

Tribal Day 2025: Building an Inclusive India Through Tribal Empowerment

9 August 2025

Key Takeaways

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs' budget tripled from rupees 4,498 crore to rupees 13,000 crore; total tribal spending across 42 ministries grew five-fold to ₹1,24,908 crore under DAPST over the last decade
- 25.11 lakh tribal families received Forest Rights Act titles
- 479 Eklavya Model Residential Schools are educating 1.38 lakh tribal students; 1.56 crore students received scholarships for higher education and Rs. 16,216.22 crore was disbursed for the scholarship schemes (2019-20 to 2024-25)
- VDVks generated ₹129.86 crore in combined sales; global recognition through Aadi Mahotsav.

Introduction

“As we celebrate Bhagwan Birsa Munda's birth anniversary, let our sensitivity and compassion for society deepen. Let us commit to including every member of our community—the poor, the Dalits, the backward, the tribals—and advance together with this resolution.”
— Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on August 15, 2024

On this World Tribal Day (August 9)—officially known as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, established by the United Nations—India exemplifies transformative empowerment of tribal communities. India's 10.42 crore tribal peoples are among the 47.6 crore indigenous peoples across 90 countries.

The Government of India is dedicated to the betterment of India's Scheduled Tribe communities. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs' budget has nearly tripled over the past decade, rising from Rs. 4,497.96 crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 13,000 crore in 2024-25, while its flagship programs demonstrate the government's commitment to "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayaas"—ensuring no tribal community is left behind in India's development journey.

Forty-two ministries or departments allocate from 4.3 percent to 17.45 percent of their budget each year for tribal development under the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes. DAPST encompasses over 200 schemes across key sectors including education, health, agriculture, skill development, livelihoods and sanitation. Funding for DAPST increased more than five-fold over the decade, rising from Rs. 21,525.36 crore in 2013-14 (actual expenditure) to Rs. 1.25 lakh crore in 2024-25.

Expenditure under DAPST during last the 5 years made by the central ministries and departments is as follows:

Year	Expenditure (Rs. in crore)
2020-21	48,084.10
2021-22	82,530.58
2022-23	90,972.76
2023-24	1,03,452.77
2024-25	1,04,436.24 (Provisional)

India has made significant strides in empowering tribal communities through various Ministry of Tribal Affairs schemes and initiatives.

Development Programs

The Government of India addresses developmental gaps in infrastructure and education, and promotes tribal cultures and safeguards tribal rights through various flagship schemes and initiatives.

PM Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan: Program for Tribal Village Development

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched India's largest tribal village development program on October 2, 2024, Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, from Hazaribagh in Jharkhand. Also known as the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, the program has a budget of Rs. 79,156 crore and involves 17 line ministries collaborating to bridge critical gaps in social infrastructure, healthcare, education, and livelihoods in approximately 63,843 tribal-majority villages and Aspirational Districts (112 of India's most underdeveloped districts) through March 31, 2029.

Progress as of July 2025 is as follows:



Figure 1: Officials organized an awareness co-profit saturation camp in Jharkhand's Hiranpur block in June 2025 under the Dharti Aaba Abhiyaan.

- Over 4 lakh pucca houses completed
- 692 hostels sanctioned
- 70 Mobile Medical Units deployed
- 8,654 households have electricity
- 2,212 villages have mobile connectivity
- 282 Anganwadi centres (child-care centres) are now operational
- 26,513 villages have piped water supply

PM Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan: Targeting the Particularly Vulnerable

“Our tribal population is small but dispersed in really small groups across the country in remote locations and the government is concerned about their well-being and development. To ensure that the benefits of PM JANMAN schemes reach each of them at various remote settlements in villages, hills and forests is a challenge for the government, but we are not leaving any stone unturned.”

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on 15 August, 2024

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups are Scheduled Tribes that show these characteristics:

- Pre-agricultural level of technology
- Low level of literacy
- Economic backwardness
- A declining or stagnant population

It is estimated that there are approximately 47.50 lakh PVTGs living across 19 states and union territories based on the mobile application-based



Figure 2: Officials set up an awareness camp for particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) in the Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh in September 2024 under PM JANMAN.

habitation survey by the governments.

The Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan works toward the socio-economic development of 75 PVTG communities. The total budget of the scheme is Rs. 24,104 crore.

The details of progress under the PM JANMAN are as follows:

Name of Ministry	Activity	Mission Target (2023-2026) and Complete Rates as of June 30, 2025
Ministry of Rural Development	<i>Provision of pucca houses</i>	4.90 lakh houses 90,892 houses are completed
	<i>Connecting roads</i>	8000 km road 205 km completed
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	<i>Mobile Medical Units</i>	1000 MMU (733 MMUs sufficient to cover all as per MoHFW) 687 MMUs sanctioned
Ministry of Jal Shakti	<i>Piped Water Supply</i>	19375 Villages 6737 villages have piped water supply
Ministry of Women and Child Development	<i>Construction and running of Anganwadi Centres</i>	2500 1001 operational
Ministry of Education	<i>Construction and running of hostels</i>	500 Work started on 52 hostels
Ministry of Communications	<i>Installation of mobile towers</i>	Coverage of 4543 habitations 901 habitations covered
Ministry of Power	<i>Energization of unelectrified HHs</i>	1.43 lakh households 92,311 households electrified
Ministry of New and Renewable Energy	<i>Households sanctioned under New Solar Power Scheme</i>	All eligible and uncovered by Ministry of Power 1934 households with solar power supply
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	<i>Multipurpose Centers</i>	1000 MPCs 532 MPCs where work has started
	<i>Setting up of VDVks</i>	500 156 VDVks where business has started

Aadi Karmayogi

The Aadi Karmayogi: Responsive Governance Programme equips tribal workers and government officials to drive people-centric governance by strengthening:

- Effective implementation of welfare schemes
- Cross-department convergence
- Community engagement and participatory learning
- Transparent governance mechanisms

The initiative aims to build 20 lakh tribal grassroots functionaries and village-level change leaders to strengthen service delivery in tribal areas, aligned with PM JANMAN and PM JUGA.

Regional Process Labs use a cascading training model where State Master Trainers lead State Process Labs, which train District Master Trainers. The first lab launched in Bengaluru in July 2025, with seven labs planned by August 2025.

Livelihood and Entrepreneurship

PM Janjatiya Vikas Mission: Supporting Tribal Livelihood

The Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PM JVM), launched in 2021 as India's flagship tribal livelihood scheme, operates through Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) to promote tribal entrepreneurship and forest-based livelihoods with 100 percent central funding.

TRIFED organized 79 artisan melas and 50 exhibitions, with promotional expenditure growing from Rs. 145 lakh to Rs. 289 lakh over 2022-25.

Van Dhan Vikas Kendras: Supporting Tribal Entrepreneurship

Van Dhan Yojana: Each VDVK cluster comprises 15 tribal self-help groups with 300 beneficiaries. The centrally-funded initiative provides Rs. 15 lakh per cluster, benefiting 11.83 lakh tribal individuals with Rs. 587 crore in total funding.



Key achievements are:

- 4,661 VDVVs sanctioned
- 12.80 lakh beneficiaries
- VDVVs have realized a combined sale of around Rs. 129.86 crore till date

Tribal Entrepreneurs

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs organized Dharti Aaba TribePreneurs in April 2025, bringing together 45 tribal startups to showcase innovations and network with investors and startup leaders.

Two startups received national recognition from Union Minister Piyush Goyal:

- OurGuest Travels (Sikkim) won the Direct-to-Consumer Award as Northeast India's first Online Travel Aggregator
- Ngurie Organic received the AgriTech Award for sustainable agriculture work

The ministry established a Rs. 50 crore Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Tribes and partnered with premier institutions including IIMs, IITs, IFCI, and META.

NSTFDC

The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC), a Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, provides affordable loans to Scheduled Tribe members for income generation and entrepreneurship activities. Over the past five years (2020-25), NSTFDC has disbursed Rs. 16,650 crore in loans.

TRIFED



TRIFED, the government's tribal marketing agency, operates 117 retail outlets and lists over 13,000 tribal products on e-commerce platforms, helping over 200 tribal communities reach customers. TRIFED has procured Rs. 97.18 crore worth of products from tribal artisans and self-help groups over five years, while promoting exports through international trade fairs and diplomatic partnerships.

The financial assistance provided to TRIFED in the last five years is given below:

Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Amount (Rs. in crore)	170.74	255.90	135.27	151.28	111.70

Education and Health



Figure 3: An awareness program on "Soil Health" was held for class 10th and 12th at an Eklavya Model Residential School in Dalbari in Assam in February 2024. It was conducted in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

Providing universal access to quality education is key to national development, as it promotes equity, economic growth, and scientific and technological progress.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) provide quality education to tribal children, supporting their health and development. Currently, 1.38 lakh students study in 479 operational schools, with plans to establish 728 schools for 3.5 lakh students.

EMRS funding has grown from Rs. 922.39 crore in 2020-21 to Rs. 4,053.87 crore in 2024-25. The National Education Society for Tribal Students manages implementation. Over the past five years, the funds released to the NESTS, which are further allocated to the state as per the requirement for the construction and recurring costs of the schools, have risen about four-fold from Rs. 1,200 crore in 2020-21 to Rs. 4,748.92 crore in 2024-25. 9,075 faculty and staff positions have been filled out of 38,480 sanctioned posts.

Category	Program/Initiative	Details	Beneficiaries
Digital Learning Infrastructure	<i>Smart Classrooms</i>	Digital boards (ERNET, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology)	All EMRS students
	<i>EKLAVYA DTH TV Channel</i>	Curriculum-based learning by CIET-NCERT (Classes 9-12)	Classes 9-12 students
	<i>Computer Labs & Science Labs</i>	Internet access and science laboratories	All EMRS students
	<i>Amazon Future Engineer Program</i>	Computer science education through interactive modules by Learning Links Foundation	430 EMRSs
	<i>Skill Labs</i>	Hands-on vocational training and industry-relevant skills (Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship)	200 EMRSs (400 labs)
Career Preparation & Skills Development	<i>Tata Motors Kaushalya Program</i>	Skill-linked education and employment pathways for Grade 12 graduates (5-year program from July 2025)	50,000 Class XII students over 5 years
	<i>IIT-JEE and NEET Coaching (Avanti Fellows)</i>	Centre of Excellence at EMRS Bhopal with premium coaching (5-year partnership from 2025-26)	80 selected students
	<i>IIT-JEE/NEET Coaching (Tata Motors & Ex-Navodayan Foundation)</i>	Comprehensive exam coaching (5-year MoU from 2025-26)	1,38,336 enrolled students
Student Support Programs	<i>TALASH Initiative</i>	Psychometric assessments, career counseling, and life skills development (UNICEF partnership based	1,38,336 students; 189 teachers from 75 EMRSs trained

		on NCERT's Tamanna model)	
	<i>President's Discretionary Grant</i>	Rs. 7,500 per student for meritorious Class XII students (2024-25)	832 students (Rs. 62.40 lakh total)
Residential & Support Infrastructure	<i>Hostels</i>	Separate facilities for boys and girls with residential amenities	All residential EMRS students
	<i>Educational Facilities</i>	Libraries, playgrounds, sports equipment, extracurricular facilities	All EMRS students
	<i>Health Services</i>	Regular health check-ups and medical facilities	All EMRS students

Scholarship schemes

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs gives scholarships to promote higher learning among tribal children and youth. These are:

SCHEME	BENEFICIARIES AND AMOUNT DISBURSED (2019-20 to 2024-25)
Post Matric Scholarship	1.01 crore; Rs. 13,380.86 crore
National Fellowship Scheme	0.16 lakh; Rs. 671.41 crore
Top Class Education Scheme	0.22 lakh; Rs. 283.57 crore
National Overseas Scholarship	269; Rs. 28.74 crore
Pre Matric Scholarship	54.41 lakh; Rs. 1851.64 crore

Sickle Cell Disease Elimination

Sickle cell anemia is a genetic disorder causing red blood cells to become sickle-shaped, blocking blood flow and causing pain, infections, and organ damage. The disease is more prevalent in tribal populations than the general population.

To address this challenge, the government launched the National Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission in 2023, targeting elimination by 2047 through screening 7 crore people aged 0-40 years in tribal-dominated regions.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and AIIMS, has

established the Bhagwan Birsa Munda Chair of Tribal Health at AIIMS Delhi and 15 Centres of Competence across 14 states for diagnosis and treatment.

Rights and Governance

Land and Forest Rights



The Forest Rights Act of 2006 (FRA) legally recognizes traditional land and forest rights of tribal communities and forest dwellers, providing safeguards against forced eviction.

As of May 2025, 25.11 lakh titles have been approved and distributed to tribal individuals and communities.

NCST

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) operates NCSTGRAMS, a grievance redress system for tribal communities across India.

In fiscal year 2025-26 (as of August 7, 2025), the system registered 1,747 cases with action taken on 1,670 cases. Since inception, the platform has handled 11,096 cases with action taken on 8,718 cases.

Grants to Voluntary Organizations

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs provides grants-in-aid to voluntary organizations for tribal welfare projects in education, health, and livelihoods.

Funding increased from Rs. 59.50 crore (2020-21) to Rs. 175 crore (2024-25), with approximately Rs. 1,000 crore released to about 200 non-profits over the past decade.

Cultural Preservation and Promotion

Tribal Research Institutes

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs supports 29 Tribal Research Institutes for preservation of tribal cultural heritage, languages, and traditional knowledge. The government allocated Rs. 265.94 crore over 2020-25 and sanctioned 10 new TRI buildings since 2014.



Figure 4: Mega tribal dance event "Jhumoir Binandini" in Guwahati, Assam, was held to celebrate 200 years of Assam Tea in February 2025.

TRIs research and document tribal languages, traditional practices, and folk arts while developing educational materials for tribal students.

The ministry has also sanctioned 11 tribal freedom fighter museums across 10 states, with three completed. These are the Bhagwan Birsa Munda Museum in Ranchi, Raja Shankar Shah Raghunath Shah Museum in Jabalpur, and Badal Bhoi Tribal Freedom Fighter Museum in Chhindwara.

Promoting Tribal Cultures (Janjatiya Gaurav Divas and Aadi Mahotsav)

Janjatiya Gaurav Divas is celebrated on November 15 to honor tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda and recognize tribal contributions to India's freedom struggle. In 2024, marking Munda's 150th birth anniversary, the Prime Minister launched Rs. 6,640 crore in tribal development projects.



Figure 5: Brass handicrafts displayed during the Aadi Mahotsav in New Delhi in February 2025

Aadi Mahotsav is TRIFED's flagship annual National Tribal Festival that celebrates India's rich tribal heritage, culture, arts, crafts, cuisine, and commerce, serving as a platform to showcase tribal diversity and promote economic empowerment.

In February 2025 during the festival over 600 tribal artisans and 500 performing artists from more than 30 states and union territories showcased various tribal cultures and dances. Over 25 MoUs were signed with

design institutes and corporate houses. TRIFED expanded beyond direct customer sales to partner with major companies like Meesho and Reliance Retail for business sales of tribal products. Key partnerships include collaborating with the National Institute of Fashion Technology to improve product designs, Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation to upgrade processing technology, and international partnerships with Torajamelo Indonesia for global market access.

Conclusion

India's tribal development represents a transformation from marginalization to empowerment, aligning with the goals of the United Nations regarding the development of indigenous peoples. With investments of Rs. 79,156 crore through PM JUGA and Rs. 24,104 crore through PM JANMAN, the government has placed tribal communities at the center of India's development agenda.

As India approaches 2047, the inclusive development of tribal communities ensures that no one is left behind in the nation's progress, embodying "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" and strengthening India's social foundations.

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