



Sustainable Pathways

The Role of Indigenous Tribes and Native Practices in India's Economic Model

NISHI MALHOTRA

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BY

NISHI MALHOTRA

Indian Institute of Management, India



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This book is dedicated to the rural India and the courageous rural women who have time and again showed us the way to empowerment and sustainable growth. This book is dedicated to the artisans, handicraft makers and the tribes of India for their contribution to the heritage and our culture. Above all, I dedicate this book to my parents.

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List of Abbreviations

AYUSH	Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy
BARC	Bhabha Atomic Research Centre
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CIF	Community Investment Fund
CLF	Cluster Level Federation
CMIE	Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy
COVID 19	COroNaVirus Disease of 2019
DAY NRLM	Deen Dayal Antodaya Yojan National Rural Livelihood Mission
DMMU	District Mission Management Units
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
HDI	Human Development Index
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IRB	Institutional Research Board
LOHAS	Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability
MAC	Mutually Aided Cooperatives
MCP	Minimum Credit Plan
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MIS	Management Information System
MYRADA	Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency
NABARD	National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NARI	Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPA	Non-Performing Loans
NRHM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
PLR	Prime Lending Rate
PMAAGY	Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana

x List of Abbreviations

PMJANMAN	Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan
PRADAN	Professional Assistance for Development Action
RBV	Resource Based View
ROSCA	Rotating Savings and Credit Association
RPL	Recognition for Learner
SBLP	Self-Help Group Bank Linkage
SC/ST	Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEWA	Self-Employed Women Association
SHG	Self-Help Group
SHPI	Self-Help Promoting Institution
SRYEA	Society for Rural & Youth Educational Advancement
SWP	Solar Water Purifiers
UN SDGs	United Nation Sustainable Development Goals
UV	Ultraviolet
VKY	Van Bandhan Kalyan Yojana
WHO	World Health Organization

About the Author

Dr Nishi Malhotra is an Assistant Professor, Finance Accounting and Control at Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Sambalpur, India. She has completed her PhD in Finance, Accounting and Control from IIM Kozhikode, India and MBA from MDI Gurgaon. She also holds an MCom degree from IGNOU, India and has done her BCom Hons from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University, India. She has approximately 4 years' experience in teaching and 11 years in industry.

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Preface

The United Nations has adopted the Sustainable Development Goals to build equitable societies and achieve equity for all. Reducing inequalities and building sustainable communities is one of the major objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Indian Government has transitioned the sustainable development goals into agenda for action. India is home to around 705 ethnic communities, and each has its own rich heritage and culture. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shree Narendra Modiji has started various schemes and initiatives for the inclusion and development of the indigenous communities and tribes. With increasing environmental challenges and dynamic environment myriad with climatic changes, ecological imbalances inclusion of the tribes and leveraging their indigenous knowledge for the preservation of the nature and ecosystem becomes extremely important. Despite the rich culture and knowledge, the tribal people do not have access to resources and are not included in the mainstream to be part of the economic growth and development. Many of the tribes are nomadic and migrate frequently making social and financial inclusion a distant dream. Since 2014, many developmental initiatives have been started by the government to facilitate the progressive development of the tribes and the indigenous people. Exclusion mainly pertains to keeping a particular community away from the resource sharing and positions of authority and roles of leadership. However, the Indian Government has carved out the special niches and roles for the communities in the development of the nation through initiatives such as the self-help group linkage programme. To give a boost to the unique skill of hand and the art possessed by these communities, the Government of India has started various schemes such as MUDRA financing and Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas and many more mission initiatives under the aegis of Ministry of Handicraft and Ministry of Textiles. To provide the livelihood to millions of artisans and craftsmen, the government has started the DAY NRLM (Deen Dayal Upadhyay National Rural Livelihood Mission) to provide employment to the marginalised craftsmen. The Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji has declared this period as Amrit Kaal of the Indian economic growth story and has identified four Amrit Stambh namely the *nari shakti*, *farmers*, *cattle rearing and fishermen and youth* and *the middle class* and *poor marginalised* sections of India. 15th November, Bhagwan Birsa Munda birth anniversary has been declared as the Jaan Jati Gaurav Diwas. During this Amrit Kaal, the Government of India aims to include all the marginalised sections of society in the development of the nation through sustainable initiatives. The preservation of the heritage indigenous art and culture

provides us a unique opportunity to enrich our civilisation and pass on the knowledge to the future generations through artistic expression, literature, culture, traditions and practices. This book is aimed at highlighting the various sustainable practices and traditions of the tribes in our country and celebrating the spirit of naturalism. The tribes are indeed the pride and add colours to mosaic of rich Indian culture and traditions. Financial inclusion is the key to the economic upliftment of the marginalised, but in deficit of the skills and craftsmanship, this objective of financial inclusion seems like a distant dream. But the tribes in our nation are in possession of most valuable skill, the craftsmanship that is passed on to them from generations to generations. This book aims to celebrate the social capital, the rich cultural identity, the craftsmanship of the tribes, without which the history of evolution of mankind and its progress is incomplete. I take this opportunity to present this book for the academicians and researchers who are keen to research the financial inclusion of the tribes and the native people in India.

Acknowledgement

This book is dedicated to my parents, teachers, sister, Delhi University, MDI Gurgaon, IIM Kozhikode, and all my professors and teachers without whom I would not have been able to accomplish this dream. Above all, I would like to thank the Government of India and our military armed forces for their relentless, selfless service to the nation, and a special thanks to the State Government of Kerala and the people of the state. I wish to thank Emerald Publishing, especially Daniel Ridge and his team for their relentless motivation and support.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Indigenous Tribes

Abstract

The indigenous and sustainable knowledge possessed by the tribal people and communities plays an extremely important role in the conservation of the climate. As per the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), tribal communities play an important role in preserving traditional knowledge, culture, food practices and textiles. The remains of the Indus Valley civilisation highlight the importance of the culture and religion. Animism and the worship of nature to achieve success in routines and tasks have been practised by these tribes for centuries. India is a mosaic of more than 705 different colourful tribes, and each of these tribes has their own identity that differentiates it from the other tribes. With increasing ecological complexities, the knowledge owned by the tribes is extremely useful in the preservation of the climate. This chapter seeks to explore the various hues and colours that constitute the mosaic of Indian tribal culture.

Keywords: Sustainable culture; indigenous knowledge; tribal community; local climate preservation; tribal culture

India is a confluence of many cultures, it assimilates in itself different tribes, sects and foreign influences. Tribes and indigenous people form an extremely important part of Indian culture, and their customs, traditions and rituals have become part of the treasured heritage of the country. Over and above the class stratification based on birth, the Indian culture assimilates anyone who wants to be part of it irrespective of caste, creed and colour sect. What is the indigenous culture of India, and how is it celebrated today? This is the main theme of this chapter. India has a rich heritage of cultures and traditions which have become part of popular culture and give it a unique identity.

Introduction

The word tribe is derived from the Latin word “tribus”. In traditional societies, a tribe is a social division comprised of families united by blood, economic, social or religious connections, and sharing a common language and dialect. Tribal communities in India are officially recognised under Schedule 5 of the Constitution of India. Thus, the communities that the Constitution designates as “Scheduled Tribes” are so named. There are 705 tribes in India. These people are also known as Adivasis. However, the modern literature refers to them as Vanyajati, Vanvasi, Pahari, Adimjati, Adivasi, Anusuchit jati. Tribal culture, festivals and traditions in India are well known all over the world. These have changed over the years to reflect the people’s beliefs and practices. The variety of ethnic groups, cultural practices and modes of life in India is unparalleled. Indian clans are characterised by unique social, cultural and political attributes. A considerable number of subcontinental Indian communities did not adhere to the social customs and rituals of the Brahmanas, nor were they stratified into a variety of unequal classes. The tribal population is dispersed in numerous regions across the Indian mainland, encompassing nearly all states and union territories. They predominantly inhabited secluded areas, including deserts, forests and hills. Strangely, the native tribes have not only blended in with the rest of the people, but they have also married into the priest clans and created many of the traditions and customs. From an idealist point of view, Sri Aurobindo’s article “Jagannath Rath Yatra” (The Chariot of Jagannath) is a great way to describe how the different ethnic groups and the main population come together. There’s no doubt that an educated society is like Lord Jaganath’s chariot – a vehicle of the holy. The chariot shows up as the Global spirit. The four wheels of this heavenly chariot are thought to represent power, freedom, unity and knowledge. Researchers who study the future think that in an idealist society, the age of truth and morals will come when work, emotion and knowledge will all come together smoothly. An excellent example of this coming together is the state of Odisha. Many of Odisha’s native cultures and practices can be seen in the form of *Bratkatha*, which are the stories of brata, or *Osha*, which are the famous fasting rituals. Indigenous cultures’ ways of life and accepted norms are shown through their traditions, stories and festivals, like the Raja Doli Gita (Raja Swing Songs). They show how readily these rules are accepted, and how important they are in shaping the social environment and fabric of the mainstream. Numerous changes and additions to current cults and religious practices are proof of this practice. Three new religions, Mahima Dharma, Khumbipatia Dharma and Alekh Dharma, came into being in Odisha in the 1800s. Pre-independence, there was more discrimination based on caste, the East India Company started revenue settlements and certain practices in temples made it easy for new groups to grow. Therefore, indigenous tribes are very important for both keeping heritage and creating new cultures. Of course, Lord Jagannath in Odisha has a strong tribal identity, and many stories about him as a god mention the presence of native tribes in his royal arsenals. The word ‘Scheduled Tribes’ first appeared in the Indian Constitution. The provisions of Article 366 (25) defined Scheduled Tribes as “such tribes or tribal communities or

parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for this constitution". The President may, concerning any state or union territory, and where it is a state, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities that shall, for this constitution, be deemed to be scheduled tribes about that state or union territory, as the case may be. Parliament may by law include or exclude any tribe or tribal community, or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1), but, except as aforesaid, a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.

Philosophy of the Indigenous and Native Tribes

The indigenous peoples' culture, beliefs, attitudes and values are influenced by their experiences in the natural environment, according to the texts. Participation in the natural environment and landscape results in a wide range of experiences. Human evolution is shaped by the time when humans first learn about and interact with nature. The approach of Claude Levi-Strauss is examined via the theoretical prism of structuralism. This method refers to the bricolage technique, which is used to adapt and adopt existing traditions. Philosophers once believed that the Earth housed the ultimate spirit of the cosmos and cosmology and that humans interact with and express themselves through nature. People, nature and natural objects such as trees and animals are all interconnected and reliant on one another. In addition, indigenous people have a strong connection to the environment and locality, which is reflected in their language. They have a strong connection to nature, which they express via their culture, beliefs and values. This bond is passed down from generation to generation. Because they are physically tied to the earth and all the aspects of nature and the world in which they dwell, these native groups view themselves as the forefathers of all humans. Nature and people have interacted over time, resulting in religious practices, folktales, myths and concepts that are passed down from generation to generation. Indigenous people studies and research are techniques to discover the truth about where people came from. Native Americans and indigenous tribes are founded on animism and the ability to interact with and comprehend the natural world. Natural impulses or a mind that can shift into different forms are what have propelled the human species forward through language, spoken words and symbols. Native traditions assist people in connecting with cosmology and the universe. As a result, it is critical to preserve their history and culture and to bring that history and culture into mainstream society. Through bricolage and modifications, these indigenous people are adapting to their changing surroundings. This chapter discusses how distinct indigenous communities live in different regions and have different traditions. Few other works emphasise the relevance of acculturation as the convergence of cultures from many geographies leads to the basic development of culture and traditions. Historians previously hypothesised that the Aryan conquerors who entered the Indian subcontinent were the

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originators of Hinduism. Later discoveries modified the theory that Hinduism arose after the arrival of the Dravidians. Until recently, the origins of tribes were assumed to be due to cultural differences, language disparities and religion. Later, studies on race and genetic inheritance became the driving force for the development of tribes. T. Kivisild et al. (2003) have studied the genetic distinctions between the Chencu and Koyas tribes in this regard. The literature emphasises the great genetic unity of Indian tribes and their ancestry with some Eurasian and European tribes. Thus, there are two schools of thought in India about the origins of caste and tribe. One school of thought links caste and tribes to primordial Brahmanical beliefs and another links caste to beliefs derived from texts such as the Vedas and Puranas based on occupation. The modern world considers their concept of caste and tribe origins as very artificial and the product of Brahmanical clan activities. The Vedic song discusses the origin of castes and clans from Adipurush's human form. According to the Vedas, Brahman arose from the mouth, Rajanya from his arms, Vaishyas from his thighs and Sudra from his feet. Similarly, early literature emphasises the disparities between races based on occupation, and the literature emphasises the presence of clans of smiths, artisans, and weavers. The presence of Aryans and Dasyus is also discussed in the Vedas. The Aryans are thought to be the extraordinarily fair-skinned group who gave birth to handicrafts. The Dasyus are jungle inhabitants who were eventually assimilated into the Aryan bloodline. The tolerant acculturation of the clans and tribes resulted in the growth of society and the invention of the moral code. Some historians praise the fourth-century enlightenment and reformation brought about by the advent of Buddhism and Jainism, led by Lord Buddha, the nobility and Lord Mahavira. To rid popular culture of biases and discrimination, the Hindu religion undertook extensive reformation. Though the Puranic texts depict castes in various ways, new literature with a higher moral code of equality emerged in the form of Jatakas. The Jatakas discuss caste mixing through marriages and alliances, with Buddha marrying a low cultivator's daughter as an example. The varnas as a birthright are abolished in the Jatakas, as anybody can become a Brahmin through penance. It evolves into an occupational idea in which trades and occupations like barbers, weavers and potters are mentioned. This period, which overlaps with the Bhakti movement in Hinduism, saw the rise of powerful occupational guilds and corporations in the fourth and sixth centuries. The Indus Valley culture, which lived 2,500 years ago, had a similar distinction based on profession. These guilds are referred to as Sresthi, and a subsequent section of the text discusses the Sresthi. The key example of this blurring of caste and varna borders is seen in the fourth-century literature called Mrchchhakatika (Toy Cart), which recounts the merger of a Brahmin clan with the lower varna, which leads to upheavals in society and law and order. This was the age of social emancipation when many reformers left up nobility and took employment as Jogi's, sanyasi and garland makers to transform society and attain the aim of inclusivity. Thus, the period from the fourth to sixth centuries is significant in terms of the creation of thought surrounding the paradigm of inclusivity and reformation in the Indian subcontinent. During this time, Megasthenes or Seleucus visited India and spoke with and offered a description of Indian society

to the Greek civilisation and philosophical community, which included prominent philosophers such as Pliny, Strabo and Arian. Hiuen Sang visited India around this time and confirmed the presence of caste in primitive Indian society, where Chandalas reside apart from the community, and their entrance into the village is marked by the banging of a piece of wood. This time was followed by enormous invasions, which gave rise to another hypothesis of caste formation as the mingling of alien races with Indian tribes and castes. Thus, in addition to the distinctions of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and varnas, the concept of varnasankaras, or mixed race, arose. However, there is disagreement among experts over the origins of classes and clans. A new class of people emerged as a result of the blending of Indian roots and their foreign invaders such as Sakas and Hun. The invasion of the White Huns from Central Asia's steppes in 465 AD which led to an intermixing that had a huge impact on the mosaic of Hindu society. The Gujar tribe of North India, situated in Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Haryana, is thought to be descended from Huns. These Gujar tribes are prominent in Hun and Indian subcontinent archaic writings; they are thought to be descendants of the Pratihara and Rajputana clans. Thus, many influences were assimilated into the Indian mosaic of Hinduism, and this culture was accepted and expanded to the diversities of various cultures, which became an insignia of the castes and clans known today as tribes. With the birth of the Prophet Mohammed in the seventh century, Islam gave further impetus to the elimination of the caste system and clans in the subcontinent, and gradually, the thin lines of birth as the reason for class and clans blurred, leaving only the belief in occupation as the insignia of caste and clan. The ownership of family skills, pursued since time immemorial, became the basis of classification; but, with mass foreign incursions, when the peasant clan began experiencing mass atrocities, the ruling military classes and nobles gained importance (Sir Edward Blunt, 2010). Then some anthropologists thought of physical characteristics and aspects such as facial features, colour and hair as differentiating elements. However, renowned anthropologist William Flower claims that physical characteristics are not used to identify people based on race (Fuller, 2022). Indeed, tribes created their rituals, language and traditions, but the occupation and possession of a distinct heritage, became the distinguishing element for tribal classification. Foreign invasions and mixing resulted in the formation of new customs, as seen in the Bengali speaking Kochh people. Because of the Mughal conquest, the Kamrup kingdom, to which they belonged, was split, resulting in racial mixing and the development of a new language. This resulted in the creation of the Rajbanshi language. As a result of so many invasions and conquests, it is considered that the Asian subcontinent has seen a great deal of race mixing. The Himalayas act as a shield, thwarting the dry cold winds that would otherwise sweep across the Indian subcontinent, causing potential natural disasters. Historically, the formidable Himalayan range has acted as a natural fortress, creating a formidable barrier to invading forces from the north. Its rugged terrain and harsh climate have made it a challenging barrier for infiltration, contributing to the defense of the Indian subcontinent. While the Himalayas present a formidable barrier, the narrow passageways between the mountains have facilitated cultural confluence and exchange in the northern

region. Similarly, in the East, the impact of the Burmese and Chinese on the people living on the periphery has given rise to numerous tribes and tribal communities. Many foreign conquerors, merchants and traders have made incursions into the Indian subcontinent in southern India, near the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea.

Constitution of India and Tribes

Lokur Committee (1965) has given the characteristics of the tribal community as distinctive culture, distinctive primitive traits, geographical isolation, shyness and, as described at the time, backwardness. The constitution of India provides for political safeguards, such as in Articles 330, 332 and 243 provide for the reservation of the seats in Lok Sabha, legislative assembly and panchayat, respectively. India has undertaken various initiatives such as TRIFED, digital transformation of schools, development of particularly vulnerable tribes, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojanas and Eklavya Model Residential School for the welfare of tribes. Tribal peoples various problems and challenges in India, such as loss of control over the natural resources, lack of education, displacement and rehabilitation of tribes, problems of health and nutrition, gender issues and loss of identity. The 15th November of every year has been declared as the Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas by India.

Origins of Tribal Population

In the pre-independence era, the British considered implementing a regulation in 1833 to safeguard the indigenous populations for a variety of reasons. In 1874, the British Government passed the Scheduled Area Regulation Act. Meanwhile, the notion of a tribe emerged as a social category that was intended to differentiate them from the Hindu, Muslim and other organised religious groups employ an overly simplistic approach. In the aftermath of independence, the protection and development of the tribe-identified population became a constitutional mandate. In pursuit of this objective, a roster of tribes was ratified. This list, which comprised 212 names in 1950, was revised by subsequent presidential decrees. The provisions of Article 366 (25) defined Scheduled Tribes as “such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for this constitution”. The President may, concerning any state or union territory, and where it is a state, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities that shall, for this constitution, be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes about that state or union territory, as the case may be. Parliament may by law include or exclude any tribe or tribal community, or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause(1), but, except as aforesaid, a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.

Importance of Tribal Communities in India

India boasts an unprecedented diversity of ethnic groups, cultural practices and ways of life. Indian lineages are distinguished by distinct cultural, political and social characteristics. A significant proportion of subcontinental Indian communities were not stratified into an assortment of unequal classes, nor did they observe the social rituals and practices of the Brahmanas. The tribal populace is geographically scattered throughout various regions of the Indian subcontinent, including the majority of states and union territories. They inhabited sequestered regions predominately, such as deserts, forests and hills. The perceived advantages of the tribal communities are as follows:

Preserving Biodiversity: The ethnic communities of India have been instrumental in conserving the fauna and flora of sacred groves of tribals and in preserving the biodiversity of numerous primeval forests. They possess invaluable ancestral knowledge and expertise regarding the adaptation, mitigation and reduction of climate and disaster risks.

Sustainable subsistence practices: The indigenous population cultivates crops that exhibit remarkable adaptability. They are resilient to altitude, drought, inundation and all temperature extremes. These crops contribute to the development of resilient agriculture. Regarding social harmony and gender equality, tribal communities are among the most progressive. The status of women is significantly elevated due to their substantial contributions to activities of basic subsistence.

The tribes in India are facing various challenges such as cultural extinction, and impinged rights to natural resources such as land and water. The numbers of many tribal groups are dwindling fast.

Case Study of Toda Tribe of Nilgiris

Approximately 3,500 years ago, arid regions with limited summer monsoon activity were more susceptible to wildfires. A mere 1,500 Todas individuals practiced controlled burning in high-altitude meadows. The findings contribute valuable insights into the paleoecology, archaeology and human ecology of the highland Nilgiris and peninsular India during that period. A study found that climate change in peninsular India may have forced a pastoralist community, possibly the Todas and their buffalo herds, to the highest Nilgiris in the Western Ghats at least 1,500 years before historical reports suggest. Todas are one of six indigenous tribes of the Western Ghats' Nilgiris highlands. The 1,500-member Todas are a Vulnerable Tribal Group. Based on the Toda language's linguistic connections with southern Indian Dravidian languages, the Nilgiris' Toda origin is believed to be less than 2,000 years old (Mongabay, 2020). However, scientists at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, and Inter-University Accelerator Centre, New Delhi, hypothesise that the discovery of "intense fire activity" and signs of humans, herbivores, and grasslands in the Sandynallah basin in the upper Nilgiris in the Western Ghats 3,500 years ago indicates the movement of a

pastoralist community and their herds from lower to cooler higher realms to manage better (Ghosh, 2020). Six ancient indigenous tribes live in the Nilgiris: Badagas (traditionally settled agriculturists and the largest numerically), Todas (pastoralists on the upper plateau), Kotas (artisans) and Irulas, Kurumbas and Paniyars. They live in thatched huts with half-barrel roofs, built on wooden frameworks by the Toda in groups of three to seven on the grazing slopes. The villages of Toda people are known as munds, and it consists of several thatched huts with barrel roofs. Toda people are known for their beautiful embroidery work known as puthkuli, which comprises of red and black thread work on white fabrics. Toda women do embroidery in home, and they join the self-help groups and cooperatives to market their craft work. In their wedding ritual, the Toda people gift bow and arrow to each other. Toda people are facing the challenges in terms of ecological balance, and there is need for sensitivity to preserve their culture. The Toda trade dairy, cane and bamboo with other Nilgiri peoples, exchanging Badaga grain, cloth and Kota tools and pottery. Kurumba bush people supply forest items and play music for Toda funerals (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2014). Besides this, the tribes are also known for their royal lineage and affiliations.

Jenu Kuruba Tribe of Karnataka

Jenukuruba tribal people live in the forest corridor between Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala (Devadasan, 2016). This tribe lives mainly in Mysore and Coorg, Karnataka encompassing about 3,000 km. Over 40,000 people live there. This tribe's culture is unique. The major profession was food gathering in the forests and collecting minor forest products like honey. They are skilled elephant tamers. They worked in logging and firefighting. They reside in Hadi villages and settlements. Their nomadic lifestyle stems from food gathering and shifting crops. Recently, they've moved to larger hamlets with government help. Agriculture is their side business. They use a bamboo spear to scratch the field instead of ploughing.

Classification of Indian Ethnic Communities or Tribes

In contemporary research and academia, there is a significant emphasis on ethnicity as the foundation of classification for human populations. This focus on ethnicity reflects a recognition of the cultural, social and historical dimensions of human diversity. From the acculturative perspective, with several incursions and invasions, the interracial mixing of tribes has led to the emergence of the shared cultural meanings, beliefs and value systems that have become the basis of classification. India is the world's seventh largest country, with a total land area of 3,287,263 square kilometres. The country's coastline is 7,517 kilometres long, and the longest river is the Holy Ganga or Ganges, which is 2,510 kilometres long. The country is divided into four distinct regions: the plains, the mountains, the southern peninsula and the desert. The productive Indo-Gangetic plains cover the