



**Seminar**  
**on**  
**Tribes, Subalternity and Social**  
**Change in India**

**Sponsored by:**

*ICSSR, Ministry of Education, Government of India*  
*(On October 13-14, 2023)*

**Organized by:**

*Giri Institute of Development Studies*  
*(A National Research Institute of the ICSSR, Ministry of*  
*Education, GOI & Govt. Of U.P.)*

**Venue**

**Giri Institute of Development Studies**  
**Aliganj Housing Scheme, near C.M.S.,**  
**Sector O, Aliganj, Lucknow,**  
**Uttar Pradesh-226024**

**Sub Themes of the Seminar**

1. Tribes as Subalterns: Ideology and Politics of Tribal Subalternity
2. State-society Relations and Tribal Development: Reproduction of Hegemony through Culture, Language, and Development
3. Tribal Education, Health and Nutrition: Marginalization of their Language, Culture and Knowledge System
4. Tribal Movements in India: Subaltern Resurgence
5. Tribal Women in India: Subjugated Subalternity

**Vision of Institute**

*The Vision of the Institute is to develop as a center of excellence in the field of Social Science Research with special focus on Uttar Pradesh's Society, Economy and Politics for implementing and Conducting research studies in the field of social science on various aspects of development*



**Registration Started:**

|                       | <i>Outstation</i>  | <i>Local</i>   |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <i>Student Fee-</i>   | <i>Rs. 1,000/-</i> | <i>700/-</i>   |
| <i>Teacher's Fee-</i> | <i>Rs. 2,000/-</i> | <i>1,500/-</i> |

**Link:** <https://www.gids.org.in/>

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*Concept Note*

Most of the anthropological and sociological studies on tribes in India portray them as a people living in an enclave, insulated from the mainstream society. These studies conjure an image of tribal society that implicitly depicts them as undeveloped and less civilized and thereby demean their society, culture, language and their way of life. They go on to appoint themselves as ambassadors of change or on a mission to civilize them. This perspective dominates the discussion on development policy. As a counter to this position, there is a recognition of the uniqueness of tribal society, their culture and languages. They consider them no less developed than those of the mainstream society. This perspective dominates anthropological studies. This binary position on tribal society lost meaning amidst massive intervention by state and other changes in tribal society.

In common parlance, tribal societies are considered as monolithic, homogeneous and having similar socio-cultural traits. However, there are pronounced variations in the various tribal societies, with some commonalities. There are considerable inter- and intra-tribe differentiations that have not been given much attention.

- ❖ Tribal groups are conscious of their common interests and threats. Marginalization of the tribal society and increasing awareness of their deprivations and sufferings have often united them to assert collectively. The Jharkhand movement that culminated in the formation of a separate state of Jharkhand is an example of their political mobilization. Some of the ethnic agitations in NE India have similar characteristics.
- ❖ Though political movements of the tribal society have increased their political participation; this has also given rise to tribal elites who have gained political office, without much benefits to the tribal

society. This has emerged as a major weakness of tribal movements in India.

- ❖ The phenomenon of tribal elite is more pronounced in north-east India where tribal population form a majority of the population in states like Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh Meghalaya. Acquisition of political power has become an instrument of accumulating economic resources, using government power. Militant movements have flourished on illegal trade and extortions and have become an instrument of acquiring personal wealth, deviating from the main declared goal of the movement.
- ❖ Data on assets-worth of political leaders of north-eastern states are revealing. For example, in the last Legislative Assembly elections of Nagaland, held in 2018, out of 193 candidates, 114 (59%) declared assets in crores. Similarly, in Arunachal Pradesh, out of 157 candidates in the last Assembly elections held in 2019, one was billionaire and 62 were millionaire. These figures are striking, given the economic conditions of the general population of these two states. While a small section of tribal population have improved their condition, the majority of them lag behind other sections of population disproportionately on various socio-economic indicators. For example, against the all India literacy rate of 73 per cent, it was only 59 per cent in the STs. Thus, there was a 14 percentage point gap between the literacy rates of the STs and the rest. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS5), infant mortality rate and child mortality rates were higher among the tribal population. It was 62.1 and 35.8 respectively. Similarly, the infant mortality rate under 5 was as high as 95.7 in STs.