Political Participation Of Tribals In India: A Systematic Approach

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Abstract:

The political participation of tribal communities in India is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon encompassing various dimensions, including electoral representation, grassroots activism, and engagement in policy formulation. This paper provides an overview of the key factors influencing tribal political participation and explores the challenges and opportunities faced by tribal populations in the Indian political landscape. The political participation of tribals is crucial for the inclusive and democratic functioning of the Indian polity, given these communities' diverse cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. This study draws on existing literature, case studies, and empirical data to analyze the historical context and evolution of tribal political participation in India. The research investigates the impact of constitutional provisions such as Scheduled Tribes (ST) reservations, Panchayati Raj institutions, and other affirmative action policies on tribal political liberation. Examines the extent to which these mechanisms have facilitated or hindered the effective participation of tribals in decision-making processes at local, state, and national levels. Furthermore, the study reconnoitres into the socio-economic factors influencing tribal political engagement, including education, economic development, and social awareness. It also reconnoitres the role of traditional tribal leadership structures, cultural values, and community solidarity in shaping political participation patterns. The abstract highlights the challenges faced by tribal communities in accessing political representation, such as issues related to land rights, displacement, and marginalisation. It also sheds light on civil society organizations play multiple roles, and advocacy groups in amplifying tribal voices, and addressing the concerns within the political sphere. The findings of this research aim to contribute to a nuanced understanding of tribal political participation in India and provide a perception for policymakers, researchers, and activists working towards enhancing the political empowerment of tribal communities. Ultimately, the study seeks to promote a more inclusive and equitable political landscape that reflects the diverse aspirations and needs of India's tribal population.
Key words: Political participation, Tribal, Election, Socio-economic and Representation

Introduction:

The political participation of tribal communities in India stands at the intersection of historical legacies, constitutional provisions, socio-economic dynamics, and cultural intricacies, contributing to a complex tapestry that shapes the democratic landscape of the nation. This comprehensive analysis seeks to unravel the nuances of tribal political engagement by delving into the multifaceted dimensions that define their taking part in the political process. Historically marginalized and often facing socio-economic challenges, tribal communities have undergone significant transformations since the pre-independence era. As India embarked on its democratic journey, constitutional provisions such as Scheduled Tribes (ST) reservations were instituted with the intent of rectifying historical injustices and ensuring adequate political representation for these communities. Understanding the impact and effectiveness of these measures in empowering tribes is paramount to assessing the evolution of their political agency. Pivotal to the analysis is an exploration of the role played by local governance structures, particularly the

functioning of Panchayati Raj institutions, in influencing tribal political participation. Examining these grassroots mechanisms provides insights into the efficacy of decentralized decision-making processes and the extent to which they accommodate the unique perspectives of tribal communities. Socio-economic factors, including education, economic development, and social awareness, emerge as crucial determinants shaping the political consciousness of tribal populations. This analysis seeks to unravel the intricate interplay between these variables, offering a nuanced understanding of how they impact tribal political participation at various levels. Within this context, gender dimensions are paramount, as tribal women navigate intersecting challenges in political mobilization. Acknowledging the distinct hurdles faced by tribal women is essential to fostering a panoramic understanding of the barriers and the right set of circumstances for political engagement within these communities. Traditional leadership structures and cultural dynamics play a pivotal role in influencing tribal political mobilization. The preservation of indigenous identity, community solidarity, and adherence to cultural values contribute to the intricate fabric of tribal political participation, warranting an in-depth exploration. However, the path to political empowerment for tribal communities is riddled with challenges. Issues related to land rights, displacement, and socio-economic marginalization continue to impede the full realization of political agency. Examining these challenges provides a critical lens through which to evaluate the efficacy of existing policies and advocate for targeted interventions. Moreover, civil society organizations, NGOs, and advocacy groups play a significant role in amplifying tribal voices and addressing their concerns within the broader political discourse. Evaluating the impact of these external actors provides insights into potential avenues for collaboration and intervention. Through this comprehensive analysis, we aim to contribute valuable insights to academic scholarship, inform policymakers, and guide advocacy efforts. By understanding the intricate web of factors that influence tribal political participation, this research aspires to contribute to the ongoing discourse on inclusive democracy, ultimately fostering a political environment that reflects and respects the diverse aspirations of India's tribal communities.

Literature Review

The review and study highlight the complex interplay between socio-economic factors, environmental challenges, and global dynamics, emphasizing the need for multidimensional approaches to address poverty, hunger, and climate vulnerabilities, which contribute to political activity among tribal populations in India. the study by Kalinga highlights critical issues related to poverty, hunger, malnourishment, and poor standards of living, and their connections to changing global factors such as globalization and climate change (Kalinga, 2016). Deka focuses on the rates and living standards of tribal literacy communities. Tribal literacy communities exhibit significantly lower literacy rates and living standards compared to other communities, highlighting disparities in educational opportunities and socio-economic conditions. This study underscores the importance of targeted interventions and policies aimed at improving literacy levels, access to education, vocational training, and overall socio-economic development among tribal populations. Malangmeih and Sagolsem state that Human capital and land capital are in the study area. The study area is well endowed with human capital (such as skilled workforce, knowledge, and capabilities) and land capital (natural resources and agricultural potential). Recognizing the existing human and land resources can guide sustainable development strategies that leverage local strengths, promote inclusive growth, and enhance livelihood opportunities within tribal communities (SAGOLSEM, 2015). as per Mohanty effects of displacement on tribals and recommendations for mitigation. Displacement due to development projects can have significant negative impacts on tribal communities, including loss of livelihoods, social disruption, and environmental consequences. The study highlights the need for comprehensive risk assessment, mitigation measures, fair compensation, rehabilitation, and benefit-sharing arrangements to hold forth to the adverse effects of displacement and ensure that development projects benefit affected communities beyond mere compensation (Mohanty, 2011). Oraon argues that livelihood challenges among small and marginal land farmers. Livelihoods based on small and marginal land holdings are increasingly unsustainable due to insufficient agricultural productivity to meet family needs. There is a need to support alternative livelihood options, improve agricultural practices, provide access to resources (such as credit, technology, and markets), and promote diversification of income sources for small-scale farmers to enhance their economic resilience and well-being (Oraon, 2012).

Objectives of the Study

To examine Electoral Participation to analyze tribal participation in electoral processes, focusing on representation in Parliament and assembles, and the impact of electoral practices on tribal representation. Assessing Representation in Political Institutions to evaluate the representation of tribal communities in various political institutions, including legislative bodies, executive positions, and administrative roles at different levels of governance.

Research Methodologies.

By combining bibliometric analysis to quantify trends in scholarly literature and document analysis to delve into qualitative aspects of government data and research literature, a holistic perspective on the political involvement of tribals in India. Analyze core articles and documents to extract topics, motivations, research gaps, and contributions related to tribal political participation and effectively leverage the strengths of both bibliometric analysis and document analysis to inform future research progress, contribute to academic discourse, and guide policy and practice in the realm of tribal political participation of tribals in India.

Representation of Tribes in the Political System

Pre-Independence

India has a rich history of diverse tribal communities with distinct cultures, languages, and social structures. The interaction between these tribes and colonial powers, primarily the British, had profound and lasting effects regarding the political landscape of the Indian subcontinent. They encountered numerous tribal communities across India, especially in the north-eastern and central regions. These tribes were often distinct from the caste-based social structure prevalent in many other parts of the country. They, following a policy of indirect rule, recognized certain areas as "Scheduled Areas" or "Tribal Areas." These areas were governed by special provisions to protect the morality and autonomy of tribal communities. British colonization often led to changes in land ownership and resource management. Tribal communities, who traditionally had communal ownership of land, faced challenges as they introduced concepts of private property. The exploitation of natural resources, such as timber and minerals, by them for economic purposes sometimes had adverse effects on tribal livelihoods. Many tribal communities were geographically isolated and marginalized by the colonial administration. This isolation, intentional or otherwise, led to the preservation of unique tribal cultures but also hindered their integration into the mainstream political and economic systems. Several tribal communities resisted British rule through various movements. The Santhal Rebellion (1855-1856) and the Munda Rebellion (1899-1900) are examples of tribal uprisings against the British in different parts of India. These movements were often responses to the economic exploitation, cultural oppression, and displacement caused by colonial policies. The British administration's efforts to assimilate tribal communities into the mainstream often involved undermining traditional cultural practices and imposing Western values. Christian missionaries played a role in converting some tribal groups, leading to changes in religious beliefs and practices.

Table 1. Seats in the Provincial Legislative Assembly pre-independence

Provinces	Total Seats	General Seats Reserved for Scheduled Castes	Seats for Representatives of Backward Areas and Tribes
Madras	215	30	1
Bombay	175	15	1
Bengal	250	30	-
United Provinces	228	20	-
Punjab	175	8	-
Bihar	152	15	7
Central Provinces and Berar	112	20	1
Assam	108	7	9
North Western Frontier Province	50	-	-
Odisha	60	6	5
Sindh	60	-	-
Total	1585	151	24

Source: Government of India Act (1935, p. 245).

Post-Independence

After India gained independence in 1947, the government continued to address the concerns of tribals. The Indian Constitution includes provisions for the protection of tribal rights, and the Fifth Schedule designates certain areas as Scheduled Areas with special provisions for governance. Post-independence, various tribal development programs have been initiated to uplift these communities, focusing on education, healthcare, and socio-economic development. The participation of tribes in the post-British political systems varies across different countries and regions. In many post-colonial nations, including India, Africa, and parts of Southeast Asia, tribes or indigenous communities have faced both opportunities and challenges in their engagement with the political landscape. In some post-colonial countries, endeavour have been made to include tribal representation in political institutions. This can involve reserved seats in legislatures or specific provisions for tribal participation in decision-making bodies. For example, in India, the Scheduled Tribes (STs) have reserved seats in parliamentary and state legislative assemblies to ensure their representation. Some post-colonial countries have created autonomous regions or special administrative units to protect the cultural, social, and political rights of tribal communities. These regions may have a certain degree of self-governance and control over local resources. Examples include the Sixth Schedule areas in India and autonomous regions in countries like Myanmar and Nigeria. Land rights are crucial for many tribal communities, and post-colonial governments have implemented policies to address historical injustices related to land dispossession. Land reforms and recognition of customary land rights aim to empower tribes and protect their traditional ways of life. Post-colonial governments recognize the importance of preserving tribal cultures and languages. Efforts are made to support cultural institutions, promote education in native languages, and celebrate tribal festivals. Initiatives often focus on integrating traditional knowledge with formal education systems. Despite efforts to promote tribal participation, challenges persist. Tribes may face economic disparities, limited access to education and healthcare, and unequal representation in decision-making processes. In some cases, there are tensions between tribal communities and the national government over issues like resource extraction, conservation, and development projects. Tribal communities often engage in civil society and advocacy activities to address their concerns. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and tribal associations play an important role in representing tribal interests and pressing for policy changes. Tribes in various post-colonial nations are increasingly connecting with global indigenous movements. This international collaboration aims to address common challenges, share experiences, and advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples on a global scale. Legal frameworks, both national and international, play a role in safeguarding the rights of indigenous peoples. International instruments like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) provide a framework for the protection of indigenous rights. It's important to note that the experiences of tribes in post-colonial political systems are

diverse and context-specific. The success of tribal participation depends on the political will of the government, the effectiveness of policies, and the level of collaboration between tribal communities, civil society, and the state. Ongoing efforts are necessary to address historical injustices and ensure the full and meaningful inclusion of tribal perspectives in the political processes of post-colonial nations.

Demarcating the Reserved Constituency in India

Demarcating reserved constituencies in India, especially from an anthropological perspective, involves understanding the historical context, social dynamics, and the rationale behind the reservation system. In India, reserved constituencies are constituencies where seats are set aside for specific social groups, such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The reservation system is a constitutional measure aimed at addressing historical social injustices, discrimination, and marginalization faced by these groups. Understand the historical context of social hierarchies and discrimination in India, particularly against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Analyze how these communities have been historically marginalized and excluded from mainstream socio-political processes. Recognize the immense cultural diversity within Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Different groups have distinct cultural practices, languages, and traditions. Anthropologically, explore the impact of reservations on preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of these communities. Examine the role of political representation in shaping the identity of these communities. Analyze how reservations in political seats contribute to empowering marginalized groups and providing them with a platform to assert their rights and interests. Investigate the social dynamics within reserved constituencies, considering factors such as caste interactions, community relationships, and the role of traditional institutions. Explore whether reservations have led to meaningful social change, breaking down caste-based prejudices and fostering social integration. Evaluate the challenges and criticisms associated with the reservation system, both from within the reserved communities and the broader society. Anthropologically assess whether reservations have achieved their intended goals or if there are unintended consequences. Analyze the impact of reservation policies on education, employment, and overall socio-economic development within reserved constituencies. Explore whether the reservation system has contributed to upliftment and empowerment or if additional policies are needed. Consider intersectionality within reserved constituencies by examining how factors such as gender, class, and regional variations intersect with caste and tribal identities. An anthropological perspective on demarcating reserved constituencies involves a nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural fabric of India, the impact of historical injustices, and the effectiveness of constitutional measures in addressing these issues. It requires a holistic analysis that goes beyond just electoral boundaries and delves into the lived experiences of the communities involved.

In India, the demarcation of reserved constituencies is a crucial aspect of ensuring political representation for historically marginalized communities, including Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The reservation of seats for these communities in legislative bodies is a constitutional provision aimed at promoting social justice and inclusivity. The Constitution of India, under Articles 330 and 332, provides for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of the Parliament) and the State Legislative Assemblies. The demarcation or delimitation of constituencies is carried out by an independent Delimitation Commission. The Delimitation Commission is constituted by the President of India, and its primary responsibility is to redraw the boundaries of parliamentary and assembly constituencies to ensure fair representation. The delimitation process is not a continuous or regular exercise. It takes place periodically to readjust the boundaries of constituencies based on population changes, and it is typically conducted before the first general elections after the census. One of the main criteria for delimitation is population equality. The aim is to have approximately the same number of voters in each constituency, which involves adjusting boundaries based on population changes over time. While conducting the delimitation exercise, the Delimitation Commission ensures the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population in the state or union territory. The specific constituencies reserved for SCs and STs are determined based on the demographic distribution of these communities within the state or union territory. The reservation of seats is not permanent. To prevent the concentration of reserved seats in specific areas, there is a provision for the rotation of reserved constituencies after each delimitation exercise. The delimitation process can be a complex and contentious task, as it involves balancing multiple factors such as population, geographical considerations, and the need for political representation. Political parties and stakeholders may have differing opinions on the demarcation of constituencies, especially regarding the reservation of seats. In recent years, technology has played a role in the delimitation process. Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and other tools are used to analyze

population data and propose boundary adjustments. It's important to note that the process of demarcating reserved constituencies is a dynamic one, and it evolves with each delimitation exercise. The goal is to ensure equitable political representation for marginalized communities and promote a more inclusive democratic system. The first Delimitation Commission was set up in 1952 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1952, after the first census following independence. This commission was tasked with redrawing the constituencies for the first general elections held in 1952.The second Delimitation Commission was constituted in 1961 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1962. It was responsible for redrawing the boundaries of constituencies based on the 1961 Census. The third Delimitation Commission was set up in 1972 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1972. This commission was formed to redraw constituencies based on the 1971 Census. The most recent Delimitation Commission was set up in 2002 under the Delimitation Act, 2002. However, the actual delimitation exercise was kept in abeyance until 2026 by a freeze imposed by the Delimitation (Amendment) Act, 2008.

The freeze on delimitation was primarily due to the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, which reorganized the state into two separate Union Territories—Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. The freeze was to maintain the existing representation until the first census is conducted after 2026. The 2002-08 Delimitation Commission had the authority to redraw constituencies based on the 2001 Census, but its recommendations were not implemented due to the freeze. The next delimitation exercise in India is expected to be carried out based on the census conducted after 2026. It's important to note that the delimitation process is a crucial aspect of maintaining democratic representation, as it helps ensure that the population is fairly represented in legislative bodies. The delimitation of seats is aimed at addressing population shifts and changes over time to uphold the principle of "one person, one vote." Each Delimitation Commission in India is tasked to maintain equality in the number of voters across constituencies within a state or Union Territory. In the context of double-member constituencies, the Election Commission observed that there was a risk of overlapping representation of tribal people. This means that the presence of two members from the same constituency, representing both tribal and non-tribal populations, could dilute the political representation of non-tribal individuals (McMillan, 2005).[1] Hence, one of the primary reasons cited for abolishing double-member constituencies was the issue of size and complexity. Double-member constituencies required representatives to manage a larger population base, leading to challenges in effective representation and governance. By transitioning to single-member constituencies, the aim was to streamline the electoral process and enhance the accountability of elected representatives to their constituents (Jensenius, 2012).[2] Hence, as a result, India choose to take up a unique method of defining the reserved constituency. The selecting of an ST-reserved constituency was relatively more straightforward than the SC-reserved constituency.

Formula1: Condition of ST seats in the Lok Sabha =

$\underline{\textbf{Total ST Population of the Country}}$ x **Total Elected Seats of the Lok Sabha**
   Total Population of the Country

Formula2: Entitlement of Schedule Tribe seats for the State =

$\underline{\textbf{Total Tribal Population of the State}}$ x **Total ST Seats of the Lok Sabha**
Total Tribal Population of the Country

Formula3: Entitlement of ST seats in the Assembly =

$\underline{\textbf{Total Tribal Population of the State}}$ x **Total Elected Seats of the Assembly**
Total Population of the State

Formula 4: Entitlement of ST seats for the District =

$\underline{\textbf{Total Tribal Population of the District}}$ x **Total ST Seats of the Assembly**
   Total Tribal Population of the State

The allocation of reserved seats for Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India, both in the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) and state assemblies. The reservation of seats for STs is indeed based on population strength as per the provisions of the Constitution of India. However, the specific formula used

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[1] McMillan, A. (2005). Standing at the margins: Representation and electoral reservation in India. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

[2] Jensenius, F. R. (2012). Political quotas in India: Perceptions of constituent political representation. Asian Survey, 52(2), 373–394.

for determining the number of ST-reserved constituencies can be complex and may involve multiple factors. In the context of the Lok Sabha, the allocation of reserved seats for STs is determined based on the population strength, as you mentioned. This is done using a formula1 that considers the proportion of the ST population to the total population of the country. Similarly, in state assemblies, a similar principle is followed where the proportion of the ST population to the total state population is used to allocate reserved seats. It's important to note that the exact formula and methodology may vary between different states and may be specified in state-specific laws or guidelines related to seat reservations. These laws or guidelines provide details on how the ST seats are distributed in state assemblies based on demographic factors. The allocation of ST-reserved seats considers the representation of tribal communities in legislative bodies, ensuring their voice and interests are reflected in the democratic process. This system aims to address historical marginalization and provide equitable political representation for marginalized communities such as Scheduled Tribes. (2011 Census), 47 seats are reserved for STs in India which will be determined by Formula 2. This maybe can be explained that though they have the loftiest attention of ethnical populations in their separate countries in a competition for ST-reserved assembly seats, they lag behind other countries in the competition for reticent administrative seats due to a lack of a substantial chance of ethnical populations in proportion to the total ethnical population of the country. For case, according to the 2001 Census, the ethnical people of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh constitute only 2.1 and 0.83 per cent of the total ethnical population, independently. Still, the numbers are far lower than other countries. still, some of the North-eastern countries are exempted from the operation of population criteria about their seat allocations in the Lok Sabha (McMillan, 2008).[3] analogous formulae have also been espoused to distribute ST seats in state assemblies. The annuity of assembly seats can be determined by following the principle of the proportion of the ST population to the total population of the state multiplied by the total tagged seats in the legislative assembly (Formula 3). The details of similar computations may be specified in state-specific laws or guidelines related to the reservation of seats for slated lines. It's important to relate to the applicable state legislation or consult sanctioned sources similar to the State Election Commission or the concerned state government for accurate and current information on the Formula and methodology used in a particular state which is determined by Formula 4. The specific procedures and criteria for the protestation of ST- reserved constituencies may be outlined in state-specific laws, election commission guidelines, or indigenous setup. To gain precise and current information, it's recommended to relate to the applicable legal documents or sanctioned sources about the specific state in question.

Table 2. Growth Rate of Population by Decades

Year	ST	SC	Total
1991	24.39	23.01	20.01
2001	23.25	18.40	17.86
2011	21.30	15.70	17.64

Source: Census of India Website

Parliament has been a snap on the equalization of the constituency population since 1971, and this snap has been extended until 2026 through the 84th Indigenous Amendment Act of 2002. The equalization process is anticipated to be enforced only after the completion of the 2031 Census. Such an action has ultimately affected the amount of ST- reserved constituencies in India (Lublin, 2014). disbursement of constituencies and the allocation of Scheduled Tribe (ST) reserved constituencies grounded on ethnical population growth rates. According to the information handed, despite the fast-decadal growth rate of the ethnical population (as per Table 2), there has been a denial of fresh ST-reserved constituencies to the loftiest ethnical concentrated countries through the disbursement of constituencies between countries. still, ways have been taken to allocate commensurate seats to lines

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[3] McMillan (2008). Delimitation in India. In L. Handly & B. Grofman (Eds.), Redistricting in a comparative perspective (pp. 75–95). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

grounded on the 2001 Census by altering constituencies within each state under the Delimitation of Constituencies Order 2008, without allocating fresh seats to countries (as per Tables 3 and 4). This suggests that sweats have been made to ensure commensurable representation for lines within countries without altering the number of seats allocated to each state. The process involves conforming the boundaries of constituencies to reflect the demographic changes observed in the 2011 Census.

Table 3: Seats in the Lok Sabha and Their Reservation Status of 2011 Census, State-/Union Territory-wise

State/ union Territory	Seats					Population -2011	Population per seat
	Gen.	SC	ST	Total	Total (%)		
Andhra Pradesh	20	4	1	25	4.60%	4,95,77,103	19,83,084
Arunachal Pradesh	2	-	-	2	0.37%	13,83,727	6,91,864
Assam	11	1	2	14	2.58%	3,12,05,576	22,28,970
Bihar	34	6	-	40	7.37%	10,40,99,452	26,02,486
Chhattisgarh	6	1	4	11	2.03%	2,55,45,198	23,22,291
Goa	2	-	-	2	0.37%	14,58,545	7,29,273
Gujarat	20	2	4	26	4.79%	6,04,39,692	23,24,604
Haryana	8	2	-	10	1.84%	2,53,51,462	25,35,146
Himachal Pradesh	3	1	-	4	0.74%	68,64,602	17,16,151
Jharkhand	8	1	5	14	2.58%	3,29,88,134	23,56,295
Karnataka	21	5	2	28	5.16%	6,10,95,297	21,81,975
Kerala	18	2	-	20	3.68%	3,34,06,061	16,70,303
Madhya Pradesh	19	4	6	29	5.34%	7,26,26,809	25,04,373
Maharashtra	39	5	4	48	8.84%	11,23,74,333	23,41,132
Manipur	1	-	1	2	0.37%	25,70,390	12,85,195
Meghalaya	-	-	2	2	0.37%	29,66,889	14,83,445
Mizoram	-	-	1	1	0.18%	10,97,206	10,97,206
Nagaland	1	-	-	1	0.18%	19,78,502	19,78,502
Odisha	13	3	5	21	3.87%	4,19,74,219	19,98,772
Punjab	9	4	-	13	2.39%	2,77,43,338	21,34,103
Rajasthan	18	4	3	25	4.60%	6,85,48,437	27,41,937
Sikkim	1	-	-	1	0.18%	6,10,577	6,10,577
Tamil Nadu	32	7	-	39	7.18%	7,21,47,030	18,49,924
Telangana	12	3	2	17	3.13%	3,50,03,674	20,59,040
Tripura	1	-	1	2	0.37%	36,73,917	18,36,959
Uttar Pradesh	63	17	-	80	14.73%	19,98,12,341	24,97,654
Uttarakhand	4	1	-	5	0.92%	1,00,86,292	20,17,258
West Bengal	30	10	2	42	7.74%	9,12,76,115	21,73,241
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1	-	-	1	0.18%	3,80,581	3,80,581
Chandigarh	1	-	-	1	0.18%	10,55,450	10,55,450

Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	1	-	1	2	0.37%	5,85,764	2,92,882
Jammu and Kashmir	5	-	-	5	0.92%	1,22,67,032	24,53,406
Ladakh	1	-	-	1	0.18%	2,74,000	2,74,000
Lakshadweep	-	-	1	1	0.18%	64,473	64,473
Delhi	6	1	-	7	1.29%	1,67,87,941	23,98,277
Puducherry	1	-	-	1	0.18%	12,47,953	12,47,953
Total	**412**	**84**	**47**	**543**	**100%**	**1,21,05,69,573**	**22,29,410**

Source: Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs Government of India 2011

Tribal communities face challenges in democratic politics, including ineffective representation and limited political choices for ST candidates. The observation of candidates contesting in unreserved constituencies outside their states may indicate a response to these challenges, facilitated by legal provisions. The reasons for this ineffectiveness are not explicitly mentioned, but it could be due to various factors such as lack of resources, inadequate representation, or other systemic issues. ST candidates face limited political choices, especially when contesting from reserved constituencies located outside their states. The reservation system designates certain constituencies for candidates from specific communities, but geographical restrictions may limit the options for ST candidates. There's a shift observed where ST candidates are contesting elections in unreserved constituencies outside their states. This shift is made possible by Section 33 of the Representation of People Act, 1951, allowing candidates to contest from two parliamentary constituencies one in their state and another outside the state. This implies that the Scheduled Tribe status is limited to a particular state, and individuals may not claim this status outside their home states.

Table 4. Seats in the Assembly and Their Reservation Status, State/Union Territory-wise.

States	General	SC	ST	Total
Andhra Pradesh	139	29	07	175
Arunachal Pradesh	1	—	59	60
Assam	102	8	16	126
Bihar	204	39	—	243
Chhattisgarh	46	10	34	90
Goa	39	1	—	40
Gujarat	143	13	26	182
Haryana	73	17	—	90
Himachal Pradesh	49	16	3	68
Jammu & Kashmir*	70	6	—	76*
Jharkhand	44	9	28	81
Karnataka	189	33	2	224
Kerala	126	13	1	140
Madhya Pradesh	155	34	41	230
Maharashtra	248	18	22	288
Manipur	40	1	19	60
Meghalaya	5	—	55	60
Mizoram	1	—	39	40
Nagaland	1	—	59	60

Odisha	91	22	34	147
Punjab	88	29	—	117
Rajasthan	143	33	24	200
Sikkim**	18	2	12	32**
Tamil Nadu	189	42	3	234
Telangana	87	19	13	119
Tripura	33	7	20	60
Uttar Pradesh	314	89	—	403
Uttarakhand	55	12	3	70
West Bengal	218	59	17	294

II. Union Territories

Delhi	57	13	—	70
Puducherry	25	5	—	30
Total	3073	570	534	4177

Source: Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs Government of India 2011

The despair of tribal communities, exacerbated by the ineffective performance of tribal political representatives in democratic politics, can be attributed to several reasons. It's essential to recognize that the challenges faced by tribal communities are complex and multifaceted, with historical, social, and political dimensions. Tribal communities often face historical injustices, including displacement from their ancestral lands and marginalization. These issues can persist, leading to a sense of despair among the tribal population. Many tribal communities lack access to quality education, healthcare, and basic infrastructure.

This limits their opportunities for socio-economic development, and the lack of resources can contribute to despair. Corruption within the political system, including misappropriation of funds earmarked for tribal welfare, can further exacerbate the challenges faced by tribal communities. When political representatives fail to address these issues, it deepens the sense of despair. In many democratic systems, tribal communities may have limited representation in political bodies. When their elected representatives are ineffective or fail to advocate for tribal rights, it erodes trust in the democratic process. Tribal representatives might face challenges in navigating mainstream political structures due to cultural differences. This can result in a disconnect between the political representatives and the communities they are supposed to represent. Government policies may not always be inclusive or tailored to address the unique needs of tribal communities. This can lead to a sense of neglect and frustration among tribal populations. Some tribal regions may experience conflicts, often linked to resource disputes or historical grievances. The presence of violence in these areas can hinder development efforts and contribute to despair. Tribal communities may feel excluded from decision-making processes that directly impact their lives. This lack of participation can result in a sense of powerlessness and disillusionment. Addressing the despair of tribal communities requires a comprehensive approach that includes equitable policies, improved representation, cultural sensitivity, and efforts to address historical injustices. Collaborative efforts involving government, civil society, and tribal leaders are crucial to creating positive change and improving the well-being of tribal populations within the democratic framework.

Conclusion

In conclusion, historical marginalization and displacement of tribal communities in India. The impact of colonial policies, followed by post-independence developmental initiatives, has often disrupted traditional tribal lifestyles. This historical backdrop influences the contemporary political engagement of tribals and, the significance of cultural factors in tribal political participation. Tribal communities often have unique social structures, customary laws, and belief systems that shape their political views and actions. The preservation of cultural identity and autonomy might be a driving force in their political decisions. The socio-economic conditions of tribal populations play a crucial role in their political involvement. Issues related to land rights, access to resources, and economic development are central to tribal concerns. Anthropologists may highlight how these factors influence their voting patterns, participation in grassroots movements, and engagement with mainstream political processes. The reservation policies implemented to address historical injustices have both positive and negative implications. Anthropologists might analyze how reserved seats in legislative bodies have empowered tribal representatives, but also explore challenges like tokenism and the need for broader structural changes. Tribal political participation is often linked to a sense of identity and representation. We may argue that political movements among tribals are not only about addressing immediate issues but also about asserting their distinct identities and challenging mainstream narratives that may marginalize or stereotype them. We can conclude by discussing the challenges faced by tribal communities in actively participating in the political process, including issues like illiteracy, lack of awareness, and inadequate representation. Simultaneously, they might highlight opportunities for empowering tribals through education, awareness programs, and inclusive policies.

The conclusion might underscore the importance of incorporating anthropological insights into policymaking concerning tribal communities. Understanding the intricacies of their socio-cultural contexts is crucial for the formulation of effective and inclusive policies that address their unique needs and aspirations., this anthropological analysis of the political participation of tribals in India underscores the complicate interplay between socio-cultural dynamics and the democratic process. By adopting an anthropological lens, we have gained valuable insights into the rich tapestry of tribal societies, their diverse traditions, and the complex ways in which they interface with the political realm. The study emphasizes the need to move beyond conventional political frameworks and appreciate the cultural nuances that shape tribal political behaviours. It is evident that a one-size-fits-all approach is inadequate; instead, policies and interventions must be tailored to the specific socio-cultural contexts of each tribal community. This calls for a more participatory and collaborative model that involves tribal members in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Furthermore, the anthropological perspective sheds light on the resilience of traditional governance systems within tribal societies. Recognizing and integrating these indigenous structures into the broader political landscape could provide a more holistic and effective framework for political representation. Land rights, displacement, and environmental concerns emerge as pivotal issues in understanding the political dynamics of tribals. Addressing these challenges requires not only legal reforms but also a comprehensive understanding of the cultural

significance of land and natural resources for tribal communities. In essence, this anthropological exploration reveals that sustainable political participation for tribals in India necessitates a synthesis of cultural sensitivity, grassroots engagement, and policy reforms. By embracing the diversity and complexity inherent in tribal societies, India can foster a more inclusive and robust democratic system that respects and reflects the pluralistic fabric of the nation.

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