



7th National Security Strategies Conference 2024

For Prelims: [National Security Strategies Conference \(NSSC\) 2024](#), [National Crime Records Bureau](#), [Non-Major Ports](#), [Financial Technologies](#), [Permanent Settlement](#), [Scheduled Castes \(SCs\)](#), [Scheduled Tribes \(STs\)](#), [Forest Rights Act \(FRA\), 2006](#).

For Mains: Challenges associated with tribals and non-colonial methods to deal with them.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Home Minister inaugurated the [National Security Strategies Conference \(NSSC\) 2024](#) in New Delhi.

- The roadmap to solutions to **emerging national security challenges** has been discussed with the top police leadership.
- The top police officers also discussed how to study the issues concerning **tribals** with a **“non-Colonial approach”**.

What are the Key Highlights of the NSSC 2024?

- **About NSSC:** It was conceived by the **Prime Minister** during the **DGsP/IGsP Conference** with the objective of finding solutions to major **national security challenges** through discussions amongst a **unique mix of senior police leadership**.
- **Diversity of Participants:** The conference brings together a unique mix of **senior police leadership** managing national security challenges, **young police officers** working at the cutting-edge level, and **domain experts** in specialised fields.
- **DGsP/IGsP Conference Recommendations Dashboard:** A new dashboard developed by the [National Crime Records Bureau](#) has been launched.
 - It is designed to aid in the **implementation** of decisions taken during the annual **Directors and Inspectors General of Police conference** chaired by the Prime Minister.
- **Focus on Tribal Issues with a Non-Western Approach:** The discussion emphasised the need for adopting a **non-colonial perspective** in addressing the grievances of tribal communities.
 - The idea is to **move away** from the **Western model** of dealing with indigenous populations, which historically **stigmatised and marginalised them** and emphasis should be given to **respect, inclusion, and empowerment** rather than control and exclusion.
- **Discussion on Multiple Security Challenges:**
 - **Radicalisation** of youth via social media particularly focusing on **“[Islamic and Khalistani radicalization](#).”**
 - **Narcotics and trafficking** has become a major concern in internal security, impacting **social and economic stability**.
 - **Security at [non-major ports](#) and fishing harbours** which pose significant risks

for **smuggling** and other illegal activities.

- **Emerging Threats and Technological Challenges:** The conference explored several emerging security threats.
 - **Fintech Fraud:** It emphasised on how [financial technologies](#) are being exploited for criminal activities.
 - **Rogue Drones:** Countermeasures against **rogue drones**, used for smuggling and surveillance, were a focal point of the session.
 - **Exploitation of App Ecosystems:** Criminals are increasingly using **mobile apps** for illicit activities.

How British Colonists Dealt with Tribals in India?

- **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871:** During British colonial rule, the [Criminal Tribes Act, 1871](#) classified several tribes as **hereditary, habitual criminals**.
 - As per the British, they were **naturally inclined** to commit minor crimes.
 - Their alleged likelihood to commit crime at any moment justified **blanket surveillance** against them at all times.
- **Indian Forest Act, 1865:** The act banned many daily practices of tribals, such as **cutting wood, grazing cattle**, collecting fruits and roots, and fishing.
 - Tribals were **forced to steal wood** from the forests, facing bribes from forest guards if caught.
- **Forest Act, 1878:** It was more comprehensive than earlier ones.
 - Forests were categorised as **reserved forests, protected forests and village forests** which restricted tribals' access to forests.
 - Provision was made to impose a **duty on timber**.
- [Indian Forest Act, 1927](#): This Act classified forests into three categories namely **reserved forests, village forests and protected forests**.
 - In reserved forests, local people are **prohibited** leading to **physical harassment** of tribal communities on their **entry**.
- **Permanent Settlement (1793):** Introduction of [permanent settlement](#) in tribal areas abolished the traditional practices of **collective and traditional ownership** of lands (Khutkutti system).
 - Exploitation by the **outsiders (Dikus)** such as police, traders, and moneylenders aggravated the tribals' sufferings.

How has the Indian Government has Adopted a non-Colonial approach for Tribals?

- **Habitual Offenders Act, 1952:** After Independence, the Indian government replaced Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 with the [Habitual Offenders Act, 1952](#).
 - The communities that were notified as 'criminal' under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 had become **"Denotified Tribes"** and **no longer considered "born criminals"**.
- **National Forest Policy 1952:** It recognised tribal **sybiotic relationship** with the forests and allowed for the **protection, preservation and development of forests**.
- **Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:** It aims to prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of the [Scheduled Castes \(SCs\)](#) and the [Scheduled Tribes \(STs\)](#).
 - It mandates the constitution of **special courts** for hearing cases on atrocities against SCs and STs.
- **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006:** [FRA 2006](#) aims to **correct the injustices** done to forest-dwelling communities by colonial-era forest laws.
 - It gives **Forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDST)** and **other traditional forest dwellers (OTFD)** the right to ownership to land farmed by tribals or forest dwellers.

What Challenges are Still Faced by Tribals?

- **Colonial Legacy of Stigmatisation:** Despite the repeal of the **"criminal tribes" law** in 1952, the stigma associated with tribals persists.

- The **colonial mindset** of **excluding tribals** and viewing them as **unequal** to the mainstream population has continued even after Independence.
- **Challenges Faced by Denotified Tribes:** Denotified tribes are **not scheduled tribes**, so they **lack legislative protection**, making them even more vulnerable.
- **Rising Violence Against Tribals:** Data from the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** indicates a steady rise in such crimes, with incidents increasing from **8,802 cases in 2021 to 10,064 in 2022 (14.3% increase)**.
 - **Madhya Pradesh (30.61%), Rajasthan (25.66%)** and **Odisha (7.94%)** recorded the majority of cases of atrocities against STs.
- **State-Wise Variations in Problems:** In Madhya Pradesh, **prostitution rackets** exploit tribals, while in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, **counter-insurgency operations** against **Maoists** disproportionately impact tribal populations.
- **Evictions and Displacement:** Despite the FRA's protections, some tribal communities still face **eviction** from forest lands due to **poor enforcement or lack of recognition of their rights**. E.g., Eviction of **Bodo, Rabha and Mishing tribe** from the **Orange National Park** in Assam.

How to Address Challenges Faced by Tribals?

- **Addressing Historical Stigma:** Public awareness campaigns, **educational reforms, and media portrayal** should **challenge stereotypes** and promote respect for tribal communities.
- **Enhancing Law Enforcement:** Strengthening law enforcement mechanisms, increasing conviction rates, and establishing **fast-track courts** for crimes against tribals are crucial steps to ensure justice.
- **Effective Implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA):** Efforts must be made to strengthen the implementation of the FRA at the local level, ensuring that tribals are not unjustly evicted from their lands.
 - Mechanisms such as **land title verification**, community involvement in forest management, and legal recourse for displaced tribals should be enhanced.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Support initiatives that promote and preserve tribal culture, languages, and traditions, fostering pride and identity. E.g., **Adi Mahotsav**.
- **Political Representation:** Ensure **adequate representation** of tribal communities in **local governance** and decision-making bodies to voice their concerns. E.g., Reservation of seats for STs in the **Lok Sabha (Article 330), State Legislatures (Article 332) and Panchayats (Article 243)** and proper implementation of **5th Schedule** of the Constitution.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the need of adopting a non-colonial approach in addressing tribal issues in India

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. At the national level, which ministry is the nodal agency to ensure effective implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006?

- (a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- (b) Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- (c) Ministry of Rural Development
- (d) Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Ans: (d)

Q. Under which Schedule of the Constitution of India can the transfer of tribal land to private parties for mining be declared null and void? (2019)

- (a) Third Schedule
- (b) Fifth Schedule
- (c) Ninth Schedule
- (d) Twelfth Schedule

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. What are the two major legal initiatives by the State since Independence addressing discrimination against Scheduled Tribes (STs)? **(2017)**

Q. Why are the tribals in India referred to as 'the Scheduled Tribes'? Indicate the major provisions enshrined in the Constitution of India for their upliftment. **(2016)**

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