



Jharkhand Tribes Fight for Rights

Why in News?

For the upcoming **Assembly elections in Jharkhand**, Political parties announced plans to introduce a [Uniform Civil Code \(UCC\)](#), but assured that **tribal communities would be excluded from its provisions** and emphasised the **protection of their rights and security**.

- Tribals have played a **vital role in Jharkhand's socio-political landscape** and their struggles have sparked numerous historical movements.

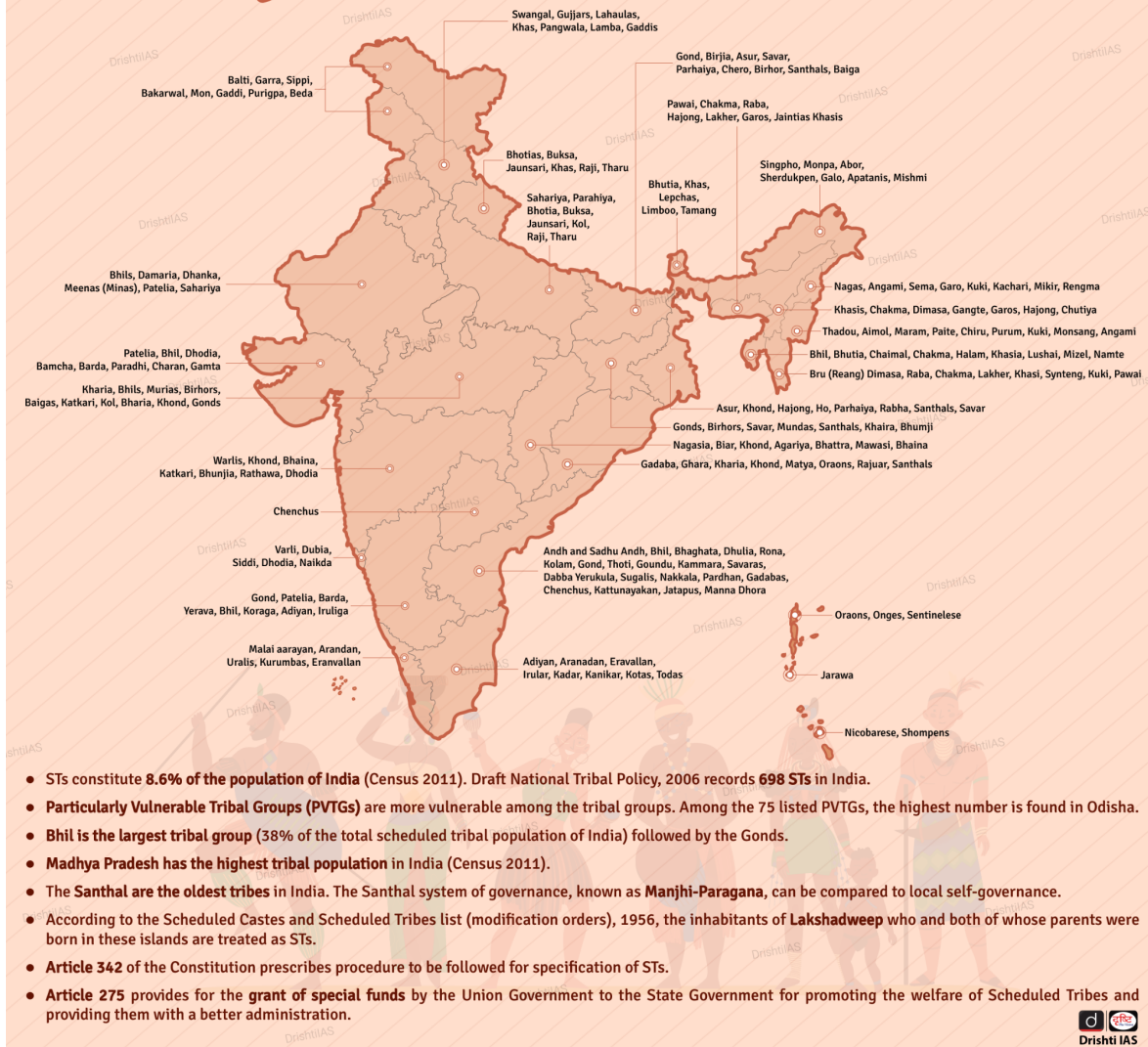
Key Points

- **British Control and Tribal Resistance in Jharkhand:**
 - **Geographical Context:** Jharkhand, primarily located on the [Chota Nagpur Plateau in eastern India](#), came **under British control in 1765** when the **Mughals granted Diwani rights over Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa** to the British, allowing them to collect revenue.
 - **Tribal Inhabitants:** Jharkhand's plateau region has long been inhabited by tribes like the **Munda, Santhal, Oraon, Ho, and Birhor**, with agriculture forming the primary livelihood for over half of these tribal workers, exceeding the national [Scheduled Tribe](#) average of 44.7%.
- **Colonial Policies and Tribal Revolts:**
 - The British introduced commercial agriculture and [mining](#), displacing many tribes from their lands. This exploitation led tribal leaders to organize movements to protect their rights and resist British rule.
 - Scholars Ram Dayal Munda and Bisheshwar Prasad Keshari identified 1769-93 as the initial phase of resistance, followed by a period of open revolt in the succeeding decade.
- **Key Tribal Rebellions:**
 - **Dhal Revolt (1767-1777):**
 - **Leader:** **Jagannath Dhal**, former king of Dhalbhum (now in West Bengal), **led the first significant revolt** against British intrusion.
 - **British Response:** The **revolt lasted 10 years**, prompting the British to reinstate Dhal as ruler in 1777. This revolt **marked the beginning of sustained tribal resistance**.
 - **Munda Rebellion (1899-1900):**
 - **Leader:** Led by [Birsa Munda](#), the rebellion **aimed to overthrow British control, expel outsiders**, and establish an independent Munda state.
 - **Objectives and Tactics:** The Mundas employed [guerrilla tactics](#) and targeted colonial officials, moneylenders, and missionaries.
 - **Outcome:** Birsa was arrested and **later died in prison in 1900**, but the rebellion left a lasting impact, with Birsa celebrated as a hero among the Mundas.
 - **Tana Bhagat Movement (1914):**
 - **Founder:** **Jatra Bhagat of the Oraon tribe** called for a return to traditional practices and launched a no-rent campaign against colonial rule.
 - **Alliances:** The Tana Bhagats joined revolutionary Congress activists, participating in the [Satyagraha, Non-Cooperation, and Civil Disobedience movements](#).
 - **Legacy:** The movement introduced ideas of non-violence and collective action, influencing the larger Independence movement.

▪ Jharkhand Movement and Statehood:

- The late 1980s saw a **resurgence of Jharkhand's identity**, with the formation of the **All Jharkhand Students Union (1986)** and the **Jharkhand Coordination Committee (1987)**, leading to the Jharkhand Movement and eventual statehood in 2000.
- The Jharkhand Movement highlighted the gradual disintegration of Jharkhand culture over 200 years, particularly under British rule. Today, **tribal communities continue to face challenges** like land disputes, low literacy rates, poverty, and exploitation amidst industrial growth.

Major Tribes in India



- STs constitute **8.6% of the population of India** (Census 2011). Draft National Tribal Policy, 2006 records **698 STs** in India.
- **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** are more vulnerable among the tribal groups. Among the 75 listed PVTGs, the highest number is found in Odisha.
- **Bhil is the largest tribal group** (38% of the total scheduled tribal population of India) followed by the Gonds.
- **Madhya Pradesh has the highest tribal population** in India (Census 2011).
- The **Santhal** are the oldest tribes in India. The Santhal system of governance, known as **Manjhi-Paragana**, can be compared to local self-governance.
- According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes list (modification orders), 1956, the inhabitants of **Lakshadweep** who and both of whose parents were born in these islands are treated as STs.
- **Article 342** of the Constitution prescribes procedure to be followed for specification of STs.
- **Article 275** provides for the **grant of special funds** by the Union Government to the State Government for promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes and providing them with a better administration.