

Understanding Marginalisation

- **Topics**

- [Who are Adivasis](#)
 - [Adivasis and Stereotyping](#)
 - [Adivasis and Development](#)
 - [Minorities and Marginalisation](#)
 - [Muslims and Marginalisation](#)
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Adivasis

- [#Adivasis](#): Communists who lived, and often continue to live in close association with forests. Also known as **Original Inhabitants**
- [#About](#): Around 8% of India's population is Adivasis and many important mining and industrial centres are also located in Adivasis areas - Jamshedpur, Rourkela, Bokaro and Bhilai among others.
- [#Group](#): They are *not* homogeneous, there are over 500 different adivasi groups. A state like Orissa is home to more than 60 different tribal groups.
- [#Location](#) : Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and in the north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.
- [#Distinctive](#): Often very little hierarchy among them. This makes them radically different from communities organised around principles of jati-varna (caste) or those that were ruled by kings.
- [#Religious Practices](#): Adivasis practise a range of tribal religions that are **different** from Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. These often involve the worship of ancestors, village and nature spirits, the last associated with and residing in various sites in the landscape – **mountain-spirits, river-spirits, animal-**

spirits etc. *Village spirits* are often worshipped at **specific sacred groves** within the village boundary while the ancestral ones are usually worshipped at **home**.

- **#Influence**: Influenced by different surrounding religions like **Shakta, Buddhist, Vaishnav, Bhakti and Christianity**.
- **#Language**: Adivasis have their own languages (most of them radically different from and possibly as old as **Sanskrit**), which have often deeply influenced the formation of '**mainstream**' Indian languages, like Bengali. **Santhali** has the largest number of speakers

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- **#Display**: Adivasis are invariably portrayed in very stereotypical ways – **in colourful costumes, headgear and through their dancing**.
- **#Wrong_believe**: This often **wrongly** leads to people believing that they are **exotic, primitive and backward**. Often Adivasis are **blamed** for their **lack of advancement** as they are believed to be resistant to change or new ideas

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- **#Job**: In the **precolonial world**, they were **traditionally ranged huntergatherers and nomads** and lived by *shifting agriculture* and also cultivating in one place.
- **#Losing_Land**: Forest lands have been cleared for timber and to get land for agriculture and industry. Adivasis have also lived in areas that are rich in minerals and other natural resources. These are taken over for mining and other large industrial projects.

- **#Displace**: According to official figures, more than **50% of persons displaced due to mines and mining projects are tribals**. Another recent survey report by organisations working among Adivasis shows that **79% of the persons displaced from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand are tribals**.
- **#Livelihood lost**: Losing their lands and access to the forest means that tribals lose their main sources of livelihood and food.
- **#Search of job**: Having gradually lost access to their traditional homelands, many Adivasis have migrated to cities in search of work where they are employed for very low wages in local industries or at building or construction sites. . They, thus, get caught in a **cycle of poverty and deprivation**.

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- **#Minority**: The term minority is most commonly used to refer to **communities that are numerically small in relation to the rest of the population**.
- **#Observation**: The Indian Constitution recognised that the culture of the majority influences the way in which society and government might express themselves
- **#Solution**: Such cases, size can be a disadvantage and lead to the marginalisation of the relatively smaller communities. Thus, safeguards are needed to protect minority communities against the possibility of being culturally dominated by the majority. They also protect them against any discrimination and disadvantage that they may face.
- **#Feeling**: Given certain conditions, communities that are small in number relative to the rest of society may feel insecure about their lives, assets and well-being. . This sense of insecurity may get accentuated if the relations between the minority and majority communities are fraught

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Muslims and Marginalisation

- **#Census**: 2001 census, Muslims are **13.4%** of **India's population** and are **considered to be a marginalised community in India** today because in comparison to other communities, they have over the years been deprived of the benefits of socio-economic development.
- **#Meeting**: Recognising that Muslims in India were lagging behind in terms of various development indicators, the government set up a **high-level committee in 2005**. Chaired by **Justice Rajindar Sachar**, the committee examined the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community in India. The report discusses in detail the *marginalisation of this community*.