

Tribes of India

Sentinel:

→ M.P.

→ Lakshadweep.

Bhils. 46 lakh members

Andamanese tribes 79 members.

Schedule 5. of the Constitution

↳ Scheduled Tribes.

Denotified tribes.

↳ listed as criminals under the Criminal Tribes Act 1871 by the British.

Most Famous Tribal Groups.

Bhils Tribe

- ↳ largest tribe in India
- ↳ mountain ranges of Udaipur and some districts of Rajasthan
- ↳ 'Bow men' of Rajasthan
- ↳ speak Bhili language
- ↳ 'Ghoomar dance',
- ↳ Bhagoria Mela, Baneshwar Fair.
- ↳ Dance drama - Than Geer

Gonds Tribe

- ↳ M.P → Chhindwara district
- ↳ parts of Maharashtra, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh.
- ↳ second biggest tribe in India
- ↳ Dravidian Gondi language
- ↳ Houses of mud walls, thatched roofs.
 - ↳ Gondi forests
- ↳ main occupation - Agriculture
- ↳ Keslapur Jathra

- ↳ Keslapur Jathra
- ↳ Madai festivals.

Baiga Tribe

A Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.

↳ Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha,

↳ semi-nomadic life.

↳ slash and burn cultivation.

↳ bamboo

↳ Tattooing

↳ Specific festivals.

Munda tribe

- Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh, Odisha, Bihar, W.B.
- Mundari language
- They were hunters, now labourers in the farms
- Sarna religion.

- Savna religion.
- Worship (Singbonga), the Sun God.
- Killi language
- Nupur dance
- Mage, Karam, Sakhaw and Phagu festival.

✓ Santhal Tribe

↳ major tribe of West Bengal,

↳ parts of Bihar, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand

↳ 1st tribe to protest against the Britishers during the 1855 Santhal Rebellion

↳ agriculture, livestock, hunting

↳ Savna religion.

↳ No belief in temples or idols of their own.

↳ Traditional festivals Karam, Sakhaw, Santhali dance

↳ music

Meenas:

↳ Rajasthan + M.P.

↳ Believe in mythological descent from the Matsya kingdom.

↳ Several clans and sub clans.

Toto tribe

↳ Totapara village of West Bengal. in the Alipurdwar district

↳ Nepali + Bengali

↳ Trade vegetables and fruits to maintain their simple life.

↳ God Ishpa and Goddess Cheima.

↳ Hindus.

Bodo Tribe

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- Found in Assam, West Bengal - Nagaland
 - Bodo language.
 - Weaving of handloom products.
 - Baishagu festival in spring.
 - ↳ Lord Shiva, Hapsa hatarani, Domashi

Angami Tribe

- Found in the district of Kohima in Nagaland
- Men wear Black and White dress.
 - ↳ Mhoushu and Lohe
- Women wear Mechala
 - ↳ ornaments of beads, mask pendants, bracelets,
- Hornbill Festival
 - ↳ Dec 1 (ten days).
 - ↳ 17 tribes participate in this
- Bamboo and cane
- Anamei, Ngami, Tsoghami.

Rengmas Tribe:

- ↳ Nagaland
- ↳ Follow patriarchal system
- ↳ Agriculture is the main occupation, Jhum cultivation.
- ↳ expert weaving — women.

Koyank Tribe

↳ Nagaland

↳ agriculture

↳ hunting

↳ 95% Christianity

↳ wear earrings →

Necklaces →

made of
deer horn.

made of
boar tusks

brass pendant

↳ 'Lao Ong Mo' — harvest festival -

Bhutia Tribe

- ↳ Sikkim, parts of West Bengal, Tripura
- ↳ Tibetan ancestry
- ↳ speak Lhopa or Sikkimese language
- ↳ art and cuisine
- ↳ Staple food is steamed meat and dumplings called momos
- ↳ Thukpa, noodles in a broth
- ↳ Losar and Losong festivals.

Bru or Reang Tribe

- ↳ Tripura, Mizoram, Assam. } — Northeast India.
- ↳ Vulnerable Group.

Chakmas

↳ Northeast side of India.

↳ Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh.

↳ Buddha's Sakya clan. from Himalayan tribes

↳ Chakma language

↳ Theravada Buddhism.

↳ Bihu, Alphaloni, Buddha Purnima, Kathin Cirav Dan.

Lepcha Tribe

↳ Himalayan tribal groups. — North East India

↳ Meghalaya,

↳ Bhutan

↳ Sikkim

↳ Darjeeling

↳ Arunachal Pradesh

↳ Nepali + Sikkim's language

↳ 'Rang'

↳ Rearing cattle and cows, agriculture,

↳ traditional dance.

↳ newung culture -
horticultural crops.

↳ Originally nature worship,
witchcraft
spirits

later they embraced Buddhism.

↳ known as 'Nepalese' in Tripura

Notes on Tribes in India

State & Tribes

Andhra Pradesh

Andh, Sadhu Andh, Bhil, Bhaghata, Dhulia, rona, Kolam, Gond, Thoti, Goundu, Kammara, Savaras, Dabba Yerukula, Sugalis, Nakkala, Pardhan, Gadabas, Chenchus A.k.a Chenchawar, Kattunayakan, Jatapus, Manna Dhora

Arunachal Pradesh

Singpho, Monpa, Abor, Sherdukpen, Galo, Apatanis

Assam

Khasis, Chakma, Dimasa, Gangte, Garos, Hajong, Chutiya

Bihar

Gond, Birjia, Asur, Savar, Parhaiya, Chero, Birhor, Santhals, Baiga

Chhattisgarh

Nagasia, Biar, Khond, Agariya, Bhattra, Mawasi, Bhaina,

Goa

Varli, Dubia, Siddi, Dhodia, Naikda

Gujarat

Patelia, Bhil, Dhodia, Bamcha, Barda, Paradhi, Charan, Gamta

Himachal Pradesh

Swangal, Gujjars, Lahaulas, Khas, Pangwala, Lamba, Gaddis

Jammu and Kashmir

Balti, Garra, Sippi, Bakarwal, Mon, Gaddi, Purigpa, Beda

Jharkhand

Gonds, Birhors, Savar, Mundas, Santhals, Khaira, Bhumji

Karnataka

Gond, Patelia, Barda, Yerava, Bhil, Koraga, Adiyana, Iruliga,

Kerala

Malai, Aarayan, Arandan, Uralis, Kurumbas, Arandan, Eranvallan

Madhya Pradesh

Kharia, Bhils, Murias, Birhors, Baigas, Katkari, Kol, Bharia, Khond, Gonds,

Maharashtra

Warlis, Khond, Bhaina, Katkari, Bhunjia, Rathawa, Dhodia.

Manipur

Thadou, Aimol, Maram, Paite, Chiru, Purum, Kuki, Monsang, Angami

Meghalaya

Pawai, Chakma, Raba, Hajong, Lakher, Garos, Jaintias Khasis

Mizoram

Dimasa, Raba, Chakma, Lakher, Khasi, Synteng, Kuki, Pawai.

Nagaland

Nagas, Angami, Sema, Garo, Kuki, Kachari, Mikir, Konyak, Lotha

Odisha

Gadaba, Ghara, Kharia, Khond, Matya, Oraons, Rajuar, Santhals.

Rajasthan

Bhils, Damaria, Dhanka, Meenas (Minas), Patelia, Sahariya, Lambada (Banjara).

Sikkim

Bhutia, Khas, Lepchas.

Tamil Nadu

Adiyan, Aranadan, Eravallan, Irular, Kadar, Kanikar, Kotas, Todas.

Telangana

Chenchus

Tripura

Bhil, Bhutia, Chaimal, Chakma, Halam, Khasia, Lushai, Mizel, Namte.

Uttarakhand & Uttar Pradesh

Bhotia, Buksa, Jaunsari, Kol, Raji, Tharu.

West Bengal

Khond, Hajong. Ho, Parhaiya, Rabha, Santhals, Savar.

Andaman and Nicobar

Great Andamanese, Oraons, Onges, Sentinelese, Shompens.

Little Andaman

Jarawa

Lakshadweep

Aminidivis, Koyas, Malmis, Melacheris.

North-East

Abhors, Chang, Galaong, Mishimi, Singpho, Wancho.

Most Famous Tribal Groups

Bhils Tribe:

Found in mountain ranges of Udaipur and some districts of Rajasthan

* Largest tribe in India

Known as the Bow men of Rajasthan

Speak Bhili language

Celebrate Ghoomar dance, Bhagoria Mela, Than Gair-a dance drama, and Baneshwar Fair

Gonds Tribe:

Found in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh, and parts of Maharashtra, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh

Second biggest tribe in India

Known for their valor and speak Dravidian Gondi language

Houses made of mud walls and thatched roofs in Gondi forests

Main occupation is agriculture

Celebrate Keslapur Jathra and Madai festivals

Baiga Tribe:

A Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)

Mainly live in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh

Traditionally lived a semi-nomadic life and practiced slash and burn cultivation, now mainly dependent on minor forest produce

Primary resource is bamboo

Tattooing is an integral part of Baiga culture

Celebrate specific festivals in different regions

Munda Tribe:

Found in Jharkhand and parts of Chattisgarh, Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal

Speak Mundari language

In the past, they were hunters, now they are laborers in farms

Follow Sarna religion and worship Singbonga, the Sun God

Language is Killi and Nupur dance is the main entertainment

Celebrate Mage, Karam, Sarhaul, and Phagu festivals

Santhal Tribes:

Major tribe of West Bengal, also seen in parts of Bihar, Odisha, and Assam.

Largest tribe in Jharkhand.

First tribe to offer resistance to the British during the 1855 Santhal Rebellion.

Depend on agriculture, livestock, and hunting for their living.

Follow the Sarna religion and have no temples or idols of their own.

Traditional festivals include Karam and Sahrai, and Santhali dance and music is a major attraction.

Meenas:

Found in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh

Claim mythological descent from the Matsya avatar of Vishnu and people of the Matsya Kingdom.

Divided into several clans and sub-clans named after their ancestors.

Oppose the entry of Gurjars into the Scheduled Tribe fold in Rajasthan.

One of the most excluded and primitive tribes

Toto Tribe:

Found in Totapara village in the Alipurduar district of West Bengal.

Language has no script and is influenced by Nepali and Bengali.

Trade vegetables and fruits to maintain their simple life.

Believe in God Ishpa and Goddess Cheima, though they proclaim to be Hindus.

Bodo Tribe:

Found in Assam and parts of West Bengal and Nagaland.

Believed to be the early indigenous settlers of Assam.

Belong to the Indo-Mongoloid family and speak the Bodo language.

Weaving of handloom products is an intrinsic part of their culture.

* Celebrate the Baishagu festival in spring, dedicated to Lord Shiva, Hapsa hatarani, and Domashi

Angami Tribe:

Found in the district of Kohima in Nagaland.

Men dress in white Mhoushu and black Lahe, and women wear Mechala and ornaments of beads, mask pendants, bracelets, etc.

Best known for the Hornbill Festival, which attracts crowds from various parts of the world.

Hornbill Festival starts on December 1 and goes on for ten days, with 17 tribes taking part

Known for intricate art and woodwork and work in bamboo and cane, and speak different dialects like Gnamel, Ngami, Tsoghami.

Rengmas Tribe:

* Distribution: Nagaland

One of the seventeen major Naga tribes

Follow patriarchal system

Originally animist, but Christianity is also present

Agriculture is main occupation, practice Jhumming

Women are expert weavers

Koyank Tribe:

Distribution: Nagaland

Largest out of 17 officially recognized tribes in Nagaland

Known as those violent headhunters with tattooed faces

Now practice agriculture and hunt seasonally

More than 95% follow Christianity

Men wear earrings made of deer horn, necklace made of boar tusks, and brass heads

Festivals Aoling to welcome spring, Lao Ong Mo harvest festival

Bhutia Tribe:

Mainly found in Sikkim and parts of West Bengal and Tripura

Of Tibetan ancestry and speak Lhopo or Sikkimese language

Known for their art and cuisine

* Staple food is steamed meat dumplings called momos

Thukpa, noodles in a broth, is another dish

Celebrate Losar and Loosong festivals

Bru or Reang Tribe:

Community indigenous to Northeast India, living mostly in Tripura, Mizoram, and Assam

Second largest tribal community of Tripura, recognized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group

In Mizoram, they have been targeted by groups that do not consider them indigenous to the state

In 1997, nearly 37,000 Brus fled Mamit, Kolasib, and Lunglei districts of Mizoram and were accommodated in relief camps in Tripura

Since then, 5,000 have returned to Mizoram in eight phases of repatriation, while 32,000 still live in six relief camps in North Tripura

* In June 2018, community leaders from the Bru camps signed an agreement with the Centre and the two-state governments, providing for repatriation in Mizoram, but most camp residents rejected the terms of the agreement because they didn't guarantee their safety in Mizoram.

Chakmas:

Distribution: Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh

Strong genetic affinity to Tibeto-Burman groups in Northeast India and East Asian populations

Believe they are part of Buddha's Sakya clan from Himalayan tribes

Gradually migrated to Arakan and spread their territory to nearby hills of Chittagong Hill Tracts

Many settlements submerged during the construction of the Kaptai Dam in the 1960s

Some became refugees in NEFA (present Arunachal Pradesh) during the Chittagong Hill Tracts conflict in mid-1970s

Language is Chakma, part of Indo-Aryan group

Mainly practice Theravada Buddhism

Festivals include Bizu, Alphaloni, Buddha Purnima, and Kathin Civar Dan

Lepcha Tribe:

Lives in the Himalayan range in North-East India, mainly in Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh,

Bhutan, Sikkim, and Darjeeling

Mongoloid tribe with an admixture of Nepalese and Sikkims languages

Call themselves "Rong

Rearina cattle and milch cows and cultivate agricultural and horticultural crops

Originally nature worshipers and believed in witchcraft and spirits, but later embraced Buddhism.

Known as Nepalese in Tripura, and their social and community relationships are also bound with Nepalese.

Khasi Tribe

Mainly found on the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya and in parts of Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and West Bengal

Most follow Christianity and speak Khasi, an Austro-Asiatic language

Property is passed on from the mother to the youngest daughter

Women wear silver or gold crown, and men wear large earrings

Play plenty of music and a wide range of musical instruments like drums, guitars, flutes, cymbals, etc

Major festival is Nongkrem festival, five days long when women wear Jainsem dress and men wear Jymphong

Gora Tribe:

Mainly found in the hills of Meghalaya and parts of Assam, Nagaland, and West Bengal

One of the few matrilineal societies in the world

Unique architecture with buildings such as Nokmong, Nokpante, Jamadaal, and Jamsireng

Women wear a variety of traditional ornaments, and men wear traditional dress with a turban with feathers stuck in them

Festival of Wangala is their celebration

Nyishi Tribe

Inhabits the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh, mainly from districts of Kurung Kumei, Papum

Pare, Upper, and Lower Subansiri

Language spoken is Nishi

Majority have converted to Christianity

No major festival mentioned

Gaddis Tribe:

Distribution: Himachal Pradesh

Mainly dwell around the Dhauladhar mountain range, Chamba, Bharmaur, and areas near Dharamshala

Main occupation is pastoralism and make their livelihood by rearing and selling sheep, goats, mules, and horses

Mostly Hindus and a few Muslims

Speak Gaddi Language but use Takri and Hindi for writing

Festivals include Shivarathri and Jatra.

Gurjars:

Found in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Kashmir

Practise pastoral and dairy farming

Engage in transhumance

Have both Hindu and Muslim segments

Established kingdoms and entered Rajput groups

Known for giving an identity to Gujarat

Warli Tribe:

Found in Maharashtra-Gujarat border and surrounding areas

Known for Warli Art created with cow dung, earth, rice paste, bamboo stick, and red ochre

Conduct Tarpa dance and Warli Folk Art Dancing People Festival

Khonds/Dongari Khond

Found in Orissa

Speak Kui language written with the Oriya script

Are nature worshipping forest dwellers

Practise shifting cultivation locally called Podu

Protested against Vedanta Resources mining company and won

Chenchu Tribe:

Indigenous to Andhra Pradesh and inhabits forests of Nallamala Hills

Hunt and trade in jungle products like honey, roots, gums, fruits, and tubers

Speak Chenchu language with Telugu accent

Ritualistic lot

Celebrate Mahashivarathri with great pomp, especially in Amarbad tiger reserve Telangana

Lambadas

Found in AP, Karnataka, Rajasthan

Largest tribe of AP

Live in exclusive settlements of their own called Tandas

Expert cattle breeders

Subsist by sale of milk and milk products

Celebrate Teej, Ugadi, etc

Apatani Tribes (or Tanni):

Found in the Ziro valley in Arunachal Pradesh

Speak a local language called Tani and worship the sun and the moon

Follow a sustainable social forestry system

Celebrate major festivals like Dree and Myoko

Practice unique rice-fish culture in the valley

UNESCO has proposed the Apatani valley for inclusion as a World Heritage Site.

Siddis Tribe

Descended from Bantu people of Southeast Africa

Brought in as slaves by the Portuguese

Found in various parts of Karnataka

Majority are Christians, others follow Hinduism and Islamism

Fond of ritual practices, dance, and music

Kodava Tribe

Concentrated in Coorg, Karnataka

Patrilineal tribe from Kodagu or Coorg

Speak the Kodava language

Basically agriculturists

Passionate about hockey

Only people in India permitted to carry firearms without a license

Koragas

Distribution: Karnataka and Kerala

* Traditionally lived in structures made of leaves, called koppus

Subjected to inhuman practice of Ajalu, banned in 2000

Practice endogamy with regard to their three main subdivisions

Worship spirits known as Bhutas as well as some devas and a sun god

Known for drum beating (dollu or dolu beating) and flute music and dance involving both men and

women

Language is Koraga which has no script

Kadar

Distribution: Kerala and Tamil Nadu

Live in forests and do not practice any agriculture

Specialists in collection of honey, wax etc which they trade to obtain food items

Live in temporary shelters with thatch leaves and shift according to employment availability

Worship many jungle spirits

Toda Tribe

Found in parts of the Nilgiris mountain in Tamil Nadu

Livelihood depends on cattle farming and dairy

Skill in architecture is reflected in the oval and tent-shaped bamboo houses with thatched roofs

Toda embroidery work, Pukhoor, is well acclaimed

Most important festival is Modhweth

Irular Tribe

Inhabits areas of the Nilgiri mountain in Tamil Nadu and Kerala

Second-largest tribe in Kerala, found mostly in the Palakkad region

Mainly farmers and dependent on the production of paddy, dhal, Raggi, chilies, turmeric, and plantains

Ritualistic, believe in their own Gods, and are known for their skills in black magic

Kattunayakan (King of Jungle)

Distribution: Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka

Hunting and collecting forest produce are the two main means of living

Believe in Hinduism and have a language, which is a mixture of all Dravidian languages

Main deity is Lord Shiva and under the name of Bhairava

Worship animals, birds, trees, rock hillocks, and snakes, along with other Hindu deities

Child marriages were common before the 1990s, but now girls marry after attaining puberty

Monogamy is the general rule among the Kattunayakar community

Non-vegetarians and are fond of music, songs, and dancing

Also called Chalanaickar and Pathinaickars.

Cholanayakan tribe:

Distribution: southern Kerala State, especially Silent Valley National Park.

They inhabit interior forests and live in rock shelters or open campsites made of leaves.

Subsist on food-gathering, hunting and minor forest produce collection.

Speak the Cholanaikkan language, which belongs to the Dravidian family.

Kanikaran tribe:

Found in southern parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu states in India.

Main profession is agriculture, but they have a special liking for fishing and hunting.

Semi-nomadic, living in temporary huts of bamboo and reeds on hillsides.

Perform Kaanikkar Nritham, a form of group dance as a rural offering.

Kurumba tribe:

Major tribe found in parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu

One of the earliest settlers of the Western Ghats.

Lead a simplistic lifestyle depending on agriculture and gathering of honey and wax

Adept at formulating traditional herbal medicines.

Well known for their skills in witchcraft and magic.

Great Andamanese tribe:

Based in the Strait Island' of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Speak Jeru dialect among themselves

Population stands at 51 as per the last study carried out by Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti in 2012

* Hundreds were killed in conflict defending their territories from British invasion, and thousands more were wiped out in epidemics of measles, influenza, and syphilis

Onges:

Semi-nomadic and fully dependent on hunting and gathering for food.

Speak the Onge language, one of two known Ongan languages

Decline in population due to changes in food habits from contact with outside world

Infant and child mortality rate is around 40%

Shompens:

Hunter-gatherer subsistence people, hunting wild game and foraging for fruits and forest foods.

Lowland Shompen build huts on stilts with woven walls and thatched palm frond roofs.

Language is Shompen belonging to Austroasiatic Language.

Sentinelese:

Uncontacted people

Hunter-gatherers

Use bows and arrows for hunting

Not known to engage in agriculture

Fire-making knowledge unclear

Jarawa Tribe:

Indigenous people of Andaman Islands

Live in South and Middle Andaman Islands

Largely shun interaction with outsiders

Great Andaman Trunk Road built through their forest homeland in the 1970s

Increased contacts with outsiders

Trading and outbreak of diseases occurred

Tourists banned from taking the trunk road passing through Jarawa area in 2013

Supreme Court reversed interim order in 2013, allowing the road to be fully re-opened with vehicles traveling in large convoys four times a day
