



# THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES OF CHHATTISGARH: IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING KEY CHALLENGES

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**Abstract:** Some of the earliest and most varied kinds of social organisation in human history can be found in tribal communities. The distinctive cultural, social, economic, and political institutions that have developed over many centuries in these societies that ultimately identify them. Tribal societies are normally found around the world; they frequently live in isolated, geographically diverse areas. Tribes are organisations of people who have family ties, a common ancestry, and a shared culture, language, customs, and traditions that form the basis of their collective identity. Protecting tribal rights, encouraging their development, and ensuring their involvement in decision-making processes have all been becoming increasingly important in recent years. There are initiatives underway to reduce socioeconomic inequalities, offer access to infrastructure, healthcare, and education, and give tribal groups the power to determine their own destinies. Tribal people have played a significant role in the social fabric of India for many years. The country is renowned for its rich cultural variety. These tribes, often known as Adivasis, make up a sizeable section of India's population and have distinctive traditions, dialects, and customs. The central Indian state of Chhattisgarh is home to a wide variety of tribal people. In this paper we are going to discuss about different types of tribal Communities found in the state with a short discussion on their culture, lifestyle and challenges face by them along with the welfare schemes run by the Government of Chhattisgarh for the benefit of Tribes. At the end will propose strategies for addressing the identified challenges.

**IndexTerms** - Tribes, culture, identity, and challenges.

## INTRODUCTION:

Tribes and tribal societies represent some of the oldest and most diverse forms of human social organization. These communities are characterized by their distinct cultural, social, economic, and political systems that have evolved over centuries. Tribal societies are typically found in various parts of the world, often residing in remote and ecologically diverse regions. Tribes are groups of people who share common ancestry, kinship ties, and a collective identity based on their shared culture, language, customs, and traditions. They have their own distinct way of life, which often revolves around close-knit communal living, mutual cooperation, and a deep connection to their natural surroundings. Tribal societies are known for their strong community bonds and collective decision-making processes. They often practice subsistence economies, relying on hunting, gathering, fishing, herding, and small-scale agriculture for their livelihoods. The relationship between tribes and their environment is intertwined, with a profound understanding of nature's resources and a sustainable approach to resource management.

Social organization within tribes is typically based on kinship and lineage systems. Extended families and clans form the core social units, and communal activities such as festivals, rituals, and ceremonies play a vital role in strengthening social cohesion and preserving cultural traditions. Tribal societies often have their own systems of governance, with leaders chosen based on their wisdom, experience, or hereditary succession. Tribal communities exhibit rich cultural diversity, with distinct languages, art forms, music,

dances, and oral traditions passed down through generations. Their cultural heritage reflects a deep connection to their ancestral roots, their spiritual beliefs, and their relationship with the natural world. These cultural expressions not only serve as a source of identity and pride but also contribute to the wider cultural diversity of the world. Throughout history, tribal societies have faced various challenges, including colonization, marginalization, and the loss of their lands and resources. However, they have also shown resilience and a strong sense of identity, adapting to changing circumstances while preserving their core values and traditions.

In recent times, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of protecting tribal rights, promoting their development, and ensuring their participation in decision-making processes. Efforts are being made to address the socio-economic disparities, provide access to education, healthcare, and infrastructure, and empower tribal communities to shape their own futures. Understanding tribes and tribal society is crucial for appreciating the diverse tapestry of human cultures and the intricate relationship between humans and their environments. By respecting and valuing tribal traditions, promoting their well-being, and fostering intercultural dialogue, we can celebrate the rich heritage of tribal communities while working towards a more inclusive and harmonious world.

Tribalism refers to a social phenomenon where individuals form strong loyalty and attachment to their own group, known as a tribe, while exhibiting hostility or prejudice towards members of other groups. It often involves the development of an "us versus them" mentality, where people prioritize the interests of their own group over the collective welfare or cooperation with other groups. Tribalism can manifest in various forms, including ethnic, religious, political, and cultural divisions. It is a deeply rooted aspect of human nature and has been observed throughout history and across different societies. While some level of group identification is natural and can foster a sense of belonging and social cohesion, excessive tribalism can lead to conflict, prejudice, discrimination, and hinder social progress.

### **Literature Review:**

**Sundar Nalini (2007)** examines the early interactions between the indigenous inhabitants of Bastar and the colonial government. the autonomy and livelihoods of the tribal population was affected by the altering of traditional social structures, land dissention, and the imposition of unfair revenue systems. exploes how political mobilisation and the development of tribal resistance movements have been used to reclaim land, proclaim cultural identity, and oppose repressive governmental policies. Author emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing indigenous knowledge systems and governance structures.

**Devy G. N. (2006)** stresses the significance of honouring the Adivasi people and their significant cultural contributions. He exposes how dominant narratives often side-line and muzzle their voices, making them feel invisible and excluded. The importance of language in maintaining and reviving Adivasi cultures is emphasised throughout the book. Author investigates the wide variety of Adivasi languages and communication styles. He contends that Adivasi groups and individuals would benefit from being more self-reliant if they were able to preserve their native languages for future generations.

**Xaxa Virginius (2001)** explains on the intricate issues of social exclusion due to structural inequalities in education, employment, land ownership, and political representation and explores the adverse inclusion faced by indigenous people in India. how development programmes frequently fail to take into account the unique political, economic, and cultural characteristics of Adivasis, which exacerbates their suffering and supports exclusionary practises.

**Sharma S. (1999)** provides a thorough examination of the evolution of tribal identity in Chhattisgarh over a considerable amount of time. The writers clarify the difficulties faced by tribal societies in the face of colonisation, state creation, and modernization by merging historical and ethnographic methodologies. The difficulties, changes, and adaptations that tribal groups have to make are thoughtfully analysed by the authors.

### **Objectives:**

1. To identify the key challenges faced by tribal communities in Chhattisgarh.
2. To assess the implications of development initiatives on tribal communities.
3. To propose strategies for addressing the identified challenges.

### **Research Question:**

The research question seeks to explore the major obstacles and difficulties experienced by tribal communities in Chhattisgarh, with the aim of understanding the underlying causes and finding effective solutions.

- "What are the key challenges faced by tribal communities in Chhattisgarh, and how can these be effectively identified and addressed?"

### **Hypothesis:**

- Due to historical and sociopolitical factors like colonial legacies, land dispossession, government policies, and development interventions, tribal communities in Chhattisgarh face significant challenges across a variety of dimensions, including socioeconomic disparities, land rights issues, cultural preservation concerns, and political underrepresentation.
- The challenges can be effectively identified and addressed, by employing participatory approaches, cultural sensitivity, inclusive policies and active implementation leading to improved well-being and empowerment of tribal communities in the region.

### **Research Methodology:**

The current research is a descriptive investigation that relies on secondary data obtained from diverse sources such as books, academic journals, scholarly articles, government report, publications, printed reference papers, and relevant websites concerning tribal issues.

## TRIBES IN INDIA:

India is known for its rich cultural diversity, and tribal communities have been an integral part of the country's social fabric for centuries. These tribes, also referred to as Adivasis, constitute a significant portion of India's population and possess unique customs, languages, and traditions. Here is an overview of tribes in India:

The Government of India recognizes certain tribal communities as Scheduled Tribes (STs). These communities are eligible for affirmative action policies and constitutional protections. The exact number of tribes in India can vary based on classification criteria, but there are over 700 distinct tribal groups identified in the country. The official website of the Ministry provides comprehensive information on the policies, programs, and initiatives for the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes<sup>1</sup>.

The decennial census conducted by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India provides demographic data on the tribal population. The census reports can offer insights into the distribution, literacy rates, and socioeconomic conditions of different tribes<sup>2</sup>. Each tribal community in India has its distinct cultural practices, rituals, and belief systems. These cultural aspects often revolve around their relationship with nature, ancestral heritage, and community cohesion. Some tribes are known for their vibrant folk dances, art forms, and handicrafts.

The **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)** has documented and preserved the cultural heritage of various tribes in India. Their publications, research papers, and multimedia resources provide valuable insights into tribal art, music, dance, and oral traditions<sup>3</sup>. Several states in India have **Tribal Research Institutes (TRI)** dedicated to the study, documentation, and promotion of tribal culture and traditions. These institutes conduct research, publish scholarly works, and organize cultural events to preserve and showcase tribal heritage. State-specific TRIs can be found by searching for respective state government websites.

Despite their rich cultural heritage, many tribal communities in India face challenges such as poverty, marginalization, and limited access to education and healthcare. Efforts have been made by the government and various organizations to address these issues and promote inclusive development.

The **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)** is a constitutional body established to safeguard the rights and welfare of Scheduled Tribes. Their reports, publications, and recommendations provide insights into the issues faced by tribal communities and the efforts being made for their development<sup>4</sup>. The National Health Portal of India provides information on the healthcare needs and initiatives targeting tribal communities. It offers resources on tribal health policies, programs, and specific health challenges faced by these communities. Some additional information are:-

**Geographical Distribution:** Tribal communities in India are found across different regions of the country. Some states with significant tribal populations include Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Arunachal Pradesh. Each state has its own set of

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<sup>1</sup> See More <https://tribal.nic.in/>

<sup>2</sup> See More <https://censusindia.gov.in/census.website/>

<sup>3</sup> See More <https://ignca.gov.in/>

<sup>4</sup> See More <https://ncst.gov.in/>

tribes, and their geographical location often influences their cultural practices, livelihoods, and social dynamics.

**Livelihoods and Economy:** Traditionally, tribal communities in India have relied on subsistence agriculture, forest-based activities, hunting, gathering, and artisanal crafts for their livelihoods. However, with changing times, many tribes have also engaged in wage labor, small-scale business ventures, and other occupations to meet their economic needs.

**Land and Forest Rights:** Land and forest resources hold great significance for tribal communities, as they are often deeply connected to their cultural identity, subsistence practices, and spirituality. In recent years, there have been discussions and struggles regarding the recognition and protection of tribal land and forest rights. **The Forest Rights Act (2006)** in India aims to address these concerns by recognizing the rights of tribal and forest-dwelling communities over forest land.

**Social and Political Movements:** Tribal communities in India have actively participated in social and political movements to assert their rights, preserve their culture, and demand better living conditions. These movements advocate for issues such as land rights, education, healthcare, and representation in decision-making processes. Some prominent movements include the Niyamgiri movement by Dongria Kondh tribe, the Pathalgadi movement by Adivasi communities, and the Adivasi Mahasabha movement.

**Traditional Knowledge and Sustainable Practices:** Tribal communities in India possess extensive traditional knowledge about biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, herbal medicine, and ecological conservation. This knowledge is often passed down through generations and contributes to the preservation of natural resources and the promotion of sustainable practices.

**Cultural Festivals and Celebrations:** Tribal communities in India celebrate various festivals and cultural events that showcase their vibrant traditions, music, dance, and attire. Examples include the Hornbill Festival of Nagaland, Tusu Parab of Jharkhand, Bihu of Assam, and Bastar Dussehra of Chhattisgarh. These festivals offer opportunities for people to experience tribal culture, crafts, and cuisine.

## **TRIBES IN CHHATTISGARH:**

Chhattisgarh, a state located in central India, is home to a rich and diverse array of tribal communities. Here are some prominent tribes of Chhattisgarh:

### **THE GOND**

The Gond tribe is one of the largest tribal communities in Chhattisgarh. They have a distinct language called Gondi and are known for their unique art and culture. The Gonds traditionally practice agriculture, animal husbandry, and forest-based activities. Their vibrant art includes intricate paintings, murals, and sculptures. The Gond tribe is one of the largest and most significant tribal communities in India, with a significant presence in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Odisha. Here's some information about the Gond tribe:

**History and Origins:** The Gonds have a rich and ancient history that can be traced back to the pre-Aryan era. They are believed to be of Dravidian origin and have their own language called Gondi. Historically, the Gonds had their own kingdoms and ruled over parts of central India.

**Occupation and Lifestyle:** The Gonds traditionally relied on agriculture as their primary occupation, cultivating crops such as rice, millets, pulses, and oilseeds. They practiced shifting cultivation, known as "bewar" or "dahiya," where they cleared small patches of land in forests for cultivation. The Gonds also engaged in animal husbandry, hunting, and gathering forest produce.

**Culture and Art:** The Gond tribe has a rich cultural heritage. They are known for their unique art forms, especially Gond art, which has gained international recognition. Gond art is characterized by intricate patterns, vibrant colors, and depictions of nature, animals, and mythological figures. It is often painted on walls, canvas, paper, and other surfaces.

**Religion and Beliefs:** The Gonds have their indigenous belief system, which is animistic and nature-centric. They worship various deities associated with natural elements like the sun, moon, earth, and forests. Spirits and ancestors also hold significant importance in their religious practices. Alongside their indigenous beliefs, some Gonds have also embraced other religions such as Hinduism or Christianity.

**Social Structure:** The Gond society is organized into clans or "kilis" and each clan has its own leader. They have a patriarchal social structure, and family bonds are strong. The community's traditional institutions, such as village councils or "panchayats," play a role in resolving disputes and maintaining social harmony.

**Festivals and Celebrations:** The Gonds celebrate various festivals and rituals throughout the year. Some important festivals include Bhagoria, which is a spring festival celebrated with dancing and matchmaking, and Karma, a harvest festival that involves communal rituals and prayers for good fortune.

The Gond tribe has faced challenges such as land alienation, displacement, and marginalization. Efforts have been made by the government and non-governmental organizations to protect their rights, preserve their cultural heritage, and promote their socio-economic development. To delve deeper into the Gond tribe and their rich culture, one can explore academic research papers, books on tribal history and art, visit local museums, and connect with organizations working with tribal communities. Additionally, there are several Gond artists and activists who share their knowledge and experiences through interviews, documentaries, and online platforms, offering valuable insights into the Gond tribe's way of life.

## THE BAIGA:

The Baiga tribe primarily resides in the forested regions of Chhattisgarh. They have a close relationship with nature and are skilled in gathering forest produce. The Baigas practice shifting cultivation and have a rich traditional knowledge of medicinal plants. They have unique cultural practices and festivals that are centered around their deep connection to the environment. The Baiga tribe is an indigenous community primarily residing in the central Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. They are one of the prominent tribes in the region and have a distinct culture and way of life. Here is some information about the Baiga tribe:

**Occupation and Lifestyle:** Traditionally, the Baigas were primarily forest dwellers and practiced a subsistence-based economy. They relied on forest resources for their livelihood, including gathering forest produce, hunting, and fishing. In recent times, some Baigas have also transitioned to settled agriculture and wage labor. It is believed that in ancient times they use to treat disease and paranormal activities of tribes and were performers of black magic.

**Social Structure:** The Baigas have a hierarchical social structure, with clans or lineages known as "gotras" forming the basis of their social organization. Each clan has its own traditions, customs, and rituals. The village headman, known as the "panch," plays a significant role in the social and administrative matters of the community.

**Cultural Practices:** The Baiga tribe has a rich cultural heritage. They have their own language, Baigani, which belongs to the Dravidian language family. Baiga folklore, songs, and dance forms are integral to their cultural expressions. They have unique traditions and rituals related to birth, marriage, and death. The Baigas also have a deep spiritual connection with nature and worship various deities associated with forests, hills, and water bodies.

**Art and Crafts:** The Baigas are known for their traditional art and craftsmanship. They excel in making pottery, bamboo and woodcraft, beadwork, and weaving. The craftsmanship of Baiga women in creating intricate beadwork and embroidery is particularly renowned.

It's important to note that the Baiga tribe, like other tribal communities, is diverse, and different regions and sub-groups may have variations in their customs and practices. Exploring academic research papers, government reports, and connecting with organizations working with tribal communities can provide more detailed insights into the Baiga tribe and their unique cultural heritage.

## THE ORAONS:

The Oraon tribe, also known as Kurukh, is predominantly found in the northern parts of Chhattisgarh. They speak Kurukh and engage in agricultural activities, cultivating crops like rice, wheat, and maize. The Oraon tribe has its distinct cultural practices, music, dance, and religious rituals. The Oraon people have a rich cultural heritage and a distinct identity. Here is some information about the Oraon tribe:

**History and Origins:** The Oraon tribe is believed to have ancient origins and is considered one of the oldest tribal communities in India. They are believed to be of Proto-Australoid or Austro-Asiatic descent. The Oraons have their own language called Kurukh, which belongs to the Dravidian language family.

**Occupation and Lifestyle:** The Oraon tribe traditionally relied on agriculture for their livelihood. They practiced shifting cultivation, known as "dhyaan," and cultivated crops such as rice, millets, pulses, and vegetables. Apart from agriculture, the Oraon people also engaged in animal husbandry, hunting, and gathering forest produce. In recent times, many Oraons have also taken up other occupations like wage labor, small businesses, and government jobs.

**Social Structure:** The Oraon society is organized into clans or lineages known as "kilis." These kilis play a significant role in social organization, marriage alliances, and resolving community disputes. The village headman, known as the "munda," acts as the leader and representative of the community.

**Culture and Traditions:** The Oraon tribe has a rich cultural heritage, encompassing music, dance, folklore, and rituals. Their traditional music and dance forms, such as the "Chhau" dance, are an important part of their cultural expressions. The Oraon people have their own folk songs, known as "jaat-ka-geet," which reflect their daily lives, traditions, and aspirations. They celebrate various festivals, including Sarhul, Karma, and Sohrai, with great enthusiasm and religious fervor.

The Oraon tribe, with their rich cultural heritage and resilience, continues to contribute to the diversity and fabric of Indian society. Exploring academic research papers, government reports, and interacting with Oraon community members or organizations working with tribal communities can provide deeper insights into their history, culture, and contemporary challenges.

## **THE KORWA:**

The Korwa tribe is primarily concentrated in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. They have a close association with the forest and practice shifting cultivation. The Korwas are known for their traditional craftsmanship, including bamboo and woodwork. They have a rich cultural heritage and participate in festivals that showcase their unique traditions. The Korwa people have a distinct cultural identity and a unique way of life. Here is some information about the Korwa tribe:

**Occupation and Lifestyle:** The Korwa tribe traditionally practiced shifting cultivation, known as "bewar" or "dahiya," as their primary occupation. They cleared small patches of land in forests to cultivate crops such as rice, millets, pulses, and vegetables. Apart from agriculture, the Korwas were skilled hunters and gatherers, relying on forest resources for their sustenance. With changing times, some Korwa individuals have also taken up wage labor and other occupations.

**Social Structure:** The Korwa society is organized into clans or lineages known as "kilis" or "parhas." These clans play an essential role in kinship, marriage alliances, and community affairs. The village headman, known as the "mukhia" or "panch," acts as the leader and representative of the community.

**Culture and Traditions:** The Korwa tribe has a rich cultural heritage. They have their own language, Korwa, which belongs to the Austroasiatic language family. The Korwa people have distinct music, dance forms, and folklore that reflect their traditional beliefs, myths, and way of life. Their traditional dances, known as "jaher," are performed during festivals and other significant occasions.

**Art and Crafts:** The Korwa tribe is known for its traditional craftsmanship. They excel in making various handicrafts using natural materials such as bamboo, wood, and clay. Korwa artisans create products like baskets, utensils, musical instruments, and decorative items using their indigenous knowledge and skills.

The Korwa tribe, with their unique cultural practices and close connection to nature, contributes to the cultural diversity of India.

## **THE BISONHORN MARIA:**

The Bisonhorn Maria tribes are found at the Bastar and Dantewada districts of Chhattisgarh. They derive their name from the traditional practice of wearing bison horns as headgear during ceremonies. The Bisonhorn Maria tribe has a distinct language and is known for their traditional music, dance forms like Ghotul, and vibrant costumes. The Bisonhorn Maria tribe, also known as the Bison Horn Maria Gond tribe, is an indigenous community primarily residing in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, India. They are a

subgroup of the larger Gond tribe and have a distinct cultural identity. Here is some information about the Bisonhorn Maria tribe:

**Name and Identity:** The Bisonhorn Maria tribe derives its name from the traditional practice of wearing bison horns as headgear during certain ceremonies and rituals. The tribe is also known as "Bison Horn Maria Gond" or "Bison Horn Maria."

**Geography:** The Bisonhorn Maria tribe primarily inhabits the forested regions of the Bastar and Dantewada districts of Chhattisgarh. The region is characterized by hilly terrain, dense forests, and rich biodiversity.

**Language:** The Bisonhorn Maria tribe speaks a dialect of the Gondi language, which belongs to the Dravidian language family. Gondi is the primary language of communication within the community.

**Occupation and Lifestyle:** The Bisonhorn Maria tribe traditionally practiced shifting cultivation, known as "bewar" or "dahiya." They cleared small plots of land in the forest for cultivation of crops such as rice, millets, and pulses. The tribe also engaged in hunting, gathering forest produce, and fishing. Over time, some members of the Bisonhorn Maria tribe have transitioned to settled agriculture and other occupations.

**Cultural Practices:** The Bisonhorn Maria tribe has a rich cultural heritage. They have their own unique music, dance forms, and folklore that are integral to their cultural expressions. Ghotul, a distinctive institution of the Gond tribes, is also prevalent among the Bisonhorn Maria tribe. The Ghotul is a youth dormitory where unmarried boys and girls live together, fostering social bonding and cultural practices.

**Festivals and Rituals:** The Bisonhorn Maria tribe celebrates various festivals and rituals. The festivals are often associated with agricultural cycles, changing seasons, and important milestones in life. Some significant festivals include Hareli, Ghotul Festival, and Dussehra. These festivals involve traditional dances, music, rituals, and community gatherings.

**Art and Craft:** The Bisonhorn Maria tribe is known for its traditional craftsmanship. They are skilled in creating various handicrafts using natural materials like bamboo, wood, and clay. They produce items such as baskets, utensils, toys, and decorative objects using their indigenous knowledge and skills.

The Bisonhorn Maria tribe, with their unique cultural practices, art forms, and close connection to the forested environment, contributes to the diverse cultural landscape of Chhattisgarh.

## THE DHURWA:

The Dhurwa tribe is primarily found in the Bastar region. They are known for their agricultural practices, cultivating crops such as rice, millets, and pulses. The Dhurwas have their unique art forms, including terracotta pottery, wood carvings, and bell metal craft. The Tribal King Kachna Dhurwa of Chhura, Gariyaband was from this tribal community. The Dhurwa tribe, also known as the Dhurwa Bhil tribe, is an indigenous community primarily residing in the state of Chhattisgarh, India. They are considered one of the major tribal groups in the region and have a distinct cultural identity. Here is some information about the Dhurwa tribe:

**Geography:** The Dhurwa tribe primarily inhabits the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, which is known for its hilly terrain, dense forests, and rich biodiversity. The region provides a natural habitat for the Dhurwa tribe, who have a deep connection with their environment.

**Language:** The Dhurwa tribe speaks a Dravidian language called Gondi. Gondi is the primary language of communication within the community and has several dialects across different Gond tribes.

**Occupation and Lifestyle:** The Dhurwa tribe traditionally practiced agriculture as their primary occupation. They cultivated crops such as rice, millets, pulses, and oilseeds. Shifting cultivation, known as "bewar" or "dahiya," was commonly practiced, where small patches of forestland were cleared for cultivation. Hunting, gathering forest produce, and fishing were also part of their traditional livelihood activities. In recent times, some Dhurwa individuals have also taken up other occupations such as wage labor and small businesses.

**Social Structure:** The Dhurwa tribe has a hierarchical social structure. They are organized into clans or lineages known as "kilis" or "parhas." The village headman, known as the "mukhia" or "sarpanch," plays a significant role in the social and administrative matters of the community.

**Culture and Traditions:** The Dhurwa tribe has a rich cultural heritage. They have their own distinct music, dance forms, and folklore that reflect their traditional beliefs, myths, and way of life. The "Karma" dance, a traditional dance form of the Gond tribes, is an important part of their cultural expressions. The Dhurwa people celebrate various festivals and rituals throughout the year, which are often associated with agricultural cycles, changing seasons, and important life events.

**Art and Crafts:** The Dhurwa tribe is known for its traditional art and craftsmanship. They excel in creating various handicrafts using natural materials like bamboo, wood, clay, and metal. Dhurwa artisans produce items such as baskets, pottery, wooden sculptures, metalwork, and decorative objects that showcase their artistic skills and indigenous knowledge.

The Dhurwa tribe, with their rich cultural heritage and close connection to nature, contributes to the cultural diversity of Chhattisgarh.

## THE KAMARS:

The Kamar tribe, also known as the Kamars or Kamars of Chhattisgarh, is an indigenous community primarily residing in the central Indian states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Jharkhand. They are one of the prominent tribal groups in the region and have a distinct cultural identity. Here is some information about the Kamar tribe:

**Occupation and Lifestyle:** The Kamar tribe traditionally practiced agriculture as their main occupation. They cultivated crops such as rice, millets, pulses, and vegetables. Shifting cultivation, known as "bewar" or "dahiya," was a common agricultural practice among the Kamars. They also engaged in hunting, gathering forest produce, and fishing. In recent times, many Kamars have adopted settled agriculture and other occupations such as wage labor, small businesses, and government jobs.

**Social Structure:** The Kamar society is organized into clans or lineages known as "gotras." These clans play a significant role in kinship, marriage alliances, and community affairs. The village headman, known as the "mukhia" or "sarpanch," acts as the leader and representative of the community.

**Culture and Traditions:** The Kamar tribe has a rich cultural heritage. They have their own language, Kamar, which belongs to the Austroasiatic language family. The Kamars have distinctive music, dance forms, and folklore that reflect their traditional beliefs, myths, and way of life. They celebrate various

festivals, including Hareli, Karma, and Sohrai, with traditional dances, music, rituals, and community gatherings.

**Art and Crafts:** The Kamar tribe is known for its traditional craftsmanship. They are skilled in creating various handicrafts using natural materials like bamboo, wood, clay, and metal. Kamar artisans produce items such as baskets, pottery, wooden sculptures, metalwork, and decorative objects that showcase their artistic skills and indigenous knowledge.

The Kamar tribe, with their unique cultural practices, art forms, and close connection to nature, contributes to the cultural diversity of the central Indian region. An Interaction with Kamar community members or organizations working with tribal communities can provide deeper insights into their history, culture, and contemporary challenges.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY TRIBES OF CHHATTISGARH

Tribes in Chhattisgarh, like many other tribal communities in India, face various challenges and issues that hinder their development and well-being. Here are some of the problems faced by tribes in Chhattisgarh:

### Land Alienation

One of the major challenges faced by tribal communities in Chhattisgarh is land alienation. The encroachment of their traditional lands by non-tribal communities, industrial projects, mining activities, and infrastructure development often displaces tribes from their ancestral lands, leading to loss of livelihoods, cultural dislocation, and marginalization. Here are some key aspects of the land alienation problem faced by tribes in Chhattisgarh:

**Historical Context:** The issue of land alienation for tribal communities in Chhattisgarh has deep historical roots. During the colonial era, forest lands inhabited by tribes were gradually taken over for commercial exploitation, infrastructure development, and settlement by non-tribal communities. This process continued even after independence, contributing to the loss of tribal lands.

**Lack of Legal Recognition:** In many cases, tribal communities in Chhattisgarh lack legal recognition and documentation of their customary land rights. Their rights over traditional lands are often not adequately recorded, leading to disputes, encroachments, and loss of control over their ancestral territories.

**Industrial Projects and Mining Activities:** Chhattisgarh is rich in natural resources, and the state has witnessed significant industrial growth, including mining activities, infrastructure development, and the establishment of factories and power plants. These projects often lead to the acquisition of tribal lands without proper consent, compensation, or rehabilitation measures, resulting in displacement and disruption of tribal livelihoods.

**Forest Conservation Policies:** Forest conservation policies, such as the creation of protected areas and national parks, have sometimes resulted in the displacement of tribal communities. These policies restrict their access to forests, which are vital for their livelihoods, traditional practices, and cultural identity.

**Encroachment by Non-tribal Communities:** The encroachment of tribal lands by non-tribal communities, including farmers, industries, and settlements, is a common issue in Chhattisgarh. Non-tribal individuals or

entities often occupy tribal lands illegally, leading to the dispossession of tribal communities and undermining their socio-economic well-being.

**Lack of Rehabilitation and Compensation:** In cases where tribal communities are displaced due to land acquisition or infrastructure projects, inadequate rehabilitation and compensation measures exacerbate the problem. Displaced tribes often face difficulties in accessing alternative livelihood options, adequate housing, and basic amenities in the resettlement areas.

**Forest Rights Act (FRA):** The Forest Rights Act, enacted in 2006, aims to recognize and secure the rights of tribal and other traditional forest-dwelling communities over their ancestral lands and resources. However, the implementation of the FRA has been uneven, and many tribal communities in Chhattisgarh still face challenges in obtaining recognition of their forest rights.

Efforts are being made by tribal organizations, civil society groups, and the government to address the land alienation problem. These include raising awareness about tribal land rights, strengthening the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, promoting community-based land management systems, and facilitating the inclusion of tribal voices in decision-making processes related to land and resource management.

## Poverty and Socio-economic Marginalization

Tribal communities in Chhattisgarh, including the Gond, Baiga, Oraon, Kamar, and others, often experience high levels of poverty and socio-economic marginalization. Limited access to education, healthcare, clean water, sanitation, and basic infrastructure contribute to their disadvantaged socio-economic status. Here are some key aspects of the poverty and socio-economic marginalization problem:

**Limited Access to Education:** Tribal communities in Chhattisgarh often face limited access to quality education. Many tribal areas lack proper schools, qualified teachers, and educational infrastructure. This leads to low literacy rates among tribes, limiting their opportunities for skill development and better employment prospects.

**Lack of Healthcare Facilities:** Tribal communities in Chhattisgarh often have inadequate access to healthcare facilities and services. Remote locations, poor transportation infrastructure, and a scarcity of healthcare professionals contribute to limited healthcare access. This results in higher incidences of diseases, malnutrition, and overall poorer health outcomes among tribal populations.

**Unemployment and Lack of Livelihood Opportunities:** Tribal communities in Chhattisgarh frequently encounter limited employment opportunities. Lack of skill development, low education levels, and geographical isolation contribute to high unemployment rates among tribes. Traditional livelihoods like agriculture, hunting, and gathering may no longer provide sustainable income due to factors such as land alienation and environmental changes.

**Lack of Basic Infrastructure:** Many tribal villages in Chhattisgarh lack basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, clean water supply, sanitation facilities, and communication networks. The absence of these essential services further exacerbates the socio-economic disparities faced by tribal communities.

**Poverty and Food Insecurity:** Poverty levels among tribal communities in Chhattisgarh are often high. Limited access to education, healthcare, employment, and basic services contribute to a cycle of poverty. Food insecurity is another critical issue, as tribal communities may struggle to access nutritious food consistently.

**Exploitation and Wage Disparities:** Tribal communities in Chhattisgarh, especially those engaged in manual labor and agricultural activities, may face exploitation and wage disparities. They may be subjected to unfair wages, bonded labor, and exploitative working conditions, which further contribute to their socio-economic marginalization.

**Lack of Social Protection and Welfare Schemes:** The implementation of social protection programs and welfare schemes for tribal communities in Chhattisgarh may be inadequate. Limited awareness, bureaucratic hurdles, and exclusion from targeted interventions can prevent tribal communities from accessing essential benefits and entitlements.

Efforts are being made by the government, non-governmental organizations, and civil society to address these challenges. These include initiatives to improve access to education, healthcare, skill development, and livelihood opportunities. Efforts are also underway to strengthen social protection schemes and promote inclusive development strategies that empower tribal communities and reduce socio-economic disparities.

## Healthcare and Malnutrition

Tribal communities in Chhattisgarh face inadequate access to healthcare facilities and services. They often suffer from high rates of malnutrition, lack of proper healthcare infrastructure, and limited awareness about healthcare practices, resulting in poorer health outcomes compared to the general population. Here are some key aspects of the healthcare and malnutrition problem:

**Limited Healthcare Facilities:** Tribal communities in Chhattisgarh often have inadequate access to healthcare facilities and services. Many tribal areas are located in remote and inaccessible regions, making it challenging to reach healthcare centers. The scarcity of healthcare professionals and infrastructure further contributes to limited healthcare access.

**Lack of Awareness and Health Education:** Tribal communities may have limited awareness about healthcare practices, preventive measures, and disease management. Health education programs tailored to the cultural context and language of tribal communities are essential to improve health literacy and promote healthy behaviors.

**Malnutrition and Food Insecurity:** Malnutrition is prevalent among tribal communities in Chhattisgarh. Limited access to nutritious food, inadequate dietary diversity, poverty, and food insecurity contribute to high rates of malnutrition, especially among women and children.

**Sanitation and Clean Water:** Access to clean water and sanitation facilities is crucial for maintaining good health and preventing diseases. However, many tribal communities in Chhattisgarh lack proper sanitation infrastructure and face challenges in accessing clean water sources.

**Maternal and Child Health:** Maternal and child health is a significant concern in tribal communities. Limited access to antenatal and postnatal care, skilled birth attendants, immunizations, and nutrition support

for pregnant women and young children contribute to higher maternal and child mortality rates among tribes.

**Traditional Healing Practices:** Tribal communities often have their own traditional healing practices and herbal remedies. While these practices can be valuable, the lack of integration with modern healthcare systems and inadequate regulation may result in delayed or inappropriate treatment for certain health conditions.

**Communicable Diseases:** Tribal communities in Chhattisgarh are susceptible to communicable diseases due to factors such as overcrowded living conditions, poor sanitation, lack of awareness about hygiene practices, and limited access to healthcare services. Diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, diarrheal diseases, and respiratory infections are common among tribes.

Efforts are being made by the government, NGOs, and healthcare organizations to address healthcare and malnutrition issues in tribal communities. These initiatives include improving healthcare infrastructure, increasing the presence of healthcare professionals in tribal areas, conducting health camps and outreach programs, promoting nutrition programs, implementing sanitation and clean water initiatives, and raising awareness about preventive healthcare practices. Collaboration with tribal communities and the integration of traditional healing practices with modern healthcare systems are also being emphasized to ensure culturally sensitive and comprehensive healthcare services.

## Cultural Disintegration

Rapid urbanization, migration, and the influence of mainstream culture pose challenges to the preservation of tribal cultures and traditions. The younger generation often faces a dilemma of balancing traditional values with modern aspirations, which can lead to cultural disintegration and identity crises. Here are some key aspects of the cultural disintegration problem:

**Loss of Traditional Knowledge and Practices:** Tribal communities in Chhattisgarh have rich cultural traditions, including unique languages, customs, rituals, art forms, and indigenous knowledge systems. However, rapid modernization, urbanization, and external influences have led to the erosion and loss of traditional knowledge and practices. This cultural loss affects the identity and sense of belonging of tribal communities.

**Language Endangerment:** Many tribal languages in Chhattisgarh are endangered due to reduced usage, lack of intergenerational transmission, and the dominance of mainstream languages. The decline of tribal languages diminishes cultural diversity and hampers the preservation of traditional knowledge and oral histories.

**Disruption of Social Structures:** Traditional social structures, community systems, and kinship networks are disrupted due to various factors such as migration, urbanization, and displacement. These disruptions weaken the social fabric of tribal communities, impacting their cohesion, collective decision-making processes, and social support systems.

**Influence of Mainstream Culture:** The influence of mainstream culture, media, and globalization often leads to the adoption of external norms, values, and lifestyles among tribal communities. This can result in the dilution of their unique cultural practices and the loss of distinct cultural identities.

**Marginalization of Traditional Arts and Crafts:** Traditional arts, crafts, and indigenous livelihood practices of tribal communities are at risk of marginalization. Economic pressures, lack of market access, and the decline in demand for traditional crafts have led to a loss of livelihood opportunities and a decline in the transmission of traditional skills and knowledge.

**Displacement and Resettlement:** Development projects, infrastructure initiatives, and conservation efforts have led to the displacement and resettlement of tribal communities. These forced relocations disrupt the social and cultural fabric of the communities, as they are uprooted from their ancestral lands and separated from their traditional cultural spaces.

**Education System and Curriculum:** The mainstream education system often neglects the cultural context, languages, and histories of tribal communities. The curriculum may not adequately represent the cultural diversity and contributions of tribal societies, leading to a disconnection between formal education and the cultural identities of tribal students.

Efforts are being made and these include initiatives to revitalize and promote traditional cultural practices, document and preserve indigenous knowledge, support language revitalization efforts, encourage intergenerational knowledge transfer, and foster cultural pride and self-identity among tribal communities. It is important to promote inclusive and culturally sensitive education, raise awareness about the value of indigenous cultures, and involve tribal communities in decision-making processes concerning cultural heritage and development initiatives.

## **POLICIES, WELFARE SCHEMES BY CHHATTISGARH GOVERNMENT**

The Chhattisgarh government has implemented various policies and welfare schemes to address the issues and uplift the tribal communities in the state. Here are some notable policies and schemes:

**PESA (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act:** The PESA Act aims to empower tribal communities by granting them autonomy in local governance. It ensures the participation of tribal communities in decision-making processes related to natural resources, land, and cultural practices.

**Van Dhan Vikas Yojana:** This scheme aims to promote sustainable livelihoods among tribal communities by providing them with skill development training and support for value addition to non-timber forest produce. It focuses on creating Van Dhan Vikas Kendras where tribal entrepreneurs can gather, process, and market forest-based products.

**Gauthan Nyay Yojana:** The Gauthan Nyay Yojana focuses on promoting sustainable livestock rearing among tribal communities. It aims to provide a market for cattle dung and promote organic farming practices. This scheme also ensures the provision of fair prices for cow milk to tribal communities.

**Mukhyamantri Suposhan Abhiyan (Chief Minister's Nutrition Campaign):** This campaign focuses on addressing malnutrition among women and children in Chhattisgarh, including tribal communities. It aims

to provide nutritional support, health services, and awareness programs to improve the health and well-being of tribal populations.

**Mitanin Program:** The Mitanin Program trains and mobilizes local women as community health workers. These Mitanins provide basic healthcare services, health education, and maternal and child health support, particularly in remote tribal areas where access to healthcare is limited.

**Saksham Scholarship Scheme:** The Saksham Scholarship Scheme provides financial assistance to tribal students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds pursuing higher education. It aims to ensure equal opportunities for education and empower tribal youth through access to quality education.

**Bodhghat Project Rehabilitation Scheme:** This scheme focuses on the rehabilitation and resettlement of tribal communities affected by the Bodhghat Multipurpose Project. It aims to provide alternative livelihood options, land compensation, and infrastructure support to the displaced tribal families.

**Tribal Sub-Plan:** The Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) is a budgetary allocation mechanism that ensures a specific proportion of the state budget is dedicated to the development of tribal communities. The TSP aims to address the socio-economic disparities and uplift the tribal population through targeted development interventions.

**Dindayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY):** The DAY scheme aims to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society, including tribal communities. It focuses on providing sustainable livelihoods, skill development, financial inclusion, and social empowerment through self-help groups and community-driven initiatives.

**Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana:** This scheme focuses on supporting farmers, including tribal farmers, by providing them with direct financial assistance for the sale of their agricultural produce. It aims to ensure remunerative prices for crops and reduce the income disparity among farmers.

**Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana:** The Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana provides social security benefits to workers in the unorganized sector, including tribal laborers. It offers life and disability insurance coverage, health benefits, maternity benefits, and pension schemes to improve the socio-economic well-being of workers.

**Suraji Gaon Yojana:** The Suraji Gaon Yojana is a comprehensive rural development program that focuses on improving infrastructure, livelihood opportunities, and quality of life in rural areas, including tribal villages. It aims to provide basic amenities, promote rural industries, enhance agriculture productivity, and strengthen local governance structures.

**Van Samruddhi Yojana:** This scheme focuses on promoting sustainable forest management and enhancing income-generating opportunities for tribal communities through the sustainable utilization of forest resources. It supports activities such as agro-forestry, bamboo cultivation, and value addition to forest produce, while ensuring environmental conservation.

**Naxal Mukta Bastar Abhiyan:** The Mukta Bastar Abhiyan is a comprehensive initiative that aims to eradicate Naxalism (left-wing extremism) from the Bastar region. The program includes socio-economic development, infrastructure development, strengthening of security forces, and rehabilitation and reintegration of affected tribal communities.

**Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi Model District Scheme:** This scheme focuses on the holistic development of the Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district, which has a significant tribal population. It aims to improve infrastructure, healthcare facilities, education, livelihood opportunities, and access to basic services in the district.

**Maa Danteshwari Kanya Vivah Yojana:** The Maa Danteshwari Kanya Vivah Yojana aims to support the marriage expenses of girls belonging to Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. It provides financial assistance to eligible families to ensure a dignified and hassle-free marriage for their daughters.

**Rajiv Awas Yojana:** The Rajiv Awas Yojana focuses on providing affordable housing and basic amenities to slum dwellers, including tribal communities. It aims to improve the living conditions of marginalized populations and ensure access to safe and adequate housing.

**Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojana:** The Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojana is a comprehensive development scheme specifically designed for tribal areas. It focuses on inclusive development by addressing the key areas of education, healthcare, livelihood, and basic infrastructure to improve the quality of life for tribal communities.

**Mukhyamantri Gyan Protsahan Yojana:** This scheme aims to encourage and support meritorious students from tribal communities to pursue higher education. It provides scholarships, financial assistance, and other support services to deserving students, helping them overcome financial barriers and pursue their educational aspirations.

**Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Haat-Bazaar Clinic Yojana:** The Haat-Bazaar Clinic Yojana aims to provide healthcare services to remote and tribal areas through mobile clinics. These clinics travel to tribal marketplaces (haats and bazaars) to deliver basic healthcare services, diagnostics, and medical consultation, ensuring access to healthcare in underserved regions.

**Chhattisgarh Forest Rights Act (FRA) Implementation:** The Chhattisgarh government has been actively implementing the Forest Rights Act to recognize and secure the land and forest rights of tribal communities. This includes the distribution of individual and community forest rights titles, empowering tribal communities and ensuring their control over forest resources.

These are some of the policies and welfare schemes implemented by the Chhattisgarh government to address the challenges faced by tribal communities. These initiatives aim to enhance livelihood opportunities, improve healthcare access, promote education, protect tribal rights, and ensure the overall well-being of tribal populations in the state. These welfare schemes reflect the Chhattisgarh government's commitment to address the diverse needs of tribal communities and promote their overall development. The government continues to implement and refine these schemes to ensure the effective delivery of benefits and uplift the socio-economic conditions of tribal populations in the state. These schemes encompass various aspects of development, including education, healthcare, housing, livelihood, and empowerment, to uplift the socio-economic conditions of tribal populations in the state.

## IDEAS TO REDUCE AND ERADICATE THE CHALLENGES OF TRIBALS

**Education and Skill Development:** Improve access to quality education: Establishing schools and residential hostels in tribal areas can provide better access to education for tribal children. Special focus should be given to recruiting trained teachers who understand the cultural context of the tribes. Implementing scholarships and incentives can encourage tribal students to pursue higher education. This can include financial support for tuition fees, textbooks, and other educational expenses. Promoting vocational training programs can equip tribal youth with marketable skills. This includes providing training in areas such as agriculture, forestry, handicrafts, tourism, and healthcare, tailored to the local needs and resources.

**Land Rights and Resource Management:** Effective implementation of land and forest rights and ensuring that tribal communities have secure rights over their lands and forests is crucial. This can involve conducting surveys, regularizing land titles, and providing legal support to protect tribal rights.

**Sustainable resource management:** Encouraging sustainable practices in natural resource management is essential. This includes promoting community-based forest management, agroforestry, and sustainable agriculture techniques that conserve natural resources while providing livelihood opportunities.

**Enhanced healthcare infrastructure:** Improving healthcare facilities in tribal areas is crucial to ensure access to quality healthcare. This includes establishing primary healthcare centers, mobile health units, and maternal and child health services in remote areas.

**Preventive healthcare programs:** Implementing preventive healthcare programs can focus on immunization campaigns, regular health check-ups, nutrition counseling, and awareness programs about hygiene, sanitation, and safe drinking water practices.

**Nutritional support:** Providing supplementary nutrition programs for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children can address malnutrition issues. This can include the distribution of nutrient-rich food items and nutritional supplements.

**Sustainable livelihood options:** Identifying and promoting livelihood options that are based on local resources and traditional knowledge can provide sustainable income opportunities. This can include promoting organic farming, horticulture, animal husbandry, beekeeping, and value addition to forest produce.

**Entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives:** Encouraging entrepreneurship and self-employment among tribal communities can empower them economically. This can involve providing training, mentoring, and financial support to start small businesses, cooperatives, or self-help groups.

**Participation in decision-making:** Strengthening the participation of tribal communities in decision-making processes is crucial. This can be achieved by ensuring their representation in local governance bodies, providing training on governance and leadership, and creating platforms for dialogue and consultation.

**Leadership development and capacity-building:** Promoting leadership development programs can help tribal youth and women gain the necessary skills and confidence to actively participate in societal and political spheres. This can include workshops, training programs, and mentorship initiatives.

**Inclusive governance:** Ensuring that tribal voices are represented in policy-making and development planning is important. This can be achieved by promoting inclusive governance structures, involving tribal representatives in policy forums, and creating mechanisms for consultation and feedback.

**Promoting tribal cultures and traditions:** Raising awareness about tribal cultures and traditions among the wider society can foster understanding and appreciation. This can be done through cultural festivals, exhibitions, cultural exchange programs, and media campaigns.

**Preservation of tribal languages and heritage:** Supporting initiatives for the preservation and promotion of tribal languages, arts, and heritage can help preserve their unique identity. This can include setting up language and cultural centers, documenting oral traditions, and supporting artistic endeavors.

**Collaboration and Partnership:** Encourage collaboration between the government, civil society organizations, and tribal communities for designing and implementing development programs.

Foster partnerships with research institutions, universities, and experts to bring innovative solutions and best practices.

These ideas highlight the importance of holistic approaches that address various aspects of tribal development, including education, healthcare, livelihoods, empowerment, and cultural preservation. Implementing these ideas requires sustained commitment, collaboration, and the involvement of multiple stakeholders to bring about positive and lasting change for tribal communities.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our discussion on the tribes of Chhattisgarh and the challenges they face has shed light on the complex issues that require attention and action. The problems faced by tribal communities, such as land alienation, poverty, lack of education, healthcare disparities, exploitation, and cultural disintegration, are deeply rooted and interconnected. However, amidst these challenges, there is hope.

The Chhattisgarh government has implemented a range of welfare schemes and policies aimed at addressing these issues and uplifting the tribal communities. These initiatives focus on education, healthcare, livelihoods, empowerment, and cultural preservation. By providing access to quality education, skills development, and healthcare services, the government is striving to create a more inclusive society where tribal communities can thrive.

Furthermore, the recognition and protection of land rights, sustainable resource management, and the preservation of tribal cultures and traditions are essential steps towards empowering and preserving the unique identity of these communities. The emphasis on representation and participation in decision-making processes ensures that tribal voices are heard and their perspectives are taken into account.

However, addressing the problems faced by tribal communities requires a collaborative effort involving the government, civil society organizations, researchers, and the tribal communities themselves. By working together, innovative solutions can be devised, best practices can be shared, and the impact of welfare schemes can be maximized.

It is important to recognize that the journey towards the well-being and empowerment of tribal communities is a long-term commitment. It requires sustained efforts, continued dialogue, and a willingness to adapt and improve strategies based on the evolving needs of these communities.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a society where tribal communities in Chhattisgarh and beyond can flourish, with access to quality education, healthcare, livelihood opportunities, and the freedom to preserve and celebrate their rich cultural heritage. By addressing the challenges, they face and nurturing their strengths and potential, we can build a more equitable and inclusive society for all.

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