Discuss the isolationist and assimilationist approaches to the tribal problems, showing their respective merits and demerits.

- 1981** Identify the main type of problems that arise out of contacts between tribal people and more advanced sections of Indian population. What measures do you suggest to mitigate the same ?
- 2025** Describe the nature of traditional socioeconomic interdependence among the Toda, Kota, Kurumba and Irula tribes of Nilgiri Hills. Highlight the changes occurring in these interrelationships.
- 1991** What are the principal characteristic of tribal markets ? What extra-economic functions do such markets perform?
- 1990** Write a note on Tribal markets as centres of social and cultural interaction.
- 1989** Write a note on Barter and Exchange in the tribal societies.
- 2026** *Unit 9.1:* 'Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan aims to meet some of the Sustainable Development Goals'. Discuss.
- 2024** *Unit 6.3:* Examine the impact of Forest Policies from 1878 to 2006 on land alienation and deprivation of rights of tribal communities in India.
- 2020** *Unit 9.1:* Discuss the effect of job reservation in alleviating unemployment among the tribal people of India.
- 2014** *Unit 9.1:* Critically examine the role of NGOs in promoting health and education in tribal areas.
- 2012** *Unit 9.1:* Using suitable examples, bring out the historical processes of the social exclusion of denotified tribes.
- 2010** *Unit 7.1:* Write a note in 150 words on The problem of bonded labour among Indian tribes.
- 2000** *Unit 7.2:* Write a note on MADA, LAMPS TRIFED.
- 2000** *Unit 9.1:* Write a note on Tribal education in the context of development.
- 1988** *Unit 6.1:* Write a note on Migration as a means of socio-economic mobility in tribal society.

## UNIT 07

## 5 CHAPTERS

# Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs

*Problems of exploitation and deprivation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. Social change and contemporary tribal societies: Impact of modern democratic institutions, development programmes and welfare measures on tribals and weaker sections. The concept of ethnicity: Ethnic conflicts and political developments; Unrest among tribal communities; Regionalism and demand for autonomy; Pseudo-tribalism. Social change among the tribes during colonial and post-Independent India.*

## CHAPTERS

|    |                                                                                           |     |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 05 | Exploitation and Deprivation of SCs, STs, OBCs: Safeguards, Schedules and PoA Act         | 102 |
| 06 | Social Change in Contemporary Tribal Societies: Democracy, Development and Welfare        | 129 |
| 07 | Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict and Regionalism: Tribal Unrest, Autonomy, National Integration | 152 |
| 08 | Pseudo-Tribalism and Social Change among Tribes: Colonial Rule to Post-Independence India | 176 |
| 09 | Tribal Social Movements in India: Santal Hul, Birsa Munda, Tana Bhagat and Jharkhand      | 197 |

ANTHROPOLOGY OPTIONAL

PAPER II · PART B



# Tribal Social Movements in India: Santal Hul, Birsa Munda, Tana Bhagat and Jharkhand

**PYQ RADAR** 24 questions · last asked 2026

This article covers **tribal social movements**: concepts, typologies, phases, major cases, causes and consequences. **Ethnicity, ethnic conflict, unrest and autonomy demands** (including North-East insurgency and Left-wing extremism) are in **7.3**; **displacement** in **6.3a**; **forest policy** in **6.3b**; **religious change and the Sarna movement** in **8.1**; and **K.S. Singh** as a scholar in **4b**.

**SYLLABUS** 7.4 Social Movements among Tribal society

## CONTENTS

|    |                                          |    |                                        |
|----|------------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------------|
| 01 | 1. Understanding Tribal Social Movements | 02 | 2. Classifying Tribal Movements        |
| 03 | 3. Phases of Tribal Movements            | 04 | 4. Major Movements: Case Studies       |
| 05 | 5. North-East and Central India Compared | 06 | 6. Causes, Consequences and Assessment |
| 07 | Key Terms                                | 08 | Contemporary Developments              |
| 09 | Diagrams to Master                       | 10 | Revision Grid                          |
| 11 | Previous Year Questions                  |    |                                        |

## ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL INDIA

# Tribal Social Movements

*Land, faith and self-rule in collective action*

TOPIC MAP

**Concepts**

Revitalization (Wallace)

Nativistic (Linton)

Millenarian prophets

**Typologies**

Mahapatra: 3 types

Surajit Sinha: 5 types

K.S. Singh, G. Shah

**Phases**1795–1860 **resistance**1860–1947 **prophets**, nationAfter 1947 **rights****MAJOR MOVEMENTS****Colonial**

Santal Hul 1855 · Kol 1831–32

Birsa's Ulgulan 1899–1900

Tana Bhagat 1914 · Mangarh 1913

Rampa 1922–24 · Heraka

**After 1947**

Jharkhand to statehood, 2000

Jungle Bachao · Koel-Karo

Niyamgiri · Pathalgadi

Sarna code · Bhil Pradesh

Tenancy laws  
1855–1908Schedules  
1935–50New identity  
AdivasiStatehood  
2000Costs  
repressionIn simple words: **tribes fought for land and freedom, and won laws.**

Anthropology

01

## 1. Understanding Tribal Social Movements

**IN SIMPLE WORDS**

A social movement is a group of people acting together, over time, to change (or to protect) some part of their society. Tribes in India rose against loss of land, forests and freedom more often than almost any other group. Their movements mixed religion, land and politics, and they changed both tribal society and the laws of the state.

**Example first: the Santal Hul of 1855.** On **30 June 1855**, thousands of **Santals** gathered at **Bhognadih** in the Damin-i-Koh (the Rajmahal hills tract settled by Santals) to hear the brothers **Sido and Kanhu Murmu**. The brothers said that **Thakur** (the supreme deity) had commanded them to end the rule of moneylenders, zamindars, police and the Company and to restore Santal rule. The rising was crushed by **January 1856**, but the government created a separate **Santal Parganas** district (**Act XXXVII of 1855**) with simpler administration. The Hul shows three features found in most tribal movements: a **material grievance** (land and debt), a

**religious charter** (a divine command through a prophet), and an **outcome in law** that recognised the tribe as a special case.

## 1.1 What makes a social movement

The Indian anthropologist **L.K. Mahapatra**, who studied movements in eastern India, described a social movement as a large number of people **deliberately banding together** for collective action to **alter, restore, protect or create** parts of their culture or social order, or to **redistribute power** in their favour. Three elements follow from this idea:

- **Collective action** that **lasts** beyond a single clash, through meetings, symbols and organisation.
- **Ideology**: a shared idea of what is wrong and what a better order would be (for the Mundas, **abua raj**, “our rule”).
- **Change-orientation**: the goal is to change or defend a social order, not merely to settle a private dispute.

## 1.2 Concepts borrowed from Paper 1

Tribal movements are often analysed with concepts from the anthropology of religion and change. The table sets out the main ones and an Indian case for each.

| CONCEPT                         | SCHOLAR (YEAR)                                                                           | MEANING                                                                                                    | INDIAN CASE                                                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Revitalization movement</b>  | <b>Anthony F.C. Wallace</b> (1956)                                                       | “A deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture” | Birsa’s new faith; Tana Bhagats                              |
| <b>Nativistic movement</b>      | <b>Ralph Linton</b> (1943)                                                               | An attempt to <b>revive or perpetuate</b> selected parts of one’s own culture under contact                | Seng Khasi; Heraka                                           |
| <b>Millenarian movement</b>     | <b>Stephen Fuchs</b> , <i>Rebellious Prophets</i> (1965); <b>K.S. Singh</b> (1966, 1983) | Expectation of a <b>sudden, total transformation</b> of the world, led by a prophet                        | Birsa’s Ulgulan; early Tana Bhagats                          |
| <b>Sanskritization movement</b> | <b>M.N. Srinivas</b> ; <b>Surajit Sinha</b>                                              | Claiming higher status by adopting upper-caste practices                                                   | <b>Bhumij</b> claims to Kshatriya rank; Bhagat vegetarianism |
| <b>Relative deprivation</b>     | <b>David Aberle</b> (1962)                                                               | Movements arise when people feel a gap between what they expect and what they get                          | Educated tribal elites leading statehood demands             |

These concepts overlap. Birsa’s movement was **revitalizing** (a reformed faith), **millenarian** (a coming kingdom), and **political** (an end to colonial rule) at the same time. **Wallace** (an American anthropologist who studied the Seneca) described a sequence: a **steady state**, rising **individual stress**, **cultural distortion**, then a **prophet’s vision** that is communicated, organised and adapted until it produces a **new steady state**. Indian prophets of 1855–1914 fit it, because colonial rule disrupted land, law and religion at once.

## COMMON CONFUSION

**Is every tribal “movement” a “revolt”?** No. A **revolt** is an armed outbreak, usually short. A **movement** is the wider, longer effort of which a revolt may be one episode. The Tana Bhagat movement had no armed revolt at all: it worked through **prayer, refusal of rent and non-cooperation**. The Jharkhand movement worked mostly through **parties and elections**.

### 1.3 Why tribes rose so often

Under colonial rule, tribes rebelled **more often and more violently** than almost any other community. **Verrier Elwin**, the missionary-turned-anthropologist of central Indian tribes, traced most tribal rebellions to a single source: the **loss of land and forests**. The main reasons were:

- **Land revenue and tenure:** communal tenures such as the Munda *khuntkatti* (the land of the lineage that first cleared the forest) were turned into **saleable private property** under landlords and revenue farmers (*thikadars*).
- **Dikus:** moneylenders, traders and landlords from the plains (*dikus*, outsiders) entered under colonial protection; interest of **50–500%** produced debt bondage (*kamioti* among the Santals).
- **Courts and police:** written law, distant courts and corrupt police favoured the literate outsider; **begar** (forced unpaid labour) served officials and landlords.
- **Forest laws:** reservation of forests and bans on shifting cultivation (*podu* in the Godavari hills) cut off food and livelihood.
- **Missions:** Christian missions brought schools and a new elite but also **division** between converts and non-converts (8.1).

02

## 2. Classifying Tribal Movements

## IN SIMPLE WORDS

Scholars have sorted tribal movements in different ways: by their aim (to go back, to stay as they are, or to change), by their content (religion, land, autonomy), or by region. No single scheme is perfect, because real movements often combine several aims at once.

### 2.1 The main typologies

The table compares the best-known classifications. Read across a row for each scholar's emphasis.

| SCHOLAR (YEAR)        | TYPES                                                                                                                                                                   | EMPHASIS                                                    |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| L.K. Mahapatra (1972) | <b>Reactionary</b> (back to the “good old days”),<br><b>conservative</b> (keep the status quo), <b>revisionary or revolutionary</b> (purify or remake the social order) | Orientation to change;<br>leaves out political<br>movements |

| SCHOLAR (YEAR)                                                                                                | TYPES                                                                                                                                                                                   | EMPHASIS                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Surajit Sinha (review of "tribal solidarity movements", 1968; in <i>The Tribal Situation in India</i> , 1972) | (1) ethnic rebellion, (2) reform movements, (3) political autonomy within the Indian Union, (4) secessionist movements, (5) agrarian unrest                                             | Historical sequence from rebellion to autonomy        |
| K.S. Singh ( <i>Tribal Movements in India</i> , 2 vols, 1982–83)                                              | Sinha's scheme with "Sanskritization" for reform and "cultural" for ethnic; by orientation: political autonomy and statehood, agrarian, forest-based, socio-religious or socio-cultural | Content and phase; colonial periodisation             |
| S.M. Dubey (1982), North-East                                                                                 | Religious and social reform, separate statehood, insurgent, cultural rights                                                                                                             | North-East only; thin lines between types             |
| Ghanshyam Shah ( <i>Social Movements in India</i> , 1990; rev. 2004)                                          | Ethnic (identity, religion), agrarian and forest rights, environmental, displacement and rehabilitation, political (statehood, nationality)                                             | Adds post-1970s ecological and displacement struggles |

Two lessons emerge. First, the older typologies were built on **colonial-era** movements and miss the **environmental and anti-displacement** struggles that now dominate; **Ghanshyam Shah**, a political scientist who reviewed the literature on Indian movements, added these. Second, the types **overlap**: the **Jharkhand** movement began as a socio-religious and educational effort, became a political party, and drew strength from forest struggles.

The data came from surveys: **V. Raghaviah**, a social worker in the Andhra tribal areas, listed about **70 revolts** (1778–1970) in *Tribal Revolts* (1971), and a **1976** Calcutta workshop under K.S. Singh produced *Tribal Movements in India*.

## ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL MOVEMENTS

# Typologies of Tribal Movements

Four ways of sorting the same struggles

[COMPARE](#)

**L.K. Mahapatra**  
1972 · by orientation

Reactionary

Conservative

Revisionary or revolutionary

**Surajit Sinha**  
1968 review · by history

Ethnic rebellion

Reform

Autonomy in the Union

Secessionist

Agrarian unrest

**K.S. Singh**  
1982–83 · by content

Political autonomy, statehood

Agrarian

Forest-based

Socio-religious, cultural

**Ghanshyam Shah**  
1990; 2004 · adds new issues

Ethnic

Agrarian, forest rights

Environmental

Displacement

Political

## Strength

Each scheme shows a different side: **aim**, **history** or **content**.

## Limit

Types **overlap**; early schemes miss **ecology** and **displacement**.

In simple words: **real movements mix religion, land and politics**.

Anthropology

## 2.2 A regional classification

Tribal movements can also be grouped by region, because history, ecology and colonial administration differed from region to region.

| REGION          | MAIN MOVEMENTS                                                                                                                         | CONTRIBUTING FACTORS                             |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| North-East      | <b>Tirot Singh</b> (1829–33); <b>Heraka</b> ; <b>Seng Khasi</b> ; <b>Naga</b> , <b>Mizo</b> , <b>Bodo</b> autonomy                     | Late, light colonial rule; Christianity; borders |
| Central-eastern | <b>Kol</b> , <b>Hul</b> , <b>Birsa</b> , <b>Tana Bhagat</b> , <b>Bhumkal</b> , <b>Jharkhand</b> , <b>Niyamgiri</b> , <b>Pathalgadi</b> | Dikus, zamindari, mining, displacement           |
| Western         | <b>Bhil</b> risings; <b>Mangarh</b> (1913); <b>Warli</b> revolt (1945–47); <b>Narmada</b> ; <b>Bhil Pradesh</b>                        | Princely states, forced labour, dams             |
| Southern        | <b>Rampa</b> (1879; 1922–24); <b>Komaram Bheem</b> ; <b>Srikakulam</b> (1967–70); <b>Indervelli</b> (1981); <b>Muthanga</b> (2003)     | Agency tracts, Nizam's rule, settlers            |

The table shows that **land and forest** run through every region, while the **North-East** is distinct in its emphasis on **nationhood and autonomy**, which arose from its separate colonial history (§5 and 7.3).

### 03 3. Phases of Tribal Movements

#### IN SIMPLE WORDS

Tribal movements changed over time. First tribes fought to keep the British out; then, as outsiders took their land, prophets mixed religion and protest; then tribes joined the national movement; and after 1947 they demanded states, land rights and protection from big projects.

**K.S. Singh**, an administrator-anthropologist who later headed the Anthropological Survey of India and became the leading historian of tribal movements, divided colonial-era movements into **three phases**, each tied to a stage of colonialism. Post-colonial movements form a fourth.

#### 3.1 First phase (1795–1860): primary resistance

- **Character:** resistance by tribes to the **establishment of British rule**, often led by chiefs and the **upper crust** of tribal society.
- **Cases:** the **Paharia** chiefs of the Rajmahal hills (from **1778**), whom the Bhagalpur Collector **Augustus Cleveland** tried to win over with pensions and a hill council; the **Tamar** risings of Chotanagpur (1789–1832); the **Kol insurrection of 1831–32** (Munda, Oraon, Ho), led by figures such as **Buddhu Bhagat**, against Sikh and Muslim **thikadars** who had been given Munda villages; the **Bhumij** rising of **Ganga Narain** (1832–33); the **Khasi** resistance under **Tirot Singh** (1829–33); and the **Santal Hul** (1855–56).
- **Outcome:** the Kol rising led to **Regulation XIII of 1833** and the **South-West Frontier Agency** (1834), a **non-regulation** area where ordinary laws did not apply automatically; the Hul led to the **Santal Parganas** district (1855). These were the first steps toward the **special administration** of tribal areas that later became the **Fifth and Sixth Schedules** (7.1).

#### 3.2 Second phase (1860–1920): agrarian and millenarian movements

- **Character:** **merchant capital**, rent and forest reservation penetrated deep into tribal economies. Movements, known by native terms such as **mulkui larai** (struggle for land), **fituri**, **meli**, **ulgulan** (great tumult) and **bhumkal** (earthquake), mixed **agrarian, religious and political** aims.
- **Influences:** **Bhakti** preachers introduced monotheism, vegetarianism and abstention from liquor; **Christianity** produced an educated tribal elite. Both fed **millenarian** hopes.
- **Cases:** the **Kherwar** movement among the Santals (1870s, under **Bhagirath Manjhi**); the **Sardari larai** of Munda and Oraon **sardars** (leaders) seeking restoration of **khuntkatti** and **bhuinhari** lands (to the 1890s); **Birsa Munda's Ulgulan** (1895–1900); the **Rampa** rebellion (1879–80); the **Bhumkal** of Bastar (1910, **Gunda Dhur**); **Govind Guru's** Bhil movement (to 1913); and the **Tana Bhagat** movement (from 1914).
- **Leadership:** now from the **lower rungs** of tribal society; Birsa was the son of a poor **raiyat** (tenant).

### 3.3 Third phase (1920–1947): nationalism, reform and autonomy

- **Three trends:** tribes joined the **Gandhian freedom struggle** (Tana Bhagats in Non-Cooperation; Gaidinliu); **reform and revival** movements purified tribal society (the **Haribaba** movement of **Duka Ho** among the Hos, 1931; **Seng Khasi**; the **Heraka**); and movements for **land, forest and autonomy** emerged under an educated **tribal middle class** (the **Adivasi Mahasabha**, 1938).
- **Cases:** **Rampa** rebellion of **Alluri Sitarama Raju** (1922–24); **Heraka** of **Jadonang** and **Rani Gaidinliu** (1920s–1932); **Komaram Bheem** against the Nizam (1928–40); **Praja Mandal** agitations in princely states against **begar** and extra levies (**abwabs**); and the **Warli** revolt (1945–47) organised by the Kisan Sabha.

### 3.4 Post-colonial movements (since 1947)

After Independence the main adversary became the **developmental state** itself: projects, mines and forest departments, rather than only the moneylender. K.S. Singh grouped these movements into **political** (autonomy, statehood, self-rule) and **agrarian and forest-based** (land restoration, forest rights, resistance to displacement). **Identity** movements (religion, language, script) and **environmental** movements became prominent from the 1980s.

#### ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL MOVEMENTS

### Tribal Movements by Phase

*From resistance to rights*

TIMELINE

#### 1795–1860 · Primary resistance

- **1831–32** **Kol** insurrection → non-regulation agency
- **1855** **Santal Hul** → Santal Parganas district

#### 1860–1920 · Prophets and land

- **1899–1900** **Birsa's Ulgulan** → CNT Act 1908
- **1910** **Bhumkal**, Bastar (Gunda Dhur)
- **1913–14** **Mangarh** (Bhils); **Tana Bhagat** (Oraons)

#### 1920–1947 · Nationalism and reform

- **1922–24** **Rampa** rebellion (Alluri Sitarama Raju)
- **1930s** **Heraka**, Gaidinliu; **Komaram Bheem**

#### After 1947 · Autonomy, land, ecology

- **1950** **Jharkhand Party**; 2000: **Jharkhand** state
- **1978–80** **Jungle Bachao**: sal against teak
- **2013** **Niyamgiri**: gram sabhas reject mining
- **2017–25** **Pathalgadi**; **Sarna** code; **Bhil Pradesh**

In simple words: **the enemy changed; land stayed central.**

Anthropology

### 3.5 How leadership, goals and composition changed

| FEATURE            | COLONIAL PHASES                                                                                                              | POST-COLONIAL                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Leaders</b>     | Chiefs (phase 1) → poor peasants and <b>prophets</b> (phase 2) → educated middle class and <b>Gandhian workers</b> (phase 3) | <b>Middle-class</b> politicians, priests, teachers, activists; NGOs                                                               |
| <b>Idiom</b>       | Religious, <b>millenarian</b>                                                                                                | Mostly <b>secular</b> : rights, Constitution, PESA, FRA                                                                           |
| <b>Goals</b>       | Restore pre-colonial polity, <b>khuntkatti</b> land, end of rent; <b>tribal raj</b>                                          | Statehood, autonomy, land and forest rights, no displacement, recognition                                                         |
| <b>Composition</b> | One tribe, or a tribe with its <b>service castes</b> (the Hul included artisans)                                             | <b>Multi-tribal</b> and <b>multi-caste</b> coalitions (Jharkhand: Adivasis with <b>sadans</b> , the non-tribal original settlers) |

The shift from **prophets to parties** reflects education and democracy; the core demands for **land, forest and self-rule** stayed the same.

## 04 4. Major Movements: Case Studies

### IN SIMPLE WORDS

A few movements shaped tribal history and the law. The Santal and Munda risings won tenancy laws; the Tana Bhagats joined Gandhi; the Bhils, Gonds and Nagas each found their own leaders; and the long Jharkhand movement finally won a state.

### 4.1 Santal Hul (1855–56)

- **Setting:** Santals settled the **Damin-i-Koh** from the late eighteenth century, clearing forest at the foot of the Rajmahal hills. Bengali and up-country **moneylenders** and **zamindars** followed, charging ruinous interest and enslaving debtors through **kamioti** bonds; police and courts sided with them.
- **Leadership and ideology:** **Sido, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav Murmu**, with their sisters **Phulo and Jhano**; a divine command from **Thakur**; the demand to **expel dikus** and pay only fixed, low rents.
- **Composition and end:** many **artisan and service castes** joined, making it a broad **agrarian** rising; martial law ran to **3 January 1856**, and Sido and Kanhu were executed.
- **Outcome:** the **Santal Parganas** non-regulation district (**Act XXXVII of 1855**); recognition of village headmen (**manjhi, parganait**); later the **Santhal Parganas Tenancy (Supplementary Provisions) Act, 1949**, which restricts transfer of Santal land.

- **Interpretation:** W.J. Culshaw and W.G. Archer (1945) traced it to debt, corruption and denial of redress; the historian **Ranajit Guha** (*Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, 1983) read it as a conscious peasant insurgency, not blind frenzy. **30 June** is **Hul Diwas** in Jharkhand.

## 4.2 Birsa Munda and the Ulgulan (1895–1900)

**Birsa Munda** is the best-documented tribal leader of colonial India, and his movement is the classic Indian case of a **millenarian revitalization** movement.

- **Life:** born on **15 November 1875** (some records give 1874) at **Ulihatu** (now Khunti district) in a poor Munda family; studied at a **German mission school** at Chaibasa; came under the influence of a **Vaishnava** teacher (Anand Panre) and adopted sacred thread, vegetarianism and Hindu ideas of purity.
- **Background:** the **Sardari larai** had failed to win back **khuntkatti** land through petitions; famine (1896–97) deepened distress.
- **The prophet (from 1895):** Birsa declared himself a messenger of **Singbonga** (the supreme deity), healed the sick and preached a **new faith**: one god, no animal sacrifice, no liquor, cleanliness, and the end of witchcraft. Followers called him **Dharti Aba** ("father of the earth") and **Bhagwan**.
- **Political turn:** he urged refusal of rent and forced labour and spoke of **abua raj** (our rule) replacing the Queen's rule. Arrested in **1895**, he was jailed for two years and released in **1897**.
- **The Ulgulan (1899–1900):** around **Christmas Eve 1899** his followers attacked **missions, police stations and officials** in the Khunti–Tamar–Ranchi area. Led by lieutenants such as **Gaya Munda**, they were fired on by troops at **Dombari Buru** on **9 January 1900**. Birsa was captured on **3 February 1900** and died in **Ranchi jail** on **9 June 1900**.
- **Ideology:** Birsa combined **Munda belief, Hindu reform and Christian ideas** (one god, a prophet, a coming kingdom), and attacked missions as well as landlords because they too had failed to restore Munda land.

### Impact of his sacrifice on tribal society:

- **Law:** the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908** recognised **khuntkatti** tenure and restricted the transfer of tribal land to non-tribals; it remains the basic land law of the region.
- **Religion and community:** **Birsaites** continued his faith; Munda solidarity and pride grew.
- **Identity and politics:** Birsa became the **icon of Jharkhand**; the state was created on his birth anniversary, **15 November 2000**. He is the only tribal leader whose **portrait hangs in the Central Hall of Parliament**.
- **National memory:** since **2021**, **15 November** is **Janjatiya Gaurav Divas** (Tribal Pride Day); **2024–25** was **Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh**, his **150th birth anniversary** year.
- **Scholarship:** **K.S. Singh's** *The Dust-Storm and the Hanging Mist* (1966), revised as *Birsa Munda and His Movement 1874–1901* (1983), analysed it as a **millenarian movement** rooted in agrarian grievance.

## ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL MOVEMENTS

# Birsa Munda's Ulgulan

*Anatomy of a millenarian movement*

PROCESS

**Grievance**Khuntkatti land lost; **begar**, rent, debt; famine**Failure**

Sardari petitions and courts bring no relief

**Prophet**1895: messenger of **Singbonga**; one god, no sacrifice, no liquor**Ideology****Abua raj**: end the Queen's rule; no rent**Revolt**Christmas 1899 attacks; **Dombari Buru**, 9 Jan 1900**Repression**Captured 3 Feb; died in **Ranchi jail**, 9 June 1900

## OUTCOMES

**Law****CNT Act 1908**: khuntkatti protected**Faith****Birsaites**; Munda pride**Identity****Jharkhand** icon; 15 NovemberIn simple words: **a prophet turned land grievance into a movement.**

Anthropology

## 4.3 Tana Bhagat movement (from 1914)

- **Founder:** **Jatra Oraon** (Jatra Bhagat) of **Chingri** village, Bishunpur (now **Gumla** district), who in **April 1914** announced a revelation from **Dharmes** (the Oraon supreme god).
- **Teachings:** give up belief in **spirits and ghosts**, **animal sacrifice**, **meat and liquor**, and the dances of the youth dormitory; live a pure, devotional (**bhagat**) life; **do not pay rent** to zamindars or work as labourers for outsiders. "Tana" comes from the Kurukh word for **pulling**, read as pulling out evil spirits or pulling the Oraons together.
- **Causes:** rent and **begar** under zamindars; failure of earlier land struggles; and a gap between **Christian Oraons**, who had gained from mission education, and the traditional **sansari** Oraons.
- **Course:** Jatra was jailed in **1914**; later leaders (including a woman, **Litho Oraon**, and **Sibu Oraon** in 1919) kept it alive. From **1920–21** the Tana Bhagats joined the **Non-Cooperation movement**, wore khadi, followed Gandhi and refused rent and taxes; many **lost their land** in auctions for arrears.
- **Outcome:** the **Ranchi District Tana Bhagat Raiyats Agricultural Lands Restoration Act, 1947** (Bihar Act II of 1948) provided for return of lands sold for arrears of rent during freedom movements of **1913–1942**. Tana Bhagats still wear **white**, worship the **tricolour** at home and are honoured as freedom fighters.

- **Assessment:** a **religious reform** with millenarian hopes became a **non-violent political** movement; its **Sanskritization** (vegetarianism, purity) made the Bhagats a distinct status group among the Oraons. The historian **Sangeeta Dasgupta** shows that it drew on hierarchies within the Oraons as much as on protest against outsiders.

#### 4.4 Bhil movements and Mangarh (1913)

- **Govind Guru** (Govindgiri), a **Banjara** reformer from Dungarpur, preached among the **Bhils** of the Rajasthan–Gujarat border through a fellowship called the **Samp Sabha**: no liquor or meat, cleanliness, education, and refusal of **forced labour** and unjust revenue. His followers kept a sacred fire (**dhuni**), the mark of the **Bhagat** movement among the Bhils.
- **Mangarh, 17 November 1913:** thousands of Bhils gathered on **Mangarh** hill (Banswara) refused to disperse; troops of the princely states and the **Mewar Bhil Corps** fired on them. There is no accurate count of the dead; local tradition remembers it as the **"Adivasi Jallianwala"**. Govind Guru was imprisoned.
- **Afterlife:** the demand for a **Bhil state** has revived: at a rally at **Mangarh Dham** in **July 2024**, Bhil organisations demanded **Bhil Pradesh** from **49 districts** of four states and asserted that tribal religion is **distinct from Hinduism**.

#### 4.5 Rampa rebellion (1922–24)

- **Setting:** the **Godavari and Vizagapatam Agency** (now Andhra Pradesh), home of **Koya** and **Konda Dora** hill people, where the **Madras Forest Act, 1882** restricted **podu** (shifting cultivation) and forest use, and officials imposed **forced labour** on road building.
- **Leadership:** **Alluri Sitarama Raju**, a non-tribal ascetic who lived among the hill people, with the Koya leaders **Gam Gantam Dora** and **Gam Mallu Dora**.
- **Course:** raids on police stations at **Chintapalli** and nearby posts in **August 1922** began a two-year **guerrilla war**; Raju was captured and shot on **7 May 1924**.
- **Context:** an earlier **Rampa rebellion of 1879–80** (against a non-tribal **mansabdar**, toddy rules and fraudulent decrees) led to protective rules consolidated in the **Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act, 1917**, which capped interest and controlled land transfer: a model for later tribal land laws.

#### 4.6 Gond movements: Bastar, Komaram Bheem and Adilabad

- **Bhumkal (1910), Bastar:** against **forest reservation**, **begar** and traders, led publicly by **Gunda Dhur**, a Dhurwa; mango boughs and arrows circulated as a call to arms; suppressed within weeks.
- **Komaram Bheem (1928–1940):** a **Gond** leader of the Asifabad forests (now Telangana) who resisted the **Nizam's** forest officials and revenue demands from **Jodeghat** and asked for Gond self-rule; he was killed in a police encounter in **1940**. He is credited with the slogan **"Jal, Jangal, Zameen"** (water, forest, land), now the watchword of Adivasi movements across India. The Austrian anthropologist **Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf**, then working with the Nizam's government on tribal affairs, documented the grievances behind the rising.
- **Indervelli (20 April 1981):** police fired on **Gonds** gathering for a meeting on land restoration and encroachment by settlers and **Lambadas** (traders added to the state's ST list in the 1970s); the official toll was **13**, rights groups put it far higher. Land struggles were turning toward the **radical left**.

- **Gondwana:** a **Gondwana** state for the Gond belt has been demanded since the 1950s, later by the **Gondwana Gantantra Party** (1991).

#### 4.7 North–East movements (summary)

North-Eastern movements stand apart because of **late annexation**, **Excluded Areas** status (1935), early **Christianity** and schooling, and **international borders**. Insurgency, autonomy and ethnic conflict are discussed in 7.3.

- **Heraka (Zeliangrong Nagas):** **Haipou Jadonang** (hanged **29 August 1931**) launched a **reformed indigenous faith** among the **Zeme, Liangmai and Rongmei** against both missions and British rule; his cousin **Gaidinliu**, arrested on **17 October 1932** and jailed till **1947**, was given the title “**Rani**” by **Nehru**. The movement was **nativistic, revitalizing and nationalist** at once.
- **Seng Khasi (from 23 November 1899):** an organisation founded in Shillong by sixteen young **Khasis** to protect **Niam Khasi** (the Khasi religion), matrilineal custom and culture against conversion; it still holds the **Seng Kut Snem** festival each November.
- **Naga movement:** from the **Naga Club** (1918) and its memorandum to the **Simon Commission** (1929), through the **Naga National Council** (1946), to statehood (**1963**) and the **Framework Agreement (2015)**; it forged one **Naga nationhood** out of many tribes.
- **Mizo and Bodo:** the **Mizo National Front** rising (**1966**) ended in the **Mizo Accord (1986)**; the **Bodo** movement of the **All Bodo Students’ Union** won the **Bodoland Territorial Council** (2003) and Region (2020).

#### 4.8 The Jharkhand movement: from ethnicity to region to statehood

**Example first: the 1952 election.** In the first general election, the **Jharkhand Party** of **Jaipal Singh Munda** (an Oxford-educated Munda who had captained India’s Olympic hockey team in 1928) won about **32 seats** in the Bihar Assembly and became the **main opposition**. A tribal demand had become a **regional political force** within five years of Independence.

| PERIOD  | ORGANISATION OR EVENT                                                            | CHARACTER                                                              |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1915    | <b>Chota Nagpur Unnati Samaj</b> (educated Christian tribals)                    | Education and social uplift; memorandum to the Simon Commission (1928) |
| 1938    | <b>Adivasi Mahasabha</b> ; <b>Jaipal Singh</b> president from 1939               | Pan-tribal political front for a separate province                     |
| 1949–50 | <b>Jharkhand Party</b> (reorganised March 1949, launched <b>1 January 1950</b> ) | Opened to non-tribals; <b>regional</b> rather than only tribal         |
| 1955    | <b>States Reorganisation Commission</b> rejects the demand                       | No common language; tribes a minority in the region                    |
| 1963    | Jharkhand Party <b>merges with Congress</b>                                      | Movement fragments into splinter parties                               |

| PERIOD  | ORGANISATION OR EVENT                                                                                                            | CHARACTER                                                                                                                            |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1972    | <b>Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Shibu Soren, Binod Bihari Mahato, A.K. Roy)</b>                                                       | Adivasi– <b>sadan</b> (non-tribal original settlers, e.g. Kurmi Mahatos)–worker alliance; Jharkhand as an “ <b>internal colony</b> ” |
| 1978–80 | <b>Jungle Bachao Andolan</b> , Singhbhum; <b>Gua</b> firing (8 September 1980)                                                   | Forest struggle against replacing <b>sal</b> with <b>teak</b>                                                                        |
| 1986–89 | <b>All Jharkhand Students Union</b> ; economic blockades                                                                         | Mass mobilisation                                                                                                                    |
| 1994–95 | After the <b>Committee on Jharkhand Matters</b> (1989), the <b>Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council</b> (Act of 1994, council 1995) | Partial autonomy, judged inadequate                                                                                                  |
| 2000    | <b>Bihar Reorganisation Act</b> (25 August); <b>Jharkhand</b> state on <b>15 November 2000</b>                                   | Statehood achieved                                                                                                                   |

The table shows a steady **widening of the social base**. The movement began among **educated Christian Mundas and Oraons**, became a **pan-tribal** front, then a **regional** movement that included non-tribal **sadans** and workers, and argued that the region supplied a large share of India’s **minerals** but received little of the benefit: a transition **from ethnicity to regionalism**.

- **Decline in the 1960s:** the merger; rivalry between **Christian and non-Christian** tribals; non-Christian support shifting to other parties.
- **Revival: displacement** by mines, dams and steel towns; **in-migration** that made tribes a minority (**26.2%** of Jharkhand in **2011**); alliances with labour and peasants.
- **After statehood:** proposed amendments to the **CNT and SPT Acts** (2016–17) were withdrawn after protests; **Pathalgadi** (2017–18), the **Sarna** code and the **Kurmi ST** demand keep tribal anxieties alive (**\$4.9–4.10**).

## ANTHROPOLOGY · TRIBAL MOVEMENTS

# The Jharkhand Movement

*From ethnicity to region to statehood*

PATHWAY

- 1915 **Chota Nagpur Unnati Samaj**: educated Christian tribals
- 1938 **Adivasi Mahasabha**; Jaipal Singh leads from 1939
- 1950 **Jharkhand Party**; main opposition in 1952
- 1955–63 SRC says no; party **merges with Congress**
- 1972 **JMM**: Adivasis, sadans, workers; "internal colony"
- 1978–89 **Jungle Bachao**; AJSU; economic blockades
- 1995 **Autonomous Council**: too little
- 2000 **Jharkhand state**, 15 November

## WIDENING SOCIAL BASE

Christian elite



All tribes



Tribes + sadans



Region

**Paradox**: tribes were only **26.2%** of the new state in 2011.

In simple words: **statehood came when tribe became region.**

Anthropology

**The 2000 states compared.** Three new states were created in November 2000. Their movements differed in how far they were **tribal**.

| STATE (DATE)                     | MOVEMENT                                                                                                  | TRIBAL SHARE (2011) | CHARACTER                                                                |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Jharkhand (15 Nov 2000)</b>   | Jharkhand Party, JMM, AJSU                                                                                | <b>26.2%</b>        | <b>Tribal-led</b> , later regional; minerals and displacement            |
| <b>Chhattisgarh (1 Nov 2000)</b> | Regional demand; <b>Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha</b> of <b>Shankar Guha Niyogi</b> among miners and peasants | <b>30.6%</b>        | <b>Regional backwardness</b> more than tribal identity                   |
| <b>Uttaranchal (9 Nov 2000)</b>  | <b>Uttarakhand Kranti Dal</b> (1979); mass agitation of 1994                                              | about <b>2.9%</b>   | <b>Hill regional</b> movement; tribes (Tharu, Bhotia, Jaunsari) marginal |

Tribal mobilisation alone did not create states; success came through a wider **regional** case, leaving tribes **minorities** in "their" new states.

## 4.9 Agrarian, forest and anti-displacement movements after 1947

- **Naxalbari (1967) and Srikakulam (1967–70):** Santal sharecroppers in north Bengal and Savara and Jatapu hill people in Andhra joined armed agrarian struggles led by the radical left; the link between **land alienation** and **Left-wing extremism** is discussed in 7.3.
- **Jungle Bachao Andolan (1978–80):** Ho and other tribals of Singhbhum resisted replacement of **sal** forest (sacred and food-giving) by commercial **teak**; police firing at **Gua** on **8 September 1980** killed several Adivasis.
- **Koel-Karo:** Munda villages blocked a hydroelectric project on the Koel and Karo rivers for decades with **barricades** and a round-the-clock vigil; police firing at **Tapkara** on **2 February 2001** killed eight people; the dams have not been built.
- **Muthanga (19 February 2003):** the **Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha** of **C.K. Janu** occupied land in the Wayanad sanctuary after the Kerala government failed to honour a 2001 land agreement; the police eviction left at least two dead (a policeman and an Adivasi leader), and the official toll later rose to five.
- **Niyamgiri:** the **Dongria Kondh** opposed bauxite mining on their sacred hill; the **Supreme Court (18 April 2013)** left the decision to the **gram sabhas**, all twelve of which rejected the project (6.3a).
- **Hasdeo Arand:** Gond villages of Chhattisgarh opposed coal mining in a dense forest; the State Assembly passed a resolution on **26 July 2022** asking the Centre to cancel the coal blocks.
- **Pathalgadi (2017–18):** villages of **Khunti** erected stone slabs (**pathalgadi**, a Munda memorial custom) inscribed with **PESA** and Fifth Schedule provisions, declaring the gram sabha sovereign; sedition cases against villagers were withdrawn by the new state government on **29 December 2019**.

These movements use **law and the Constitution** (PESA, FRA, Fifth Schedule) as weapons, join **sacred geography** to ecological argument, and draw support from **NGOs and activists**.

## 4.10 Identity and recognition movements

- **Sarna religion code:** tribal organisations of Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Bengal demand a separate **Sarna** column in the Census; about **4.9 lakh** people wrote “Sarna” under “Other religions” in **2011**; the **Jharkhand Assembly** passed a resolution for a **Sarna Adivasi Dharma Code** on **11 November 2020** (detail in 8.1).
- **Against “pseudo-tribal” claims:** when the **Kurmi** (Kudmi) community staged **rail blockades** on **20 September 2025** in Jharkhand, Bengal and Odisha demanding ST status, tribal organisations held large counter-rallies in Ranchi, Dhanbad and Gumla in **October 2025** to defend the ST category (pseudo-tribalism is discussed in 7.3).

05

## 5. North–East and Central India Compared

### IN SIMPLE WORDS

Tribal movements in the North-East and in central India grew from different histories. In the North-East, tribes were never fully ruled from the plains and many became Christian and educated early, so

they asked for nationhood and autonomy. In central India, tribes lost land to settlers and projects, so their movements centred on land, forests and a tribal state within India.

The table compares the two regions on the points that explain their difference.

| POINT                | NORTH-EAST                                                                                                       | CENTRAL INDIA                                                                  |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Colonial rule</b> | Late, indirect; <b>Excluded Areas</b> ; Inner Line                                                               | Early, direct; zamindari; non-regulation tracts                                |
| <b>Demography</b>    | Tribes a <b>majority</b> in most hill states                                                                     | Tribes a <b>minority</b> amid dikus and migrants                               |
| <b>Religion</b>      | Large <b>Christian</b> majorities among Nagas, Mizos, Khasis; revival movements (Heraka, Seng Khasi, Donyi-Polo) | Mixed: Sarna, Hindu, Christian; <b>Sanskritizing</b> Bhagat movements          |
| <b>Main goal</b>     | <b>Nationhood</b> , autonomy, sometimes sovereignty                                                              | <b>Land, forest</b> , protection, a <b>tribal state within India</b>           |
| <b>Methods</b>       | Insurgency and negotiated <b>accords</b>                                                                         | Revolts, then <b>parties, elections, gram sabhas, courts</b>                   |
| <b>Outcomes</b>      | Separate states, <b>Sixth Schedule</b> councils, accords                                                         | <b>Tenancy laws</b> , Fifth Schedule, <b>Jharkhand</b> and <b>Chhattisgarh</b> |

**Current status.** In the **North-East**, **Naga** talks remain unresolved a decade after the 2015 Framework Agreement, the **Bodo** accord of 2020 brought relative peace, and violence in **Manipur** since **2023** shows land and ST status dividing communities (7.3). In **central India**, struggles centre on **mining and forest diversion** (Hasdeo, Niyamgiri), **PESA** self-rule (Pathalgadi), **religious identity** (Sarna code) and defence of the ST category (the 2025 Kurmi agitation).

06

## 6. Causes, Consequences and Assessment

### IN SIMPLE WORDS

Tribal movements arose from loss of land, debt, forest laws, outside rule and threats to culture. They won important laws and new states and gave tribes a shared identity, but they also brought repression, violence and new divisions inside tribal society.

## 6.1 Causes

| TYPE                           | CAUSES                                                                                 | EXAMPLE                                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Economic</b>                | Land alienation, rent, debt bondage, forced labour, low prices for forest produce      | Santal <i>kamioti</i> ; Munda <i>khuntkatti</i> loss     |
| <b>Ecological</b>              | Forest reservation, bans on shifting cultivation, mining, dams                         | Rampa ( <i>podu</i> ), Bhumkal, Jungle Bachao, Niyamgiri |
| <b>Political</b>               | Alien courts, police, revenue farmers; weak safeguards; no participation               | Kol ( <i>thikadars</i> ); Pathalgadi                     |
| <b>Cultural-religious</b>      | Threat to custom and religion, missionary pressure, contempt for tribal ways           | Seng Khasi, Heraka, Sarna                                |
| <b>Demographic</b>             | In-migration reducing tribes to minorities                                             | Chotanagpur, Tripura                                     |
| <b>Leadership and ideology</b> | Charismatic prophets; later an educated elite experiencing <b>relative deprivation</b> | Birsa; Jaipal Singh                                      |

After 1947, unrest has been fed by **weak implementation of safeguards**: Fifth Schedule powers rarely used, **outsiders** taking jobs and land in industrial areas, meagre **compensation** for displacement, and cultivators treated as **encroachers** (6.2, 6.3).

## 6.2 Consequences

- **Protective law**: the Santal Parganas district (1855) and tenancy laws; the **CNT Act (1908)**; the **Agency Tracts Act (1917)**; the Tana Bhagat land restoration (1947); and, in a long line, the **Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas** of 1935 and the **Fifth and Sixth Schedules**.
- **New identities**: scattered tribes came to see themselves as **Adivasis** (original inhabitants), **Jharkhandis** or **Nagas**; the North-East saw old tribes take new names and small tribes merge into larger ones.
- **Institutions and reform**: tribal parties, autonomous councils and new **states**; abstinence, education and reform of custom (Bhagats, Heraka), sometimes **Sanskritizing** the tribe.
- **Costs**: heavy loss of life in repression; **internal splits** (Christian against non-Christian, advanced against backward tribes); **elite capture** of movement gains; and, in places, cycles of **insurgency and counter-insurgency**.

## 6.3 Role in the emergence of tribal identity

Movements **made** tribal identity as much as they expressed it: the **Hul** and **Ulgulan** gave Santals and Mundas heroes, songs and anniversaries; **Jharkhand** created a **regional identity** including **sadans**; the **Naga** movement fused many tribes into a nation. The Indian sociologist **Virginius Xaxa** shows that **Adivasi** itself became a political identity through such struggles: a claim to **prior rights** as original inhabitants.

## 6.4 Contribution to the freedom struggle

| MOVEMENT                           | CONTRIBUTION                                                    |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Santal Hul (1855)</b>           | Among the earliest mass armed challenges to Company rule        |
| <b>Birsa's Ulgulan (1899–1900)</b> | Demand for <b>abua raj</b> (self-rule) against the Queen's rule |
| <b>Tana Bhagats (1914 onward)</b>  | Non-violent non-cooperation, refusal of rent, Gandhian loyalty  |
| <b>Govind Guru (1913)</b>          | Mass Bhil assertion against princely and colonial exactions     |
| <b>Rampa (1922–24)</b>             | Guerrilla war against the Madras government                     |
| <b>Gaidinliu (1930s)</b>           | Naga resistance linked to the national movement                 |
| <b>Laxman Nayak (1942)</b>         | Quit India mobilisation in <b>Koraput</b> , Odisha              |

Long **left out** of nationalist histories, tribal resistance now has official recognition through **Janjatiya Gaurav Divas** and **tribal freedom fighters' museums**.

## 6.5 Strengths and weaknesses

| STRENGTHS                                                              | WEAKNESSES                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Won protective laws and administrative safeguards</b>               | <b>Violence</b> and harsh repression; lives lost                     |
| <b>Built leadership and political consciousness</b>                    | <b>Fragmented</b> : local, one tribe at a time, rarely pan-Indian    |
| <b>Created states and autonomous councils</b>                          | <b>Elite capture</b> : gains to the educated and Christian sections  |
| <b>Put land, forest and consent on the national agenda (PESA, FRA)</b> | Some movements were <b>captured</b> by insurgent or extremist groups |

The balance is positive: the main **legal protections** tribes enjoy today were **won through movements**, not granted freely. But movements have been better at **winning laws** than at securing their **implementation**. The usual remedies follow: real **participation** of tribes in decisions, closing **loopholes** in land laws, cheap **credit** against moneylenders, and wider use of **Sixth Schedule**-type self-government.

## 6.6 Anthropological interpretations

- **Revitalization view** (Wallace, Fuchs, K.S. Singh): cultural responses to the stress of contact, with prophets remaking religion.
- **Agrarian view** (K.S. Singh, Ranajit Guha): **peasant insurgencies** over land and rent; tribe and peasant overlap in central India.

- **Identity view** (Surajit Sinha, Xaxa): **solidarity** and identity formation, from tribe to Adivasi to region.
- **Political economy view** (the “internal colony” argument; Ghanshyam Shah): resistance to **resource extraction** by state and capital.

A full explanation of any one movement, such as Birsa’s, needs all four: **land, religion, identity** and **power**.

## 07 Key Terms

| TERM                           | MEANING IN SIMPLE WORDS                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Social movement</b>         | Sustained group action to change or protect society        |
| <b>Revitalization movement</b> | Effort to build a more satisfying culture (Wallace)        |
| <b>Nativistic movement</b>     | Effort to revive or keep one’s own culture (Linton)        |
| <b>Millenarian movement</b>    | Hope of a sudden, perfect new world under a prophet        |
| <b>Diku</b>                    | Outsider, exploiter from the plains                        |
| <b>Khuntkatti</b>              | Munda land held by the lineage that first cleared it       |
| <b>Kamioti</b>                 | Santal debt bondage to moneylenders                        |
| <b>Hul / Ulgulan</b>           | Santal “revolution” / Munda “great tumult”                 |
| <b>Abua raj</b>                | “Our rule”: Birsa’s goal of self-rule                      |
| <b>Bhagat movement</b>         | Reform movement of purity, devotion and abstinence         |
| <b>Heraka</b>                  | Reformed Zeliangrong Naga faith of Jadonang and Gaidinliu  |
| <b>Seng Khasi</b>              | Organisation protecting the Khasi religion (1899)          |
| <b>Sadan</b>                   | Non-tribal original settlers of Chotanagpur                |
| <b>Internal colony</b>         | A region exploited for resources by the rest of the nation |
| <b>Pathalgadi</b>              | Stone slabs declaring gram sabha self-rule                 |
| <b>Jal, Jangal, Zameen</b>     | “Water, forest, land”: slogan credited to Komaram Bheem    |

08

## Contemporary Developments

- **Birsa Munda at 150: Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh** ended on **15 November 2025**; **museums** of tribal freedom movements are being built.
- **Kurmi ST agitation:** rail blockades (**20 September 2025**) met large tribal counter-rallies in **October 2025**.
- **Bhil Pradesh:** the **July 2024** Mangarh rally revived the Bhil state demand.
- **Indervelli:** the Telangana government officially observed the martyrs' anniversary for the first time on **20 April 2025**, 44 years after the firing.

09

## Diagrams to Master

- **Topic map:** concept → typologies → phases → major cases → outcomes (law, identity, statehood).
- **Typologies compared:** Mahapatra (3), Surajit Sinha (5), K.S. Singh (4 orientations), Ghanshyam Shah (5).
- **Timeline by phase:** 1831 Kol → 1855 Hul → 1900 Ulgulan → 1913 Mangarh → 1914 Tana Bhagat → 1922 Rampa → 1950 → 2000 Jharkhand → 2013 Niyamgiri.
- **Birsa's Ulgulan:** grievance → prophet → reformed faith → revolt → repression → CNT Act 1908.
- **Jharkhand pathway:** 1915 → 1938 → 1950 → 1963 → 1972 → 1995 → 2000, with the widening social base.

10

## Revision Grid

| SCHOLAR               | WORK (YEAR)                                                                            | KEY IDEA                                                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>K.S. Singh</b>     | <i>Birsa Munda and His Movement</i> (1983); <i>Tribal Movements in India</i> (1982–83) | Millenarian Ulgulan; three colonial phases; four orientations |
| <b>Surajit Sinha</b>  | "Tribal solidarity movements" (1972)                                                   | Five types: rebellion to agrarian unrest                      |
| <b>L.K. Mahapatra</b> | Typology (1972)                                                                        | Reactionary, conservative, revisionary                        |
| <b>Ghanshyam Shah</b> | <i>Social Movements in India</i> (1990; 2004)                                          | Adds environmental and displacement movements                 |
| <b>V. Raghaviah</b>   | <i>Tribal Revolts</i> (1971)                                                           | About 70 revolts, 1778–1970                                   |
| <b>A.F.C. Wallace</b> | "Revitalization Movements" (1956)                                                      | Stages from stress to new steady state                        |
| <b>Ralph Linton</b>   | "Nativistic Movements" (1943)                                                          | Reviving or perpetuating culture                              |
| <b>Ranajit Guha</b>   | <i>Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency</i> (1983)                                 | Tribal risings as conscious insurgency                        |

| SCHOLAR       | WORK (YEAR)                             | KEY IDEA                        |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Virginus Xaxa | <i>State, Society and Tribes</i> (2008) | Adivasi as a political identity |



## Previous Year Questions



2026

Write notes on: Tana Bhagat movement.

2024

Write an essay on the life history of tribal activist and freedom fighter Birsa Munda. What was the impact of his sacrifice on tribal society?

2022

Compare the nature of tribal movements between North-East and Central India. Briefly mention the current status of existing tribal movements in these areas.

2013

Write a note in 150 words on Ethnic movements in India.

2008

Write a note on Revivalistic Movements.

2006

Critically review Tana Bhagat Movement-its causes and effects.

2004

Classify the tribal movements in contemporary India in a regional perspective and analyse the contributive factors.

2003

Identify the causes and consequences of major tribal movements in India.

2001

Write a note on Birsa Movement.

2000

Assess the political and economic role of tribal and rural movements in the creation of the new states of Uttaranchal Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

1999

Write a note on Jharkhand Movement.

1994

Write a note on Tribal movement-pros and cons.

1991

Discuss the socio-economic and political characteristics of revitalization movements in tribal India. How are they affected by culture-contact with outsiders ?

- 1990 Discuss the role of sociopolitical movements in the emergence of tribal identity in the Indian context.
- 2026 *Unit 4:* Write notes on: Kumar Suresh Singh's contribution in studying tribal movements.
- 2026 *Unit 6.3:* Make a critical appraisal of Niyamgiri movement against mining-induced displacement.
- 2019 *Unit 7.3:* What has been the contribution of tribal people to the Indian Independence movement ?
- 2019 *Unit 5.3:* Discuss how the elements of Little and Great Traditions combine in the emergence of social/political/religious movements, giving any one example to illustrate the issue.
- 2016 *Unit 9.3:* Write a note in 150 words on Anthropological interpretation of ethnic and political movements.
- 2009 *Unit 9.3:* In what ways has anthropology contributed to the understanding of ethnic & political movements in India?
- 2009 *Unit 7.3:* Write a note on Tribal unrest in Central India.
- 2003 *Unit 7.3:* What is regionalism ? Evaluate how regionalism has stimulated political movements in India.
- 1996 *Unit 2:* Discuss the major linguistic divisions in the Indian population. Also point out the role of language in ethno-political movements.
- 1995 *Unit 9.3:* To what extent, ethnicity is responsible for the tribal movements in India? Elaborate with suitable examples.

FREE SAMPLE

## Liked the sample? Get the complete notes.

You have read 2 of 15 chapters of Anthropology Optional — Paper II, Part B: Tribal India. The complete book covers every unit below in the same format: a topic map and plain-language explanation for each topic, diagrams, key terms, and the previous year questions after every chapter.

15

Chapters

4

Units

534

Previous year questions

359

Pages

### IN THE COMPLETE BOOK

#### 06 Tribal Situation in India

4 chapters · from page 4

#### 07 Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs

5 chapters · from page 101

#### 08 Religions, Tribes and the Nation-State

2 chapters · from page 220

#### 09 Tribal Administration and Development

4 chapters · from page 266

COMPLETE NOTES

## Get Anthropology Paper II Complete Notes

Part A and Part B of Paper II in one download, with the topic-wise PYQ book free: every unit in the same format as the chapters you have just read.

- ✓ 33 chapters across both parts, in syllabus order
- ✓ Previous year questions after every chapter
- ✓ 171 diagrams, plus the 1,855-question PYQ book free



SCAN TO OPEN

₹699

Get the complete paper →

Questions: [support@lotusarise.com](mailto:support@lotusarise.com) · [lotusarise.com](https://lotusarise.com)