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PRESERVING TRIBAL CULTURE

Relevant for: null | Topic: Indian Culture - An Introduction

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Tribal people performing their traditional dances in their traditional attire, during a rally in Bhubaneswar. | Photo Credit: BISWARANJAN ROUT

The identity of tribal communities is rooted in their culture. Its uniqueness lies in the unbreakable bond between the community and nature. As societies embrace modernised development, the richness, diversity, and depth of tribal cultures tend to fade away. They tend to get overshadowed by the homogeneity of globalised norms.

While the Central government has introduced several developmental projects for tribal people, it has a one-size-fits-all approach that divorces tribal development from tribal cultures. Even in schemes such as the Aspirational Districts Programme, the focus is exclusively on development-driven indicators; the cultural and societal contexts of those districts are sidelined.

In a significant move towards preserving, promoting, and popularising tribal culture while also continuing with the development process, the Odisha government launched the Special Development Councils (SDCs) initiative in 2017. This is an active effort to preserve the culture and heritage of 62 tribes in the State under one umbrella while keeping economic development on course in the regions. The scheme, which covered nine tribal-dominated districts and 60 lakh tribal households in 117 blocks, has now been expanded to 23 districts covering more than 84 lakh tribal people.

In this model, important cultural markers that are a reflection of tribal identity are identified and promoted. First, language is recognised as an important marker of culture. As Odisha is a land of over 22 diverse tribal languages, the focus is on the use and propagation of these languages. Over 21 tribal proficiency centres have been established. These have modules to educate frontline workers like ASHA workers and non-Odia speakers about tribal culture and dialect. Second, more than 4,500 sacred groves that were close to vanishing from the village landscape are now being conserved. These groves hold immense cultural and conservational value for the tribal population, as they are considered to be inhabited by the gods. Resource extraction in these groves is strictly prohibited. More than 4,730 sacred groves are under protection in nine districts, and 1,609 tribal cultural clubs have been set up. Third, artisan ID cards have been issued to over 40,000 tribal artisans. This initiative not only preserves culture, but also enables employment opportunities. Fourth, to ensure an efficient transfer of knowledge, more than 50 Tribal Resource Centres have been constructed in Sundargarh district. More are coming up in the remaining districts.

The SDCs is a completely state-funded programme. This helps the government factor in the cultural context, which is sorely missing in most Central schemes. An amount of 387 crore has been budgeted and spent from 2017-18 to 2022-23 by the SDCs. Further, a total of 223.5 crore has been budgeted for 23 SDCs for the year 2023-24 for 62 tribal groups including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The projects are taken up by the Council Fund, which is given complete autonomy over the utilisation of these funds.

The SDC model also helps to preserve the culture and tradition of small tribal groups by giving them a role in decision-making processes. Thus, it takes care of intra-tribal majoritarianism. The Councils not only have people from major tribes, but also the PVTGs. The Boards are formed under the chairmanship of an eminent tribal person of the locality. The Council consists of the chairperson, vice chairperson (where one among the two has to be a female), and members from various tribal groups nominated by the government. This makes the bodies truly representative of the community.

The vision of inclusive growth and community-led development is not an idea but an actionable strategy for Odisha in its 5T (transparency, technology, teamwork, time-limit, leading to transformation)-driven development model. This model of culture-sensitive and culture-inclusive tribal development is here to stay. It is about time that the Central government also takes inspiration for its tribal sub-plans and district/nodal plans from this model in other tribal-dominated States such as Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, and in the north-east so that they can benefit from this.

Dr. Amar Patnaik is a Rajya Sabha MP from Odisha and an advocate. He was a former CAG bureaucrat. Views are personal

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SALIENT FEATURES OF PRIME MINISTER SHRI NARENDRA MODI'S 77TH INDEPENDENCE DAY ADDRESS ON GIANT STRIDES INDIA HAS TAKEN IN ELECTRONICS AND IT SECTOR

Relevant for: Art and Culture | Topic: Important Schemes & Programmes of the Government

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed the Nation from the Ramparts of Red Fort in New Delhi on the auspicious occasion of 77th Independence Day. Along with other remarkable achievements the proud Nation achieved in this wonderful journey, he also talked about how the technological landscape has been completely changed in the last one decade. He even emphasised the importance of a digitally empowered India.

Progress so far:

The Digital India programme was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on July 01, 2015 with an aim to transform India into a knowledge-based economy and a digitally empowered society by ensuring digital services, digital access, digital inclusion, digital empowerment and bridging the digital divide. The programme is coordinated by MeitY with the Ministries and Departments in the Central and State Governments partnering it in their respective domain areas. The Ministry of Electronics and IT through the Digital India Programme has given a special focus on supporting start-up industries in the country; for attracting investment in semiconductors and strengthening the semiconductor ecosystem in the country, Quantum computing, Digital Public Infrastructure, etc.

Under the Schemes viz. North East BPO Promotion Scheme (NEBPS) and India BPO Promotion Scheme (IBPS), 246 units have setup BPO/ITES operations distributed around 100 small cities/towns covering 27 States/UTs of the country providing direct employment to over 52,000 persons. No new application is being invited. However, committed liability under funded projects and any new approval, based on already received proposals, will be supported in these Tie2/3 cities.

Modified Programme for Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in India:

In order to widen and deepen electronics manufacturing and ensure development of a robust and sustainable Semiconductor and Display Ecosystem in the country, Government approved the Modified Programme for Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in India with an outlay of Rs. 76,000 crores. The programme aims to provide attractive incentive support to companies that are engaged in silicon semiconductor Fabs, Display Fabs, Compound Semiconductors/silicon photonics/sensors, semiconductor packaging and semiconductor design.

The Government of India has approved the proposal of **Micron Technology Inc.** on 14.06.2023 for setting up a semiconductor unit in India with capital investment of Rs. 22,516 crore (2.75 billion dollars). This manufacturing facility of Micron will manufacture DRAMs, Flash memories and Solid-State Devices.

Applied Materials Inc. has announced a planned investment of \$400 Mn. to establish Collaborative Engineering Centre in Bangalore. During the initial 5 yrs. the center would support \$2Bn+ of spending and create ~500 advanced engineering jobs.

Under **Chips to Start-up (C2S) Programme**, 103 organizations have been selected for chip design & fabrication support via ChipIN Centre as well as financial support for next 5 years for designing semiconductor chips for various applications. This will result in generation of **85,000** manpower at B.Tech, MTech and PhD level specialized in VLSI/ Chip design area.

New curriculums have been launched at UG, Diploma level as a step towards creation of Talent pool in Semiconductor domain. These courses at Diploma and UG level will drastically reduce the time gap to make students industry ready.

India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) has signed an MoU with Purdue University, to enable collaboration for development of skilled workforce (through curation of specific courses/ academic programs), specialized R&D programs, collaboration for funding/ grants support.

Lam Research, USA, Semiconductor Equipment Manufacture has announced to train 60,000 workforce in the next 10 yrs. through its Semiverse Solution virtual platform in collaboration with Indian academic institutions, aiming to expedite India's semiconductor education and workforce development goals.

As a step towards **international research collaboration, MeitY and National Science Foundation (NSF), U.S.** has initiated the joint research program with joint projects in different applied research areas such as semiconductors, next generation communication, cyber security, sustainability and green technologies and intelligent transportation systems.

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THE FOURTH G20 CULTURE WORKING GROUP (CWG) MEETING TO START TOMORROW IN VARANASI

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: G20

The 4th G20 Culture Working Group (CWG) Meeting will begin tomorrow in Varanasi culminating in the Culture Ministers' Meeting (CMM) on 26th August 2023. Delegates from G20 member nations, invitee countries, and various international organizations will attend the meeting.

Building upon the success of the previous three CWG meetings in Khajuraho, Bhubaneswar and Hampi, as well as the four Global Thematic Webinars, the 4th CWG meeting in Varanasi, from 23-25th August 2023, aims to arrive at actionable outcomes while positioning culture at the heart of policy making.

The insights and recommendations from the expert-driven Global Thematic Webinars on the priority areas of the CWG have been collated in a comprehensive report titled "**G20 Culture: Shaping the Global Narrative for Inclusive Growth**". This insightful report, by India's G20 presidency's Culture Working Group, will be launched in Varanasi as a part of the Culture Ministers' Meeting.

The Culture Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi will aim to catalyze collective actions for accelerating progress on the four priority areas articulated by the Indian Presidency- Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property, Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future, Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy, and Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture.

The CWG, under India's G20 presidency, had launched the 'Culture Unites All' campaign to highlight India's unwavering belief in multilateralism based on peaceful coexistence among diverse cultures and communities. The CWG is releasing a special stamp to commemorate the campaign on 26th August 2023. The 'Culture Unites All' postage stamp has been crafted as a distinctive emblem combining the ideas of connectivity, communication, and journey representing a cultural exchange and establishing cultural context.

During the meet, the delegates will have the opportunity to experience world-renowned Ganga Aarti on the banks of the river Ganga, and explore the beautiful history of the lion capital of Sarnath. The G20 Global Orchestra performance titled "Sur Vasudha" celebrating the rich musical knowledge and heritage of G20 member nations and invitee countries will be presented in Varanasi. The delegates will also witness cultural performances including Indian classical music and dance forms during their time in Varanasi.

In 2020, under the Saudi Arabian Presidency, the Culture Ministers' met for the first time on the side-lines of the G20. In 2021, Culture was formalised as a Working Group during the Italian Presidency, leading to the inaugural G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting and the consequential 'Rome Culture Ministers' Declaration'. The 'Bali Declaration' of 2022 under the Indonesian presidency further stressed the role of culture in sustainable development. In Varanasi, this would be the fourth time that the Culture Ministers of the G20 members and invitee countries would be meeting.

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