



Report on Status of Gotti Koya Tribals

Why in News?

The [National Commission for Scheduled Tribes](#) has asked the Union Home Ministry and Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha to submit a detailed report on the status of the [Gotti Koya tribals](#), who were displaced from Chhattisgarh due to [Maoist violence](#).

Key Points

- **Background and Displacement Challenges:**
 - The Commission **received a petition in March 2022 highlighting that Gotti Koya tribals, who fled Chhattisgarh** in 2005 due to Maoist violence, now **face significant difficulties** in neighboring states.
 - Tribal rights activists report around **50,000 Gotti Koya tribals displaced**, now residing in 248 settlements across Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra.
- **Concerns:**
 - The **Telangana government** reclaimed **land from internally displaced Gotti Koya families** in at least 75 settlements, affecting their livelihoods and increasing vulnerability.
 - According to the officials, **Gotti Koyas, being migrants from Chhattisgarh, do not qualify as Scheduled Tribes in Telangana** and thus **lack forest rights** there.
 - The Commission asked the **Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Studies** and **Forest Department representatives** to present **findings from surveys** conducted in Gotti Koya settlements in Telangana.
- **Government Data on Displaced Tribals:**
 - The government informed Parliament that **tribal families from Chhattisgarh are unwilling to return** despite **rehabilitation programs**.
 - According to the Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, 10,489 individuals from 2,389 families were displaced due to [Left-Wing Extremism](#) in Sukma, Bijapur, and Dantewada districts.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

- **About:**
 - It was **set up in 2004** by **amending Article 338** and by inserting a new article 338A in the [Constitution](#) through the [89th Constitution Amendment Act, 2003](#). Hence, it is a constitutional body.
 - By this amendment, the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was **replaced by two separate Commissions namely:**
 - [National Commission for Scheduled Castes \(NCSC\)](#)
 - [National Commission for Scheduled Tribes \(NCST\)](#)
- **Objective:**
 - Article 338A inter-alia gives powers to the NCST to oversee the implementation of various safeguards provided to [Scheduled Tribes \(STs\)](#) under the Constitution or under any other law for time being in force or under any other order to the Government and **to evaluate the working of such safeguards**.
- **Composition:**
 - It consists of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and 3 other Members who are appointed by

the [President](#) by warrant under his hand and seal.

- At least **one member should be a woman.**
- The Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the other Members **hold office for a term of 3 years.**

Gotti Koya Tribe

- Gotti Koya are one of the few **multi-racial and multi-lingual tribal communities** in India.
- They live in the forests, plains, and valleys on **both sides of the [Godavari River](#)**, in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, **Chhattisgarh**, and Odisha.
- They are said to have migrated to central India from their original home in **Bastar, northern India.**
- **Language:**
 - The Koya language, also called **Koyi, is a Dravidian language.** It is closely **related to Gondi** and has been **strongly influenced by Telugu.**
 - Most Koyaspeak either Gondi or Telugu, in addition to Koyi.
- **Occupation:**
 - **Traditionally**, they were **pastoralists and shifting cultivators**, but now-a-days, they have **taken to settled cultivation** supplemented by **animal husbandry and seasonal forest collections.**
 - They grow Jowar, Ragi, Bajra, and other millets.
- **Society and Culture:**
 - All Gotti Koya belong to one of **five subdivisions called gotrams. Every Gotti Koya is born into a clan**, and he cannot leave it.
 - They have a **patrilineal and patrilocal family.** The family is called "Kutum". The nuclear family is the predominant type.
 - **Monogamy** is prevalent among the Koyas.
 - They practice their **own ethnic religion**, but also worship a number of **Hindu gods and goddesses.**
 - **Many Gotti Koya deities are female**, the most important being the "mother earth."
 - They **maintain community funds and grain banks at the village level** to help the needy families and provide food security.
 - They either bury or **cremate the dead.** They erect menhirs in memory of the dead.
 - Their main **festivals are Vijji Pandum** (seeds charming festival) and **KondalaKolupu** (festival to appease Hill deities).
 - They perform a robust, **colourful dance called Permakok (Bison horn dance)** during festivals and marriage ceremonies.