



## **ADIVASI RESOURCE CENTRE** **BRIDGING CIVIL SOCIETY AND LEGISLATIVE GAP**

*The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.*

*- Article 46, Directive Principles of State Policy*

The Indian Constitution recognises the need to protect and promote the interests of the Scheduled Tribes of India, who constitute about 8 per cent of the country's total population. Yet, in the current political economy of India, they are one of the most marginalised communities as clearly evident from the following indicators:

Indicators	Total population (%)	<b>Adivasi population (ST's) (%)</b>
Below Poverty Line (BPL)	38.90	<b>63.23</b>
Literacy rate	65.38	<b>47.10</b>
Under nutrition	47	<b>55.9</b>

Source: Tenth Five Year plan, Planning Commission of India (2002 - 2007)

In addition to low development indices, government data of 1947 - 1990 shows that Adivasis constituted 55 per cent (8.5 million) of the total displaced population in the country. They have been displaced by various projects such as dams, mines, sanctuaries and industries, all of which have failed to meet the needs of Adivasis themselves.

This marginalisation continues to persist due to a complex interplay of factors which include the political economy of Adivasi areas, lack of representation of Adivasis in governance; weak governance systems in Adivasi areas and limited social activism around Adivasi and governance issues.

Despite the constitutional and legislative protection extended to Adivasis, laws such as the Wild Life Protection Act of 1972 and the Forest Conservation Act of 1980 continue to violate the rights of the Adivasis. In many instances, the violation of Adivasi rights by the State is justified on one pretext or another. Owing to these contradictions and dichotomies within government policies on Adivasis, it becomes extremely important to understand the impact of these policies on the situation of Adivasi governance. It therefore becomes important to address these **gaps in knowledge and information on Adivasi issues**. It may be noted that, so far, the Adivasis have been studied primarily through the anthropological lens with a focus on their culture; language etc. There has been a dearth of knowledge and information on Adivasi issues from a governance point of view.

The current need, therefore, is to promote awareness and action on Adivasi rights and development. This can be done by creating a knowledge base on governance and Adivasi, its inter-linkages and influences on marginalisation and exclusion of Adivasi.

**National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS)** is a knowledge and advocacy resource centre with the core mandate of strengthening the capacity of marginalised people and social action groups to advocate on the issues concerning their basic rights and social justice. It now seeks to bridge the information gap between Adivasi and governance issues through the **Adivasi Resource Centre (ARC)**. By creating a space for dialogue and interface between legislators and civil society on Adivasi issues, it seeks to mainstream these within a rights based approach.

The **Adivasi Resource Centre** seeks to fill in the existing gaps in knowledge and information through the following objectives:

- Bridge the gap in understanding of micro- macro linkages by building, consolidating and disseminating knowledge resources on Adivasi and governance issues;
- Create space for interface between civil society and the legislative system to deliberate and discuss on Adivasi issues;
- Seek government to become more accountable and responsive to the issues of the Adivasi.

The ARC shall work at the Union level and at the state level in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, operating from Delhi, Pune and Raipur respectively.

**What you can expect from this resource centre:**

- Consolidation and dissemination of information on Adivasi related bills, policies and governance institutions;
- Identification of information needs on Adivasi issues and working toward meeting the same;
- Facilitation of knowledge building on Adivasi and governance issues through workshops and seminars;
- Generation of communication and advocacy tools and products which can be used for improved advocacy on Adivasi issues in the Legislative Assembly and Parliament;
- Media advocacy to sensitise print and electronic media professionals on Adivasi and governance issues.

**ARC and You:**

- We request you to approach us with any information needs on Adivasi and governance issues in order to bridge the information gap;
- Furthermore, you are welcome to share with us any information on Adivasi and governance issues which could be useful in knowledge building and advocacy around Adivasi issues.

**Contact us:**

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