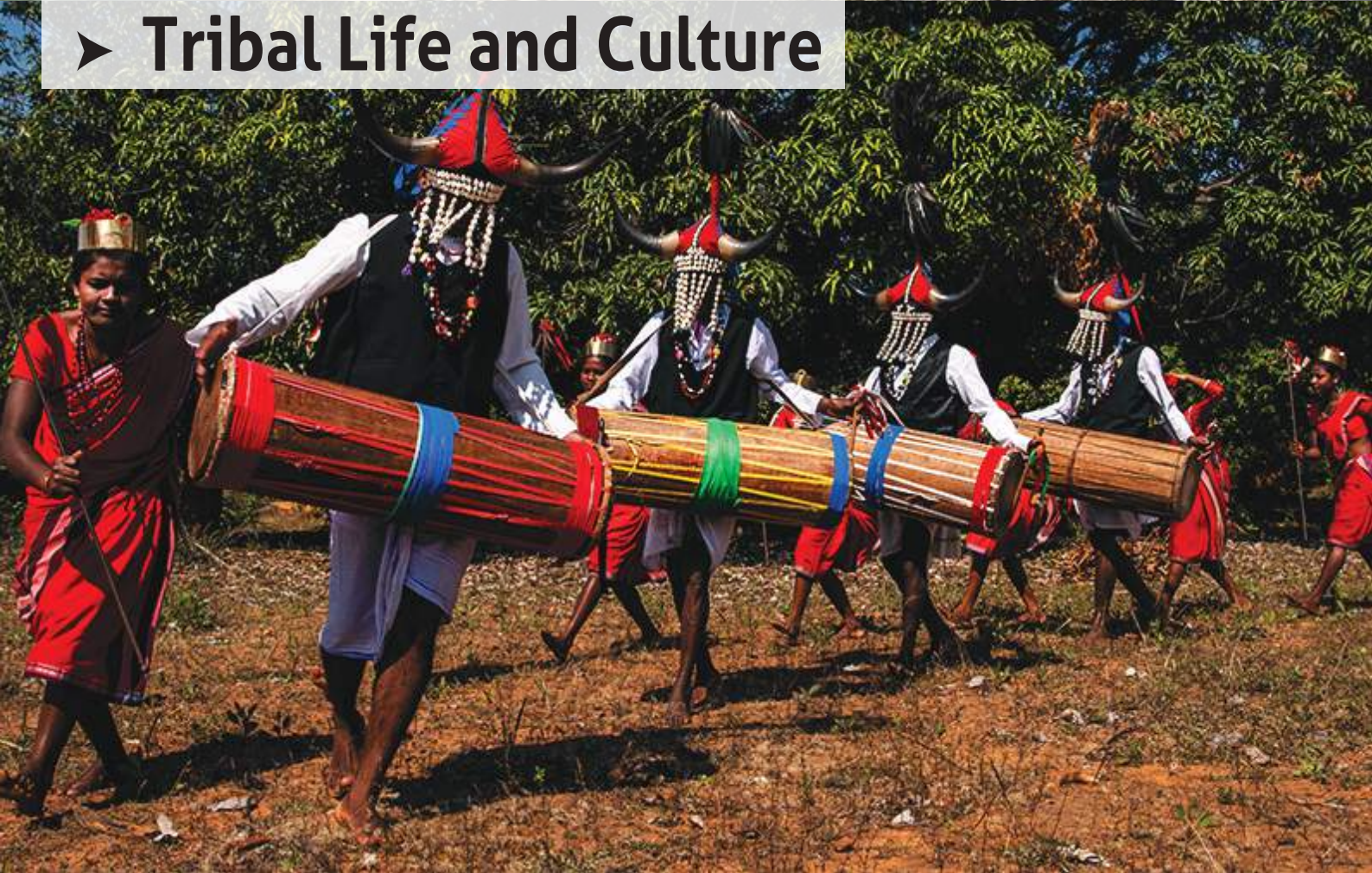




- **J&K and Ladakh**
- **Tribal Life and Culture**



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J&K AND LADAKH

Chapter 1: Counter Terrorism Scenario in J&K

Jammu and Kashmir is considered one of the most resource rich, yet one of the most vulnerable states to violence and also one state which is the most sensitive compared to any other states in the country. The increased militancy in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, especially in the Kashmir valley is due to a combination of many factors which have increased antipathy of the people against the government and increasing the feeling of alienation. A comprehensive strategy is required to mainstream the people of J&K on the lines of others in the country.

Reasons for militancy in Jammu and Kashmir can be categorized as follows-

- Absence of strong democratic political leadership.
- Development of the state stifled due to the frequent skirmishes between India and Pakistan.
- Jammu and Kashmir facing the brunt of resource curse.
- Gaps in Infrastructural development in terms of education, employment, health care facilities, roads etc
- Political patronage from Pakistan.
- Frequent surfacing of separatist movements.
- A sense of alienation among the population of J&K and a binding spirit.
- Quality of life being suffered due to policy paralysis.
- Accusation of the army of being hard on the citizens due to application of AFSPA.

Current Terrorism Outlook for the Region

A vital indicator of the improved security situation in Kashmir Valley is the residual strength of the terrorists operating in the region. This number stretched to thousands at the peak of militancy in the early 1990s. Today, circumstances have changed. Current terrorist strength in Kashmir stands at approximately 163, the lowest in decades (see Table 1).

Table 1: Terrorist strength in Kashmir Valley

Region	Pakistani Terrorists	Local Terrorists	Total
North Kashmir	60	17	77
South Kashmir	18	68	86
Total	78	85	163

Source: Indian Army

- These terrorists primarily belong to the three terrorist groups—Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM).
- Some are part of the local affiliates of pan-Islamic groups such as the al-Qaeda's Ansar Ghazwatul Hind and Islamic State J&K. However, their numbers are marginal.
- Security forces note that, unlike the previous times, Pakistani terrorists have been reduced to guiding and motivating the local terrorists, who have taken charge of the militancy in the region.
- South Kashmir remains the hotbed of militancy, with around 86 terrorists operating in the region. LeT and HM, in particular, have better reach, network and organisation here therefore, this region is the hub of their activities.
- While north Kashmir, which has traditionally served as the entry point for Pakistani militants from the LC, has remained relatively peaceful.

Tackling Cross-Border Militant Infiltration

Pakistan-based terrorist groups have used the mountainous terrain in north Kashmir to sneak into the Kashmir Valley.

- Pakistani security establishment actively supports them by bringing infiltrating terrorists right up to the LoC in army vehicles, monitoring the infiltration routes, giving covering fire while terrorists infiltrate, and supplying sophisticated communication equipment.
- Militants also enter from the south of Pir Panjal range (the Jammu-Samba-Kathua plains and the hilly Rajouri-Poonch area), sometimes through tunnels.
- To counter this infiltration, security forces, in the last one and half decades, have raised a highly-effective three-tiered counter-infiltration grid. In this, the Indian Army forms the first tier on the LoC, followed by the second tier of paramilitaries such as the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the third one of the J&K Police (JKP).
- In addition, the security forces have deployed Anti Infiltration Obstacle System (AIOS) fencing and strengthened surveillance through reconnaissance drones, night-vision equipment, and hand-held thermal imaging devices

Crackdown on Terrorist Groups and their Ecosystem

Meanwhile, security forces have kept up **pressure on the terrorist** groups in the hinterland through **several Counter-Insurgency (CI) operations**. These have yielded significant success by eliminating the top militant leadership and disrupting their subversive plans.

- Thus, barring the February 2019 suicide attack on the CRPF convoy at Lethpora in Pulwama district, militants have been reduced to carrying out an intermittent campaign of targeted killings against soft targets. This random violence denotes their desperation and an attempt to stay relevant in Kashmir's changing security scenario.
- A crucial part of security crackdown is the punitive action against the subversive elements of the ecosystem that support the terrorists. It includes not just the network of the Over Ground Workers (OGWs) and terrorist sympathisers but also the cadres of Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI). [Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) banned the JeI, terming it an "unlawful association"]
- In addition, security forces have targeted the OGWs who provide multiple services to the terrorists like recharging mobile phones, giving shelter and informing the terrorists about the security forces' movements. Since 2019, JKP has arrested more than 900 OGWs under the Public Safety Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Countering terrorist finances has been another focus area for the security establishment.

- National Investigation Agency (NIA) has launched several investigations into the cases of terrorist financing. Besides, the MHA has set up a Terror Monitoring Group, comprising representatives of security (NIA, Central Bureau of Investigation, Intelligence Bureau, and JKP) and financial agencies (Central Board of Direct Taxes, and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs) to closely monitor terrorist financing cases. These steps have unearthed the nexus between ISI, Pakistan and PoJK-based terrorist masterminds and their associates in Kashmir for inciting separatist sentiments and militant violence.
- This crackdown has dramatically reduced the stone-pelting incidents, which had once become a striking feature of unrest in Kashmir Valley. Pakistan had regularly showcased these stone-pelting incidents as an expression of anti-India and pro-freedom sentiments of Kashmiris.

Soft Measures undertaken

They have also implemented several soft measures that the locals have appreciated. These include

- Exercising maximum restraint
- Avoiding pellet guns
- Minimising collateral damage during the CI operations and protest demonstrations.
- Top security officials have made an outreach to the families of active militants to request their kids to surrender/urging them to request their sons to shun the path of violence. These initiatives have deprived ISI and terrorist masterminds of significant propaganda material.

A direct impact of these steps implemented by the security agencies is the improvement in the security situation in the valley. This has boosted the local tourism sector, with tourist arrivals hitting a new high: in the first half of 2022, more than 10 million tourists visited the region, making it the most successful tourist season in Kashmir's history.

Evolving and Emerging Counter-Terrorism Challenges

At the same time, the region faces new challenges as Pakistan-backed elements persist in their efforts to keep the pot boiling.

1. **Radicalisation and Terrorist Recruitment:** A significant contributor to this local recruitment is the radicalisation of the local youth, which has emerged as the most critical security challenge.
 - Several factors aid the radicalisation process, including peer pressure, victimhood feelings, and self-radicalisation enabled by the Salafi and Wahhabi propaganda.
 - Countering this radicalisation process is a work in progress, and security forces have launched multiple initiatives to reverse the trend.
 - For instance, the Indian Army's 'Sahi Raasta initiative' aims to bring the youth on the right track through national integration tours, sports training programmes and festivals, and skill development workshops.
2. **Hybrid terrorists and virtual terrorist outfits:** With increased CI ops and neutralisation of many active militants, terrorist masterminds have now changed their strategy to obfuscate their activities. To commit violence, they are now using terrorist sympathisers.
 - Most of them have no criminal records and are therefore likely to escape police scrutiny. These 'hybrid terrorists' are the ones who are primarily responsible for the recent acts of targeted killings in and around Srinagar.
3. **Pakistan's information warfare:** Since August 2019, ISI's disinformation machinery has gone into overdrive on social media platforms with anti-India propaganda.
 - With Pakistan's material and financial support to anti-India terrorist groups like LeT and JeM coming under the global scanner, the ISI has sought to project Kashmir's militancy as 'indigenous resistance'.
 - In addition, it has sought to label India as a major human rights violator. This propaganda aims to draw attention to Kashmir and gain international sympathy.
 - This information warfare campaign by Pakistan is a significant challenge because it exploits any minor incident to create a narrative of falsehood against India and the security forces. This has the potential to undo the gains made post-August 2019.

DOGRI LITERATURE

Dogri -the language of the Dogras is spoken in the region which includes parts of three States, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and undivided Punjab.

- Dogri is one of the 22 official languages of India. It was added in the 8th schedule of the constitution in 2003. It is also one of the 5 official languages of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Dogri was originally written in the Dogra Akkhar script – a modified version of Takri.[10] It is now more commonly written in Devanagari in India.
- The Dogra script was standardised from "Parane Dogrā Akkhar" (Old Dogra version of Takri script) during the Dogra rule. This script was then called "Namēm Dogrā Akkhar".
- Dogri is a feminine form of the word Dogra which is a tribal name signifying the people of Duggar.

Dogri literature as a whole can be divided into two categories:

A. Folk literature: Folk tales, songs, idioms, proverbs, riddles, ballads, Karaks, etc. provide a representative of Duggar life.

- It is universal as the contents within are also universal.
- It talks about different rituals, traditions, nature, and local deities.

B. Written literature: References to written literature have been found during 16th and 17th-century historical sagas and Khandkavyas.

- Maharaja Ranbir Singh also got translations of Sanskrit books to develop Dogri prose for common use.
- Frederic Drew, a scholar and traveller who lived in the state from 1862 to 1872, gives an account in his work of Maharaja's Royal Darbar in which all documents were in Dogri.

The significant poets of Dogri language include

- Manakchand, Gambhir Rai, Devi Dina, Maya Das, Raghubir Das, Ganga Ram,, Sant Ram Shastri, Mehta Madura Das, Hakam Jatt, Mulraj Mehta, Baba Kanshi Ram, Kavi Dattu and Hardutt and Dinu Bhai Pant.
- Professor Ram Nath Shastri is famously known as the "Pitamaha of Dogri" and "Bharatendu Harishchandra of Dogri".
 - He is a Padma Shri awardee and he led the movement for winning gratitude and honour for his mother tongue Dogri and convinced those established writers penning down their creative works in other languages to realise their moral responsibilities towards their own language and traditions.
 - He inspired people to write in Dogri and enrich their language and literature.

Chapter 2: Changing Face of J&K

Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India, the development and quality of life indicators can't be allowed to fall any further, there is an urgent need to integrate people of Jammu and Kashmir into the mainstream by devising a suitable strategy for inclusive development of Jammu and Kashmir eradicating the factors keeping it behind in the developmental ladder and eradicating the feeling of alienation-

POLITICAL LEVEL

- More political will is needed from the government of Pakistan to stop militancy in the valley.
- Indian government needs to have the will to channelize the efforts of the youth in J&K.
- It is needed that J&K does not become a theatre for regional politics with India, Pakistan and China showcasing their power.
- It is needed that a bold debate is started on Article 370 and Article 35A and thus, reducing the feeling of alienation.

ECONOMIC LEVEL

Projects for economic development in J&K should be fasttracked. Measures should be taken to tackle unemployment, promoting small scale industries of the state, promoting tourism and increasing the per capita income. The economic development of J&K should be at par with the other major states of the country.

A. Framing Economic Policies

- A suitable economic policy for any region has to take into account both the advantages and disadvantages of that region and also take into account the location and topography.
- One of the key disadvantages of the region is the cost factor as the price of the goods produced also must include the transportation costs.
- An appropriate strategy for such high-cost economies that should guide both investors and policymakers is to promote the production of goods and services of niche areas/ segments where customers are willing to pay a premium amount which compensates for the disadvantages of high transportation costs.

- These products/services must be the natural strength of the region due to natural endowments or products/services that have evolved with the application of traditional skills/ knowledge over a long period of time.
- Example: J&K handicrafts, unique handlooms and crafts and exquisite cuisine, J&K Apples, walnuts and saffron, etc.

B. Attracting Investments

- The Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy 2027-30 is the flagship policy with respect to investment and industrial growth in the UT.
- The New Industrial Development Scheme promises a higher incentive for investment in remote areas that will help with balanced development while enabling J&K to leverage its land abundance in areas hitherto neglected.
- The Policy has a key focus on investment, growth and employment. Considering the centrality of the objective of employment generation, the objectives of the Policy and the choice of industries focused upon products/services that are high in value which includes both J&K's traditional strengths such as tourism, handicrafts and horticulture as well as new sectors like IT, ITES, healthcare, etc.
- The new policy also focuses on synergies with existing strengths like post-harvest management of Horticulture and Film Tourism as an add-on to Tourism.
- Learning from experience, the Policy is also more concerned with extending financial support as compared to previous policies.

C. Horticulture

- The Budget's emphasis on horticulture addresses both the productivity and the income issues of the sector. The thrust on cold storage capacity
- The thrust on cold storage capacity expansion, increase in productivity of apple through high-intensity orcharding, and support to high value and low volume agro-products like aromatic and cash crops and vegetables are all budget initiatives along with the GI-certification initiatives for saffron and other crops are expected to benefit the sector.

D. Foreign Trade and Investment

- There have been strategies to leverage India's recent trade agreement such as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE (another off-budget element of transformation) to seek markets, investments and tourists.
- Considering the proximity and familiarity of UAE with J&K, the Gulf Investment strategy seeks to build on these links and potentialities.

E. Impact on J&K Bound Investment

- Combined with the end of constitutional uncertainty in the region, a far better law and order situation, a massive thrust on infrastructure and a focused strategy for economic development, there has been an increased interest in the region by investors.
- The UT Government reported that it received investment proposals worth Rs. 51,000 crores whose employment potential is nearly 2.37 lakhs.
- Considering the total spending of the Industrial Policy is nearly Rs. 28,400 crores spread over 10 years, the potential investment being "crowded in" appears to be impressive
- Further, the interest in the region now extends to overseas investors, especially well-known names and brands in the UAE.

F. Appropriate Investor Strategy

- The profitability of investments depends on how closely the business plan is linked to the natural, traditional and human capital endowments of J&K and a well-designed business venture running on those lines will not depend on state subsidies for it to be profitable.
- The recent rush of tourism to J&K that broke records demonstrates the profitability of this sector to the investors.
- Startups in horticulture and post-harvest value addition can potentially be another profitable area. Investments in both areas leverage the natural endowments of the UT amplified with local knowledge and tradition and make it rewarding for the investor.
- The investor can also choose to invest in other promising areas such as IT and ITES and take advantage of the region's considerable local talent pool
- Another virgin sector for the region could be the services sector, especially the Education, Health and Holistic Wellness sectors.

EDUCATION & SKILLING

With Ladakh becoming a Union Territory in 2019, various opportunities have opened up for the region which is blessed with unique natural resources, a pristine environment and an amiable population.

To Ensure Continuity in Learning

- A project named “Directorate of School Education Jammu Home Classes” was started by the Directorate of School Education Department Jammu for ensuring that children continue their education during the pandemic.
- A Google form was developed and shared with the faculties to invite them to contribute to the home classes and digital applications such as Google Meet, Zoom, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram were used to implement the project.
- Further, to expedite the process of teaching and learning, the department started a dedicated YouTube channel “DSE Jammu Home Classes”
- The video lectures were also recorded and telecast through local cable networks and radio stations.
- The “DSEJ’s Home Assignment” actively engaged the students during the pandemic wherein students were given assignments on a weekly basis.

Important initiatives

- **SARAL Android App:** SARAL (Students Accessible Resource and Learning Application) is an App developed by the IT wing of the Directorate of School Education Jammu.
 - The App has been developed on the concept of “All-in-One” which connects students to e-content available on various educational portals like DIKSHA, e-Pathshala, Swayam, e-VidyaDaan, and Swayam Prabha.
- **“Aadharshila” School Tracking & Monitoring System:** Aadharshila is a web-based system developed by the Directorate of School Education, Jammu.
 - The system is designed to digitise all the government schools in Jammu, monitor and keep track of infrastructure, teachers, and their expertise in teaching.
 - This data helps to identify various indicators such as teacher-student ratio, category-wise student details, scholarship details, students without Aadhaar details, etc.
- **Samadhan:** Samadhan is an online grievance redressal system that aims at increasing transparency and improving the delivery mechanism in school education.
 - The system is designed by DSE and developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).
 - The platform can be used by parents, students, and teachers to put forth their grievances.
- **J&K Education Hub:** J&K Education Hub is a web-based system that is used to host the academic digital content developed by teachers of government schools.
 - The portal has a special section that highlights the achievements of teachers and students.
- **e-Office at Directorate of School Education, Jammu:** The e-office at the directorate was started to streamline the office working system to ensure transparency and accountability
 - The e-office is a digital system developed by NIC to make the office paperless.
- **System for Management of Private Schools:** It is a web-based system used in the management of private schools.
 - It caters to all private schools irrespective of their Boards like JKBOSE, CBSE, or ICSE.
 - The initiative is under development and is expected to be completed soon.

Quality Education and Enabling Infrastructure

- The key focus has been on offering quality higher education in Ladakh and as a result, the University of Ladakh (UoL) was established in 2019 as a cluster University comprising 6 constituent colleges located at Leh, Kargil, Nubra, Zaskar, Khaltsi and Drass.
- The courses offered in the University have now expanded to 22 Departments that include specialised subjects like Forensic Science, Police Administration and Bachelor of Physical Education.
- 16 MoUs have been signed by UoL with other institutes to promote student exchange programmes, faculty development, collaboration on research and capacity building, etc.
- The infrastructure in the constituent colleges has also been strengthened to cater to growing student strength and the quality of education is also being improved through Faculty Development programmes, students exchange programmes and visiting faculty.
- Under the Special Development Package announced by the Government of India for the new UT of Ladakh, infrastructure projects of around Rs 200 crores have been sanctioned for the colleges in the year 2021-22 which includes hostels, libraries, multi-purpose Hall landscaping and sports grounds, and construction has started at the sites.
- The enrollment in colleges and universities has seen **a sharp rise in the past two years.**

Scholarships

- To encourage merit students, Ladakh administration launched the Rewa (Ladakhi word meaning expectation) Scheme in 2021 to give financial assistance of upto Rs 1 lakh to meritorious students of Class X and XII, irrespective of their family income.
 - The financial assistance is given to enable students to take up coaching for national-level examinations like NEET, JEE, UG CLAT and NDA.

- Under the Rewa Scheme, all those qualifying preliminary examinations of Civil Services, Engineering Services and Forest Services are also given financial assistance upto Rs 1.54 lakh for taking up coaching for the Mains exams.
- About 9,363 students in Ladakh availed scholarships under the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme of the Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) in the year 2021-22.
- Further, around 347 students from Ladakh availed of scholarship under the Prime Minister Special Scholarship Scheme, which is specifically for students of Ladakh and J&K studying in recognised institutes outside the two UTs.

Collaboration with Indian Institutes of Technology

- For the first time ever, the students of Ladakh have got an opportunity to intern with and pursue a postgraduate course in M.Tech at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), as part of the collaboration between the Higher Education Department, UT Ladakh and the consortium of IITs.
- The programmes at the IITs will not only give the students valuable experience but will also help them explore different opportunities, build their entrepreneurial skills, and create new paths for research and development.

Skilling Ladakh

- Skilling and vocational education is an integral part of the National Education Policy, 2020 and steps are being taken to strengthen and expand the skilling ecosystem in Ladakh.
- Ladakh has two Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) along with two Polytechnic Colleges.
- To strengthen the infrastructure of the two ITIs, new workshop buildings are coming up with state-of-the-art equipment. Acknowledging that to improve the quality of training at the ITIs, it's imperative to improve the quality of instructors, therefore the remuneration of guest faculty has been increased by 2.5 times the existing remuneration.
- Horticulture and Floriculture have been introduced to explore new avenues in keeping with the requirements of the region and aspirations of the students.
- To further strengthen and expand the skilling ecosystem in Ladakh in tune with the National Skill India Mission, Ladakh Skill Development Mission (LSDM) was set up in 2021 to formulate skill development programmes under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana and other skill development programmes of various Ministries.
- First-ever Kaushal Mela was organised in March-April 2021 to expose youth to opportunities for skilling and subsequent employment opportunities.

Apprenticeship

- Under the Apprenticeship Act, all establishments having a workforce of 30 or more are mandated to undertake Apprenticeship Programmes and engage apprentices.
- Apprenticeship acts as a bridge course for fresh graduates and puts the responsibility on the industry to extend on-the-job training to fresh pass-outs of colleges.
- Students can avail of apprenticeship to gain skills of their choice and at the same time earn while they learn.

Entrepreneurial Education

- Entrepreneurial education is to be built into the education which is also emphasised in the National Education Policy 2020.
- A comprehensive project is being worked to introduce entrepreneurship as a credit-based subject in Higher Educational Institutions.
- The Department of Industries has also taken up a number of initiatives like setting up the Ladakh Incubation Centre, training in leather goods, exploring the export market for fruits, handloom and handicrafts.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE IN J&K

Various initiatives by MoHFW

- Through the National Health Mission (NHM) the Ministry has developed a robust grass-root level cadre of health workers such as the ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers.
- Additionally, the expansion of the network of ANMs (Auxiliary Nurse Midwives) and other field health staff to support have put in place an all-encompassing coverage system.
- The **Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centre (AB-HWC) of NHM**, has been a flagship programme of the Government of India and is the biggest intervention in strengthening primary level healthcare in recent years.
- The **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** - the most ambitious health sector intervention of the decade.
- The **Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)** which seeks to provide free inpatient department (IPD) expenses coverage for BPL patients throughout the country with an annual cover of Rs 5 lakh, is also a landmark scheme in J&K.

Health coverage achievements in J&K

- The response of the populace across the region towards community-based interventions has been overall positive, which is reflected in the Health Management Information System (HMIS) and RCH Portal.
- These portals have ensured sustained monitoring and evaluation of fieldwork, along with providing an idea of the sheer volume of services that have been delivered which have resulted in improved health outcomes for the UT of J&K which includes reduced Infant Mortality Rate and Neonatal Mortality Rate.
- Early detection of diseases closer to home is being made possible in J&K by ensuring population-based screenings at HWCs for major non-communicable diseases such as Diabetes and Common Cancers.
- Screening has been further expanded to include a range of diseases including Ophthalmic care, ENT care, Elderly care, and Palliative care.

CULTURAL LEVEL

- Citizens of the state should be promoted for cultural exchanges with citizens of different states.
- Schemes like “Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat” should be promoted.
- The outlook citizens of other states with respect to the citizens of J&K should be changed.
- The feeling of alienation and deprivation should be tackled with priority.
- Various awareness programs should be launched to promote the citizens of J&K with the mainstream.

ARMY LEVEL

- The army should understand that AFSPA is only to deal with the extreme situations.
- The sensitivity of the army with respect to the citizens of J&K should be increased.
- Any intention or act to misuse the AFSPA for personal benefit or to showcase power should be strongly dealt with.

SOCIAL LEVEL

- The measures to curb the freedom of expression should be stopped.
- The antipathy of the citizens should be dealt with measures of good governance and tackling the problems at the grassroots rather than suppressing them further.

WHERE SKY IS NOT THE LIMIT

Satish Dhawan Centre for Space Sciences (SDCSS)

To understand space science and its applications, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has set up various institutes in different parts of the country. J&K is one of the regions which has an advanced space research center namely the Satish Dhawan Centre for Space Sciences (SDCSS) at the Central University of Jammu.

- Established under the collaboration of ISRO and the Central University of Jammu (CUJ).
- A premiere Centre in northern India which helps in tapping the potential of space applications for the region and provides an opportunity for the youth to contribute to the field of space science.
- The area of space applications is of particular interest to J&K and the larger Himalayan region as its economy and habitations are influenced by the vegetation cover, forest area, snow, landslides, avalanches and other atmospheric conditions
- To monitor these, a remote sensing and GIS lab is set up in the Centre which helps in forecasting air pollutants, and particulate matter, identifying temperature inversions and their correlation with atmospheric stability using mesoscale atmospheric models and 3D-Var data assimilation techniques.
- The establishment of SDCSS will help address the need of the emerging Geospatial and Space Technology which in turn help in the development of the J&K region.
- SDCSS also has facilities for Geospatial Data analysis that will help in the sustainable use of natural resources and planning land-use patterns.
- It also consists of ground-based observations for Atmospheric Studies, a research lab for astrophysics, Atmospheric Sensing, and Glacier Studies Lab
- A Disaster Management Centre will also be set up at SDCSS that helps in managing disasters such as floods, landslides, forest fires, drought, and climate change.

Hanle Space Observatory

- The Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) located at Hanle near Leh in Ladakh is said to be one of the most promising observatory sites globally
- The region offers numerous advantages such as clearer nights, minimal light pollution, background aerosol concentration, extremely dry atmospheric conditions, and uninterrupted by rains.
- Researchers from India and their collaborators carried out a detailed study of the night-time cloud cover fraction over eight high altitude observatories, including three in India, namely IAO in Hanle, Merak (Ladakh), and Devasthal (Nainital).

- Digpa-ratsa Ri in Hanle, was chosen as the prospective site for a National Observatory after a study of meteorological conditions over the Indian subcontinent in 1993.
- The highest peak in Digpa-ratsa Ri is at an altitude of 4517 metres, and has been named Mount Saraswati. The location of the Himalayan Chandra Telescope (HCT) is to the east of the peak.
- After examining several years of data on various astro-climatological parameters, the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) installed the HCT at IAO, Hanle, in 2000.
- Due to the uniqueness of this site, many astronomical telescopes operating at optical and infrared wavebands have been installed at Hanle by several institutes in the country.

SECURITY LEVEL

- Increasing the vigilance at the borders to counter infiltration and promote counter terrorism measures.
- Strengthening the intelligence network across the state.
- Ensuring that the citizens of the states do not face the brunt of being citizens of a border state and live life like citizens of any other state.

Chapter 3: Sustainable Tourism

Breathtaking landscapes, crystal clear sky-high mountain passes, thrilling adventure activities, and Buddhist monasteries are some of the pictures that come to one's mind when thinking about the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Tourism has gained extensive recognition as an important industry in the district of Ladakh in view of its potential for the creation of employment opportunities and generation of income on a vast scale. The tourism sector has a direct impact on the socio-economic sector of the region and many others working in allied industries such as transportation, lodging, catering, cottage industry, etc. However, tourism causes a major strain on the natural resources of the sensitive ecosystem and extreme climate change impacts are also endangering the lives here.

- The glaciers are melting rapidly
- Snowfall has decreased dramatically over the past two decades.
- Rainfall has also become irregular.
- Flash floods due to cloud bursts in the Leh-Ladakh region are also casting doubt on Ladakh's long-term sustainability.

The unprecedented increase in tourism has led to “**over-tourism**” in these locations, which has an immediate negative impact on natural resources, cultural legacy, and quality of life. This awareness has sparked debate on sustainable tourism.

- Around 250,000 tourists visited Leh in two months, June and July, this year, breaking previous records. The tourist population in two months is about eight times more than Leh city's local population.
- Most hotels and homestays are drawing groundwater by installing borewells to serve tourists and depositing wastewater in septic tanks. Additionally, this construction frenzy is rapidly replacing and displacing farm fields, further reducing not only open space but permanently removing land from food production, thus increasing dependency of the town on the commercial food system for sustenance and reducing the incentive or need to recycle organic material (including human waste) into the soil
- Environmentalists are concerned that rapidly growing tourism is compromising the sustainable way of living in Leh, with increasing waste generation, water demand, vehicular traffic and construction activities.
- While more infrastructure develops to support tourists, some NGOs and environmentalists are demanding restraint on tourist movement, promotion of responsible tourism and mindful travel in Leh.

The Potential of Tourism

- Kashmir is famously referred to as “**paradise on earth**” and has long been a major tourist attraction.
- The region is also known as the “**Switzerland of the East**” because of its abundance of snow-capped mountains, rivers, and freshwater lakes.
- There is a plethora of products that can be purchased in the region which attracts visitors.

- Each district has a lot to offer to the visitors, including abundant natural resources, adventure tourism (such as river rafting and mountain climbing), numerous trekking routes, pilgrimage tourism, wildlife tourism, heritage tourism, ethnic food festivals, and cultural events, handicrafts, etc.

Government initiatives

The Ladakh Government has undertaken the task of waste management with the goal to safeguard the environment. The Central Government is also working towards making Ladakh a tourist destination with a focus on aspects of adventure, culture, and responsible tourism.

- Seven projects worth Rs 594 crores have been sanctioned for J&K and Ladakh under **Swadesh Darshan** and **PRASHAD Schemes**, under the Ministry of Tourism
 - These are expected to make Ladakh a high-value, low-impact tourism destination that fosters sustainable and inclusive growth for the local community.
- Through the promotion of tourism in Ladakh, the aim is to create employment for the locals and promote Ladakh's culture and products to tourists from India and the rest of the world.
- Since it was made into a UT, Ladakh has been witnessing widespread development in the form of hotels, restaurants, bike shops, and new camping rounds. This has resulted in an increase in plastic waste left behind by tourists. To tackle this problem and to preserve ecology in the Himalayas, it has been decided that about 10 percent of the bituminous roads in the region will be constructed using plastic.
- Initiative to promote sustainable development in domestic yak preservation: Yaks have been domesticated in Ladakh for thousands of years and are a precious animal in the Himalayan economy. They are mainly used to carry loads and plow fields. Authorities are planning to buy male and female hybrids—wild yak (*Bos mutus*) and domesticated yak (*Bos grunniens*)—from the Pangong Valley and give them to the nearby valleys of the Lalok region. This initiative will aid in the reproduction of a more robust and healthier genetic breed of wild yak in the valley, which will benefit the locals.
- The central government had announced its intention to focus on eco-tourism in Ladakh by promoting bird watching and preservation of structures with heritage importance.
- Furthermore, efforts are being made to promote Ladakh among writers and researchers as an ideal location for their work.
- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is also working to restore the region's heritage structures.



Image Source: [The Live Wire](#)

Way forward

- At present, the strategy should be the reduction in significant risk of pollution and environmental degradation, and promote sustainable tourism.

- The potential of high-end tourism and wildlife conservation is yet to be harnessed through a scientific understanding and efficient planning.
- Without a proper understanding of the delicate interlinkages of different landscape components, the rapid development of tourism may affect the unique ecosystems of the region.
- It is crucial to consider the sustainability prospects for tourism growth in these regions as threats to the socio-cultural heritage, intensive use of finite resources, and negative externalities, as elsewhere, could have other detrimental effects.
- J&K and Ladakh must strive to develop into Eco-Tourism hotspots because uncontrolled tourism contributes to the ecological imbalance brought on by climate change.
 - Eco Tourism is ethical travel to unspoiled areas that protects the environment, promotes community development, and educates both locals and visitors.

The UT may take inspiration from Bhutan, which has pledged to “absorb more carbon than we release and to be a net sink for global greenhouse gases”.

Kashmir: Poetry and Mysticism

In the evolution and development of literary, criticism, metaphysics and poetics in Sanskrit, Kashmir holds an important place as being the birthplace or residence of several prominent literary critics, theoreticians, philosophers and commentators.

The list includes names such as Panini, Chandracharya, Bharata, Kshemendra, Abhinavagupta, Vasugupta, Somananda, Somadeva, Bilhana, Kalhana, Patanjali, Anandavardhana and many others.

- **Panini's Astadhyayi** is the basis of **Sanskrit grammar**
- **Bharata's Natyashastra** is the foundational text for theorising on dramaturgy.
- The poetic theories of **aucitya, guna, rill and dhvani** are the contributions of Kashmir to Indian poetics.

From Buddhism to Shaivism to Sufism, Kashmir's literary and cultural landscape has enriched the corpus of mysticism and literature in India.

- The great philosopher **Abhinavagupta** lived in Kashmir in the 11th century and his name has become inseparable from the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism.
- This system of philosophy teaches the concepts of **abhas-vad (intuition) and pratyabhijna (recognition)**.
- Abhinavagupta also added the ninth rasa, “**shanta rasa**” to the typology of eight rasas enumerated by Bharata in Natyashastra.
- His other compositions include **Tantraloka, Abhinavabharati**, commentary on the Bhagavad Gita titled **Gitartha Samgraha and Parmarthasara**

There was a robust spiritual environment wherein saint-poets such as **Lal Ded** flourished and composed **vaakhs** (four-line stanzas).

- In contemporary Kashmiri poetry, **Bimla Raina** has preserved the tradition of the singing of **Lal-Ded's vaakhs**.
- **Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani** was a master in the rishi or reshut parampara of Kashmir wherein his mystical thought blended the values of Kashmir Shaivism and Sufism.
- He composed **four-to six-line poems known as shrukh in Kashmiri** and is also credited with translating the Holy Quran into Kashmiri.
- The tradition of great women saints and mentors is preserved in the verses and dargahs in Kashmir.

The first all-women Sufi band was formed in 2015 in the region and they call themselves “**Yemberzal**” and are dedicated to preserve the Sufiana mausiqi, the tradition of Sufi music and Kashmiri classical music.

Chapter 4: Fostering MSMEs and Artisans

Kashmir is known for its handicrafts throughout the world. The carpets, silks, shawls, basketry, pottery, copper and silverware, Papier-mâché, and walnut wood are most sought after. Kashmir's traditional handloom weaving has existed for centuries and has developed a name for itself across the world. Apart from designs found specifically in the area, raw materials such as the pashmina, silk or wool are in great demand. The cottage handicrafts industry provides direct employment to over 3 lakh artisans. A new plan for global cooperation has been launched with Germany which is one of the biggest patrons of Kashmiri handicrafts.

Current Status of MSMEs

- Most MSMEs work in the following domains:
 - **Manufacturing:** Food processing, Steel fabrication, Packaging water, Cardboard manufacturing, Furniture-based industry, Handicrafts & Handlooms based Units, Cricket Bat manufacturing
 - **Services:** CA Stores, Hotelier Industry, Tour and travel based industry. Tourism related service.
- The major industrial estates of the valley have been developed with the use of **Micro & Small Enterprises – Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP) Scheme** of Ministry of MSME, with total project cost of approximately 46 crores.
- **SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) clusters** are also working in the region.
- **J&K Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB)** is establishing and nurturing an entrepreneurial ecosystem under the micro and village industries sector across the UT.
 - KVIB artisans produce customer-savvy products and foster a strong rural community spirit by establishing a sustainable and dynamic village and traditional industries sector.
- The **Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)** which is a central sector scheme is also being implemented in the region on war footing by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) where the government subsidy is routed through the identified banks for eventual distribution to the beneficiaries/entrepreneurs in their bank accounts.

Implementation of MSME Schemes

- **MSME – Cluster Development Programme:** The objective of the Scheme is to improve technology, skills, quality and market access, etc., through infrastructural facilities in the new/existing clusters of MSEs besides sustainable technology for the clusters.
- **ESDP – Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programme:** The aim of the scheme is to motivate young persons of different sections of the society including SC/ST/women, physically challenged, ex-servicemen and Below Line (BPL) persons to consider self-employment as a career option.
- **BPMS – Procurement and Marketing Support Scheme:** The objective of the Scheme is to enhance the marketability of products and services:
 - To promote new market access initiatives, create awareness and educate the MSMEs.
 - To create more awareness about trade fairs, digital advertising, e-marketing, GST, and GeM portal.
- **MSME Sustainable (ZED) Certification Scheme:** The Scheme envisages promotion of **Zero Defect and Zero Effect (ZED)** manufacturing amongst MSME and ZED assessment for their certification to encourage and enable MSMEs for manufacturing quality products by using latest technology and tools with the least effect on the environment.
- **Udyam Registration:** The government has organised a system to facilitate the registration of MSMEs. A permanent registration number will be given after registration.
- **Technology Centre at Samba:** A technology centre is being set up at Industrial Estate, Samba (J&K).
- **National SC and ST Hub in Leh:** The **National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (NSSH) Scheme** which is an initiative of the Union Ministry of MSME was launched in 2016 by the Prime Minister.
 - The Scheme aims at capacity enhancement of SC/ST entrepreneurs and promoting “entrepreneurship culture” amongst the SC/ST population.

Blooming Business of Lavender

The Aroma Mission, also popularly referred as “Lavender or Purple Revolution”, has started from J&K and transformed the lives of farmers who are able to grow lavender, make lucrative profit and improve their lives.

- *Lavandula angustifolia* Mill or the “True Lavender” is a small, non-hardy perennial evergreen subshrub.
- It is commercially cultivated in many parts of the world.
- Lavender is mainly cultivated for its essential oil, obtained by the hydro-distillation of its attractive flowering spikes.
- Lavender is commercially one of the best-known essential oil-bearing plants grown for essential oil and dry flowers.
- The variety of lavender is highly suitable for cultivation in the rainfed regions of the temperate regions of India, including Kashmir valley and temperate regions of the Jammu division.

Aroma Mission

- The Aroma Mission is envisaged to bring transformative change in the aroma sector through desired interventions in the areas of agriculture, processing and product development for fuelling the growth of aroma industry and rural employment.
- **Objectives:**
 - To promote the cultivation of aromatic crops for essential oils.
 - To enable Indian farmers and the aroma industry to become global leaders.
 - To provide benefits to the farmers in achieving higher profits, utilization of waste lands and protection of their crops from wild and grazing animals.
 - Provided employment to women farmers
- **Nodal Agencies:** CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CSIR-CIMAP), Lucknow.
- **Aromatic Plants include**
 - Lavender
 - Damask rose
 - Mushk bala, etc.
- **Projects include**
 - **Lavender oil** which sells for at least Rs. 10,000 per litre
 - **Lavender water**, which separates from lavender oil, is used to make incense sticks.
 - **Hydrosol**, which is formed after distillation from the flowers, is used to make soaps and room fresheners.
 - **Coverage:** The project assured benefits to the growers of Vidarbha, Bundelkhand, Gujarat, Marathwada, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and other states where farmers are exposed to frequent episodes of weather extremes and account for maximum suicides.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Bring about 5500 ha of additional area under captive cultivation aromatic cash crops particularly targeting rain-fed /degraded land across the country
 - Provide technical and infrastructural support for distillation and values-addition to farmers/growers all over the country
 - Enabling effective buy-back mechanisms to assure remunerative prices to the farmers/growers
 - Value-addition to essential oils and aroma ingredients for their integration in global trade and economy'



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TRIBAL LIFE AND CULTURE

Chapter 5: Tribal Life and Culture

A. The Constitutional Provisions

Sixth Schedule

- The provisions of the sixth schedule are provided under **Articles 244(2) and 275(1)** of the Indian Constitution.
- Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram** falls under the sixth schedule of the constitution
- The most important provisions of the Sixth Schedule are that the **tribal areas are to be administered as Autonomous Districts and Autonomous Regions.**
- **The Governor of the State** is empowered to determine the area or areas as administrative units of the Autonomous Districts and Autonomous Regions.
- If there are different tribes in an autonomous district, **the governor can divide the district into several autonomous regions.**
- **Each Autonomous District shall have a District Council** consisting of not more than thirty members, out of which four are nominated by the Governor while the rest are elected on the basis of adult franchise.
- The elected members hold office for a term of five and nominated members to hold office during the pleasure of the governor.
- **Autonomous District Councils and Regional Councils are endowed with certain legislative, executive, judicial and financial powers.**

Judicial Powers

- The **District and Regional Councils** are also **empowered to constitute Village and District Council Courts** for the trial of suits and cases where all parties to the dispute belong to Scheduled Tribes within the district.
- And **no other courts except the High Courts and the Supreme Court** have the jurisdiction over such suits or cases of the Council Courts.
- The region where the incident took place **falls under Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous District Council.**

NOTE:

- The Constitution under Article 342 empowers the President to specify the Scheduled Tribes (STs) in various states and union territories.
- Further, it permits Parliament to modify this list of notified STs.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)

- NCST was set up with effect from 19th February, 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.
- **Powers:** It oversees the implementation of various safeguards provided to STs under the Constitution and to evaluate the working of such safeguards.
 - The commission is vested with all the powers of a civil court while investigating any matter on inquiring into any complaint relating to deprivation of rights and safeguards for the Scheduled Tribes
- **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.
 - The members are not eligible for appointment for more than two terms.

States can have sub-groups among SC/ST

Justice Arun Mishra's judgement:

- Reservation has created inequalities within the reserved castes itself.
- Benefits of reservation are being used by a few.
- Caste, occupation, and poverty are interwoven.
- The State cannot be deprived of the power to take care of the qualitative and quantitative differences between different classes.

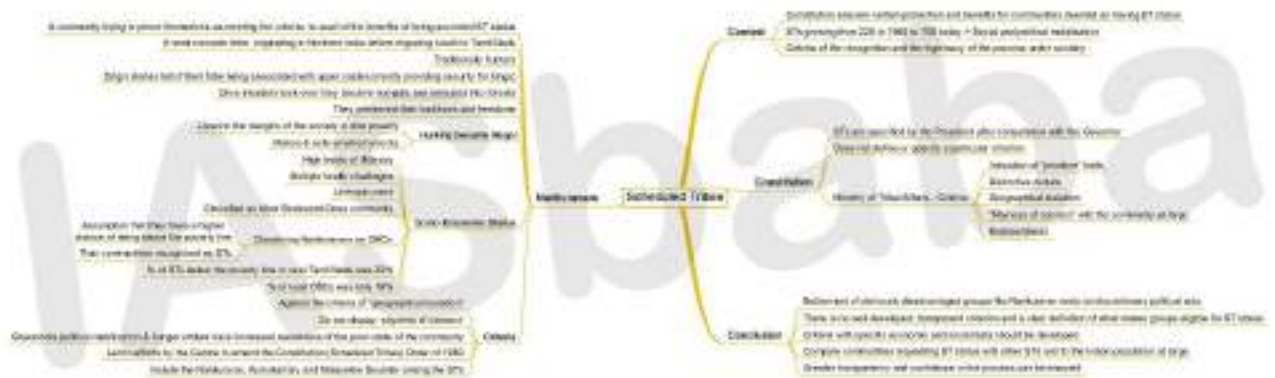
- ST and SC in the Central List do not constitute a homogenous group.

Do you know?

- The judgment is significant as it will provide the push to extend the creamy layer concept to the SC and ST.
- In 2004, the Chinnaiyah judgment had held that allowing the States to unilaterally make a class within a class of members of the SC would lead to changes in the Presidential list.
- The issue has now been referred to a seven-judge Bench of the court.

Important value additions

- The Central List of SC and ST are notified by the President under Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution.
- The consent of the Parliament is required to exclude or include castes in the List.
- Thus, States cannot unilaterally add or pull outcastes from the List.
- The Supreme Court has reasoned that sub-classifications within the Presidential/Central List do not amount to changing it. No caste is excluded from the list.



New Tribes added to the Scheduled Tribes List

- The **Hatti tribe** in the Trans-Giri area of Sirmour district in **Himachal Pradesh**.
- The **Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran** hill tribes of **Tamil Nadu**.
- The **Binjhia in Chhattisgarh**, who were listed as ST in Jharkhand and Odisha but not in Chhattisgarh, were the communities newly added to the list.
- **'Betta-Kuruba'** as a synonym for the **Kadu Kuruba tribe In Karnataka**.
- In Chhattisgarh, the Cabinet approved synonyms for tribes like the Bharia (variations added include Bhumia and Bhuyian), Gadhwa (Gadwa), Dhanwar (Dhanawar, Dhanuwar), Nagesia (Nagasia, Kisan), and Pondh (Pond), among others.

Process to include tribes in the ST list:

- It will start with the **recommendation from the respective State governments**, which are then sent to the **Tribal Affairs Ministry**, which reviews and sends them to the **Registrar General of India for approval**.
 - This is followed by the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes'** approval before the list is sent to the **Cabinet for a final decision**.

Note: The Cabinet approved a proposal to bring the **Gond community** residing in 13 districts of **Uttar Pradesh**, under the ST list from the Scheduled Caste list. This includes the five subcategories of the Gond community (**Dhuria, Nayak, Ojha, Pathari, and Rajgond**).

S. N.	Article/Schedules	Provisions in Brief
1	14	Equality before the law or the equal protection of laws
2	15	Government not to discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth
3	15(4)	States can make any special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens including STs
4	16(4)	Reservation of appointments or posts by States
5	38	State to strive to promote the welfare of its people by securing and protecting a social order
6	46	State to promote educational and economic interests of all the weaker sections including STs
7	164(1)	States with a large proportion of ST population (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha) shall have a Minister-in-charge of tribal welfare.
8	275(1)	Grants-in-aid for promoting the welfare of the STs and for raising the level of administration of the scheduled areas
9	330, 332 & 335	Reservations of seats for STs in the Lok Sabha, the State legislative assemblies and services
10	340	State to appoint a Commission to investigate the conditions of the socially and educationally backward classes
11	342	State to specify tribes or tribal communities as STs
12	275(1)	Grants from the consolidated funds of India each year to be released for promoting the welfare of STs
Schedule		
13	Fifth	Prescriptions outlined for the administration of Scheduled Areas and the setting up of Tribal Advisory Councils for monitoring and advising the matters relating to welfare of the tribal community [Article 244(1)]
14	Sixth	Administration of Scheduled areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram by designating certain areas as Autonomous Districts and Autonomous Regions and also by constituting District Councils [Article 244(2)].
Constitutional Amendments		
15	73 rd & 74 th Amendments & Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled areas Act 1996)	Major shift towards empowering and enabling the scheduled tribes to look after their own interest and welfare through their own initiative. PESA provides a constitutional, legal and policy framework to ensure sustainable autonomous tribal governance.

Image Source: Kurukshetra

B. The socio-economic status of the STs:

1. Livelihood Development

- According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) survey on the poverty line, ST people living below the poverty line in 2011-12 were 45.3 percent and 24.1 percent in the rural and urban areas, respectively.
- As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey, conducted by NSSO, the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in usual status (Principal + Subsidiary) for STs during 2017-18 and 2019-20 were 41.8 and 47.1 percent.
- The India Human Development Survey shows the incidence of poverty is highest among the STs (49.6%), followed by the SCs (32.3%), and then the Muslims (30.6%).

2. Literacy Rate and Education:

- According to the Census figures, the literacy rate for STs in India improved from 47.1 percent in 2001 to 59 percent in 2011.
- Although STs show a declining trend in dropout rates they are still very high – 35.6% in Classes I to V; 55% in Classes I to VIII; and 70.9% in Classes I to X in 2010-11, according to the Statistics Of School Education 2010-2011.
- Special incentives such as free education in schools, and exclusive residential schools for the STs are provided to address the issue of dropouts.
- Special focus is laid on STs under schemes such as the Mid-Day meal scheme, Navodaya Vidyalaya etc.
- The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs is setting up Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) under every block with more than 50% Schedule Tribe (ST) population and at least 20,000 tribal persons by the year 2022. These are being set up by grants provided under **Article 275(1)** of the Constitution.

- The objective of EMRS is to provide quality middle and high level education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in remote areas, and to have access to the best opportunities in education at par with the non ST population.
- By focusing on specific intervention to cater to the educational needs of STs, their quality of life is expected to improve to the level of the rest of the social groups and a visible impact by the 2021 Census.

3. Entrepreneurship and Skill Development

- Enabling an entrepreneurial atmosphere along with skill development initiatives to ensure gainful absorption of educated ST persons are crucial for their development.
- Under Skill India Mission, the Union Ministry of Skill Development has been delivering short-term skills through Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, Jan Shikshan Sansthan Scheme, National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, and long-term skills through Craftsman Training Scheme and Industrial Training Institutes to the youth belonging to all section of the society including tribal community.
- All of the above schemes have the mandatory provision of utilisation of funds for tribals through Scheduled Tribes (ST) component.
- While resources are not an issue, the prime concern is how to encourage the participation of youth, employable STs in various vocations by mapping their needs and aspirations.

C. Government's Key Welfare Schemes for the Tribal Population

After Independence, provisions were made in the Constitution to safeguard tribal interests and promote their developmental and welfare activities through various government schemes. Governmental schemes tried for the uplift and rehabilitation of tribals but faced challenges to achieve their goals and tribal proletarianisation has persisted since independence.

Challenges faced by government while implementation of tribal welfare schemes –

- Social barriers pertain in dealing with tribal social system. Cultural barriers are related to different cultural values which come in the way of adoption of innovation.
- Poor implementation of programmes is reason for lack of social development among tribes. Another argument regarding poor development of the tribal populations is built around the issue of the traditional socio-cultural aspects of tribal life.
- Massive development displacement of tribes. Tribal areas have witnessed the development of industry, mining, and infrastructure projects such as hydraulic projects such as dams and irrigation. It has been often loss of livelihood and involuntary migration of tribes.
- About 40 percent of those displaced by dam-building belong to the Scheduled Tribes. Scheduled Tribes constitute about eight per cent of the country's population; they are clearly disproportionately represented in the number of displaced persons.
- The Provisions of PESA 1996 and FRA 2006, enacted to redress the historical injustice to tribal and forest communities, have been significant initiatives that have changed their legal status. However, policies and practices have been slow to absorb the changed circumstances recognised in the law.
- Massive push to development agenda with economic liberalization and the entry of private corporations into tribal areas, has been met with considerable resistance by tribal communities.
- Of the nine States considered to be seriously affected by LWE, six are States with Scheduled districts. LWE primarily a national security problem that is used and addressed militarily. This approach is resulting in the further alienation of tribal communities, widening the trust deficit between the State and the tribal people creating hurdles in implementation.
- Northeast is often viewed as a singular and homogeneous entity, the region is highly diverse with over 200 tribes and sub-tribes, each of which has its own language, culture, and political structures. Therefore, DoNER in the Northeast faces challenges also conflicts between the State and tribal groups, between different tribes, and between tribes and non-tribal groups hampering the relationship between people and administration.

High-Level Committee under Virginius Xaxa recommended appropriate interventional measures to improve the same –

- New micro-agencies need to be created in such pockets to cater to specific tribal groups.
- Protecting the land and forest rights of tribal communities is equivalent to protecting their livelihoods, life and liberty.
- The right to preservation of their language, culture and traditions, and to protect themselves against the loss of identity, must be recognised, protected, documented and allowed to thrive as a dynamic living culture.

Key welfare government schemes for tribals –

- **Development of PVTGs:** It is for 18 States and a UT for the activities like housing, land distribution, land development, agricultural development, and animal husbandry.

- **Mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through MSP and Development of Value Chain for MFP:** The scheme seeks to establish a system to ensure fair monetary returns for their efforts.
- **Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana:** The scheme proposes to bring the tribal population of the country at par with other social groups and include them in the overall progress of the nation. The government aims for the holistic development of tribals by plugging in the infrastructural gaps and lags in human development indices.
- **Tribal Handicrafts:** TRIFED has set up TribesIndia a chain of showrooms where several categories of handicrafts are being marketed like tribal textiles and tribal jewellery. TRIFED is also working on the capacity building of the tribes.
- **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs):** To provide quality middle and high-level education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in remote areas, to enable them to avail of reservations in high and professional education courses and as jobs in government and public and private sectors.
- **National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation:**
 - NSTFDC strives towards empowerment of the ST population through the creation and promotion of sustainable livelihood.
 - The corporation in collaboration with the state ST corporations and banks provides concessional loans for viable projects costing up to Rs. 50.00 lakh per unit for undertaking various income generation activities.
 - **Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana**, an exclusive scheme for the economic development of Scheduled Tribes women provides loans up to 90 percent for projects costing up to Rs. 2 lakh.
 - **Micro Credit Scheme for Self Help Groups**, a scheme for meeting small loan requirements of ST members under which the corporation provides loans up to Rs. 50,000 per member and maximum Rs. 5 Lakh per Self Help Group.
 - Corporation provides loans up to Rs. 10.00 lakh at a concessional rate of interest of 6 percent per annum under **Adivasi Shiksha Rrinn Yojana** to ST students to meet the expenditure for pursuing technical and professional education including Ph.D. in India.
- **The National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS):** This is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. It has been registered as a Society, under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 in New Delhi on 1 April 2019 to establish, endow, maintain, control and manage the schools (hereinafter called 'Eklavya Model Residential Schools') and to do all acts and things necessary for or conducive to the promotion of such schools.
- **Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission:**
 - The Mission seeks to achieve livelihood-driven tribal development during the financial years 2021-22 to 2025-26 through the formation of Van Dhan groups that have been organized into Vandhan Kendras.
 - The Minor Forest Produces gathered by tribals will be processed in these kendras and marketed through Van Dhan Producer Enterprises.
 - New haats bazaar and warehouses will be developed in the next 5 years as part of "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan".
 - TRIFED would be the nodal agency for implementing the scheme
- **Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Tribes**
 - Announced in 2022-23 Union Budget to promote entrepreneurship among tribals who are oriented towards innovation and technology.
 - Schemes provides concessional finance and hand holding to new incubation ideas and start-up ideas by ST entrepreneurs.
- **Stand-Up India Scheme**
- **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme**
 - It is a major credit-linked subsidy scheme launched by merging two schemes namely Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY) and Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP)
 - It aims for generating employment opportunities by establishing micro-enterprises in urban and rural areas in the non-farm sector.
 - Implemented by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)

Financial Support to STs:

- There are several major centrally sponsored schemes under which credit is provided by banks and subsidy is received through government agencies with significant reservation and relaxation for the members of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities.
- The allocation for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes across all Ministries has witnessed an increase from Rs. 31,920.00 crore in 2017-18 to Rs. 78,256.31 crore in 2021-22.
- NSTFDC's refinance to scheduled commercial banks/regional rural banks on lending to STs is considered as priority sector lending which makes the refinance more attractive and helps in expansion of its outreach.

- Special financial assistance is ensured to States for infrastructure development in tribal dominated areas under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution.
- Budget outlay for the Financial Year 2022-2023 for the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, saw an increase of 12.32% from previous year budget.

Initiatives to promote livelihood opportunities for tribals in India:

- **Institutional Support for Development and Marketing of Tribal Products/Produce:** Under the scheme Grants-in-aid are released to State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations and TRIFED. To give comprehensive support to people belonging to various tribes in the entire range of production, product development, preservation of traditional heritage, support to both forest and agricultural produce of tribal people, support to institutions to carry the above activities, provisions of better infrastructure, development of designs, dissemination of information about price and the agencies which are buying the products, support to government agencies for sustainable marketing is provided and thereby ensure a reasonable price regime.
- **Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP)** The scheme ensures fair returns to MFP gatherers mainly through MSP for identified MFP collected by them along with necessary infrastructure at local level.
- **Van Dhan Vikas Yojana (VDVK):**
 - It is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED, launched in 2018, to improve tribal incomes through the value addition of tribal products.
 - It is a Market Linked Tribal Entrepreneurship Development Program for forming clusters of tribal Self-Help-Groups (SHGs) and strengthening them into Tribal Producer Companies
 - It aims to set up tribal community-owned Minor Forest Produce (MFP)-centric multi-purpose Van Dhan Vikas Kendras.
 - The Kendras would act as common facility centers for procurement cum value addition to locally available MFPs.
 - One typical Van Dhan Vikas Kendra comprises of 15 Self Help Groups, each consisting of 20 Tribal gatherers.
 - These SHGs will get training on sustainable harvesting/collection, primary processing & value addition and also be provided with working capital to conduct their business.
- **Equity Support To National/State Scheduled Tribes Finance And Development Corporation (NSTFDC/STFDCs):** NSTFDC is a Government aided Not-for-Profit company having licence under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 to provide concessional financial assistance to scheduled tribes for their economic and educational development.

Schemes for uplifting the education amongst tribal communities:

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)

- Announced in the Union Budget of 2018-19, they are established under every block with more than 50% Schedule Tribe (ST) population and at least 20,000 tribal persons by the year 2022.
- These are being set up by grants provided under Article 275(1) of the Constitution.
- The objective of EMRS is to provide quality middle and high-level education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in remote areas and to have access to the best opportunities in education at par with the non ST population.
- These EMRSs were to be at par with Navodaya Vidyalayas with special facilities for preserving local art and culture besides providing training in sports and skill development.

National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST students: Under the scheme, Fellowships are provided to ST students to take up higher studies after completing Post Graduation, such as M.Phil and Ph.D courses.

Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme and Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme

Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRI): The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs under the scheme "Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRI) provides grants to States/UTs to strengthen the Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) for their infrastructural needs, Research & documentation activities and Training & Capacity Building programmes etc.

Development of PVTGs:

- The Scheme for Development of Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Groups was first introduced and implemented from 1st April 2008.
- The Plan characterises PVTGs as the foremost defenceless among the Planned Tribes and the Plan hence looks to organise their assurance and improvement.
- It recognizes 75 PVTGs.
- The Scheme adopts a habitat level approach to improve the quality of life through intervention in housing, drinking water, education and health services, livelihood services and cultural aspects.

Major Challenges for Tribal Education:

In the case of Scheduled Tribes, the remoteness of habitations, lack of travelling facilities, insufficient infrastructure facilities, illiteracy of parents, communication problem, and segregated population are the primary constraints for the educational attainment of these children.

Lack of Adequate Infrastructure in Schools:

- Adequate infrastructure such as gender segregated functional toilets, pucca school buildings, electricity, water, play area, library, sports facilities, and safe and conducive environment for learning are the primary requirements for retaining a child in the school.
- The schools in tribal areas are generally located in remote, hilly and in dense forests and lack above facilities which ultimately leads to children dropping out of school.

Low Learning Level of Children: The recently released results of National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021, indicate that only 42 percent of children at Grade III are proficient in all subjects which decrease to 23 percent in class X.

Medium of Instruction: Primary education in mother tongue has huge benefits. One language dominating learning and education as a medium of instruction in a country with multiple cultures and languages can leave many illiterate and foster unproductive learning.

Lack of Teachers and Appropriate Pedagogy:

- Due to disproportionate teacher's deployment, schools in far flung areas and difficult terrain face shortage of teachers. Many primary schools merely have a single teacher and that teacher is not aware about the needs of tribal students.
- Real life application of knowledge and respect for tribal knowledge may make a huge difference in educational outcomes of tribal students.

Conclusion

Schemes are facing grassroots implementation problems. But it does not mean that these schemes are a failure. Due to such initiatives many tribal communities of India improved their economic, educational, social and cultural status. Due to such scheme mainstreaming and channelization of scheduled tribes took a leap forward. By strengthening of the weaknesses of tribal area schemes the objective of their existence in modern world can be achieved.

National Tribal Health Mission

For the first time since independence, a tribal President has become a reality in India. On this International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, let us explore how this symbolic gesture can be turned into a health revolution for the tribal people of India.

- Nearly 11 crore tribal people (enumerated as Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the Census of India (2011) live in India.
- They constitute 6% of India's population, the second largest number of tribal people in any country in the world.
- A study published in The Lancet, titled 'Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Health' (2016), found that India held the inglorious distinction of having the second highest infant mortality rate for the tribal people, next only to Pakistan.
- In 2018, the first national report on the state of India's tribal people's health was submitted to the Government of India by the Expert Committee on Tribal Health.
- The 13-member committee was jointly appointed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.

Findings

- Firstly, tribal people are concentrated in 809 blocks in India.
- Such areas are designated as the Scheduled Areas
- Half of India's tribal population, nearly five and a half crore, live outside the Scheduled Areas, as a scattered and marginalised minority.
- They are the most powerless.
- Second, the health status of tribal people has certainly improved during the last 25 years as seen in the decline in the under-five child mortality rate from 135 in 1988 in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-1 to 57 in 2014 (NFHS-4). However, the percentage of excess of under-five mortality among STs compared to others has widened.
- Third, child malnutrition is 50% higher in tribal children: 42% compared to 28% in others.
- Fourth, malaria and tuberculosis are three to 11 times more common among the tribal people.
- Though the tribal people constitute only 8.6% of the national population, half of the total malaria deaths in India occur among them.
- Fifth, while malnutrition, malaria and mortality continue to plague tribal people, gradually, the more difficult to treat non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes, and worse, mental health problems such as depression and addiction leading to cancer and suicide, are increasing. These threaten the health and survival of tribal adults.

- Sixth, tribal people heavily depend on government-run public health care institutions, there is a 27% to 40% deficit in the number of such facilities, and 33% to 84% deficit in medical doctors in tribal areas.
- Seventh, there is hardly any participation of the tribal people – locally or at the State or national level – in designing, planning or delivering health care to them.

The official policy of allocating and spending an additional financial outlay, called Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), equal to the percentage of the ST population in the State, has been completely flouted by all States.

A roadmap

- Firstly, launch a National Tribal Health Action Plan with a goal to bring the status of health and healthcare at par with the respective State averages in the next 10 years.
- Second, the committee suggested nearly 80 measures to address the 10 priority health problems, the health care gap, the human resource gap, and the governance problems.
- Third, the committee suggested the allocation of additional money so that the per capita government health expenditure on tribal people becomes equal to the stated goal of the National Health Policy (2017), i.e. 2.5% of the per capita GDP.

The tribal healthcare system is sick, and tribal people need more substantive solutions. India needs to move from symbolic gestures to substantive promises, from promises to a comprehensive action plan, and from an action plan to realizing the goal of healthy tribal people.

If actualized, the Tribal Health Mission can be the path to a peaceful health revolution for the 11 crore tribal people. India needs to demonstrate to them that democracy offers a caring solution to their wounds.

Tribal Welfare: GI Tag

Context: In the era of Inclusive development the empowerment of scheduled tribes (ST), which are largely economically and socially backward, has assumed special significance.

A sustainable way to empower Schedule Tribes is help them become self-employed entrepreneurs.

Self-employment is already high amongst STs

- According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2018-19 report, a large proportion of scheduled tribe workers (57%) are self-employed, basically in the agriculture & allied activities and handicrafts.
- Around 30% are casual and agricultural labour and only around 13% are engaged in salaried employment.
- Hence, it is essential to explore skilling avenues which would help them earn more in the same occupation.

Would the GI tag help the tribes to become entrepreneurs?

- A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin
- GI holds the potential for increasing the value and market price of a wide variety of potential GI forest products for local ST communities.
- Many communities have benefited enormously economically from the GI recognition granted to their traditional products.
- For instance, post the GI tag, the price of Kadaknath Chicken, a native breed of the Dhar and Jabua districts in Madhya Pradesh and primarily nurtured by the Bhil tribals, has gone up significantly.
- The GI tagged aromatic Araku Valley Coffee, originally produced by the tribal population of Andhra Pradesh, is now being exported as a premium lifestyle and health product

Will getting the GI tag be enough to economically upstage the tribal population?

There are various challenges associated post giving GI Tag to traditional products of STs, some of which are:

- Challenges of Middlemen: The benefit of the GI registered tribal product, in many cases, accrues not to the artist but to traders or middlemen.
- Issue of duplicate and fake products: Traditional hand-woven designs are often duplicated and sold at a lower price through mass production, which deprives the tribes of their legitimate income
- A case in point is the GI registered unique hand-woven embroidery and textile designs made by the Toda tribe of the Nilgiris.
- Challenges of Marketing and brand promotion: The GI tag enhances the value—in terms of sales and profits—of only those products which are known, are already profitable

Way Ahead

- Proactive State Governments: States should try to identify traditional products, which incorporate the knowledge and skills of the scheduled tribes, and strive to get GI tag for such products
- Effective Implementation of GI Provisions: Any infringement of GI provisions, such as cases of proliferation of duplicate and fake products, should be dealt severely.

- **Inclusive GI Tag recognition:** There is a need to upgrade the GI Act, 1999, and make it more inclusive and responsive to ground realities so that more products are GI registered.
- **Civil Society Support:** It is also critical that NGOs and corporates support the branding and marketing of GI products. In fact, the credit for establishing Araku Valley coffee as an international brand owes essentially to the marketing efforts of an NGO and select corporates.
- **Enterprise-facilitating platform** such as a chamber of commerce, governmental help desk or a voluntary organisation dedicated to GI must be constituted. This would help connect the buyer with the original seller/tribal, thereby helping in reducing the exploitative gap between owner and seller within the GI ecosystem
- **Legal Support:** The inclusion of legal support services within the chamber of commerce and voluntary organisations also helps protect the rights of tribes.

Conclusion

At a time when the government is working on the 'One District, One Product' plan and considers the use of GI tag for better results, the experience of scheduled tribes could help.

All the best
Team IASbaba 😊



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