

CONCEPT OF SCHEDULED TRIBE

(CC-10, UNIT -3)

The term 'Scheduled Tribes' first appeared in the Constitution of India. 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 the purposes of this constitution". Article 342, which is reproduced below, prescribes procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of scheduled tribes.

Article 342 provides for specification of tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which are deemed to be for the purposes of the Constitution the Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory. In pursuance of these provisions, the list of Scheduled Tribes are notified for each State or Union Territory and are valid only within the jurisdiction of that State or Union Territory and not outside.

The list of Scheduled Tribes is State/UT specific and a community declared as a Scheduled Tribe in a State need not be so in another State. The inclusion of a community as a Scheduled Tribe is an ongoing process.

- The essential characteristics of these communities are:
- Primitive Traits
- Geographical isolation
- Distinct culture
- Shy of contact with community at large
- Economically backward

Tribal communities live, in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains and forests to hills and inaccessible areas. Tribal groups are at different stages of social, economic and educational development. While some tribal communities have adopted a mainstream way of life, at the other end of the spectrum, there are certain Scheduled Tribes, 75 in number known as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), who are characterised by

- pre-agriculture level of technology
- stagnant or declining population
- extremely low literacy

* subsistence level of economy

G.S. Ghurye, in his book *The Scheduled Tribes* (1963), writes: “The Scheduled Tribes are neither called the ‘Aborigines’, nor the ‘Adivasis’, nor are they treated as a category by themselves. By and large, they are treated together with the Scheduled Castes and further envisaged as one group of the Backward Classes.”

Ghurye mentions three ways for solution for the problems of the tribal people:

- (1) No change and revivalism,
- (2) Isolationism and preservation, and
- (3) Assimilation.

Despite these distinctions, some common problems of the tribal people are:

- (1) Poverty and exploitation
- (2) Economic and technological backwardness
- (3) Socio-cultural handicaps
- (4) Problems of their assimilation with the non-tribal population


S.C. Dube’s five-fold classification of the Indian tribes provides a clear picture of the problem of tribes in India.

Dube (1982) mentions:

- (1) Aborigines living in seclusion;
- (2) Tribal groups having an association with the neighbouring non-tribal society and also maintaining their distinctiveness;
- (3) Tribals living in villages along with caste groups, sects and religious groups and maintaining their identity;
- (4) Tribals who have been degraded to the status of untouchables; and

(5) Tribals who enjoy high social, economic and political status. Such a classification is based on the nature of cultural contacts of tribals with non-tribals.

Reference:

1. ["2011 Census Primary Census Abstract" \(PDF\)](#). Censusindia.gov.in. Retrieved 1 October 2017.
2. ["National Commission for Schedule Castes"](#). Indiaenvironmentportal.org. Retrieved 1 October 2017.
3. [Census of India 2011, Primary Census Abstract](#)  [PPT](#), Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Government of India (28 October 2013).
4. Sengupta, Chandan (2013). *Democracy, Development, and Decentralization in India: Continuing Debates*. Routledge. p. 23. [ISBN 978-1136198489](#).